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TBML  Trade-Based Money-Laundering
TK  Traditional Knowledge
TLAS  Tiranë Legal Aid Society
UASC  Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UCO  Used Cooking Oil
UK  United Kingdom
UN  United Nations
UNAIDS  Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCAC  United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNCT  United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD  United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS  United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNECE  United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP  United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC  United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF  United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO  United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNODC  United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN OMT  UN Operations Management Group
UNRRA  United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF  United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN WOMEN  United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR  Universal Periodic Review
USD  United States Dollar
VAT  Value Added Tax
VAW  Violence Against Women
VAWG  Violence Against Women and Girls
VET  Vocational Education Training
VNR  Voluntary National Report
WB  World Bank
WBF  Western Balkans Fund
WB6  Western Balkans Six (countries)
WCO  World Customs Organisation
WEO  World Economic Forum
WFD  Water Framework Directive
WHO  World Health Organisation
WPS  Women, Peace and Security
ZVAP  Zyra Vendore e Arsimit Parauniversitar (Local Office for Pre-university Education)

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS IN 2019

- European Union
- Government of Albania
- Government of Austria
- Government of Netherlands
- Government of Italy
- Government of Switzerland
- Government of Sweden
- Government of Turkey
- Government of United Kingdom
- Government of United States of America
- Government of Germany
- Government of France
- Government of Russia
- Government of Luxembourg
- Government of Croatia
- Government of Norway
- Government of Australia
- Government of Kazakhstan
- Government of South Korea

The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)
Peace Building Fund
Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Global Environment Fund
Global Fund to End Violence Against Children
UN Global Funds
Gilead Science Inc.
Intesa Sanpaolo Bank of Albania
In our capacity as the Co-Chairs of the Joint Executive Committee of the Government of Albania and the United Nations in Albania, we are pleased to present the Annual Progress Report of the third year of our Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017–2021.

Years 2018 and 2019 were dominated by several earthquakes, strongest being the earthquake of 26 November 2019, and the extraordinary mobilisation of the domestic and international response, only to be followed in the early months of 2020 by the COVID-19 crisis, this time of global proportions. Both crises highlight the importance of the work that the UN and its partners do in capacity building and preparedness. And both crises highlight how much more there is to be done. The closing days of 2019 witnessed the Government, the UN and its partners working around the clock to assist those affected by the earthquake, and putting together a rapid Post-Disaster Needs Assessment to get on with Building Back Better as quickly as possible.

We recognise that success—in our time perhaps best measured by progress towards Agenda 2030 and the accompanying improvements in the wellbeing of Albanians—is founded on partnership. The UN’s wide-ranging partnerships across the governmental institutions of Albania—from the Prime Minister’s Office and national ministries to local administrative units, from independent institutions such as INSTAT or the People’s Advocate to individual child protection workers or border officials—lies at the core of our work. Parliament plays a special role, creating regulatory environments, deciding priorities through key processes such as the national budget, and increasingly overseeing the work of the executive branch of government. Organisations of civil society identify gaps and needs, provide services, perform watchdog functions, offer innovative solutions, and neither the UN nor the government will achieve its objectives without their partnership.

As an inter-governmental organisation, the UN leverages the knowledge of the world, and this is amplified through engagements with international development partners. In 2019, the UN collectively delivered USD 18.6 million through its programmes, of which two-thirds was mobilized by efforts of the country offices. Support for the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund this year not only included two of our flagship joint programmes—Leave No One Behind (Switzerland) and Eliminating Violence against Women (Sweden)—but also new and renewed partners. The governments of Albania and Norway each contributed to the Fund, while discussions with the EU have been initiated on gender equality. Bilateral agreements support the work of UN agencies and their partners in areas such as labour mediation (Sweden), area-based development programming in the north (UK), anti-trafficking (UK), rural women (Italy), legal aid and access to justice (Austria), health policy (Switzerland), and promoting social entrepreneurship, as well as cultural heritage, and local governance and democracy (EU), to name but a few. Multilateral partners, such as CEB, have supported the expansion of reception capacities for migrants and asylum seekers, and the UN’s Peacebuilding Fund is helping the UN to jointly accompany RYCO in its aims. The UN Country Team in Albania was one of 36 countries to win a first round grant of the Global Joint SDG Fund on social protection.

All of the UN’s work in Albania contributes to the country’s achievement of Agenda 2030 and the ambition to integrate with the European Union. We see EU integration, in fact, as an accelerator towards the SDGs. In 2019, the government chaired the UNICEF-hosted Regional SDG Forum in Geneva, underscoring its commitment. Interim targets for the achievement of the SDGs were prepared across government, led by the Prime Minister’s Department for Development and Good Governance. These targets, along with a review of the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015–2020, will feed into the preparation of a new NSDI 2021–2030. Discussion is ongoing with the Prime Minister Office on the drafting of a Vision 2030 document that lays out longer-term priorities for the country, and the institutionalisation of monitoring and reporting alongside statistical capacity building.

Finally, 2019 was the first year of the roll-out of the UN’s reform of the Development System. The UN Country Team in Albania is grateful to its partners for their support for this reform, passing in many ways unnoticed thanks to its smooth implementation. The full-time Resident Coordinator and strengthened Office will be better positioned to support government’s SDG and EU strategic planning. This additional capacity will help ensure that the next UN programme cycle (2022–2026) is even better tailored to Albania’s needs.

We hope you are inspired by this report!
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sustainable development is everywhere now defined by the 2030 Agenda, a universal framework that all UN member states have adopted. The Government of Albania and its partners have taken many steps to accelerate achievement of the SDGs in the country.
The present United Nations Albania Progress Report features four chapters, along with five annexes complementing the findings, that provide information on progress for the year 2019, prepared with contributions from 16 UN agencies.

Chapter 1 reports the key development trends, with focus on European Union (EU) integration priority areas and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting the political, social and economic conditions that could impact the implementation of development initiatives in the country.

Sustainable development is everywhere now defined by the 2030 Agenda, a universal framework that all UN member states have adopted. The Government of Albania (GoA) and its partners have taken many steps to accelerate achievement of the SDGs in the country. These are highlighted in Chapter 2. Also, links between the UN agencies’ implementation efforts in the country for achievement of related SDGs is reported in the narrative on progress of each output in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3—the core of the report—presents UN Albania’s contribution and results for the year from working with government, civil society and development partners for sustainable development in four areas: 1) Governance and Rule of Law, 2) Social Cohesion, 3) Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture, and 4) Environment and Climate Change. These areas represent the four Outcomes of the GoA and United Nations Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017–2021, and support the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015–2020, including national EU integration goals and the 2030 Agenda. An account of the implementation progress of a recently launched joint UN–Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) initiative ‘Supporting the Western Balkan’s collective leadership on reconciliation: building capacity and momentum for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office’, is also presented at the end of this chapter. Moreover, the chapter also presents the immediate mobilisation efforts of UN Albania to the earthquake of 26 November 2019.

Chapter 4 covers implementation details, including financial delivery and operations management, the role of the Resident Coordinator and the organisation of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Albania, and provides an overview of the work of the UN Operations Management Team and UN Communication Team in the country.

Implementation of PoCSD in 2019 aimed at a budget of USD 21 million, with 74 percent provided by government and development partners in the country, including national, regional and global. By the end of the year, the programme achieved a delivery rate of 89 percent, with the balance carried over into 2020. A few flagship results for each of the four Outcomes are provided below. For a comprehensive review, or to look up progress in a particular area, please refer to Chapter 3.

OUTCOME 1 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

Human Rights

- Albania submitted the following: its 3rd cycle report to the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR); the 5th and 6th Periodic Report on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols to the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child; National Report on the Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action. UNCT Albania, National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) submitted alternative and shadow reports to the UPR session, Beijing+25, Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (submission on 4 recommendations). Albania received Concluding Observations from the Committees on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Migrant Workers, and Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Albanian Parliament headed the national delegation and country’s commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+25) at the Nairobi Summit to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. (Support from UN Women, United Nations Population Fund; UNFPA; United Nations Children’s Fund, UNICEF; International Organisation for Migration, IOM.)

- The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2020 achieved 63 percent of its objectives by the end of 2019, according to a monitoring activity supported by UN Women. Achievements included, among other, (i) increase in the number of women members of the Parliamentarian Commission on National Security; in 2019, the Commission was led by a woman and included three women members, compared to 2017 and 2018 when the Commission had only two women members; (ii) increase in the participation of women in the military force; eight percent increase in number of women officers and 10.7 percent increase in women non-commissioned officers compared to 2017. (Support from UN Women.)

- The adoption during 2019 of new laws on Social and Economic Aid and on the 2020 Budget, as well as amendments to the Law on the Use of Disabled Salt and Parliament’s Resolution on Children, represent critical steps to improving the status of children in the country. (Support from UNICEF)

- Albania is one step closer to meeting its commitment to eradicating statelessness and achieving the pledges made during the High-Level Segment on Statelessness during the Global Refugee Forum, which effectively set the asylum policy agenda for the coming years. A total of 472 persons at risk of statelessness benefited from the provision of Free Legal Aid (FLA) services, with 358 cases resolved, and another 114 to be followed up in 2020. The six by-laws required for implementation of the revised Law on Civil Status were drafted and adopted, and entered into force in May 2019. Comments were drafted on the revised Law on Citizenship and presented in a hearing of the National Security Committee of the Albanian Parliament. (Support from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR; Tirana Legal Aid Society.)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law

- The citizen-centric service delivery reform in Albania encompassed support for innovation and expansion of customer-care service delivery throughout the country with: a Mobile Delivery Office piloted in Baldoshki, Shengjeri and Zall-Herr; Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania (ADISA) municipal One-Stop-Shops in Belsh, Divjaka, Kukes, Librazhd, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq and Patos; ADISA Innovation Lab. new life event service information packages launched, including on needs of Roma and Egyptians (R&E), Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and foreigners in Albania, among others; 2019 Trust in Government opinion poll fieldwork was completed with upgraded methodology to secure nationally representative data. (Support from United Nations Development Programme, UNDP.)

- Government is actively involved in the programme between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organisation Container Control Programme (CCP) at the Port of Durres and the CCP–Air Cargo Programme at Tirana International Airport. (Launched in early 2019, this unit is the only operational CCP–Air unit in South Eastern Europe.) By the end of 2019, the two units had seized more than 5.5 kg of pure heroin, 15 kg of hashish, 137 kg of cocaine, 1.2 million pieces of smuggled cigarettes and EUR 26,500 of undisclosed currency. A mechanism was established to collect data from national institutions and produce regular evidence-based analytical reports on organised crime in the Western Balkans, including Albania. (Support from UNODC.)

- Albania’s Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) action plans were reviewed in a consultative process led by the Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism to include baselines, indicators, and costing (especially action plans of the ministries of Interior, of Finance and Economy, of Education, Sports and Youth, of Health and Social Protection, and of Justice, as well as the CVE Centre). The Albanian Inter-institutional Plan for the process of reintegration of returnees from conflict zones is being developed along with a protocol that specifies roles and responsibilities of each actor for the first 72 hours and then beyond. (Support from IOM.)

- Albanian Media Council (established in 2016) adjudicated its first complaints received from citizens about alleged violations of the journalistic code of ethics by media outlets. The council monitored 40 online media on their ethical breaches of Code of Ethics, and organised media ethics training in selected media outlets. (Support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO.)

Local Governance

- Strengthened Administrative Capacities: 37 Standard Operating Procedures developed and adopted for nine pilot municipalities; municipal good practices were identified and catalogued in a booklet; a Practical Manual on Fiscal Administration Procedures in Local Government was made available to all municipalities; Revenue Management Action Plans were developed for 29 municipalities; all 61 municipalities were equipped with webpages and are publishing their decisions online; Standard Municipal Code of Conduct for local governments was endorsed as a standard by the National Coordinator against Corruption; six municipalities piloted Integrity Risk Assessment Methodologies, which were approved by the respective councils.

- Improved Local Services: The One-Stop-Shop Information System (OSSIS) was deployed in an additional 33 municipalities, bringing the total number with a functional system to 36 across the country, and more than 1,750 municipal staff trained to operate OSSIS. Meanwhile, at least 70 administrative municipal services were re-engineered, optimised, catalogued and preconfigured as standard services, and six offices were colocated and provide local and central government services together with ADISA in the municipalities of Belsh, Divjake, Kukes, Librazhd, Malesi e Madhe and Maliq. (Support from UNDP.)

- The Youth Voice platform, the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) media platform and Y-Peer network were expanded in 15 municipalities and MoUs signed with these municipalities on establishing partnership networks on SRH and Rights (SRHR), Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and on developing local plans and budgets that include young people’s issues. Local partnerships for HIV/AIDS continue to be strengthened in six counties: Berat, Elbasan, Kukes, Lezhe, Shkodër and Vlore. (Support from UNFPA.)

Access to Justice

- The normative justice for children, and vulnerable women and men framework was improved through (i) approval of five Decisions of the Council of Ministers (DCMs), one Prime Minister Order and two Ministerial Ordinances based on the Criminal Justice for Children Code, which guarantees procedural rights of children; (ii) development of a roadmap for cross-disciplinary case management for justice for children processes at the local level and a package of regulatory documents for the coordination and monitoring mechanism at the central level; (iii) three DCsMs and five ministerial orders that create an effective implementation of the FLA Law as an enabling environment for vulnerable women and men to access the justice system in an unhindered and equal manner. (Support from UNICEF, UNDP.)

- The High Judicial Council decentralised the court’s review of criminal justice for children cases, requiring every judicial district court assign at least three judges to specialise in justice for children. This important change in 2019 contributes to reducing the length of juvenile pre-trial detention and increasing all children’s access to justice. (Support from UNICEF.)

- Access to the following services was enabled: expansion of FLA centres to the District Courts of Peshkopi and Shkoder, reaching 851 vulnerable people; three FLA centres in Durrës, Fier and Lezhe began the process of revitalisation and are expected to be fully operational in 2020 onwards; work is ongoing to establish an Integrated Data System on Justice for Children and make operational the Centre for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Criminality, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice. (Support from UNDP, UNICEF.)

Mainstreaming Gender and Gender Responsive Budgeting

- The Mid-Term Budget Programme 2020–2022 is already responsive to men and women’s needs, with 7.2 percent of budgetary funds pledged to address gender inequality issues in several sectors. For 2020, 38 (50%) budgetary programmes have included gender budgeting in their mid-term plans, and ten (out of 11) line ministries and two institutions (People’s Advocate, Commissioner for
Protection Against Discrimination) have included the basic elements of gender equality in their budgetary programmes. (Support from UN Women.)

- Independent, oversight institutions and MPs played an increased role in demanding accountability of public institutions on budget allocations and application of Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) within them. The Ombudsperson is drafting a report on the costing and budgeting of actions against domestic violence. The High Court of Audit conducted a performance-based audit of GRB within the Gender Equality Strategy for 2018, while the gender equality sub-committee proposed to the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) concrete amendments to the Organic Budget Law (2016) to enhance gender key performance indicators in the budget preparation format. (Support from UN Women.)

- The National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) produced the 2019 Women and Men Publication independently, building on previous years of technical support from UN Women, and setting the stage for sustainable annual reporting. INSTAT also developed and launched an online platform providing access to the publication data, and compiled additional disaggregation for SDGs indicators, resulting in an increased number of SDG gender-related indicators for Albania to feed into the national 2019 SDG Indicators Report to be compiled additional disaggregation for SDGs in—OUTCOME 2 - SOCIAL COHESION

OUTCOME 2 - SOCIAL COHESION

- **Health**
  - Increased focus of government on people-centred primary health care resulted in the development for the first time in Albania of a Primary Health Care (PHC) Strategy 2020–2025 (draft), revision of PHC Standards and Methodology for the List of Reimbursed Medicines, and review of capacities of the National Regulatory Authority. (Support from World Health Organisation, WHO.)
  - Strengthening health sector emergency preparedness and response was a priority during 2019. Achievements include the development of a Roadmap for the National Action Plan of Health Security; an Albanian Strategic Risk Assessment, including a public health risk profile, register of risks, and a workplan for emergency preparedness actions; an MoHSP National Emergency Operation Plan and an Emergency Operation Plan for the Infectious Disease Hospital at Mother Teresa University Hospital Centre; assessment by the Institute of Public Health laboratories with regard to high threat pathogens; and a national response to address SRH issues in emergency situations (Minimum Initial Service Package implementation). (Support from WHO, UNFPA.)
  - Technical assistance was provided to improve policy concerning a number of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including advanced response frameworks on HIV–TB, immunisation, antimicrobial resistance, and cancer control through approval of laws, development of action plans, protocols, guidelines, assessments and studies, as well as procurement of vaccines and medical equipment. (Support from WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA.)

- **Education**
  - UNESCO’s comparative analysis ‘Intersection of Gender Equality and Education in South-East Europe—A Regional Situation Analysis of the Nexus between SDG 4 and SDG 5’ confirms the continuing improvement of many education indicators in Albania, but highlights disparities between the levels of education (from early childhood to upper secondary).
  - The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY) produced a diagnosis of the education system, based on an OECD–UNICEF review of the system and mid-term review of the current Strategy for Pre-University Education 2014–2020, whose recommendations will feed into the development of a new sector strategy and trigger debates on the quality and inclusiveness of the education system itself. The pre-school assessment framework and curricula for the pre-primary year were approved in 2019 by MoESY and have a national reach. A national budgeted policy financially supporting children at risk of dropping out of school, and those that have dropped out, was approved by DCM no. 666. A new guideline for assistant teachers, approved by MoESY decision no. 26, date 25.11.2019, details selection criteria, academic requirements, duties and responsibilities for a collaborative and inclusive assistant teacher. (Support from UNICEF.)
  - In response to the November earthquake, a methodology on Disaster Risk DRR (DRR) in school was developed and approved, while twenty schools in the country increased their DRR capacities through teachers and school personal

- **Migration and Asylum**
  - Albania witnessed a significant increase in inward migration and asylum seeking during 2019, with 10,557 persons (85% increase) entering the country. The UN supported strengthened capacity to deal with the inflow, including a fully equipped Centre for Registration and Temporary Accommodation of Migrants (60 beds) at the Border and Migration Police Station in Kapititce, Korca, and increased reception capacity in Ezerke (30 beds) and Gjirokaster (20 beds). In addition, the new National Strategy on Migration Governance (2019–2022) began implementation. Parliament passed a new Law on Asylum to ensure compliance with international standards, and amended the Law on Social Assistance (adopted in July 2019) to include asylum seekers in its scope. Work on Advance Passenger Information systems advanced with completion of an assessment of the current legal framework and IT infrastructure. (Support from IOM, UNHCR.)
  - A total of 449 border or community monitoring visits were conducted and pre-screening procedures, including implementation of safeguards, were monitored. A total of 11,245 persons were provided with food and 2,774 with non-food items at border areas, 524 persons received medical services in the national health system, 7,352 persons were assisted with interpretation services during pre-screening, and 7,003 individuals were transferred to the National Reception Centre of Asylum-Seekers in Babrru. (Support from UNHCR, Cantans.)
  - INSTAT conducted a Household Migration Survey that provides additional insight into migratory movements in and out of Albania. Diaspora mapping was completed for Belgium, France and Italy, charting the interest of Albanian diaspora in engaging in various professional profiles needed for the Albanian market, as well as for potential investors, and a fellowship mechanism was established and activated to promote the transfer of knowledge and skills of the diaspora for the benefit of their home country. (Support from IOM.)

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  - In response to the November earthquake, a methodology on Disaster Risk DRR (DRR) in school was developed and approved, while twenty schools in the country increased their DRR capacities through teachers and school personal
custom trainings, and a DRR commission was set up in schools, with school plans for emergency preparedness developed. (Support from UNICEF.)

- Comprehensive Sexuality Education was introduced for the first time in the counties of Berat, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokaster, Korce, Tirane and Vlore, reaching 35 percent of students and 50 percent of teachers through information, training and monitoring. The Y-Peer network was expanded in four municipalities—Cerrik, Korce, Pogradec and Ure Vajgurore—50 new young people trained as peer educators, and more than 20,000 people reached with information on SRHR through social media. (Support from UNFPA.)

Social Inclusion and Protection

- At the national level, ministries are being supported in further developing the legal and regulatory framework for social inclusion, introducing mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of national policies and strategies, and establishing funding mechanisms at the central level to invest in social inclusion (e.g. the Social Fund, Social Enterprise Fund, measures to support and prevent out-of-school children, and social housing). INSTAT has been supported in establishing standardised data collection systems for monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion. This resulted in INSTAT publishing for the first time, in December 2019, the main results of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) in line with EU and Eurostat standards. (Support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women.)

- At the local level, municipalities are being capacitated to fulfil their obligations with regard to the provision and management of social care policy and services. This has included support for all municipalities in Albania with methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, and tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation. In addition, support has been provided to municipalities to pilot the testing of various mechanisms at the local and regional levels to learn practical lessons prior to facilitating a wider roll-out. Of the 61 municipalities in Albania, 41 now either have an approved local social care plan or are in the process of drafting, finalising or approving a plan. In addition, the capacities of social care service providers are being enhanced via a number of practical training actions for professional staff, while support is being provided to review or update university curricula on social work (pre-service and in-service skills and qualifications). (Support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women.)

- Vulnerable groups and persons are being empowered through a range of measures linked to advocacy and awareness raising. This includes capacity building of CSOs, local networks and consultative structures to promote participation in social policy planning and monitoring, as well as to facilitate access to the social services. A series of community-based social service models and tools have been developed via the programme and are now operational at the local and regional levels (e.g. services for PWD, R&E, inclusive education, child health and protection, GRB, and SRH). Meanwhile, support has been provided for rehabilitation of social care facilities and for innovative local projects. In addition, some 7,000 persons from vulnerable groups have engaged in fora and debates with local authorities on issues of concern, and around 2,750 vulnerable persons have received quality social care services as a direct result. (Support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women.)

Child Protection

- Increased government focus on implementation of the completed legal framework for child protection has led to finalisation and adoption of a full range of by-laws for the Law on Child Rights and Protection. To support implementation, the capacities of local child protection structures have been enhanced to effectively implement the revised legal framework, including provision of assistance to (potential) Victims of Trafficking. The National Committee for Protection of Children’s Rights has approved a two-year action plan on Combating the Economic Exploitation of Children. The National Child Helpline ALO116 received state financial support for the first time in 2019, marking a significant shift in terms of recognition of its central role in the child protection system and its sustainability, resulting in 893 children receiving direct help and counselling, with 100 percent of cases requiring action referred to the necessary services. (Support from UNICEF, IOM, International Labour Organisation, ILO.)

- Agreement was reached with the Chief Prosecutor of Tirana and the Ministry of Interior to establish a dedicated task force to look into the bottlenecks obstructing investigation of online crime against children. The Peer-to-peer Programme on Online Safety, designed and implemented by more than 312 peer educators, has been used by more than 12,286 school children in seven counties of Albania. Tirana Municipality promoted the initiative Friendly WiFi Albania, which was operational in five Friendly WiFi public spaces in the city from June to December 2019. Just one such WiFi spot blocked a monthly average of 32,000 Internet requests to access blacklisted or adult sites, 150 blacklisted or adult websites and 3,000 items of child sexual abuse and pornography content. Nearly 4,500 children and ad-

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**Trends in Albania’s HDI component indices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Life Expectancy</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>GNI per capita</th>
<th>HDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Human Development Reports 1990-2019

**Young people (age 15 – 24) not in employment, education or training (neet), (in some countries of the region)**

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Macedonia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Albania in figures 2019, INSTAT
OUTCOME 3 - ECONOMIC GROWTH, LABOUR AND AGRICULTURE

Economic Development

Albanian Competition Authority participation at the annual meeting of the Inter-governmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy (Geneva, 10–12 July 2019) resulted in recognition among experts of (i) the importance of the provision of training courses in competition law and policy at the national level; and (ii) the need to strengthen national regulations related to competition. For Albania, these are crucial elements to facilitating the process of access to the EU. (Support from United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD.)

UNECE provided technical assistance in evidence-based policy making in sustainable housing and urban development. Working towards SDG 11, MoFE’s national workshop ‘Evidence-based policies to achieve SDGs: sustainable housing and urban development in Albania’ (Tirana, 2–3 May 2019) helped spur the development of national programmes for social and low-cost housing in Albania. This will include an online system for the collection of applications from vulnerable groups for housing, to be finalised by the end of September 2020. (Support from United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, UNECE.)

Labour

Reform in the employment and skills development sector continued to advance in 2019. The Action Plan of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019–2022 was revised, adopted by DCM no. 659, 10.10.2019; a new organisational structure and modern functions were proposed to transform the National Employment Services into the National Agency for Employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT RATE (15-64 YEARS IN %)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Women and Men in Albania, 2019 – INSTAT
and Skills (NAES), adopted by DCM no. 554, 31.07.2019; Active Labour Market Programmes were reconceptualised based on an approach that focuses on the profiling and needs of jobseekers and endorsed by MoFE and NAES; a comprehensive Vocational Education Training (VET) review was carried out and a first draft report prepared; self-assessment of 44 public VET providers was carried out for the first time and a full report developed and endorsed by the National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification (NAVEQT); Employment Social Fund potential for PWD was tapped through the design of a set of programmes, including on-the-job training, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship and start-ups, support for employment programmes, and workplace adjustment, among others. (Support from UNDP)

- Capacities of the secretariat of the National Labour Council were strengthened for the operation of the case management system of the Labour Dispute Resolution and core staff of MoFE and NAVEQT on how to establish and operate Labour Dispute Resolution and core staff of MoFE for employment programmes, and workplace adjustment, among others. (Support from UNDP)

Agriculture and Rural Development

- Further development of the legal and regulatory framework was undertaken. The Action Plan 2021–2027 on e-Agriculture Strategy is now in place, and a concept note and ToR for the new Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (ISARD) 2021–2027 was endorsed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD). A total of 102 women (5% of all beneficiaries) gained access to national subsidy schemes of MoARD. (Support from FAO, UN Women.)

- Support to smallholders was continued in the diversification of economic activities in Berat, Korca, Maleis e Madhe and Permet. Main product chains were selected, Geographic Indications (GI), organic and traditional products promoted, and networking of producers, targeted consumers, local restaurants and tourist shops strengthened to encourage marketing of these products. (Support from FAO.)

- A pilot national school food and nutrition project for Albania started in Baldushk, in collaboration with the private sector and public institutions, aiming to promote healthy dietary practices in schools and provide support to small holders and local producers. (Support from FAO.)

- MoARD capacities have been strengthened in agriculture statistics, data collection, reporting, and economic and policy analysis with a 2019 Statistical Annual Report produced, while post-disaster damages and losses in agriculture following the November earthquake were assessed and fed into the Post-Disaster Needs Analysis (PDNA) report produced by the government. (Support from FAO.)

Culture

- The UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed extension of the World Heritage List of the part of Lake Ohrid located in Albania. (Support from UNESCO.)

OUTCOME 4 - ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural Resources

- Alignment of Albanian policies with EU requirements on nature protection and biodiversity was strengthened, with focus on financing mechanisms for protected areas to strengthen marine and coastal protection. A gap analysis of maritime sector legislation in comparison with the EU acquired and the Barcelona Convention was developed and 22 pieces of legislation prepared. A risk assessment of pollution from marine oil spills and hazardous pollution in ports and sea waters was developed and two exercises on response measures and management of oil clean-up operation organised. In tourist zones, a total of 4,200 kg of used cooking oil was collected, and shipped to specialised recycling facilities. A national planning framework for the institutional development of the National Agency of Protected Areas and the medium-term financial plan for the Protected Areas System were developed and endorsed. A mobile application was prepared for the national park of Kanaburum–Sazani http://www.kanaburumsazan.mpa.com with respective interfaces for tourism, culture and nature conservation. An Information Centre in each of the four main national parks in Albania were operational throughout the year, and youth involvement was promoted through seasonal and other work. The number of tourists visiting the protected areas in 2019 increased by 30 percent, to 916,660 individuals, compared to 2018. (Support from UNDP)

- Several achievements were realised from the Implementation of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)’s new project ‘Promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Albania through Integrated Restoration of Ecosystems’, including MoTE approval of a comprehensive assessment and legislative gap analysis; identification of a sub-legal act needed (starting in 2020) in support of the new draft law on forestry, and proposed legal and economic instruments for stimulating investments in land productivity. At the same time, assessment is ongoing of current capacities and training needs of farmers to adopt SLM practices, with 50 farming households selected to adopt SLM practices in Klonja Municipality. (Support from UNEP.)

- The Management Plan for the World Heritage property Natural Heritage and Cultural heritage of Ohrid region was prepared and adopted. Preparations are also finalised for a joint World Heritage Centre, International Council on Monuments and Sites, and International Union for Conservation of Nature reactive monitoring mission to the property in January 2020. The joint mission will address the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre regarding the threats facing the cultural and natural attributes of the property, with its possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. (Support from UNESCO.)

DRR and Climate Change

- In the frame of the 2019 Climate Action Summit, UNDP provided government with a position paper and relevant technical advice, while continuing supporting the preparation of the first Biennial Update Report under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and a time se-
ries for greenhouse gas emissions for the years 2010–2016 for several sectors. UNDP also prepared a Trans-boundary Drini River Strategic Action Programme, marking the development of the first strategic document for the water resources in the region. UNEP supported the National Designated Authority (MoTE) for the Green Climate Fund to begin drafting the first Albanian country programme and issue a call for proposals to strengthen the pipeline of projects. UNECE’s review of Albania’s implementation of recommendations from Environmental Performance Reviews vis-à-vis SDGs and targets was finalised, to be validated nationally in 2020. (Support from UNDP, UNEP, UNECE.)

- National DRR capacities were improved through (i) development of a Hydrogeological Conceptual Model of the Skadar–Shkoder and Buna–Bojana Trans-boundary Aquifer System (Albania–Montenegro) and an Aquifer Comprehensive Vulnerability Map for territory planning and wise exploitation of the trans-boundary aquifer; (ii) advocacy activities on the use of WHO methodology on implementation of water safety action plans for urban and rural water facilities; and (iii) national mapping of genetic resources of plants and livestock and training of experts from the Extension Service Sector, at MoARD and the Regional level, in disaster risk prioritisation, emergency response preparedness and contingency planning for natural disasters affecting the agriculture sector, among others. (Support from UNESCO, WHO, FAO.)

- Policy and regulatory financial support schemes and measures are being drafted for establishing an enabling environment for rapid uptake of bio-energy technologies, along with guidelines for policy makers on how to develop quality infrastructure in support of national renewable energy technology markets. Of the 40 enterprises supported in preparation of feasibility studies and business plans and completion of the grant application procedure, seven received grant support and have installed several pieces of bio-energy equipment. (Support from United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, UNIDO.)
CHAPTER 1
KEY DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN ALBANIA. YEAR 2019 IN BRIEF
European Union integration continued to be the top priority of Albania’s foreign policy in 2019. In May, its progress report, the European Commission repeated its recommendation, first made in 2016, to the European Council that accession talks should be opened. This recommendation was based on the Commission’s positive assessment of the implementation of the justice reform and reforms involving the public administration, the fight against corruption, combating organised crime and the protection of human rights (particularly those of the Roma community)—the five conditions set by the EU before accession talks could begin. However, the European Council in October 2019 failed to give the green light to the opening of negotiations for both Albania and North Macedonia, concluding that the Council should discuss the issue again prior to the EU-Western Balkans summit to be held in Zagreb in May 2020, under the Croatian Presidency of the EU Council. Reasons cited for the EU decision included the intention to review internally the EU’s own enlargement procedures prior to further opening, while continued political blockages in Albania, migration concerns, electoral reform blockages and incomplete judicial reform have all contributed as contextual elements to the debate.

Between June and November 2019, Albania experienced three powerful earthquakes. The first of these, of magnitude 5.3 on the Richter scale, struck on 1 June. A second quake of magnitude 5.8 hit on 21 September and a third earthquake of magnitude 6.4, on 26 November. The last of these quakes was the strongest the country had experienced since 1979 and killed 51 people. The government, with rapid support from the international community, underpinned by EU-led search and rescue operations quickly followed by short-term life-saving assistance for those in need, took immediate search and rescue operations quickly followed by short-term life-saving assistance for those displaced. Measures included the lodging of people in hotels, delivery of food and non-food items, and the establishment of a rental subsidy programme. The UN Country Team responded quickly, bolstered by a UN Disaster Assistance Coordination team organised by OCHA and which worked under the umbrella of the EU-led Civil Protection Team, given Albania’s location within Europe. UN Agencies—especially UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO—provided immediate relief assistance to the disaster situation. The UN received a medal of honour from the Prime Minister of Albania in appreciation of the organisation’s rapid support during the immediate response phase.

The prime minister formally requested assistance from the EU, the United Nations and the World Bank to undertake a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) on 6 December. The results of the PDNA were released on 5 February 2020, to further support preparations of the Together for Albania Donor Conference. Most of the damage was recorded in the housing sector, followed by the productive sector (e.g. business, tourism, agriculture and cultural heritage), and the education sector. In order to address the effects of the damage and the revenue lost as a result of the earthquake, the assessment concluded that nearly EUR 1.08 billion would be needed across all sectors for recovery. Several UN agencies played a leading role in the PDNA, especially UNDP and UNICEF.

In the political sphere, polarisation persisted throughout 2019. Parliamentary activities were affected by a prolonged boycott by opposition parties carrying over from 2018, who then also relinquished en bloc their parliamentary mandates in February 2019. Subsequently, the centre-right opposition led monthly protests demanding new general elections, raising tensions, though the government did not cede to their demands. Albania held municipal elections on 30 June despite a decision of the President to cancel the vote (on the grounds of political tensions) and a boycott by the main opposition parties. Electoral reform remains a contested topic fueling the political polarisation with the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for June 2021. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights recommendations from several past elections have yet to be implement ed, though multi-layered negotiations are (haltedly) under way.

Meanwhile, Albania’s deep judicial flagship reform continues, with a comprehensive vetting process being undertaken for all judges and prosecutors and the establishment of new judicial structures. New appointment procedures and national investigative offices will guarantee a much greater protection from political influence and greater independence. More than 50 per cent of the judges and prosecutors so far reviewed by the Independent Qualification Commission have been removed following vetting, largely due to their inability to justify their wealth. The process has resulted in a serious shortage of judges, critically in the Constitutional Court, and created serious backlogs across the judicial system. Differing understandings by Parliament and the President of the procedure for appointment of Constitutional Court judges triggered a mini crisis within the reform, calmed temporarily via an appeal to the Council of Europe’s advisory Venice Commission. Despite the slower than expected progress, several new institutions have been established and are now functional, including the High Judicial Council, High Prosecutorial Council and Justice Appointment Council. The vetting is foreseen to be completed in 2021.

In addition to these new judicial institutions, other structures to tackle corruption and organised crime have been established or strengthened. In December 2019, eight prosecutors were sworn in before the President to establish the Special Anti-Corruption and Organised Crime Structure (Struktura e Posasme kundër korrupsisë dhe krimet të organizuar, SPAK). The National Bureau of Investigation, an independent structure responsible for investigation of criminal offences under the jurisdiction of SPAK, has also been created. Meanwhile, the State Police has begun its own vetting process. Yet, much work lies ahead in the country’s fight against corruption. In 2019, Albania dropped seven places from the previous year in the Corruption Perception Index compiled by Transparency International, to 106th out of 180 countries. Meanwhile, the Rule of Law Index 2020 ranks Albania 78th out of 126 countries, dropping four positions from 2019. Albania’s score places it ninth out of fourteen countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region and 29th out of 42 upper middle-income countries.

Starting on January 1, 2020, Albania assumed for the first time the Chairmanship of OSCE. Taking over the Chair is a truly historic moment for the country, highlighting its significant positive transformation. The government has identified the following major priority issues during its term: conflict in the OSCE area, organised crime, violent extremism, cybersecurity, youth and women issues, peace and security. Albania intends to advance the OSCE Structured Dialogue on current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area.

Albania is moderately prepared with regard to reform of the public administration. Some progress is noted in

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2. Amid COVID-19 challenges, in its decision of 25 March 2020, the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Albania while asking the Commission to submit a proposal for a framework for negotiations.

3. Detailed information on the support of the UN agencies is provided in Chapter 3 of the Annual Progress Report 2019.

4. The certificate says: “In recognition of the work of the Search and Rescue unit of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team for extraordinary dedication in the search and rescue lives of those affected by the earthquake, and for selflessness shown by all members of the unit in professionally helping the people in need, in extreme conditions.”

5. On 17 February 2020, at the Together for Albania Donor Conference organised by the EU, the international community pledged more than EUR 1.15 billion in donations, grants and loans to help Albania recover from November’s devastating earthquakes. The amount is expected to cover the country’s recovery needs after the stronger earthquake in December increased the poverty level by 1.3 percent and reduced Albania’s GDP by more than three percent.


PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS (PERCENTAGE OF GDP)

Source: Albania in figures 2018, INSTAT
the efficiency and transparency of public services delivery, improving the regulatory framework on impact assessment of policies, more transparent recruitment procedures, and overall strengthening of the administration’s capacity to undertake merit-based civil service procedures. Consolidation of these achievements should advance, to ensure a more efficient, depoliti-
cised and professional public administration. Moreover, implementation of the public administration reforms implies greater financial accountability for municipalities, particularly with regard to planning, budgeting and monitoring the use of public resources. This crucial local government capacity needs to be developed, local councils and civil society organisations have important oversight roles to play in this respect.4

The country is fully committed to protecting and promoting all human rights and has compiled overall with international human rights instruments and ratified most international conventions related to integration of the protection of fundamental rights. Nevertheless, overall implementation of human rights instruments remains to be strengthened, while further efforts are needed in relation to the consolidation of property rights. In 2019, Albania submitted its 3rd cycle report to the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR); the 5th and 6th Periodic Reports on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols to the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child, National Report on the Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action. UNCT Albania, National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) submitted alternative and shadow reports to the UPR session, Beijing+25, Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (submission on 4 recommendations).

Albania received Concluding Observations from the committees on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Migrant Workers, and Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Parliament headed the national delegation and the country’s commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)+25 at the Nairobi Summit to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. The monitoring process on implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2020 at the country level achieved a level of accomplishment of 63 percent by the end of 2019. Also, Albania’s platform, established in 2018 with the support of UN in Albania, to conduct a comprehensive monitoring and reporting on Human Rights Conven

ventions recommendations is fully functional.5 Moreover, the country has reduced significantly the risk of statelessness by amending the Law ‘On Civil Status’, resolving gaps in birth registration for 1,031 children. Regarding freedom of expression, the Assembly of Al-

bania, at its plenary session on 18 December 2019, approved a package of legislation amending the law on audio-visual media services and the law on electronic communications. On 12 January 2020, amendments to the media law were sent back to Parliament by pres-
dential decree. Currently, the proposed amendments to the media law are with the Venice Commission for re-

view. An official opinion is expected on 21 March 2020. According to the Human Development Report 2019, Albania ranks 69th out of 189 countries and territories, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.791, put-
ting the country in the high category, and just short of the very high category. Between 1990 and 2018, Albania’s HDI increased by 23 percent. The 2020 Global Gender Gap Index ranks Albania 36th out of 149 countries, noting the country as one of the top five most improved (along with Ethiopia, Spain, Mali and Mexico) in the overall index, recording a substantial improve

ance in women’s presence in political institutions. Moreover, the report mentions Albania as the best re-
gional performer with the Political Empowerment in-
dicator. Meanwhile, for the 2020 Gender Equality In-
dex, Albania scored 60.4, seven points fewer than the EU-28 average, except in the domain of power where Albania has a higher gender parity than the EU-28, at 60.9 and 51.9, respectively.

In December 2019, Albania published the main results of the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey (EU-SILC) covering 2017 and 2018,6 measuring living conditions, relative poverty and material depriv-

ation in Albanian households. This was a significant achievement because no new poverty data had been published since 2013 and also because now Albania will follow the EU standard approach. The main indica-
tor is at-risk of poverty (relative poverty), used for assessing the percentage of individuals with incomes below 60 percent of the median equalised income, also defined as the relative poverty line. By 2018, the at-risk of poverty rate in Albania had decreased by 0.3 percentage points from the previous year, to 23.4 percent compared to 23.7 percent in 2017, and the country now ranks above Romania (23.5 percent) and Serbia (24.3 percent).

Albania’s social care sectors constantly suffer from the unsatisfactory level of public sector investment.7 The country spends three percent of GDP on education and health, nine percent on social protection, including social insurance programmes, which occupy 80 percent of total allocations, and less than one percent on child and family allowances, which include cash transfers for poverty and disability. Public spend-
ing on social inclusion programmes also remains very modest. A 2018 review on local and central public budget spending on social care services, conducted by the UN in Albania Leave No One Behind programme, revealed that the share of this sector’s budget to GDP decreased from 1.4 percent in 2017 to 1.32 percent in 2018. Cash transfers continue to constitute about 95 percent of the overall budget of the social protection sector, and when stripped of cash trans-
ers, this budget constituted just 0.4 percent of the total government budget for 2018. For education, the largest part of the spending (>50%) is on basic education, with the rest for secondary (professional and general) and higher education.12 Recent social policy development in Albania, providing for better integration of people with disabilities into the Alba-
nian labour market, includes approval (in March) of a new employment promotion law requiring the estab-
ishment of a National Employment Social Fund to support their integration into the labour market, and a new law on social assistance (July), which will pro-
vide an additional incentive for boosting employment among such people.

Population dynamics present additional challenges to the governance and development of Albania. The country’s population is getting older, putting pressure on the social insurance and pension schemes. INSTAT population projections reveal that the Albanian popu-
lation will decline during the next decade, from 2.86 million in 2020 to 2.75 million in 2030. The share of elderly Albanian population cohorts (age 65 and above) will, according to INSTAT projections, rise from 14.7 percent in 2020 to 21.8 percent in 2030. As the share of working-age cohorts (15–64 years of age) is projected to fall (from 68% to 62% over this period), this implies a sharp increase (from 21.5% to 35%) in the old-age dependency ratio. In addi-

8. 2019 EU Progress Report and UN Albania (MAPS) report.
   ex/CONNECT1/Sys/en
   mentation-human-rights
10. http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6544/income-and-living-conditions-
11. Partly explained by the substantial level of informal economy-related tax collection in the country as the size of the informal sector is estimated to account for about 50 percent of GDP. As a result, tax collection stands currently at 25.9 percent of GDP (2019-2020) and, according to the medium-term budget frame-
   work, is expected to remain at similar levels over the next four years, while it is lower than that of other countries in the region (Serbia, 34%; North Macedonia, 29%) and the EU average (currently > 40%).
tion to threatening the financial sustainability of retirement and disability pensions, these trends can also be expected to further strain the state health insurance system’s finances. Moreover, as in other Western Balkan countries, there has been a significant rural–urban shift, a drop in fertility rates and a high level of emigration. Figures confirm that there remains a high level of desire among Albanians to emigrate. A significant number of health sector graduates, including nurses and doctors, have been successful in finding employment in the EU. Between 60 and 83 percent of Albanians want to leave their country according to a recent study by Gallup, which placed Albania fourth out of 152 countries included in the survey for the proportion of citizens most wanting to leave. 13 Albania also sits at the top of European countries in the Human Flight and Brain Drain Index, which measures the number of young educated people who want to leave the country permanently.14

Migration pressures on the one hand could exacerbate social trends, and on the other provide the country with new development opportunities. The topic of emigration is politicised, in Europe as part of the debate about accession, irregular migration and organised crime, and in Albania as evidence cited by the opposition of failures of governance. With regard to the flow of third-country nationals through Albania, with some seeking asylum, the country has demonstrated a position in line with the pan-European approach. The legal framework for migration and asylum is broadly in line with the EU acquis and UN norms. In June 2019, government approved the National Strategy on Migration 2019–2022, and its Action Plan, addressing a major gap in policy since 2010.

Albania has received mixed migration flows since the migration crisis of 2015, and in the last two years has witnessed an increase. The country has signed a Status Agreement with the EU on actions carried out in Albania by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, FRONTEX. Not only does this underline the country’s interest in moving towards EU integration, it is also a first for any country outside the EU itself. Since the end of Communism, Albania has never closed its borders and makes significant efforts to respect international asylum-seeking procedures, even while the vast majority of those starting the process in Albania subsequently disappear, presumably to continue northward. Institutional capacity for border management and asylum and reception capacity to deal with mixed migration flows has increased. Nonetheless, the number of arrivals at the borders has doubled compared to the same period of 2018. In 2019, arrivals of refugees and migrants in Albania increased by 85 percent from the year before, totalling 10,557 persons. Asylum requests correspondingly increased by 52 percent from 2018, totalling 6,677. An increase in the proportion of women, children and families arriving and requesting asylum was particularly noted. They constituted 24 percent and 36 percent, respectively, of the total figures. The flow remains transitory in nature, however, with approximately 99 percent of new arrivals requesting asylum and then leaving the country after a few days. By the end of 2019, Albania had hosted 142 refugees and long-term asylum seekers.

After expanding to 4.1 percent in 2018, annual growth slowed to 2.2 percent in 2019, mostly due to a plunge in energy production as a result of a drastic decline in rainfall in the first half of the year and the consequences of the earthquake. Services and construction led the growth that did take place. Albania’s economy had initially been forecast to grow by between 3.5 percent and 4.1 percent in 2020; however, between the post-earthquake recovery and the COVID-19 crisis, the

Albania ranks 27th among 44 countries in Europe, with effectiveness, labour freedom and government spending. By mid-2019, labour force participation reached 60.6 percent—a new record in the region. The female participation rate (age 15-64 years) rose above 53 percent, narrowing further the gender gap. Yet, despite improvements, Albania continues to face challenges in ensuring safe and productive employment for its population, promoting better and more productive jobs, and ensuring the integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market, particularly those in need, and especially women and youths.

Albania’s economic freedom score is 66.5, the 52nd freest among 186 countries, according to the 2019 Index of Economic Freedom,16 the World Bank Doing Business Report 2020 ranks Albania 82nd out of 190 economies, a decrease of 19 positions from the 2019 report, largely to underperformance in almost all indicators except for improvements in ‘getting electricity’.17 In addition, the country has dropped five positions in the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2019, which ranks Albania 81st out of 141 countries. Problems persist in security and response to organised crime, property rights, road infrastructure, protection of intellectual property and in the effect that taxes and subsidies have on the country’s competitiveness. Meanwhile, progress is noted in skills in the work force, facilitating the employment of foreigners, electricity access for the population, and capacity to develop the field of own information technology.

Strengthening regional cooperation rests at the centre of Albania’s foreign policy and leads the country’s constructive approach and active leadership in the region. Albania is part of the Regional Economic Area (REA) for the Western Balkans, an initiative supported by the EU for the six Western Balkan Countries (WB6) in the context of the Berlin Process and the Trieste Summit. The country is vested in the expansion and intensification of multi-lateral regional cooperation with the aim of implementing the decisions made under the Berlin Process in support of development projects, energy and infrastructural interconnections, and for regional economic cohesion. According to the Small or Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Policy Index 2019, Albania continues to be the region’s leader with regard to the SME Operational Environment for business registration and licensing, and in providing services to the public. GoA took an active part in all activities related to successful implementation of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Ionian Adriatic Pipeline (IAP) projects.

The government has worked closely with international institutions in implementation of the World Bank Group project Western Balkans Regional Investment Policy and Promotion to formulate and endorse the Regional Investment Reform Agenda (RIRA). Albania hosts the Secretariats of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) and the Western Balkans Fund (WBF), highlighting the belief that neighbourly rela-

15. Western Balkans Regular Economic Report no. 16.
17. Albania increased the reliability of power supply by rolling out a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) automated energy management system for the monitoring of outages and the restoration of service.

Moreover, as of 1 January 2019, the former Albanian MP and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Majlinda Bregu, took office as the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council for the term 2019–2021, following her appointment by the ministers of Foreign Affairs of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) at the meeting held on 23 April 2018 in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia. The new RCC Secretary General is committed to continuing working with all stakeholders for advancement of the political climate of dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance and openness towards cooperation, as key preconditions for the stability and prosperity of the SEE region and its citizens.

Incidentally, the prime ministers of Albania and North Macedonia, together with Serbia’s President, signed, on 11 October 2019 in Novi Sad, northern Serbia, a declaration of intent to establish the free movement of people, goods, services and capital between the three countries. The ‘mini-Schengen’ is to become operational in 2021, when citizens will be able to cross the borders of each of the three states with an ID card ‘at most’. The initiative is open to the remaining members of the WB6.
CHAPTER 2
AGENDA 2030
ALBANIA ACHIEVEMENTS
TOWARDS SDGs
In 2019, UN supported the Albanian government in launching the establishment of interim targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would feed into preparation of a new National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2021-2030.

In parallel, the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) was supported by UNDP in conducting a mid-term review of the current NSDI. Prior discussion was initiated with the PMO for drafting a Vision 2030 document that lays out longer term priorities for the country, and institutionalisation of monitoring and reporting alongside statistical capacity building. The UN also supported Albania’s chairmanship of the SDG Regional Forum of March 2019. Albania’s Minister of Health and Social Protection, Ms Ogerta Manastirliu, chaired the SDG Regional Forum, which gathered 850 participants from 50 countries and shared Albania’s experience in achievement of the SDGs and reflections of the country’s 2018 Voluntary National Review to the High-Level Political Forum in New York.

In collaboration with government and partners, in 2019, UN Albania identified catalytic actions to support priority areas of SDG achievement in the framework of NSDI 2015–2020 and the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017–2021 and mobilised relevant resources for their implementation through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. In October 2019, the Joint Executive Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the UN Resident Coordinator met to discuss achievement of the SDGs in the context of implementation of PoCSD 2017–2021, and allocation of SDG Acceleration funding to areas that promote multiplier SDG achievement results. Henceforth, the Fund received the first tranche of the Government of Albania contribution to an amount of USD 0.5 million to support (i) municipal social protection service delivery, (ii) child protection, (iii) DRR and Climate Change, and (iv) capacity building for enhancing employability. The Albanian government has committed an annual contribution of USD 2 million to the Fund and, with this leading contribution, other, flexible, matching funds will be sought from partners.

For the first time, the Government of Norway made a contribution of USD 0.85 million to the Fund for areas aligned to their overall development strategy for Albania (governance and democratic development, human rights and economic development). In 2018–2019, the governments of Sweden and Switzerland supported the Fund with contributions for gender equality and social inclusion. All actions supported by the Fund are in line with the accelerators of SDGs in Albania, identified in the MAPS report that was launched by the Albanian government in September 2018: (i) governance and the rule of law, (ii) investments in an inclusive, green economy, and (iii) investment in social and human capital.

The role of Parliament is crucial in terms of financing the SDGs. For several years, UN in Albania has advocated with government and Parliament for more effective and equitable budget allocations for health, education and social protection, including child protection. As Albania will hold elections in 2021, a new impetus will be provided to reinvigorate the discussion on SDGs especially in the light of greater financing for social sectors. Moreover, within the Economy and Finance Commission of Parliament, a dedicated sub-committee on Sustainable Development will be established in early 2020 with a mandate on social economic development, sustainable economic development, achievement of SDGs and Agenda 2030.

INSTAT remains an important partner to the UN in Albania. The close collaboration, through the joint UN-INSTAT Data Group, continued throughout 2019. It resulted in the first publication of statistical indicators and the launch of the Dashboard platform on the INSTAT website, made possible through UNDP’s continuous support to the institution in its SDG-related efforts. Joint efforts are progressing for preparation of the 2020 Albanian Population and Housing Census, and UN agencies are providing continuous support for capacity development of INSTAT, and participation of institute staff in regional and global workshops, among other efforts. In addition to the support provided to INSTAT, UN agencies are assisting statistics development in various sectors and areas, including gender equality, gender-based violence, child protection, health, migration, social inclusion, education, environment, agriculture, rural development, human rights, and employment, with focus on vulnerable or marginalised groups. Details of this work are presented in Chapter 3 of the present report.

Extending partnerships with the private sector has been at the focus of the UN work throughout 2019, while promoting the SDG Global Compact to align the actions of companies with SDG-oriented actions. For example, in May 2019, on its 20th anniversary, the Albanian Association of Banks organised an international conference to discuss Banks for Sustainable Development. This event aimed to ensure the participation of reputable international institutions and national policymakers, financial institutions and the UN to discuss recent developments among a broad array of topics on sustainable development, as well as to rekindle the Global Compact.

Looking ahead to 2020, the UN plans to support the Albanian government in finalising establishment of interim targets for the SDGs and drafting of a Vision 2030 document. Support will be provided to Parliament for implementation of its SDG Action Plan, including strengthening Parliament’s monitoring and oversight competencies. The Ministry of Finance and Economy will be supported for development of a National Investment Framework on SDGs, aiming to ensure that budgets are allocated to priority areas and serve as a tool to be used by development finance institutions at the central level, institutions at the local level, and private sector investors to identify the investments that might work best to support Albania’s needs towards the achievement of SDGs. Nationwide awareness raising will continue, along with partnership building to deepen efforts, including through engagement with the private sector and the mobilisation of contributions to the SDG Acceleration Fund.
**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (JOURNEY IN ALBANIA)**

### 2015

- **UN and the government announced establishment of Albania SDG Acceleration Fund (April).** Government committed $500,000 in 2019 and $2M annually until 2021.

### 2016

- **UN, in collaboration with government, undertook an SDG mission focused on Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support (MAPS),** the first in the Western Balkans. The MAPS report was launched officially by government (19 Sept.).

### 2017

- **Albania's deputy prime minister presented the Voluntary National Review of SDGs at the 2018 HLPF held under theme 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.'**

### 2018

- **Prime Minister decreed the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial SDG Committee, Chaired by Deputy PM, and Inter-Institutional Working Group in May 2017.** Both structures have held meetings twice a year.

### 2019

- **Work started to establish SDG interim targets, draft Vision 2030, and develop the new NSDI 2021-2030 aligned to SDGs.**

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**On September 2015,** Republic of Albania, along with other 192 members of the UN, committed to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by adopting the Declaration of the Summit on Sustainable Development, held in NYC.

**Using UN Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) tool,** the level of integration was assessed of SDG goals and targets into NSDI II and sectoral programmes.

**PMO implemented, with UNDP support,** a pilot project to develop and test SDG16 targets and indicators prior to adoption of Agenda2030. As a result, a set of 21 governance indicators, along with targets, baseline data and sources of data, were integrated into the NSDI II pillars.

**Albanian Parliament unanimously passed a Resolution and 25 universities signed a Declaration of Commitment, pledging to promotion, implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2030 and SDGs, through inclusive and broad-based development processes, in line with Albania’s development priorities and EU integration.**

**The SDGs are integrated into NSDI 2015-2020 and National Statistical Programme 2016-2020.**

- **Report on the Harmonisation of SDGs with Existing Sectoral Policies, launched in February 2018, serves as a useful national baseline report.**

- **2016-2017 Public Expenditure Review to SDGs in Albania informed on GoA spending on each SDG, serving to design specific/focused programmes to reach the marginalized.**
CHAPTER 3
DELIVERING RESULTS FOR ALBANIA
Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law—consists of six outputs focusing on 1) Human Rights, 2) Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law, 3) Local Governance, 4) Access to Justice, 5) Mainstreaming Gender and Gender-Responsive Budgeting, and 6) Migration and Asylum.

This outcome supports the Government of Albania in achieving two priorities of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, and 2) Consolidate good governance, democracy, and the rule of law. It also contributes to governments efforts to achieve SDGs 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 16 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 5, 10, 16, 17, 22, 23 and 24.

The total budget available for implementation of Outcome 1 in 2019 was USD 8.4 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States, as well as the European Union, the Council of Europe Development Bank, and the UN regional and global funds. The outcome delivery was 90 percent.
Implementation progress

Albania has ratified most of the international human rights instruments and stands committed to contributing to the international protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Albanian institutions continue to further improve legal, policy and institutional frameworks and mechanisms to ensure the protection of human rights.

UN Albania is a strong supporter of state institutions, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), parliamentary bodies, the Central Election Commission and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to monitor, report and advocate for implementation of national and international legal instruments, and also to collect data to provide evidence-based recommendations, perform core functions and increase outreach, including for child rights, access to territory and asylum, and improve gender-responsive electoral management.

Through UN support, in 2019, Albania submitted its 3rd cycle report to the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR), accepting 186 out of 197 recommendations and noting the other eleven. Within the context of the UPR preparations, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs launched the online platform Human Rights Action Plan and Monitoring Mechanism to facilitate the monitoring process of the implementation of the UPR recommendations of the second cycle, and other treaties-based bodies recommendations related to UPR recommendations. Moreover, on 1 April 2019, the Ministry, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), organised a side event on the UPR, aiming to (i) increase national engagements with human rights and specifically UPR; (ii) share good practices related to protection of human rights; (iii) increase awareness and share key policy actions for achieving sustainable progress, the opportunities and challenges thereof; and (iv) foster dialogue and cooperation with states and international organisations, taking into account the review of Albania under UPR. In addition, the Ministry also held a technical dialogue between the Albanian delegation and representatives of respective institutions, and the Committee on Migrant Workers, on the measures taken for implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

In 2019, the UN Country Team (UNCT) Albania, NHRIs and CSOs also submitted their alternative and shadow reports to the UPR session. Meanwhile, the High Commissioner for Human Rights in his letter to Albania’s Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs pointed out the need for the country to establish a standing, institutionalised national mechanism on human rights reporting and follow-up (termed NMRFs).

UNCT Albania prepared and submitted its Confidential Report, and the Monitoring Network Against Gender-Based Violence, its shadow report, to the UPR Pre-Session in Geneva, highlighting remaining challenges in effectively addressing violence against women and girls.

16. Albania was reviewed in the 1st UPR cycle on 2 December 2009. The second national report on the human rights situation in the country was submitted in January 2014 in the context of the second cycle the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The review took place during the sixteenth session of the Working Group of UPR, on April 2014. Albania received a total of 165 recommendations, which were assessed by the Government.


OUTPUT 1.1 - HUMAN RIGHTS
Constitutional, ministerial and independent mechanisms are reinforced to identify and report human rights violations and enable evidence-based policy making and response
In principle, UPR recommendations relate to the full range of SDG Goals under the 2030 Agenda. Many of the recommendations address equality (SDG 5 and 10), peace, justice and accountable institutions (SDG 16), economic and social rights (Goals 1-4 and 6), labour rights and conditions (SDG 8), and international cooperation (SDG 17). Emerging human rights frontiers such as affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), sustainable consumption and production (Goal 12) and climate change (Goal 13) are also given considerations and will merit more attention in future UPR processes. Being more specific, the recommendations under the 2030 Agenda include those addressed to the country under review. The recommendations related to women’s rights and gender equality, and the actions taken are linked directly to achievement of targets under SDG 5, with majority linked to SDG target 5.2 to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and deal with harmful traditional practices such as child early and forced marriages and target 5.6 women’s reproductive health and rights. Actions taken to address these recommendations contribute to the achievement of SDG indicators 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.6.1 and 5.6.2. Women’s rights are not confined to Goal 5 only but reflected in a cross-cutting manner, including issues such as women’s equal access to education (4.5) and the labour market (8.5), and the challenge of maternal mortality (3.1).

Incidentally, in April, UN Women and UNFPA, with the support of OHCHR, organised informative sessions with civil society, including youth organisations, on the UPR review process, as well as a mock session with members of the Working Group to prepare them for the UPR reports.

Moreover, NHRIs, line ministries and UN agencies inputs, prepared a submission for the Country report for the 4th periodic report, the Mid-term Implementation Report on the National Action Plan for the SDGs. The special sessions dedicated to the Mid-term Implementation Report, with members of the National Council on the Rights of the Child and the Parliament of Albania, called for immediate measures to improve on the major governance issues at the national and sub-national levels in order to deliver results for children in the country, such as increased budgeting to implement the necessary steps planned under the Action Plan, increased vertical and horizontal coordination among different implementing entities, and more regular or frequent reporting to measure progress.

In April, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection to lead the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +25 (BDPA +25) National Review, which featured a participatory and inclusive process of five consultative meetings with 73 participants. Albania submitted its national report in April 2019. Furthermore, four members of the Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence, with contributions from another eleven non-governmental organisations (NGOs), prepared and submitted the Beijing +25 CSO report.

Albania also received Concluding Observations from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), State Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW), and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The latest national reports to these committees were prepared and submitted in 2017, to CRPD, and in 2018, to CMW and CEARD. Yet, despite slow but steady progress, government was late in its reporting obligations under four treaties: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment (CAT).

UN Women, on behalf of UNCT Albania and based on UN agencies inputs, prepared a submission for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee on implementation of four recommendations of the UN Women engaged with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection to lead the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +25 (BDPA +25) National Review, which featured a participatory and inclusive process of five consultative meetings with 73 participants. Albania submitted its national report in April 2019. Furthermore, four members of the Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence, with contributions from another eleven non-governmental organisations (NGOs), prepared and submitted the Beijing +25 CSO report.

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Committee that were part of the 2016 Concluding Observations on Albania. The upcoming CEDAW report on Albania will be submitted in 2020. UN Women will support government for submission of the national report and also the People’s Advocate for preparation of an alternative report to CEDAW.

Based on its work with CSOs, with a specific focus on violence against women and girls with disabilities, UN Women provided contributions to UNICT’s submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in the context of the consideration of the state report submitted in 2017 to the Committee. Violence against women with disabilities is a topic that is little known, discussed and addressed, but requires increased attention.

Following approval of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2018–2020, a monitoring process on implementation of the WPS Agenda at the country level was conducted with UN Women support, intending to institutionalise systematic reporting, as well as strengthen accountability for implementation of the Agenda at the country level. In the frame of the Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) project, UN Women’s continued support to the Coalition of CSOs on WPS resulted in the Coalition’s commitment to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to part of the 2016 Concluding Observations on Albania, related to improvement of the legal aid system in the country, improvement of gender anti-discriminatory legislation, measures to increase reporting of gender-based violence and strengthening of the enforcement of court decisions related to protection of women from violence.

A desk review of existing documents and reports produced by the Albanian authorities on the WPS Agenda was examined, and is considered a solid basis and used for informing the monitoring process. The desk research intended to take stock of the work done by the government authorities (including all line ministries, UN Women National Office and the WPS Agenda, as well as the work plans of 31 CSOs on implementation of NAP for UNCRPD 12.6). These recommendations, part of the 2016 Concluding Observations on Albania, related to improvement of the legal aid system in the country, improvement of gender anti-discriminatory legislation, measures to increase reporting of gender-based violence and strengthening of the enforcement of court decisions related to protection of women from violence.

25. The Albanian Parliament continued to improve its action during 2019 in defence of child rights, supported by UNICEF. In particular, the parliamentarians group Friends of Children was supported to maintain child rights high on the agenda, both in the legislative work of Parliament and in its public oversight role, particularly as the latter is still understudied. Independent Human Rights Institutions were also supported in their monitoring and reporting capacities with regard to child rights, in providing remedies and upholding the rights of the child, while promoting a stronger dialogue with Parliament. In this regard, 2019 saw adoption of a new Law on Social and Economic Aid, a Law on Budget (2020) more responsive to child rights, and amendments to the Law on the Use of Iodised Salt. In addition, Parliament held several ministers accountable for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the CRC Committee recommendations and the National Child Rights Agenda, as well as the NHRI in their oversight and remedy-providing role for various violations of child rights. Parliament also passed a Resolution on Children, a framework document providing a set of measured obligations incumbent on the Albanian institutions, such as Parliament, government, judiciary and civil society for improvement of the status of children in the country. As a result of this support, Friends of Children is becoming an even capable and effective body to address child rights.

The parliamentary sub-committee on Gender Equality and the Prevention of Violence against Women improved knowledge on population issues and harmful practices relating to gender-based sex selection and Forced and Early Child Marriage thanks to a joint session on issues related to Population Dynamics and Harmful Practices, organised on the occasion of ICPD+25 Review by UNFPA and the sub-Committee with participation and contribution of parliamentarians, representatives from line ministries, academics, CSOs, young people, and development partners. Moreover, with the support of UNFPA, Parliament headed the national delegation and the country’s commitments to ICPD+25 in Nairobi.27 The People’s Advocate continued to improve its oversight role during 2019 and particularly in the defence of child rights, supported by UN agencies in Albania. UN Women, in consultation with other UN agencies, provided input to formulation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2022 of the Office of the People’s Advocate. The Office was also supported by UNICEF in 2019 to (i) strengthen its oversight role over the public administration in the area of criminal justice for children through monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Criminal Justice for Children Code and on the treatment of children deprived of liberty, (ii) prepare information on child rights and ways to seek remedies, for use by teachers and pupils, (iii) reach out to children in local communities to increase their demand for remedies provided by the Advocate, and (iv) engage in constructive dialogue with Parliament to bring to the attention of parliamentarians the challenges of public authorities to guarantee child rights, as well as to highlight challenges related to the limited resources of the Child Rights Protection and Promotion Unit in adequately investigating and providing remedies for violations of child rights. As a result of this support, the People’s Advocate has, for the first time, received ten complaints directly from children of violations of their rights. This constitutes a compliance with the Paris Principles and a direct contribution to SDG target 16.a, and particularly indicator 16.a.1.

UN Women, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, studied the level of women’s representation in local government bodies.28 The study revealed positive, increased representation of women in decision-making bodies, especially those of local self-governance. At the top executive levels, however, little progress was made. Among 21 municipalities with only one deputy mayor in the structure, none of those officials are reported to be women. Of the 37 municipalities that have two or more deputy mayors, gender representation of women is 30 per cent or above in only 15 municipalities. Meanwhile, only 15 percent of municipal administrator are women, while of the 64 reported commercial companies, only nine stated that they are run by women administrators. This initiative contributes to achievement of SDG 5, targets 5.5 and indicators 5.5.1 and 5.5.2.

25. [https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/commitments](https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/commitments)
Reducing the number of stateless individuals is a lengthy process due to administrative and judicial procedures. Nevertheless, in 2019, persons at risk of statelessness were successfully assisted and the 2018 legal amendments to the Law on Civil Registry brought Albania close to preventing some 90 percent of potential new cases. UNHCR estimated there were 1,031 persons at risk of being stateless at the beginning of 2019, through a multi-institutional effort to identify cases over a three-month period. Such individuals without birth or citizenship registration are predominantly Roma or children born abroad returning to the country. In the absence of implementation of the Law on Free Legal Aid, UNHCR, through its partner Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS), provided legal aid services for 472 persons at risk of statelessness. The cases were referred by relevant government and non-government actors and managed through legal and administrative barriers preventing refugees and asylum seekers from effectively accessing rights, and issuing personal ID numbers and cards to them, facilitating effective access to the right to personal security. At the same time UNHCR also focused on increasing the country’s capacity to protect refugees by ensuring that asylum procedures are fair and efficient and by strengthening the quality of asylum decision making.

UN agencies collaborated closely with INSTAT to improve the country’s statistical framework during 2019. UNHCR and TLAS held four meetings with INSTAT, providing recommendations on the methodology of data collection for persons at risk of statelessness through the 2020 Census. INSTAT received support also from UNICEF with regard to the training of data collectors for the questionnaire testing of Census 2020, with special attention paid to questions on impairments, and the European Health Interview Survey. Both surveys have a significant role in the generation of new data, including those on children and youth. Through the coordination of INSTAT and in the framework of the EU accession agenda, UNICEF supported the inter-sectoral alignment of national statistics with the International Classification of Crime Statistics. The alignment will enable the generation of new official statistics that are comparable internationally. Technical work is taking place in two domains: mapping of alignment for the penal code, and the statistical information management systems. This process is expected to last for at least 15 months, given the in-depth technical discussions and agreements to be reached.

Challenges

The tension in the political system put at risk the bi- and multi-partisan nature of the Friends of Children caucus. To address this issue, UNICEF advocated with the members of the new opposition on the importance of having different views on possible solutions to child rights challenges and, as a result, a good number of parliamentarians did join the caucus.

UNICEF offered temporary human resources support to the Child Rights Protection and Promotion Unit at the People’s Advocate, and also promoted dialogue between this NHRI and Parliament around a potential increase in the budget for human resources for the Unit. Despite these efforts, the NHRI did not manage to obtain a positive response from Parliament during the reporting year. UNICEF will continue to support the People’s Advocate with more strategic communication with Parliament to increase the chances of a positive response in the following year. Without sufficient dedicated staff, the proactive role of the People’s Advocate to influence the demand of children for this NHRI’s remedies remains constrained.

Although the legal framework has improved, the legal services offered by relevant stakeholders for cases regarding confirmation of nationality remain limited due to the lack of properly trained staff and financial resources. The training of Albanian consulate officials in countries with a large Albanian diaspora needs strengthening. Identification mechanisms of persons at risk of statelessness nonetheless need to be further strengthened through training and technical support provided to local stakeholders. The advocacy foreseen for the revision of the Family Code needs to be undertaken in 2020.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

In collaboration with CSOs and National Human Rights Mechanisms, as well as government institutions, UNFPA and UN Women will support the follow-up of the recommendations resulting from the 3rd UPR cycle. UNFPA and UN Women will also provide support relating to the upcoming CEDAW national report, due in July 2020. Support will continue with regard to the Istanbul Convention and UN Women will also support national participation at Beijing+25-related events (CSW64, Generation Equality Forum in Paris), as well as engagement of the national gender equality mechanism in the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

With the completion of the 5th and 6th Periodical Reports to the CRC Committee, UNICEF will continue its advocacy work towards building momentum and
visibility around children’s rights issues. More specifically, UNICEF will engage in generating new evidence in respect of implementation of child rights and continue to support both the legislative and public oversight role of Parliament. In particular, it will continue to support the parliamentarians group Friends of Children in implementing its strategy and action plan.

UN agencies will support Parliament, CSOs, PA and CPD to increase their monitoring role and advocate for further improvement and effective implementation of national legislation in accordance with human rights obligations. UNFPA will continue to support IN-STAT to produce data for better monitoring of human rights obligations. UN Women will place further focus on women empowerment as leaders at the national and local level, as well as on increasing capacity building to bring the administrative practice to international standards, notably on identification, referral and confirmation and acquisition of nationality. UNHCR’s support and advocacy will be conducted in line with the government’s pledges at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness in October 2019, namely to: (i) improve access to birth registration procedures for children of Roma and Egyptian communities, and for children of Albanian nationals born outside of the country, by 2021; (ii) align the Law on Citizenship with the 1961 Convention; and (iii) establish and implement a dedicated statelessness determination procedure by 2020. UNHCR will continue to monitor implementation of the revised Law on Civil Status and its respective by-laws, in order to identify any possible gaps and consolidate proper referral mechanisms. The agency will also continue to provide capacity development of government officials for consolidation of implementation of amendments to the Law on Civil Status and the new Law on Citizenship. UNHCR will support the Albanian authorities in establishing a statelessness determination procedure through the preparation of by-laws within the new legislative framework. The agency will continue to provide support to stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness towards the acquisition or confirmation of nationality of about 400 persons. For this purpose, collaboration with the Directorate of Free Legal Aid in the Ministry of Justice and Bar Association will be established.

UNHCR will strengthen the protection monitoring system (through partnership with the People’s Advocate) with a focus on access to territory and asylum for refugees, enhancement of pre-screening tools in border areas and promoting non-discriminatory practices for asylum seekers and refugees. UNHCR will continue to fulfill its mandate on statelessness in 2020 through advocacy and capacity building to bring the administrative practice to international standards, notably on identification, referral and confirmation and acquisition of nationality. UNHCR’s support and advocacy will be conducted in line with the government’s pledges at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness in October 2019, namely to: (i) improve access to birth registration procedures for children of Roma and Egyptian communities, and for children of Albanian nationals born outside of the country, by 2021; (ii) align the Law on Citizenship with the 1961 Convention; and (iii) establish and implement a dedicated statelessness determination procedure by 2020. UNHCR will continue to monitor implementation of the revised Law on Civil Status and its respective by-laws, in order to identify any possible gaps and consolidate proper referral mechanisms. The agency will also continue to provide capacity development of government officials for consolidation of implementation of amendments to the Law on Civil Status and the new Law on Citizenship. UNHCR will support the Albanian authorities in establishing a statelessness determination procedure through the preparation of by-laws within the new legislative framework. The agency will continue to provide support to stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness towards the acquisition or confirmation of nationality of about 400 persons. For this purpose, collaboration with the Directorate of Free Legal Aid in the Ministry of Justice and Bar Association will be established.

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**OUTPUT 1.2 - ANTI-CORRUPTION AND RULE OF LAW**

National public administration has greater capacity to improve access to information, address corruption and organised crime, and engage CSOs and media in efforts to strengthen monitoring of reform efforts.

**Implementation Progress**

The new Transparency Report 2019 gives Albania a poor score in the fight against corruption, ranking the country 106th among 180 countries. The ranking follows on from the continuous deterioration of the previous three years: 83rd in 2016, 91st in 2017, and 99th in 2018 (see Chapter 1).

Albania is an active member of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (2016–2019). To help improve its capacity to reduce corruption (and trafficking of goods) in trade, the government is also actively involved in the UNODC–World Customs Organisation (WCO) Container Control Programme (CCP) at the Port of Durres. In an expansion of the programme, in early 2019, the CCP Air Cargo Programme was launched at Tirana International Airport to safeguard shipments by air. This unit is the only operational CCP Air Cargo Unit in South Eastern Europe. Subsequently, 56 customs and border control officers and civil aviation representatives enhanced their knowledge with the support of UNODC. The increase in Albania’s capacities to detect suspicious container activity and abilities to ensure cross-border movements of goods, enhances...

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30. Through three sub-programmes, the programme addresses strategic themes related to the rule of law, good governance (especially in the areas of organised crime and trafficking in drugs, human beings and goods), countering crime (laundering, preventing and combating corruption, supporting the development of national drug and crime policies and strategies and their implementation plans), in line with EU requirements under Chapters 23 and 24, and drug prevention, treatment and care, in line with EU requirements under Chapter 26 of the EU acquis communautaire, as well as the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.
the country’s compliance with the national laws and regulations, leading to a better readiness of Albania to effectively counter illicit trafficking and organized crime in line with the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 16 on security and rule of law, targets 16.4 and 16.A, and indicators 16.4.1, 16.4.2, and 16.a.1. In 2019, Durres Port Control Unit (PCU) and Tirana Air Cargo Unit seized more than 5.5 kg of pure heroin, 15 kg of hashish, 137 kg of cocaine, 1.2 million smuggled cigarettes and EUR 26,500 of undeclared currency. The units continue to conduct and report seizures on an ongoing basis.

In the area of organised crime, UNODC finalised the EU-funded project ‘Measuring and assessing organised crime in the Western Balkans (MACRO)’. The project established a mechanism to collect available data from national institutions and developed a standard framework to produce regular, evidence-based analytical reports on organised crime in the Western Balkans, including in Albania. UNODC will release the final regional report31 in the course of 2020, describing the trends and patterns observed through the data collected and propose evidence-based policy advice to support developments in the rule of law, address organized crime by better understanding it, and further the EU accession process in the beneficiary jurisdictions, including in Albania, contributing thereby to the implementation of SDG 16, target 16.a, indicator 16.a.1.

In 2019, Albania was the first country to participate in a UNODC pilot rapid assessment of the causes of recidivism. Thirteen focus group interviews were conducted with repeat offenders in three prisons: Ali Demi Women’s Prison in Tirana, Fer Prison and Peqin Maximum Security Prison. This work represents the first research conducted by UNODC on criminal justice matters and could become the basis for a global study on prisons,32 which could assist the Government in finding solutions to address recidivism and ultimately reduce crime thus contributing to SDG 16, target 16.a.

Albania is actively cooperating with UNODC in the field of anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-financing of terrorism (CFT), in particular in the framework of the joint regional UNODC and EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) project on Capacity Building of South Eastern Europe on Financial Investigations. In 2019, 65 experts representing Albanian law enforcement and judiciary institutions underwent two series of financial investigation trainings. The trainings were conducted by a UNODC-certified group of eleven national trainers in financial investigations, following the national curriculum, which will be institutionalised by the Security Academy of Albania in 2020. Moreover, in the framework of cooperation with the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organised Crime (TADOC) and the Federal Financial Monitoring Service of the Russian Federation (Rosfinmonitoring), five officials representing the relevant financial and law enforcement institutions in Albania received training in, respectively, crime intelligence analysis, and analysis and investigation of financial operations. By building the capacity of the Government of Albania in addressing AMU/CFT risks and promoting regional cooperation through trainings ensures an effective response and an increased cooperation among agencies, leading to a strengthened overall response to countering illicit financial flows in Albania and beyond in line with SDG 16, target 16.4, indicator 16.4.1.

In the area of terrorism, Albania is actively using the UNODC training manual on foreign terrorist fighters for judicial training institutions in South Eastern Europe launched in 2017 and updated in 2019 with translation into Albanian. The manual was launched in December 2019 in the presence of officials from various countries, including Albania. In the area of corruption, Albania increased its capacities in countering corruption by taking part in a series of multi-stakeholder workshops on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and its Review Mechanism organised by UNODC, to consolidate an outcome document aimed at providing a shared vision for all stakeholders in South Eastern Europe in effectively addressing corruption in the region. Civil society representatives from the region, including Albania, collaborated over the joint outcome statement, which spells out concrete and practical steps towards strengthened cooperation in the areas of training and knowledge, implementation of UNCAC and its Review Mechanism and collective action, and which was endorsed by all contributors in the course of 2019. In December, the joint outcome statement was promoted during a special event in the margins of the eighth session of the Conference of the State Parties to UNCAC and presented as best practice in collective action initiatives for the implementation of UNCAC in South Eastern Europe. Albania’s participation in joint anti-corruption initiatives with the involvement of the civil society contributes to providing a unified and joint response to corruption in the region contributing to the achievement of SDG 16, target 16.5, indicator 16.5.1.

Moreover, UNODC supported Albania with six capacity building events in the areas of CFT, countering crypto-currencies and trade-based money-laundering (TBML) with the training of more than 151 officials from Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and law enforcement agencies. This support contributed to an
improved understanding by more than 60 percent of the risks posed by the above threats and strengthened inter-agency cooperation, necessary for disruption of terrorist financial networks. These efforts have contributed to strengthening Albania’s compliance with international standards, namely UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly the recently adopted (2019) Resolution 2462 on countering the financing of terrorism, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on money laundering standards and OSCE commitments, in line with SDG 16, target 16.4.

In 2019, through IOM support, the strategic planning, coordination and monitoring of Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) strategies and action plans in Albania advanced, specifically for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), with the review of all action plans in a consultative process led by the Coordination Centre for CVE (CCCVE). Following the review, the ministries of Interior, of Finance and Economy, of Education, Sports and Youth, of Health and Social Protection, and of Justice, as well as the CCCVE developed costed action plans, with baseline and indicators, and an indicative budget showing contributions by government, partners and the funding gap. CCCVE regularly organised stakeholder coordination meetings, assisted municipalities to create and strengthen Local Security Councils, and has reforming service delivery was the consolidation of an integrated model of central-local service provision offices and standards, which has triggered demand and will be further supported for expansion to all municipalities. The model ensures transparency, reduced bureaucracy and efficiency and contributes directly to making progress towards achieving SDG targets 16.5 - substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms, 16.6 - develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, and 16.10 - ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. UNDP’s efforts directly contribute to achieving SDG indicators 16.5.1, 16.6.2 and 16.10.2.

During 2019, UNDP’s assistance for the public services reform resulted in:

- a. the successful piloting of a Mobile Delivery Office with two service windows to ensure greater access to central government services for remote communities in Albania, starting with three locations in Tirana County: Baldushti, Shengjerj and Zali-Herri;
- b. the functioning of additional joint ADISA-municipality One-Stop-Shop co-locations, in Berat, Dërbygjash, Kukes, Malësi e Madhe and Patos, following the pilot in Malaj, accompanied by publication of an ADISA customer service standard manual for public service delivery front office establishments and operations as a guide for municipalities (April 2019);
- c. the launching of ADISA Innovation Lab new life event service information packages including on persons with disabilities, as well as foreigners in Albania, and engagement with Roma and Egyptian (R&E) communities aimed at design services packages that address their needs;
- d. the organisation of a nationwide information campaign on the Citizen Charter, setting out the rights and duties in public service delivery;
- e. the conducting of a 2019 mystery shopping assessment covering 18 key central government institutions in primary focus of the public services reform, with 1,818 visits in 346 branches of 18 institutions in all twelve counties in Albania, conducted in two waves based on ADISA and benchmarked service standards; and
- f. the completion of 2019 Trust in Government opinion poll field work with an upgraded methodology to secure nationally representative data.

In addition, supporting the anti-corruption efforts at the central level, the Integrity Risk Assessment Methodology for central government institutions was drafted for piloting at the Ministry of Justice in its capacity as the National Coordination against Corruption, and capacity building was conducted for 67 staff in preparation for the start of the ministry’s integrity plan formulation.

Moreover, with support from UNESCO, the Albanian Media Council (established in 2016) adjudicated its first complaints received from citizens about alleged violations of the journalistic code of ethics by media outlets. The Council also monitored 40 online media over ethical breaches of the Code of Ethics, organised media ethics training in selected media outlets, and raised its visibility through awareness raising campaigns in social media and print media.

**Challenges**

Despite government commitment for advancement in this area, anti-corruption and rule of law need to have adequate capacities in place, both at the central and the local level, as well as stronger coordination among national partners to ensure effective implementation. Key challenges noted throughout 2019 include insufficient local-level expertise, fragmented accountability and insufficient capacities in M&E, along with absence of an adequate legal framework to effectively fight illicit trafficking of cultural property and still weak cross-sectoral cooperation. As detailed in the section below on the way ahead, UN support to this sector will focus on improving governance, strengthening institutions and reducing vulnerability to corruption, considering the specific needs of women, children and people who may be subject to marginalisation and discrimination. The degree of readiness and preparedness of local government units in adopting customer ser-
Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNODC will support the Albanian State Police by offering equipment as agreed with the relevant authorities for an enhanced operational capacity in the field of narcotics and other areas in the fight against organised crime. Moreover, the agency will strengthen the scientific and forensic capacities of forensic service providers in accordance with the needs assessment of the Albanian Institute of Scientific Police, and support the country with capacity building in implementation of methods for analysis of new psychoactive substances and precursors, and through provision of relevant equipment. UNODC will also continue to support GoA in the areas of countermoney laundering and the financing of terrorism, anti-corruption, asset recovery, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, firearms, enhanced border security capacities in consultation with national authorities, and in countering illicit trafficking, in particular by enhancing control of container transportation by sea or air.

UNESCO will build on the achievements of 2019, through both broadening and deepening capacities building for public institutions and individual and corporate stakeholders, promoting civic engagement, ethics and education, including support for media objectivity, advancing public administration reform, especially through the service delivery reform, and assisting anti-corruption and the fight against organised crime, all of which are key for EU integration. Additionally, UNESCO will continue to assist, with government efforts, enhanced protection and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage through targeted and tailor-made initiatives, raising awareness of the links between economy, tourism, culture and sustainable development, supporting the prevention of illicit traffic of cultural objects, and, very importantly, supporting a new Law on Culture, backed up by the setting up of a database of stolen works of art and establishment of a permanent cooperation mechanism between key authorities to improve the management of cultural heritage in all its aspects. It is also expected that the new regional programme on the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural objects will start in 2020 through strengthened mobilisation at the regional and sub-regional level, with well-established cooperation channels, updated legal and technological tools dedicated to inventories, traceability, exercise of due diligence, investigations, adequate means to dispute resolution and restitution processes. UNESCO’s assistance will also take place in the context of the 50th anniversary of the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the UNIDROIT Convention.

UNDP, furthering its support to citizen-centric service delivery reform during 2020, will focus on (i) expansion of ADISA customer services through supporting co-location and mobile delivery deployments, (ii) implementation of service delivery standards through innovative approaches, (iii) enabling of regular performance oversight and citizen feedback, and (iv) supporting of sustainability and capacity consolidation for ADISA. The agency will also continue work with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government’s National Coordinator against Corruption, to prepare its integrity plan implementing the integrity risk assessment methodology UNDP helped put in place for central government institutions.

IOM will continue to assist the CVE Centre in working with different line ministries and local authorities for implementation of the CVE strategy, and for prioritising prevention and reintegration.

Implementation Progress

The year 2019 marked the end of the first full mandate of the 61 new municipalities resulting from the implementation of the Territorial–Administrative Reform (TARI). The Mid-term Review of the National Strategy on Decentralisation and Local Government (NCSDLG) 2015–2020, finalised in 2019, noted that significant progress had been made in the framework of decentralisation. The review reconfirmed the relevance of the four strategic objectives of NCSDLG and recommended extension of the Strategy timeline until 2022, and the necessity to update the related action plan to 2022 as well. It highlighted several areas in need of further development and support to address the following, among other challenges: conflicting and overlapping responsibilities and legal inconsistencies between central and local government; further strengthening of the autonomy of local governments and financial management, with property transfer from central to local government; weak human resources; and high turnover of personnel. Considering these shortcomings and challenges, the revised action plan of NCSDLG 2015–2022 includes a series of objectives aiming at: the application of ICT integrated administrative services in all municipalities and their administrative units; consolidation of the administrative structure capacities; strengthening of dialogue between central and local government and fostering of
The opposition continued the political struggle, giving much attention to exposing the criminal past of some local elected leaders, e.g. in Shkodra Municipality, the new elected mayor could not be sworn in having been found to have an undeclared criminal history, and the new mayor of Vora was investigated immediately after taking office, while in Durres, the mayor resigned following problems over the management of the November 2019 earthquake.

In 2019, UNDP attained important achievements throughout its STAR2 project,\(^34\) in line with local governance reform priorities, and contributed significantly to the NCSDLG action plan. Overall, STAR2 backbone has been the expansion of the one-stop-shop instrument for municipal administrative services and the implementation of own functions, ensuring open, transparent and accountable governance; widening the coverage of e-Governance at the local level; and implementation of the civil service law at the local level. Local governance was seriously impacted by the local elections of June 2019, staged amid political tensions following problems over the management of the November 2019 earthquake.

Key results in 2019 from the implementation of STAR 2 project include the following:

### Administrative Capacities: 37 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were developed in the field of human resource management, public procurement and finance and budget for nine pilot municipalities\(^36\) through on-the-job assistance for development and adoption of SOPs in these municipalities. The practice of SOPs development was also disseminated to 51 municipalities in 2019. Tirana Municipality is the best example of a local government in Albania that has mastered the practice of SOP development and operationalisation. Aiming to raise awareness and also inform the leadership of the local governments of successful models in implementation of decentralised functions, municipal good practices (of the previous mandate) were identified and catalogued in a booklet. A Practical Manual on Fiscal Administration Procedures in Local Government was made available to all municipalities. Revenue management action plans were developed for 29 small and medium municipalities\(^37\) and innovative integrity plans piloted in the first six municipalities. By end 2019, STAR2 directly supported the increase of municipalities operating a OSS from 16% to 70%. The objective is to close the gap in the near future and expand the system downwards to the sub-municipal levels. Likewise, the positive experience of integrity plan pilots will be expanded across all municipalities and become the norm. Both interventions directly contribute to achieving SDG targets 16.5 (indicator 16.5.1) - substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms, and 16.6 (indicators 16.6.1 and 16.6.2) - develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

### Local Services:

#### Public Services: During 2019, the STAR 2 project collected valuable information concerning issues of public service provision models, costs, bottlenecks, process workflows and other factors influencing the efficiency and accessibility of services to citizens. Data elaboration was made available to all municipalities (Elbasan, Pogradec, Polican), during 2019, a One-Stop-Shop Information System (OSSIS) was deployed in 33 LGs,\(^37\) bringing the total number of municipalities with a functional system to 36 across Albania. At least 70 administrative municipal services were re-engineered, optimised, catalogued and pre-configured as standard services. More than 1,700 municipal staff were trained to operate the OSSIS. Six offices have been collocated to provide local and central government services together with ADISA, in the municipalities of Belsh, Divjake, Kukes, Librazhd, Malësi e Madhe and Maliq. The opposition continued the political struggle, giving much attention to exposing the criminal past of some local elected leaders, e.g. in Shkodra Municipality, the new elected mayor could not be sworn in having been found to have an undeclared criminal history, and the new mayor of Vora was investigated immediately after taking office, while in Durres, the mayor resigned following problems over the management of the November 2019 earthquake.

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municipality, to be consolidated into an aggregated report on municipal service delivery features, findings and recommendations, to be finalised in 2020.

Local Democracy: By 2019, all 61 Albanian municipalities were equipped with web pages, thirteen of which were supported by STAR 2, and are publishing their decisions online, 33 of which were supported by STAR 2. A total of 500 local government officials from all 61 municipalities developed capacities in public engagement and consultation, integrity risk assessment methodology, and standard municipal code of conduct for local governments, endorsed as a standard by the National Coordinator against Corruption. Six municipalities38 piloted the integrity risk assessment methodologies, which were approved by the respective councils.

UNFPA works to improve local governance by empowering youth to put their issues on the table, through (i) establishment or expansion of youth networks, national advocacy platform Youth Voice, SRH media platform, Y-Peer network, local partnerships for HIV-AIDS in six municipalities,39 and (ii) development of local plans and budgets addressing young people’s issues (see comprehensive details in output 2.1 and 2.3). These networks and platforms at municipal level have proven to be good advocates and watchdogs to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions and ensure inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, contributing towards achieving SDG 16, targets 16.6, 16.7 and 16.10, indicators 16.6.2, 16.7.2 and 16.10.2.

Challenges

Municipalities show limitations in taking actions towards the implementation of good democratic participatory governance practices without mentorship and advice from partners, and municipal staff need more time and support to fully absorb the instruments provided and make effective use of them. The implementation of OSSIS has suffered from a lack of IT equipment and computer literacy, despite tailored training and capacity building. A degree of staff resistance to depart from the old traditional paper-based work was also encountered. The leadership of mayors in implementation of change is definitely a game-changer, in most cases, for overcoming technical issues and increasing overall absorption of the assistance provided by partners.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Further consolidation of the results, especially through building upon the achievements of STAR 2, but also with a view to better responding to the Action Plan of the NCSDLG, will be the focus of UNDP for 2020 and beyond in the area of decentralisation and local governance. Functional participatory governance practices, enhanced municipal systems and standards, improved service delivery and overall municipal performance, effectively driven policy development, coordination and monitoring are some of the key priorities for 2020–2021 towards the advancement of the decentralisation agenda.

38. Durres, Elbasan, Gjirokaster, Kamez, Mat and Patos.

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Children and vulnerable adults and groups have equitable access

**OUTPUT 1.4 - ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Children and vulnerable adults and groups have equitable access
to a friendlier justice system, and juvenile justice is administered to

**Implementation Progress**

The importance of ensuring equal access to all rights holders as individuals (all men, women, boys and girls) is a priority for Albania. Three key factors contribute to a fragile framework for access to justice in the country:

- low levels of legal literacy, dubious attitudes to what is just, and a lack of trust in the justice system. The year 2019 witnessed significant advances in shaping a comprehensive normative framework for justice for children. These required substantial support from all partners, especially the UN in Albania, including for the establishment of new institutions such as the Juvenile Criminality Prevention Centre, and Free Legal Aid Directory, among others, appointment and training of specialised professionals, building coordination mechanisms at the central and local level, investing in data on justice for children, provision of child-friendly justice services at the local level, and strengthening public oversight of justice for children issues.

In 2019, UNICEF’s continued support and advocacy to government to improve the normative justice for children framework, resulted, among others, in the approval of five Decrees of the Council of Ministers, one Prime Minister’s Order and two Ministerial Ordinances (MOs) based on the Criminal Justice for Children Code. Together, these legal instruments help to (i) guarantee procedural rights of children, including the right to be heard; (ii) establish new justice for children institutions; (iii) govern data for children in criminal justice processes; (iv) specify responsible authorities for implementation of the normative framework; and (v) determine procedures and regulations for returning, and repatriation of, unaccompanied children.

Criminal justice for children improved in practice as well. The High Judicial Council decentralised the court’s review of criminal justice for children cases, for example, requiring every judicial district court to determine at least three judges who specialise in justice for children. Compared to the situation in 2018, when only six district courts were mandated to try criminal cases affecting children, this important change advocated by UNICEF contributes to reducing the length of juvenile pre-trial detention and increasing access to justice for all children. Meanwhile, the Order of Psychologists received support to develop and distribute information to every judicial district court and prosecution office clarifying the role of psychologists in justice processes affecting children. Three pre-trial detention centres for children, where adult separation was not ensured, were shut down so that now juveniles are placed in juveniles-only facility, also advocated by UNICEF.

Furthermore, in 2019, UNICEF began supporting some tailored services41 for children in contact with the law, as well as establishing two police child-friendly interview units. Some 75 probation officers (nationally) were trained in their role for advancing the use of restorative justice for children pursuant to the Criminal Justice for Children Code, and 32 professionals of various disciplines in Berat and Gjirokaster were trained in inter-institutional collaboration for cases of children in contact with the law. In addition, following the requirement of the Justice for Children Strategy, a roadmap for cross-disciplinary case management for justice for children with processes at the local level and a package of regulatory documents for the coordination and monitoring mechanism at the central level were developed by UNICEF. The agency also supported the municipalities of Berat and Gjirokaster in configuring the practical execution of the code and the strategy. The above efforts have ensured a steady decrease of the number of children deprived of liberty, both those convicted with a prison sentence and the unsentenced child detainees, contributing directly to SDG goal 16, target 16.3, and indicator 16.3.2. These interventions also seek to provide the right response to child victims of various forms of violence. While the number of those who experience violence will require persistent efforts to come down, the improved response by the justice system in collaboration with other protection authorities, will ultimately lead to less violence in society.

Efforts have also been made to ensure unaccompanied minors receive the appropriate services from national authorities. UNHCR was actively involved in drafting a DCM approved in March that enhanced coordination of state services in cases of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). UNHCR ensured awareness of non-national UASC at the National Workshop on Unaccompanied Children in mid-April. The National Child Agency in coordination with UNHCR were involved in the return of two UASC to Greece in May. The Ministry of Justice and the National Agency for Information Society, supported by UNICEF, determined in 2019 the technical requirements, related operational costs, administration and maintenance for the Integrating Data System on Justice for Children following the legal requirements. These officially approved Terms of Reference helped MoJ to include in the Mid-Term Budget Programme (MTBP) all the costs of the system starting from January 2021. Also, establishment of a Centre for Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Criminality, under the auspices of the ministry, is ongoing with the centre’s personnel being recruited based on job descriptions developed with UNICEF support. Capacity development of MoJ staff was supported in 2019 through participation in an international conference on restorative justice in

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41: target, psychologist, restorative justice, rehabilitation, parenting and socio-economic reintegration assistants.
The Free Legal Aid (FLA) Law entered into force in mid-2018, and the development and adoption of relevant by-laws during 2018-2019 was crucial to creating adequate fundamentals for a functional free legal system that centres its services around the most vulnerable persons in society. Yet, there is an urgent need for primary and secondary free legal aid services to become available to citizens, especially the most disadvantaged in the country. Also, in view of the legal responsibilities mandated in the FLA law and by-laws, the responsible state structures need to support them to function with regard to administering and overseeing FLA services. In March 2019, pursuant to the FLA law, the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Justice adopted, with UNDP support, three Decisions of the Council of Ministers (DCMs) and five ministerial orders that create an effective implementation of the FLA law and an enabling environment for vulnerable women and men to access the justice system in an unhindered and equal manner. Two other by-laws are awaiting MoJ approval, to be finalised in 2020. Responding to the growing demand among the most vulnerable women and men in Albania for legal aid services, UNDP supported expansion of the FLA centres to the district courts of Peshkopi and Shkoder, reaching some 851 vulnerable persons (f, 428, m, 523) by the end of 2019, through free primary and secondary legal aid services, serving approximately 71 per month for the two centres. Furthermore, three FLA centres in Durres, Fier and Lezhe began the process of revitalisation by the end of 2019 and are expected to become fully operational during 2020.

Challenges

A key challenge in 2019 was staff turnover and delays in recruitment of local professionals due to, among others, the challenging political situation prior to, during and after the local elections, and the vetting of magistrates as part of the Justice System Reform. To address these challenges, UN agencies invested additional efforts to discuss interventions with the newly appointed professionals, leadership, and staff, especially at the local level, to enlist their commitment and develop their capacities in key areas. The agencies successfully advocated with MoJ to ensure appointment of key staff on justice for children and FLA-related issues.

Diversion measures and alternative sanctions, including restorative justice measures for children and their parents, are still under-utilised for most prosecutors and judges who have only recently been assigned to deal with cases of children. To address this situation, UNICEF has paid particular care to supporting prosecutors and judges, at least in the fiscal jurisdiction, in building their network with other key stakeholders, such as municipal social services and child protection units (CPUs), regional education directorates, regional employment services, and other public and private service providers.

Participation of CPUs in pre-screening of UASC became more consistent in Gjirokaster in 2019, though it remains a gap in other border areas. Despite some developments in the legal framework, government capacities to implement effective systems for managing UASC cases are still limited, due also in part to a lack of understanding and awareness. Albania lacks a specific protection system for UASC, including provision of appropriate accommodation.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNDP will support the government in adequate FLA law implementation, advancing professional capacities of assigned state structures on provision and monitoring of FLA, and consolidating and scaling up FLA centres, with the aim of ensuring unhindered and equitable access to FLA services for the most vulnerable populations.

UNICEF will support government and the judiciary in implementing the Justice for Children normative framework, particularly in terms of institution building (establishment of a Centre for Juvenile Delinquency Prevention), capacity development (for justice, law enforcement and other professionals involved in justice for children processes, including against trafficking in persons); establishment of electronic information management systems and improvement of administrative data in the area of children’s access to justice; and support for local government and local professionals in 2-4 municipalities to mould the functioning of justice for children processes (support establishment of diversion practices, promote restorative justice, support community-based rehabilitation and reintegrations programmes, promote establishment of a coordinated and inter-disciplinary mechanism to address cases of children in conflict and contact with the law), while documenting them and advocating with Albanian authorities to properly budget for child rights.

ILO in collaboration with its International Training Centre in Turin will support the School of Magistrates to enhance the capacity of future judges dealing with labour litigation in enforcing fundamental labour rights at work.

UNHCR and UNICEF will assist national partners in developing SOPs for identification, referral (including repatriation to Albania) and protection of unaccompanied children in Albania, which also involves the appointment of legal guardians and determination of the best interest of the child.

UN Women will support national partners in addressing the obstacles faced by women in owning, controlling and using property through (i) providing a holistic package of interventions aimed at further strengthening the legislative and strategic framework, and (ii) developing the capacities of state institutions tasked with dealing with women’s property rights, namely MoJ, the Central and Local Offices of Immovable Property Registration, notary offices, judges and lawyers. The interventions aim particularly to target vulnerable women, including women survivors of violence, elderly women and women with disabilities, through targeting specific communities and women from those categories. The interventions will include street law activities and provision of information packages on violence against women to shelters and NGOs and service providers. In addition, UN Women will support CSOs to provide free legal aid to survivors of violence in several municipalities in the framework of the regional programme ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey.
OUTPUT 1.5 - MAINSTREAMING GENDER & GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

State institutions have capacities and mechanisms to mainstream gender in policy-making and planning processes.

Implementation Progress

The National Strategy on Gender Equality 2016–2020 and the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015–2020 call on actions at the central and local level to mainstream gender into their legislative and policy development initiatives, and for implementation to be equally beneficial to men and women. In line with the public finance reform, the new Albanian Public Finance Management Sectoral Strategy 2019–2022, drafted and endorsed by the Council of Ministers on 18 December 2019, reinforces Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) through the annual budgeting process. The MTBP 2020–2022 is already responsive to men and women’s needs through planning of 7.2 percent budgetary funds to address gender inequality issues in sectors such as health, social protection, education, agriculture. Several social inclusion policies measures reinforced in 2019 have incorporated gender equality explicitly, including a budget increase in pension contributions and a baby bonus policy allocation. Government has committed to continuing financing the establishment of social services for men and women with disabilities, and for all men and women and families in need, in addition to the already available economic aid and disability schemes. Ten (out of 11) line ministries have already included gender budgeting in their mid-term plans. This is a milestone that contributes directly towards achieving SDG Indicator 5.c.1 – proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment. With UN Women support, Albania has piloted the methodology for measuring this SDG indicator and has voluntarily reported for the second year as part of the global SDG reporting, noting that 7.2 percent of the planned 2020 budget will contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment compared to 6.8 percent in 2019.43

Key requirements for successful gender mainstreaming include a strong and stable national gender machinery, an administration with specific gender mainstreaming skills, and an integrated process in all elements of governance, reinforced repeatedly to make it routine. Efforts are made across UN programmes to ensure that the budgeting processes back up gender equality with financial resources. The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) and line ministries have been continuously supported by UN Women in developing capacities to mentor budget users in applying GRB in the MTBP, as well as in conducting gender budget analysis. Following the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Mid-term Review of the Public Finance Management Strategy 2020–2022, MoFE requested UN Women assistance in drafting measures to be included in the PFM strategy for further implementation of GRB within the MTBP framework action plan. Financing gender mainstreaming is incorporated across many UN programmes. For example, eleven municipalities have developed three-year and fully costed social care plans (see Output 2.3 for details), supported by UNICEF, duly taking into account the diverse and gendered challenges for boys and girls and men and women. UNICEF has also trained relevant municipal staff for mainstreaming gender into these plans.

While noting the budgetary achievements, solid steps have been taken in mainstreaming and strengthening gender equality data and evidence for a sociably improved development context in Albania. INSTAT, produced, for the first time without UN Women technical support, a 2019 Women and Men publication, in addition to close collaboration and support of UN Women in other areas, and developed and launched in parallel an online platform that provides access to data from this publication. Furthermore, INSTAT was able to reprocess information from available national data sources for compilation of additional disaggregation for SDG indicators, resulting in an increased number of SDG gender-related indicators for Albania in the national 2019 SDG Indicators Report to be prepared by INSTAT in 2020.44

For the first time, in 2019, oversight institutions became proactive in demanding accountability of public institutions on budget allocations and application of GRB within them. As the People’s Advocate, the Anti-discrimination Commissioner and the High Court of Audit have become more knowledgeable about Gender Equality (GE) and GRB, possessing also basic knowledge on the MTBP cycle and integration of GRB. The Ombudsperson is drafting a report on the costing and budgeting of domestic violence with data from line ministries and five target municipalities, while the High Court of Audit has already conducted a performance-based audit of GRB within the

43. UN Women efforts have directly contributed to measuring and ensuring progress on this indicator by: (i) supporting the government efforts to create a legal framework with gender principles, which enables to track budget allocations through key gender performance indicators; (ii) strengthening the monitoring role of oversight institutions such as the Parliament, the Ombudsperson and the Anti-discrimination Commissioner; and (iii) increasing transparency and accountability through specific provisions that make allocations for GRB publicly available in dedicated sections of the government budget. Officially reporting to the Parliament and High Court of Audit on the implementation of GRB-related commitments as part of the National Strategy on Gender Equality.

44. UN Women supported the process through technical expertise provided through a national consultant who guided the entire process of data reprocessing and links to SDGs.
Gender Equality Strategy for 2018. Thirty members of the Department of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion at the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) were enabled to provide information for the performance-based audit thanks to UN Women technical support, training and guidance.

MPs are also playing an increased role in demanding accountability on GRB, with eight MPs and the Parliamentary sub-commission on Gender Equality and the Prevention of Violence against Women informed on GRB in the MTRP, and have used GE and GRB analysis in the Parliamentary Commission hearings during the 2020 budget discussions, thanks to UN Women support for training and a study visit to the Austrian Parliament. Following the visit, the sub-committee called a hearing in November 2019 to demand accountability of MoFE and line ministries on application of GRB in the 2020 budget, and to propose to MoFE concrete amendments to the Organic Budget Law (2016) to enhance gender key performance indicators in the budget preparation format. Although the meeting was cancelled as a result of the earthquake disaster in Albania, the amendments were shared with MoFE and are currently pending review. Such initiatives (trainings and study tours) enhance transparency, accountability and participation by legislators in determining the spending priorities in government policies. Positive feedback was received from MPs and an action plan to follow to elaborate concrete actions the sub-committee will take in 2020 in applying GRB.

The U-Report platform, launched in 2018 by UNICEF, continues to engage adolescent boys and girls in raising issues and discussing solutions affecting their lives, providing them an equal voice and opportunity to influence public policies. Throughout 2019, Albania continued to participate in the Western Balkans U-Report initiative aiming to increase youth civic engagement in issues that concern them and their communities. In 2019, there were 3,015 U-Reporters in Albania, with an almost equal representation of boys and girls in all 61 municipalities in the country. U-Report has completed a total of eight surveys, through UNICEF support: three at the country level, four regional and one global, including one dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, launched on International Women’s Day.

Incidentally, the newly approved Youth Law, supported by UNFPA, in close cooperation and partnership with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY), CSOs, Youth Voice and the Youth NGOs network, will open up avenues for empowering young girls and boys equally, addressing inequalities and ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable. The Youth Law will make a strong contribution to SDG Goals 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16 specifically to achieve indicators 4.3.1, 8.6.1, 10.3.1, 16.6.2, 16.7.2, to mention a few.

Gender equality issues are also mainstreamed in many areas affecting children. UNICEF supported MoESY in (i) conducting a mid-term review of the National Strategy of Pre-University Education, offering a substantial range of recommendations to feed into the development of the new sector strategy and trigger debates on the quality and inclusiveness of the education system, including from the gender equality perspective, and (ii) ensuring effective implementation of new curricula and teaching methodologies, including from a gender equality and non-discrimination perspective. Similarly, MoHSP and its subordinate authorities were supported in introducing for the first time elements of gender equality and GBV in the accredited trainings of health care professionals tasked with visiting children in their own home environment.

Challenges

Sectoral gender analysis and evidence are preconditions for effectively mainstreaming the gender perspective in the budgeting process. This perspective requires parallel capacity-building efforts with public officials and gender focal points in institutions to identify sectoral gender gaps in addition to the know-how on GRB in public finance management, which UN Women intends to follow through in the subsequent phase of the GRB project.

The approach to GRB training needs to focus on increasing programme-based budgeting skills across governments with GRB as an element of the overall approach. UN Women will take into account this lesson in the new phase of the GRB regional project being developed. This phase will focus more on providing public administration with a mixed set of skills, combining gender sectoral analysis and application of GRB in budget programmes where gender gaps are prevalent. The existing module on GRB, endorsed by ASPA, will be updated to reflect these newly identified needs.

45. Study visit to Vienna, 24–27 March 2019, by MPs of the Parliamentary sub-commission on Gender Equality and the Prevention of Violence against Women. The aim of the visit was to gain an understanding of the mechanisms and instruments of GRB that have been successfully implemented in Austria. As a result, sub-committee members are now more familiar and knowledgeable of tools used for analysing public policies, programmes and budgets and monitoring their implementation from a gender perspective, and have some skills to influence decisions and demand for more efficient and equitable resource allocations.
Way Ahead 2020–2021

At the central level, UN Women will seek to build upon the positive changes resulting from previous national planning and budgeting interventions and provide targeted assistance in areas where gaps have been identified, including upscaling the proven approaches and good practices for GRB integration at all levels of planning and policy making, and supporting government in translating gender commitments into budget allocations through application of a gender lens to the processes, resources and institutional mechanisms. At the local level, UN Women will emphasise the use of GRB as a tool to enable local governments to recognise the value and potential for local development and inclusive growth by investing in gender-responsive services and gender-inclusive processes. CSO networking and advocacy efforts will be supported to enable structured and continued oversight and analysis of budgetary allocation and spending from a gender perspective, and to generate missing watchdog evidence and expert policy recommendations. Municipalities will be supported in the application of gender and children responsive planning and budgeting of local MTBPs. Furthermore, UN Women will contribute in the implementation of the UN Women flagship programme Making Every Woman and Girl Count in Albania by i) supporting the mainstreaming of gender data by assessing the relevant administrative data sources as primary to informing the gender-responsive planning, monitoring and evaluation of sectoral policies and strategies; ii) improving online data availability of gender-related statistics to increase the statistical literacy of the various target groups (e.g. pupils, students, media, policy makers), whether by e-Learning or face-to-face.

Following the work conducted previously with the Gender Equality Facility in phase I, UN Women will focus intervention in order to reflect the EU commitment on gender equality as a principle underpinning its external relations within the framework of Albania’s accession to the EU, and with a focus on the improving negotiation process. With the overall aim of enhancing transposition of the EU gender equality acquis and achieving GE outcomes in line with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs (with a focus on SDG 5), the interventions will focus on strengthening gender and socially responsive governance at central and local levels, in line with international human rights norms and standards such as CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, and the recommendations of the UPR. Intended to complement ongoing programmes on GE and the empowerment of women and girls, the action emanates from implementation of the UN Women Gender Equality Facility, phase I (2016–18).

With the National Strategy on Gender Equality coming to an end in 2020, UN Women will support MoHSP in addressing violence against women issues, with UNICEF duly addressing the GE challenges faced by boys and girls in the new cycle.

Migration is a crucial element in Albania’s social and economic development, considering the large proportion (1/3) of Albanian citizens living abroad and the strong dependency on migrant remittances. Albania is also considered a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. To address challenges related to complex migration flows, as well as to enhance the development impact of migration, IOM supported government in (i) implementing the National Strategy on Migration (2019–2022) and its Action Plan, (ii) improving immigration reception capacity for immigrants to ensure proper registration, pre-screening, identification of vulnerability and referral to accommodation and other specialised governmental services, (iii) increasing the legal and technical capacities of the national agencies to introduce Advance Passenger Information systems, and (iv) enhancing engagement with the Albanian diaspora, with specific focus on the communities in Italy. Support for enhancing migration data was also provided to INSTAT for conducting a household migration survey.

More specifically, the support for implementation of the measures of the Migration Strategy Action Plan consisted in carrying out an in-depth assessment of the migration-related functions of relevant institutions, as well as the development of a training module on migration governance for officials. Coupled with the previous IOM support for drafting the National Strategy on Migration and Action Plan, this effort
makes a direct contribution to the achievement of the SDG target 10.7 - facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies – and related indicator 10.7.2.

IOM’s contribution to increasing the reception capacities at the border crossings with Greece resulted in the establishment of a fully equipped Centre for Registration and Temporary Accommodation of Migrants in Albania - KAPSHTICE BORDER POLICE STATION.

A Household Migration Survey (HMS), supported by IOM, of more than 20,000 households and 70,000 interviewees, providing additional insights into migration movements in Albania. The HMS was combined with Focus Group Discussions and returnee and key informant interviews with local authorities in selected areas to further explore migration, return and reintegration dynamics and challenges.

IOM support to boosting diaspora engagement continued during 2019 with the completion of a diaspora mapping exercise in Belgium, France and Italy that charted the interest and propensity to engage by members of the diaspora with selected professional profiles needed in the Albanian market, as well as potential investors. Under the same action, a fellowship mechanism was established and activated for institutional support from the Embassy and consulates in Italy, as well as in support of the revitalisation of remote cultures.

In 2019, arrivals of refugees and migrants increased by 85 percent, to a total of 10,557 persons. Asylum requests increased by 52 percent, totalling 6,677 requests. An increase in the proportion of women, children and families was noted, with roughly a tenfold increase for each, compared to 2017. Some 70 percent of arrivals and 76 percent of asylum seekers originated from countries with generally high levels of protection. The flow remains transitory in nature. Asylum seekers have access to reception conditions, material assistance, interpretation, psycho-social support and free legal aid through UNHCR partners, although a lack of resources and capacity is a challenge. The legal framework is generally aligned with international standards.

Through UNHCR support, Mot managed effectively mixed movements of refugees and migrants to and through the country during 2019. UNHCR and its partners exceeded targets in relation to border monitoring and assistance to new arrivals. The agency also continued to advocate for strengthened identification and referral of persons with specific needs, using the joint UN Needs Assessment as a basis for advocacy and for securing additional funding. UNHCR funded additional reception capacity in Enëka (30 beds) and refurbishment in Gjirokastër (20 beds), contributing to the achievement of SDG goal 10, target 10.7 and indicator 10.7.2. Through its partner Caritas, 11,245 people were provided with food at border areas, and 2,774 people with non-food items. Some 524 persons received medical services in the national health system.

Since the deployment of Frontex in May 2019, UNHCR has been participating in monthly operational briefings to new Frontex officers. Their presence has led to enhanced identification of persons with specific needs. The agency and its partners conducted profiling interviews in the border areas, providing information to the arrivals both before and after pre-screening procedures. Quantitative data from these exercises was collated and analysed through Information Management System tools. The proposed piloting of a new approach to border, reception and asylum management along the southern border was discussed on an initial basis with relevant government counterparts and international stakeholders. However, due to Albania’s turbulent political and legislative context of 2019, plans for the pilot were ultimately postponed until 2020.

UNHCR welcomed the government’s pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 concerning refugees and asylum seekers. The pledges, which effectively set the asylum policy agenda for the coming years, are geared towards: i) the elimination of legal inconsistencies and administrative barriers preventing refugees and asylum seekers from effectively accessing rights; ii) issuance of personal ID numbers and cards to refugees and asylum seekers, facilitating their effective access to the right to personal security and increasing the country’s capacity to protect refugees; iii) ensuring that asylum procedures are fair and efficient; and iv) strengthening the quality of asylum decision making.
UNHCR, through TLAS’ two legal experts, supported MoI in drafting a new Law on Asylum to ensure compliance with international and European standards. The agency coordinated round-tables with international partners and submitted its comments for incorporation. Amendments to the Law on Social Assistance allowed UNHCR to advocate with the relevant line ministry, MoHSP, for inclusion of asylum seekers in its scope. The agency contributed to the drafting and approval of two DCMs ‘On determination of the criteria, documentation and procedures for the approval, refusal, renewal and cancellation of the work permit, Type C,’ and ‘On some amendments and additions to DCM no. 827, date 11.12.2003, ‘On the method of coding and the structure of the identity number of citizens’.

UNHCR, through its partner Refugee and Migrant Services in Albania (RMiSA) provided information on asylum procedures and legal counselling to 776 asylum seekers. Formal legal representation was provided to two persons in the first instance and two persons in the second instance. In addition, the agency was present as an observer during Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews conducted by the asylum authorities. In 2019, UNHCR and the Directorate for Asylum and Integration are hampered by contradictory laws, by-laws and provisions of the asylum procedures and legal counselling to 776 asylum seekers. Formal legal representation was provided to two persons in the first instance and two persons in the second instance. In addition, the agency was present as an observer during Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews conducted by the asylum authorities. In 2019, UNHCR and the Directorate for Asylum and Citizenship (DIAC) embarked upon a Quality Initiative Project, aimed at enhancing the quality of asylum decision making and building capacities.

Special care is needed to address the needs of unaccompanied minors and child migrants. UNICEF has advocated for a more effective response from the child protection system over cases of migrant or asylum-seeking children. Through UNICEF support, the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child was able to deploy a mobile team to monitor and support capacities of Child Protection Workers (CPWs). A total of 29 CPWs have been supported with coaching and mentoring, involving 33 cases of children at risk or in need for protection, including unaccompanied or separated children. Finally, a more in-depth understanding of barriers to effective protection of children at the local level has emerged from this exercise, which will serve to inform policies and future interventions.

Challenges

While the basis for improved prospects of societal integration has been set, refugees and other persons granted protection still require significant assistance in this area. Services for persons with specific needs are insufficient, and there are limited accommodation facilities for them. A joint UN project under the SDG Acceleration Fund (Norway contribution) will provide consistent integrated referral pathways and training modules for providers of specialised services. Due to a security incident in May 2019, UNHCR and its partners suspended activities at the National Registry of Civil Status, NRCAS, and were unable to monitor conditions. Cases of irregular returns along the southern border are at times reported. Approval of the Law on Asylum is still pending, while viable alternatives to integration are hampered by contradictory laws, by-laws and administrative practices.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

To address challenges related to complex migration flows, as well as enhance the development impact of migration, MoI will support government in (i) implementing the National Strategy on Migration Governance; (ii) strengthening capacities to address both inward and outward migration, in full respect of migrant rights; (iii) improving capacities to ensure proper registration and pre-screening of migrants, identification of vulnerability and referral, including counselling on Assisted Voluntary Return to the country of origin; and (iv) enhancing engagement with the Albanian diaspora, with specific focus on the communities in Italy. Support will be provided to INSTAT to conduct a migration survey. Efforts to raise awareness of irregular migration and the risks associated with it and promote regular migration will continue.

UNHCR will support improvement of the border management system, ensuring access to territory and asylum to asylum seekers, through the introduction of differentiated accommodation arrangements and specialised services tailored to the profile of the arrivals, including increased reception capacity in border areas. UNHCR will support implementation of the pledges made by government at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, notably to foster prospects of integration. Under the Norwegian contribution, UNCT will jointly build upon the findings of the assessment and strengthen capacities in managing mixed migration flows by addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.

UNHCR, in coordination with UNICEF and other UNCT members, will work with MoHSP, the Agency for Child Protection, and MoI to ensure that the needs of women and children at risk are adequately addressed. This will be achieved through dedicated on-the-job capacity building and technical support to child protection service providers in the strategic border adjacent counties (Gjirokaster and Korce).

This outcome supports the Government of Albania in achieving three priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Consolidating good governance, democracy, and the rule of law, and 3) Investing in people and social cohesion. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 19, 23, 24 and 32.

The total available budget for implementation of Outcome 2 in 2019 was USD 7 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Albania, Australia, Austria, Germany, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States, as well as the EU, Gilead Sciences Inc., Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Global Partnership to end Violence against Children, Intesa Sanpaolo Bank of Albania, Peacebuilding Fund, and UN regional and global funds. The outcome delivery was 96 percent.

Outcome 2 - Social Cohesion

All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights, while more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion.

Alignment with SDGs
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

Alignment with National Development Goals
1 2 3

Alignment with EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas
19 22 23 24 32

Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that out of 27 targets, 27 (93%) are on track, one (3%) is partially on track, and one (3%) has not progressed.

For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.
There is increased access to quality, inclusive, equitable and affordable health-care services, and community demand is increased. According to the 2018 Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality, infant and under-five mortality in Albania were eight and nine per 1,000 live births, respectively, each of which is higher than those for other countries in Europe. Infant and child mortality rates in the under-served areas of mountainous Albania are higher than the national average. Rates of ante- and postnatal care are high, while maternal mortality is still of concern.

Implementation progress

The government is engaged in improving the health of Albanians through the approach of Universal Health Coverage. Public health expenditure is still at three percent of GDP and ten percent of the national budget. Disparities and inequalities persist among some groups of the population. The report Can people afford to pay for health care? New evidence on financial protection in Europe (WHO Europe 2019) examined the impact of out-of-pocket costs of health care upon access to health services, unmet need and financial hardship for individuals and families in 24 countries, including Albania. The report concluded that where financial protection is relatively weak, catastrophic spending is mainly driven by out-of-pocket payments for outpatient medicines, underpinning the importance of programmes such as the outpatient reimbursed medicines list (ORML) in Albania for providing access to affordable medicines. Another challenge is outward migration of Albanian health-care workers, while insufficient trust towards publicly provided health-care services remains an issue.

According to the 2018 Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality, six is the leading cause of death (16.6%) in Albania. About 7,000 new cancer cases are reported every year, and more than half of those patients will need radiotherapy as part of their treatment. The Mother Theresa University Hospital in Tirana is the only public medical centre providing radiotherapy. With a population of 2.8 million, the country currently has six high-energy radiotherapy machines (one cobalt-60 teletherapy machine and five LINACs). However, there is still a long waiting list of patients, calling for an increased number of radiotherapy treatment machines. In 2019, a cervical cancer screening programme based on HPV testing was established in the Primary Health Care (PHC) system. Efforts to be made include strengthening of the referral system, quality assurance of the programme and expansion of the target age group covered by the programme. However, breast cancer screening is fragmented, and mostly opportunistic, though colorectal screening is part of the National Preventive Check-Up Programme.

In 2019, there was an increased focus by government, supported by UN agencies, towards people-centred primary health care, integrating health and social care at the community level, and raising investment in the infrastructure of health facilities. To address needs, the health system framework was strengthened through the development for the first time in Albania of a Primary Health Care Strategy 2020–2025 (draft), revision of PHC standards and the methodology for development of a list of reimbursed medicines, as well as review of the capacities of the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) in the country, all supported by WHO. In 2019, FAO produced a report on a 2017–2018 survey Nutrition status and nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes and practices among school-aged children in Albania, which aimed to support improvement of national school nutrition programmes.

The HIV & TB response framework advanced, supported by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA, through (i) the development of a National Action Plan for Control of HIV and TB 2020–2025, an HIV treatment protocol and TB and HIV care guidelines (7 guidelines) and training of trainers (ToT), (ii) piloting of integration of TB care in PHC (1st phase), (iii) development of technical assistance and training in management of TB medicines and diagnostics (2 ToT), (iv) assessment of TB laboratory services, (v) strengthening of the Procurement Service Management (PSM) system for health commodities related to HIV–AIDS and TB, expected to contribute towards optimisation of quantification and forecasting for improved availability of health commodities related to anti-retroviral treatment (ART), (vi) development of a manual on a pre- and post-release plan for young drug users.

WHO–UNICEF–UNFPA estimates 2019, though it has been steadily decreasing over the last two decades.

Although national immunisation coverage remains at satisfactory levels (>97%), MMR 1 coverage rates have dropped to 94 percent (WHO–UNICEF Joint Reporting 2019). Stronger focus is required in addressing an emerging vaccine hesitancy, especially in the light of the measles outbreak of 2018–2019. In August 2019, the European Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination determined that Albania had lost its measles elimination status. Meanwhile, Albania introduced the rotavirus vaccine that year.

In Albania, more than 94 percent of all deaths, and about 85 percent of the overall disease burden, are caused by Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) (Global Burden of Disease Study 2019). Over the last decade, the overall number of NCD cases recorded at the primary health care level in Albania has increased by 56 percent, from about 18,000 in 2008 to more than 28,000 in 2018. The primary care screening programme (Preventive Check-Up for citizens of age 35–70 years), established in 2015, has helped in the early detection of NCDs.

After cardiovascular disease, cancer is the leading cause of death (16.6%) in Albania. About 7,000 new cancer cases are reported every year, and more than half of those patients will need radiotherapy as part of their treatment. The Mother Theresa University Hospital in Tirana is the only public medical centre providing radiotherapy. With a population of 2.8 million, the country currently has six high-energy radiotherapy machines (one cobalt-60 teletherapy machine and five UNACs). However, there is still a long waiting list of patients, calling for an increased number of radiotherapy treatment machines. In 2019, a cervical cancer screening programme based on HPV testing was established in the Primary Health Care (PHC) system. Efforts to be
users in prison settings, (vi) preparation of a study on size estimation of the national and regional levels of key populations and increasing the programmatic and operational capacities of CSOs working with the most vulnerable and young key populations to be stronger advocates, focusing on SRH and rights, and (vii) improving capacities of health-care providers through ToT in LGBTI communities with focus on health, SRH and health response to GBV-related issues, in which 24 health-care providers were trained in Tiranë as part of the activities envisaged under the strategic document. All efforts are strongly progressing towards achieving a number of SDGs, such as SDG 3, 4, 5, 10 and 16. However, the relation is closer with SDG 3, more specifically targets 3.3 and 3.8 and indicators 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

To strengthen the immunisation response in the country, WHO conducted a Polio Outbreak Simulation Exercise (POSE) in Albania, prepared a study on Measles Virus Transmission Characteristics in Measles Outbreaks with a High Proportion of Adult Cases, a situation analysis of the measles outbreak 2018, and conducted a flu-awareness campaign during 21–25 October. Also in 2019, UNICEF continued to provide procurement services to government for childhood vaccines, and an influenza vaccine supported by the UNICEF supply division in Copenhagen.

Concerning Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), WHO supported (i) establishment of a National Anti-microbial Susceptibility Testing Committee, responsible for keeping updated breakpoints (in EUCAST) and the development of an online platform for the testing committee, (ii) convening of an Albanian CAESAR Network, (iii) a study on the use of antibiotics in hospitals (Point of Prevalence Survey), and (iv) the Institute for Public Health (IPH) and University of Medicine in conducting a campaign on AMR (November 2019).

Regarding neglected communicable diseases, WHO supported the development of an Albanian Leishmaniasis Action Plan 2020–2022 and guidelines for the surveillance of the disease, as well as guidelines for case management of Visceral and Cutaneous Leishmaniasis. It also strengthened capacities of the IPH Leishmaniasis Reference Laboratory and procurement of laboratory equipment and materials for standard functioning, and for conducting a study on the sero-prevalence of the disease in the Albanian population, as well as operationalisation of its surveillance (pilot), and ToT for the above.

With regard to NCDs, WHO supported the training of a core team of five experts for developing an evidence-based policy brief on salt consumption reduction in Albania. On 26 June, 2019 the Council of Ministers approved a revised Universal Salt Iodisation Law, with the draft law submitted to Parliament for approval. Technical support was provided by UNICEF during the discussions in the parliamentary commissions to ensure successful universal salt iodisation and a higher level of protection for Albanian children from iodine deficiency disorders. WHO also advocated for healthy nutrition of children with Parliament and in the media, while UNICEF’s support to the MoHSP, IPH and the National Operator of Health Services resulted in preparation of the first National Report on Child Nutrition, offering real-time and disaggregated data for evidence-based policy action. Meanwhile, the child nutrition monitoring system, established through multi-year UNICEF support, was consolidated through strengthening the quality assurance mechanisms for data collection and analysis and realising complete digitalisation from the service point (health centre) to the national level (IPH). A total of 344 health personnel benefited from capacity development activities that contributed towards improved reporting rates and better quality data for child growth and infant and young child feeding practices in 2019. Also, WHO provided technical assistance to Parliament for legal amendments on the control of novel tobacco products ('vaping') and strengthened capacities of 86 health inspectors for control of such products.

With regard to cancer screening, WHO technical support provided to MoHSP resulted in the establishment of a Pilot Cervical Cancer Screening Programme and evaluation of progress made by December 2019. From February to June, through UNFPA support, 538 health professionals from around 400 health centres across the country were trained in implementation of the screening programme and as of 1 December 2019, some 13,900 test kits had been distributed to health centres, and more than 12,300 samples collected.47 To mark Pink October, 2019, WHO was supported for providing comprehensive awareness-raising activities on breast cancer throughout the month. During the year, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supported Mother Theresa University Hospital with several fellowships, scientific visits and expert missions in the area of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine, as well as provision of a range of equipment46 for the hospital, and also for the Nuclear Medicine Department at Shqofet Ndroqi University Hospital, with ongoing biweekly delivery of radiosources and cold kits for nuclear medicine.

Regarding sexual and reproductive health, WHO supported the consultation and publication of an assessment of sexual, reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent (SRMCA) health services in the context of universal health coverage. UNFPA supported (i) realisation of the National Reproductive Health Committee and the organisation of two meetings held during the 3rd quarter of 2019;49 (ii) strengthening of the capacities of logistics management information system specialists and PHC providers for forecasting and monitoring RH commodities, with five meetings and trainings held in Elbasan, Shkodër, Tiranë and Vlorë; (iii) strengthening of the community health model, with expansion in the districts of Malësi e Madhe and Puke with 53 awareness sessions held in Malësi e Madhe involving 636 community members, and 30 such sessions in Përsheshir involving 750 community members, including 151 youths of age 14–18 years, from urban and rural areas; (iv) expansion of the community model in the 4th quarter, in the remote areas of Berat, Devoll, Elbasan, Gramsh, Korçë, Kruçë, Librazhd, Pogradec, Poliçan, Puka, Malësi e Madhe, Skrapar and Ura Vajgurore; and (v) strengthening of the capacities of health mediators for the Roma and Egyptian community in Berat, Elbasan and Korçë, reaching 335 activists from the community through learning sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and identifying 86 health mediators in this group aiming to intensify the work in the field for this vulnerable and marginalised community. All initiatives contribute towards achieving SDG targets 3.7 and 5.6, indicators 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 5.6.1 and 5.6.2.

UNICEF engaged in capacity development of health care workers employing a holistic approach to child care, and in preparation of standardised tools for service delivery and development of mechanisms for inter-sectoral collaboration. Some 180 health-care workers from four regions (Elbasan, Korçë, Tiranë and

46. Deliverables (i–iii) are supported by UNICEF, and (iv) by UNICEF as part of its technical assistance in implementation of Global Fund programme activities. The assessment of the HIE-450 and TB laboratories accompanied by a budgeted action plan, analysis of the procurement system and SOPs for quantification, forecasting, inventory management and quality assurance of medications are expected to contribute towards optimisation of quantification and forecasting for improved availability of health commodities related to antiretroviral therapy (ART). In 2019, UNICEF continued to provide procurement services for improved availability of health commodities related to antiretroviral therapy (ART). In 2019, UNICEF continued to provide procurement services to the government for antiretroviral therapy (ART).

47. Of the samples tested, 6.1 percent were positive for high-risk HPV (HR–HPV). During December 2019, additional screening test kits were distributed to health centres according to the needs.

48. Pandemic infiltration equipment for children undergoing treatment in the initiation of procurement focusing on upgrading one of the two LINACs at Mother Theresa University Hospital to an advanced treatment technique (Volumetric modulated and Therapy, VMAT), estimated to be finalised in May 2020.

49. Re-establishment of this committee through Order of the Minister of Health and Social Protection dated September 30, 2019. All key stakeholders were represented on this committee.
Vlore have acquired knowledge and skills for implementing universal progressive home visits. Elements of child development, disabilities, child protection and gender issues were introduced for the first time in accredited trainings for health care professionals. Mechanisms for inter-sectoral collaboration were developed in these regions following consultations with health, social care, child protection and local government representatives.

With regard to mental health, WHO conducted policy dialogue on suicide, prevention and public health implications and finalised an assessment of the challenges and needs of PHC providers in meeting the requirement of Albania’s mental health legislation. Environmental health benefited from WHO’s piloting of water safety plans in small water utilities (in Petrele, Tirane) and technical support provided to Albanian institutions in meeting the obligations of the water protocol.

The health sector emergency preparedness and response situation has been strengthened through the completion of an Albanian Strategic Risk Assessment, with the main outcomes of development of a Public Health Risk Profile, Register of Risks, and a Workplan for emergency preparedness actions; (3) preparation of MoHSP’s National Emergency Operation Plan and the Emergency Operation Plan of Department of Infectious Diseases at Mother Theresa University Hospital; (4) assessment of RH laboratories with regard to infectious Diseases at Mother Theresa University Hospital and Shkoder benefiting 65 medical professionals.

Meanwhile, regarding the emergency response to the earthquake of 26 November, WHO supported MoHSP and IHF for (i) mapping the relevant actors working in the health sector and coordinating the response and recovery of the health sector, (ii) conducting a needs assessment for the emergency medical team field hospital to ensure continuity of health services, (iii) procuring emergency medical devices to equip three ambulances, (iv) conducting a public communication on risks and resource mobilisation, (v) ensuring the early warning and surveillance system is fully functional among the displaced population, including monitoring of water quality and hygiene conditions, and (vi) preparing a post-disaster needs assessment report (PDNA).

Health advocacy was central in 2019 efforts of WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA to engage in raising awareness and advocacy for World Health Day, World TB Day, No Tobacco Day, Blood Donation Day, Hepatitis Awareness Day, European Immunisation Week, Antimicrobial Awareness Week, Flu Awareness Week, national forums on Child Health and Nutrition, and Health Screening at Primary Care and on NCDs.

Challenges

There are several challenges to building a comprehensive health system in Albania that delivers equitable, efficient, accessible and affordable services for all, including: i) lack of implementation tools for all policies and concrete models for effective inter-sectoral collaboration, ii) need for supervision and follow-up on capacity development interventions to adapt to institutional change and ensure sustainability, iii) weak government capacities to deal with financial management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies, as well as adequate budget allocations for the marginalised, and iv) obligations for the government to pay VAT on imported donations remaining a challenge, often delaying project implementation.

There is a difference between Albania’s upper-middle income status and the country’s actual needs for support in specific areas that lag behind the SDGs and other important international targets. Financing of health care should be significantly increased (at least doubled) if it is to come in line with EU practice, and requires a serious plan to forecast the scaling up of investment.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, all UN agencies in Albania will support the government to implement the COVID-19 Country Action Plan. UN agencies will engage in comprehensive public awareness and information campaigns specifically tailored for target groups and aiming to inform, engage and educate the public on preventive measures against infection from COVID-19, as well as messages in support of the measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

Priority interventions, also in support of COVID-19 response, of UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, IAEA) will include: (i) health system strengthening with focus on financing, equitable access to services, integration of health and social care at the community level, strengthened reproductive, mother and child health care, including home visiting, enforcement mechanisms and compliance in the use of health-care protocols at all levels; (ii) perinatal care, with its assessment, identification of critical gaps and implementation of priority interventions, and development of an immunisation strategic plan, addressing the issues of vaccine hesitancy; (iii) food and nutrition, with school nutrition, health promotion and education, piloting of the provision of meals to school children, baby-friendly hospitals, and implementation of the Iodine Deficiency Prevention policy; (iv) scaling up and ensuring sustainability of the national response to HIV-AIDS and TB, with implementation of the strategic action plans on the control of HIV and TB; (v) mental health, with community-based services for people with mental health disorders; (vi) improvement of the screening, prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, of tobacco control, air quality, continued human resource capacity building, upgrading and improving utilisation of existing medical equipment and introduction of newer and more sophisticated therapy and diagnostic techniques; (vii) strengthening of emergency preparedness and response and capacity development required under the 2005 International Health Regulations, with development and implementation of the National Health Security Action Plan, updating and development of pandemic and epidemic-prone diseases contingency plans, with particular focus on influenza, delivering SRH services in humanitarian crises and emergencies; and (viii) health information, with technical support for better generation, collection and processing of health data, better use of M&E frameworks, dissemination and support for in-depth analysis of the Demographic and Health Survey 2018.
Implementation progress

Albania has made significant progress towards consolidating the democracy and open market economy in a country that has evolved from one of the poorest in Europe into an increasingly competitive, upper-middle income economy. While public spending on education remains low, at 3.2 percent of GDP and 10.4 percent of total public expenditures, and remaining below internationally agreed benchmarks, the country has made improvements in access to education and learning outcomes, rising from one of the weakest performers in the Western Balkans to one of the fastest improvers. Recent reforms contributing to such developments include development of a competency-based curriculum framework, reforms for teacher training and employment, and system governance improvements. Most recently, Albania has restructured key agencies responsible for school support and external evaluation in an effort to further de-concentrate central functions and improve service delivery.

The in-depth sector reforms have contributed to improvement across key education indicators. Access to primary education has expanded in recent years, though lower and upper secondary education net enrolment rates remain low compared to the OECD and the EU, as well as to some countries in the region.

Students learning outcomes are gradually improving in Maths while further improvements are needed in Reading and, especially, in Science given the PISA 2018 results. Those results also show that the average three-year trend in mean scores in all three PISA subjects is positive, resulting in narrowing of the performance gaps among the top and lower achievers. Albania recently raised the bar for entry to the Faculties preparing teachers as a prerequisite for improving education quality. Efforts were also made in 2019 to improve the quality of these programmes. Setting up professional learning networks within each municipality in the country for continuous professional development has also constituted a welcome step for teacher learning and sharing of experiences. MoESY has also undertaken reforms to close small and underperforming schools with fewer than 50 children, decreasing the number of students learning in multi-grade classes, from 33,000 to 22,000 pupils.

However, disparities in opportunity and outcomes persist across population groups. Albania still faces issues of equity in education, drop-out challenges and a need to improve the learning outcomes with a focus on science, literacy and transferrable skills needed for work and life. UNESCO’s comparative analysis...

50. Following the adopted Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, the internationally agreed target for public expenditure on education is at least 4-6 percent of GDP or at least 15-20 percent of total public expenditures.

51. Total enrolment in Albania for the academic year 2016-2017 was 88,8/88,6 (f, m, ISCED 2) and for the academic year 2018-2019, 87,7/86,5 (f, m, ISCED 2).

52. For reading literacy, the main topic of PISA 2018, 15-year-olds in Albania scored 405 points compared to the average of 487 points in OECD countries; girls performed better than boys with a statistically significant difference of 38 points (OECD average: 30 points higher for girls). On average, 15-year-olds scored 437 points in mathematics compared to an average of 489 points in OECD countries; girls performed better than boys with a statistically significant difference of 5 points (OECD average: 5 points higher for boys). The average performance in science of 15-year-olds from Albania was 417 points, compared to an average of 489 points in OECD countries; girls performed better than boys with a statistically significant difference of 16 points (OECD average: 2 points higher for girls).

53. Entrance to universities preparing teachers is now only possible for students who have reached an average score of 7.5 or above in high school.
UN agencies continue to support MoESY to reduce disparities and promote a more inclusive, equitable and quality education system. To advance evidence-based policy making and advocacy, UNICEF supported MoESY with two exercises: an OECD–UNICEF review of the assessment and evaluation system, and a mid-term review of the National Strategy of Education.46 Recommendations will assist development of the new sector strategy and hopefully trigger debate on quality and inclusiveness. UNICEF also provided technical assistance and evidence-based advocacy on financing for inclusive education, resulting in a national policy supporting financially children at risk of dropping out of school, and out-of-school children, approved by DCM no. 666.47

Improving equitable learning and mainstreaming inclusive school practices were at the core of UNICEF efforts in 2019 in the education sector. For professional development, 200 teachers were trained in inclusive school practices and a training curriculum developed to set up a core professional network of assistant teachers. These teachers conducted trainings to an additional 500 assistant teachers during the year. Thus, a clearer understanding is in place of the assistant teacher profile through development of a new guideline for assistant teachers (approved by MoESY order no. 26 dated 25.11.2019) detailing selection criteria, academic requirements, duties and responsibilities for a collaborative and inclusive assistant teacher. Meanwhile, an Early Warning System for Dropout prevention was developed, with 1,200 teachers trained to prevent and address the risk of dropping out of school. A total of 51 teacher professional development networks have been set up by UNICEF in Albania serving discussions and the sharing of challenges and ways they can be overcome or addressed. Also, an end-of-line assessment of school interventions48 was developed showing improvement of the situation of students at risk of school dropout in three main areas: school performance, behaviours and school attendance. The C4D strategy “my school is a safe place” is playing a crucial role in changing the attitudes of schools and communities towards violence in school. Under the motto “Be safe, be Respectful, be Responsible” 500 teachers, 1,200 students and 1,000 parents have been reached through various training and awareness-raising activities. Meanwhile, qualitative pre-school education for children with disabilities was provided, with a professional development programme developed for teachers promoting an inclusive and stimulating environment for children, focusing on respect and promotion of diversity and social inclusion. Finally, a pre-school assessment framework and a curriculum for the pre-primary year, whose development was supported by UNICEF, were approved in 2019 by MoESY and have a national reach. UNICEF’s efforts towards improving the access and quality of preschool education in Albania, through development of standards, curricula, teacher training and assessments, contributes to SDG 4, target 4.2, indicators 4.2.1, 4.2.3, 4.2.4, and 4.2.5. In addition, UNICEF is also contributing to target 4.1, indicator 4.1.1 through efforts aimed towards improving policies, increasing the capacities of workforce in inclusive education, identifying out of school children and reducing school dropout. The SDG indicator 4.1.1 “the proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex” has marked progress. For example, enrolment rates at the primary level are trending upward since 2009 (UIS, 2020)[1] comparable to the enrolment rates in OECD countries49.

Following the November earthquake in Albania, during the rapid response phase, UNICEF provided temporary learning spaces for 400 children affected by the earthquake in Durrës, and led the education sector inputs in the FDNIA, the main reference document for the international donors conference (February 2020), and which proved crucial in obtaining EUR 1.08 billion of international support to Albania’s earthquake recovery efforts. Meanwhile, UNICEF has prioritised advocacy for the inclusion of DRR practices in schools, with a methodology on DRR developed by UNICEF and approved in 2019. Twenty schools in Albania increased DRR capacities through teachers and school personnel training and awareness-raisings, while DRR commissions in schools are set up and school plans for mainstreaming of DRR as part of MoESY’s post-earthquake recovery plans.

UNFPA efforts in Comprehensive Sexuality Education continued, scaling the results achieved in the newly included municipalities of Berat, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokaster, Korçë, Tirane and Vlore, and reaching 35 percent of students and 50 percent of teachers through information, training, and monitoring. UNFPA expanded the Y-Peer network to reach out to the most vulnerable and marginalised young people with information on sexual and reproductive health and rights in four municipalities: Cerrik, Korçë, Pogradec and Ure Vajgurore. UNFPA trained 50 young people as peer educators and reached more than 20,000 people through social media. In addition, a regional conference organised on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of ICPD (What’s Changed since ICPD ’94: Regional Conference on Comprehensive Sexuality Education

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45. UNICEF’s efforts towards improving the access and quality of preschool education in Albania, through development of standards, curricula, teacher training and assessments, contributes to SDG 4, target 4.2, indicators 4.2.1, 4.2.3, 4.2.4, and 4.2.5. In addition, UNICEF is also contributing to target 4.1, indicator 4.1.1 through efforts aimed towards improving policies, increasing the capacities of workforce in inclusive education, identifying out of school children and reducing school dropout. The SDG indicator 4.1.1 “the proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex” has marked progress. For example, enrolment rates at the primary level are trending upward since 2009 (UIS, 2020)[1] comparable to the enrolment rates in OECD countries49.


49. Net enrolment rate in primary education in Albania in 2017 (96%), comparable to that of OECD countries on average (96%) and the EU (96%).
and CSE Champions—Albania and beyond) helped increase the collaboration and synergies with government and development partners, celebrating successes and generating commitments for the next 15 years in line with ICPO and SDG target achievement.

A meaningful and important achievement in the education sector in 2019 was a strengthened partnership between UN Albania and RYCO as part of an inter-agency and multi-country project launched in 2018. Key results in 2019 include the development of a mapping of the best education peacebuilding experiences in the region, as well as a teacher training curriculum on peacebuilding in secondary education, both supported by UNICEF. In 2019, UNFPA was nominated as a member of the RYCO Advisory Board, contributing towards youth empowerment and exchanges in the area of peacebuilding, peacekeeping and reconciliation in the six Western Balkan Countries.

**Challenges**

The education system faced two major challenges in 2019: student protests demanding a more equal and quality higher education, and the November earthquake. The latter required an immediate response that called on extraordinary efforts in terms of human resources response (in numbers, efforts and time) and cost, depleting an already meagre education sector budget. UN agencies are supporting MoESY in addressing sectoral challenges and continuously advocating for increased and equitable budgets for all levels of education.

Persistent data gaps for SDG 4 indicators remain, enhancing the need for increased capacity development of staff in the education sector at INSTAT for data gathering. This becomes particularly necessary in view of preparations for a new National Education Strategy.

UN agencies have worked at different levels in improving data gaps and systems, work that should continue during 2020 and beyond.

**Way Ahead 2020–2021**

Guided by SDG 4, UN agencies UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA and ILO will support MoESY in translating the strategic direction of the Pre-University Education Development Strategy 2014–2020 and NSDI 2015–2020 into concrete measures for ensuring a quality education system for every child, with inclusion and equity, increased access to education, improved quality of education provision, and strengthening of the education sector governance. These collective efforts will feed into the development of a new education sector strategy and enable a closer alignment of the next sector strategy with SDG 4: Education 2030.

Albania will be a part of UNESCO’s sub-regional activities on SDG 4 concerning comparative research studies and capacity development. UNICEF interventions will aim at strengthening inclusive education practices in schools, guided by the vision of a transformed education system that responds to a diversity of learners (including boys and girls with disabilities) by enhancing quality education. This approach will be embedded in a framework for inclusive education in line with General Comment Number 4, Article 24 on inclusive education of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNICEF will also support: (i) improvement of systems at national and local levels for identification and integration of out-of-school children and reducing drop-out of boys and girls in four counties in Albania (School as Community Centre initiative), and implementation of a child-driven scheme for professional development with a focus on inclusive preschool education and development of inspection tools for pre-school; (ii) teacher training and communication for behaviour change for a non-violent school (Zero violence initiative), and addressing of issues of violent extremism in schools; (iii) adolescents and second decade learning through promotion of intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and RYCO, and piloting of the use of technology and innovation as a means of improving learning outcomes, and expanded access to learning; (iv) development of the new National Strategy of Education 2021–2026; and (v) development of tools for psycho-social support and expansion of DRR in schools.

UNFPA will continue to focus on increased availability of comprehensive sexuality education aiming to have it introduced in 80 percent of schools within 2021. Support will be provided for: (a) completing teacher standards on CSE; (b) expanding CSE in all local offices for pre-university education (ZVAP) including awareness for out-of-school youth through a Y-Peer approach; (c) advocating for CSE to be included in the curriculum of VET schools and teacher training faculties; and (d) strengthening the monitoring and information system, and consolidating the CSE database. UNFPA will intensify efforts to strengthen CSE for out-of-school young people focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalised and those with disabilities, through the Y-Peer network. In 2020, UNFPA will implement priority interventions in the framework of the joint UN–RYCO project in WB6 with focus on out-of-school vulnerable youth on peacebuilding and reconciliation by using the Y-Peer approach.

ILO will support the Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASCAP) in preparing the curricula for behaviour change for a non-violent school (Zero violence initiative), and addressing of issues of violent extremism in schools; (ii) adolescents and second decade learning through promotion of intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and RYCO, and piloting of the use of technology and innovation as a means of improving learning outcomes, and expanded access to learning; (iv) development of the new National Strategy of Education 2021–2026; and (v) development of tools for psycho-social support and expansion of DRR in schools.

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social inclusion standards are strengthened with budgets and clear targets that reflect equity and social inclusion standards

Implementation progress

The Albanian government recently approved extension until 2023 of the National Social Protection Strategy 2015–2020 and its Action Plan, the main policy document setting out its vision for an integrated social protection system. The Strategy provides the grounds for three major reforms: (i) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the poverty-targeted cash assistance, (ii) improving the situation of persons with disability, and (iii) establishing an integrated system of social care services at the decentralised level. While GoA is committed to implementing the legislative and institutional social care reforms, the administrative capacities handling social protection programmes remain limited at all levels, both in terms of the number of staff, and their technical competency. Services provided through the non-public sector—mainly financed by international CSOs and charities—have attempted to fill the gaps in public service provision.60 The EU progress report for 2018 makes a clear recommendation for government to take further steps in the social care reforms, where policy intent has to be accompanied by adequate and effective budgetary allocations. The current budget allocated to social protection stands at nine percent of GDP, including contributory social insurance programmes, which occupy 80 percent of the allocations, and less than one percent of GDP allocated as child and family allowance, including cash transfers for poverty and disability. These levels are far below the average investment in social protection in the Europe and Central Asia region, of 16 percent of GDP. As the country faces challenges with fiscal space and is struggling to lower the level of public debt, a nominal budgetary increase is not possible. Therefore, better use of the existing resources and strengthened coordination and integration between social protection entitlements are imperative.61

Through the support of UN agencies to INSTAT and national partners to measure and report on multiple poverty and deprivation, Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) survey data for 2017 and 2018 were published in December 2019, reporting the new measurements of household and child poverty. In addition, child monetary poverty, using the EU indicator ‘children at risk of poverty’, was reported officially for the first time in Albania. Data on monetary poverty of Albanian children for 2017 and 2018 were published (29.6% reported at risk of poverty) and a roadmap developed to measure child multiple deprivation using the EU child deprivation index.62

The resourcing of the Social Fund, a central government programme started in 2019 to finance social care services at the local level, is to be commended. Approximately ALL 100 million will reach fourteen municipalities: Durres, Elbasan, Gjirokaster, Kurbin, Lezhe, Librazhd, Lushnje, Maliq, Prrenjas, Roskovec, Peshkopi, Sarandë, Tirane and Vlore. The budgetary amount reported by MoHSP officials in the working group discussions.

Alignment with SDGs

Goals: 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 16

Targets: 1.3, 3.7, 4.1, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 10.2, 11.10, 16.6

62. Some 39.0 percent of Albanian children have been reported to be at risk of poverty for 2017 and 2018, with girls affected more than boys. 36.6 percent of girls and 26.9 percent of boys were at risk of poverty in 2018; compared to, respectively, 31.8 percent and 27.3 percent in 2017. Through UNICEF support, INSTAT collected data on child non-monetary deprivations for 2018 and 2019 following Eurostat methodology, and developed a roadmap to measure child multiple deprivation using the EU child deprivation index.
63. Indicative amount reported by MoHSP officials in the working group discussions.

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seven municipalities, contributing directly to making Social Fund and support social care services at the local level, UNDP allocated funds to re-study visits and mentoring support. Moreover, in line and the strengthening of capacities of 31 service providers with disabilities organised in three project sites — Diber, Kruje and Ura Vajgurore, 31 info-days on rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities were targeted (3 completed and 6 ongoing) and approximately 500 vulnerable women and young girls benefiting from training and awareness events, with a clear understanding of GBV, defining a list of select gender-responsive priorities. A total of 2,500 women citizens (45% of participants) engaged in the public budget consultations, including those from the most vulnerable groups: youths, older women, those living in rural areas, women with disabilities, unemployed and single heads of household.

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Similarly, through UNICEF support and part of the LNB programme, eleven municipalities developed three-year social care plans, fully costed and with clear targets to reach at least 60 percent of all children in poverty or in a vulnerable situation in each municipality. All eleven municipalities developed budget briefs, informing on spending plans related to the social care plan and social care services, highlighting gaps and recommending on how to improve budget planning for these services and ensuring a better and more effective mobilisation of available financial resources. UNICEF’s advocacy resulted in additional public investments being made available at the local level in 2019. Six municipalities (Durrës, Librazhd, Malq, Sarande, Tirane and Vlore) will now have funds from the central budget for 2020 to establish social care services, which have been prioritised in the social care plan, contributing to the achievement of SDG 1, target 1.3, indicator 1.3.1.

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were transmitted live on IN TV and rebroadcast over six weeks, conceptualised as a youth show focused upon four different angles: quizzes, discussions with experts, personal stories, and short inserts and videos. The episodes were shared on social media (Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) with roughly 40,000 views, with a further 100,000 through jotabu.al by the end of 2019, managed by the NGO Together for Life on behalf of the Youth Voice network. This initiative helped reach young people, parents, teachers and families and resulted in the promotion of additional discussions on sensitive issues through engagement of experts and advocates on UNFPA and ICPD issues. More than 50 articles were produced on pozitivi.org and 93 on jotabu.al for the issues of SDGs, SRH, empowerment of girls, international development days, early marriage, modern contraceptive methods and gender equality. Equally importantly, following finalisation and approval by Parliament of the Youth Law (December 2019), by-laws will be developed and disseminated in 2020 and the process for review of the Youth Action Plan 2015–2020 and development of a new Youth Action plan are planned for 2020. The Law was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth in close consultation with UNFPA and UN agencies, representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and ILO, in the framework of the LNB programme. The Law aims to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision making affecting their lives, and to hold the duty bearers accountable. The working group established for this process, which included youth representatives and organisations, contributed with inputs during the drafting stage, and discussed the Law with young people all over Albania during the consultation stage.

Thanks to a major step taken by government to implement EU-SILC, the survey offers a key opportunity to improve gender-based analysis by using it as a baseline. UN Women, in collaboration with INSTAT, is undertaking a vulnerability mapping study with a focus on women and girls in the target 16 municipalities of the LNB project. The mapping will be finalised in May 2020 and provide policymakers with information about the current situation and the main poverty-risk factors for citizens, including women and girls, in the 16 municipalities.

Technical assistance from UNICEF to government, through the LNB programme, has expanded the scope of the Management Information System (MIS) of the cash transfer programme for social care services. Workflows and standard operating procedures were developed for the MIS of social care services to become part of the social protection MIS. More than 300 municipal staff in 19 municipalities were trained and mentored in the use of the system and how to enter data according to case management practices and system protocols. In addition, thanks to UNICEF support, INSTAT collected data on child non-monetary deprivations for 2018 and 2019 and reported officially for the first time on child monetary poverty in 2019, using the EU indicator children at risk of poverty. INSTAT has also in place a roadmap to measure child multiple deprivations using the EU child deprivation index.

MoHSP undertook a mid-term assessment of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016–2020. It was supported by UNDP; through the LNB programme, in designing the methodology, including the data collection instruments and validating them with relevant stakeholders in a participatory process. The report, presented in mid-January 2019 to the National Council on Persons with Disabilities, served as a stimulus to announce 2019 as the Year of Accessibility. In addition, MoHSP was supported in organising the National Conference ‘Accessibility and challenges for inclusiveness’, held in May 2019 and attended by 140 participants representing a diversity of stakeholders including disabled people’s organisations. The conference discussed accessibility issues, achievements and challenges, and highlighted the importance of raising stakeholder awareness on this topic. The conference recommended the development of an action plan to improve accessibility legislation and standards and their implementation. As a result, and with technical assistance of the LNB programme, MoHSP drafted four by-laws for implementation of Law no. 93/2014 ‘On inclusion of and accessibility for persons with disabilities’ and initiated the drafting of an Accessibility Action Plan 2019–2021 for Persons with Disabilities in Albania. The joint efforts contribute directly to making progress towards achieving SDG targets 10.2 and 10.3, indicators 10.2.1 and 10.3.1.

UNDP, through the project ‘Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians’, supported government in its efforts to achieve the objectives set forth in the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians (NAPIRE) for the year 2019, while promoting respect for human rights, gender mainstreaming and inter-cultural dialogue, prerequisites for Albania’s EU integration. As a result, the Roma system is functional; coaching was provided to more than 200 public officials and R&E focal points to implement and report progress on NAPIRE; integrated employment measures were implemented in Berat, Durres, Shkoder and Tirane to break the cycle of poverty for R&E women and men, while 163 R&E obtained work or started up a business during the year, and more than 400 managed to sustain the economic activities they had previously initiated; a training book and course curriculum on life skills and basic literacy was designed by UNDP and endorsed in 2019 by three ministries—MoHSP, MoESY and MoE—to become part of the curricula in schools, vocational education training (VET) and community centres of Albania; 368 R&E enjoyed improved access to the services of civil registration, education, health and social care provided through a pilot model of integrated community-based social services; and the living conditions of more than 1,000 R&E families (approximately 4,500 inhabitants) were improved through a wide variety of community upgrading infrastructure projects: construction of sewage systems, water supply, lighting, reconstruction of kindergarten cribs, and other interventions in line with the needs and priorities of communities.

Through the LNB programme, UNFPA continued to scale up the community-based model to increase...
demand of the vulnerable for quality integrated SRH services. In the municipalities of Maleše Madhe and Puke, and in the remote parts of Berat, Elbasan and Korce, a total of 90 awareness-raising sessions were organised, with the participation of more than 2,000 Roma community members; capacities of 335 activists from R&E community were enhanced through learning sessions on SRHR, enabling them to contribute as health mediators in the monitoring of implementation of social services at the local level and to intensify the work in the field for this community, while a training toolkit was designed and developed, tailored to the specifics of R&E; and three advocacy meetings were organised with representatives of MoHSP; focusing on the importance of recognising the role of the health mediator in the health system as an important element for implementation of the Action Plan of the R&E Strategy 2016–2020.

In the area of social housing, MoFE reviewed the minimum standards for adequate solutions tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities, supported by UNDP through the LNB programme. The review resulted in the drafting and consultation of a technical report on design and construction norms and standards, followed by the definition of a set of minimum standards for adequate housing solutions presented to MoFE as part of a package of by-laws on the Law on Social Housing. Some 72 participants, of whom 28 were officials from 21 municipalities, engaged in a capacity building and consultation work-shop with representatives of MoHSP, focusing on the importance of recognising the role of the health mediator in the health system as an important element for implementation of the Action Plan of the R&E Strategy 2016–2020.

Albania’s recent legislative changes for the promotion of social enterprises and the creation of a related state fund represent an opportunity for UN Women to support the development of the social economy in Albania. Building on international good practices, UN Women has identified the gaps that require immediate addressing and has created entry points for enhancing capacities of public sector stakeholders (national and local authorities) to support and promote social entrepreneurship within their respective mandates. The environment for development of social enterprises as a growth sector has been strengthened with legislation being put in place during 2019 for the financial framework for an efficient operation and the registration of social enterprises. The financial framework was designed and endorsed on the means of supporting social enterprises through subventions. A fund for social enterprises has been created to the value of ALL 249.76 million for the period 2019–2021. The fund subsidises social enterprises activity, with new job positions enabled for employing disadvantaged groups and social and health security provided for disadvantaged groups employed in such enterprises. UN Women guided the entire process of legislation drafting by providing expertise in the drafting of by-laws and designation of the fund. UN Women also technically supported ministry budget users to integrate the Social Enterprise Fund in the Medium-Term Budget Programme of MoHSP.

Challenges

At the policy level, the challenge of operationalization of the mechanism for monitoring and implementation of the Social Inclusion Policy Document (SIPD) 2016–2020 has continued to persist since the first year of the programme. Initially, the LNB plan foresaw the establishment of a Statistical Integrity Indicators Group (SIIG) as part of the Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG) system. In 2018, the IPMGs were re-grouped following an order from the prime minister, while UNDP continued to offer support in setting up the necessary structures for coordination. Furthermore, and depending on the set-up and functioning of SIIG, UNDP will support MoHSP to facilitate and coordinate the production of an annual social inclusion report that describes and analyses social progress in Albania. Increased cooperation between MoHSP and INSTAT is being encouraged over this matter.

The support to INSTAT for processing and publicly presenting SILC 2016 data, and later SILC 2017 and SILC 2018, was re-scheduled several times before taking place in November 2019. This affected LNB programme implementation, specifically the support for measurement of and reporting on social inclusion indicators with regard to SIPD, as well as the design of targeted interventions and the combined government and UN efforts to measure their impact on the vulnerable population.

Legislation and policies cannot be implemented if there are no clear and easy-to-use tools and guidelines. For the tools to be relevant, they need to be technically sound, but also their feasibility must be assessed on the ground, and they need to be validated with all stakeholders and standardised for national use. Tools for social care planning developed with UNICEF support are now being used by all national and international stakeholders. The monitoring process of policy documents such as the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (NAPWPD) 2016–2020 highlighted the need for stronger engagement of stakeholders to coordinate, collect data and share information across the institutions at central and local levels, particularly for issues on PWDs.
Capacity building is not a single and one-way process. Tailored training for local authorities on the theoretical know-how and practice required for effective social care service management was key at the start, but was followed with mentoring and coaching, while local authorities improved (and resourced) the internal structures, and followed the implementation process and the monitoring of the plans. At the local level, municipalities demonstrated limited capacities to build the necessary structures and system for social services to enable delivery of integrated social services as foreseen in the Law on Social Services. In addition, lack of professional staff (with the social worker as a key figure in the system), weak Needs Assessment and Referral Unit (NARU) structures for case management, lack of adequate funding from municipal budgets, lack of knowledge of the social inclusion legislation and of the policy framework in related areas (education, employment, VET, health, housing) render difficult the implementation of social care plans designed by municipalities with the support of LNB. At the community level, CSOs have demonstrated scarce capacities in budget literacy and public finance management for scrutiny of public budgets at the local level and provision of recommendations.

Active engagement with decision makers in the municipalities and in interest groups, including representatives of communities, is crucial during the development, implementation and monitoring of social care plans. Stronger coordination among governance levels is needed for the future, especially with regard to implementation of the new law on social care. Coordination is also needed among different partners working in the area to support the LGUs, as uncoordinated support can produce negative effects that might have a long-term impact on social care governance and on institutional and beneficiary trust in the new system.

Regarding expansion of the advocacy and lobbying work on SRH priority areas at municipal and community levels, national coverage remains a challenge, requiring additional resources, financial and human, and focused packages of informative materials for targeted influencers, for certain hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups, as well as for communities at large. Youth policies following implementation of the law at the local level remains a challenge. Given Albania’s stage of development and status as an upper-middle income country, increased access to services for people not-easy-to-reach needs to be intensified all across the country. More effort should be focused on expanding work on the ground with the engagement of partner CSOs and networks, as well as with establishment of new partnerships at the local level and mobilisation of youth groups and grassroot who know the context, who can be strengthened to work with those most in need and can follow up sustainability with local government, holding it accountable for its promises and commitments.

Heighened political tension and recent earthquakes have impacted implementation to varying degrees throughout the year. As a result, some activities at the local level have slowed and some delays have taken place, e.g., during the start of operations of community centres in two municipalities (Permet and Ure Vajgurore), and finalisation of local MTBPs and participatory budgeting processes in six municipalities.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Under the joint LNB programme currently being implemented by UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF, the focus will remain on operationalizing the Laws on Social Services and Social Enterprises, strengthening the systems, standardising the services, consolidating good practices, replicating services, ensuring sustainability of investments, and scaling up successful practices and innovations. Concrete actions to be implemented by UN agencies contributing to the LNB programme include: continuation of work in target municipalities to foster dialogue between LGUs and communities; delivery of services through capacity-building interventions for vulnerable groups and their representative organisations on rights and inclusion; delivery by municipalities of community-based integrated social services; Social Fund implementation, with municipal grants for implementation of social care services; development of at least 20 local social-care plans, and their implementation; building of capacities of municipal social services units in 61 municipalities, and the service providers, to plan, budget, deliver and monitor social care services; support for government in tailoring accessibility interventions for PWDs and the conducting of social impact assessments in selected municipalities to influence the design and implementation of gender sensitive services and investments.

In 2020, the UN in Albania launches its global SDG Fund-financed joint project Improving Municipal Social Protection, to be implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO. It aims to support Albanian Government translate the policy intent into proper local actions so that men, women, girls and boys living in poverty, or vulnerable situation have access to integrated, quality social care services - supports the vision of an overall inclusive Albania, making progress towards SDGs 1, 5, 10, and 16. It will ensure: Integrated social care services; institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms functional with clear roles and responsibilities at local level in 6 municipalities; Municipal and national institutional capacities strengthened through training and mentoring for the development of social care plans and accessing the Social Fund; Innovative models of integrated social care services piloted, including established local linkages between health and social protection services; Vulnerable communities (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability etc.) empowered to actively participate in decision making and make institutions accountable; Financing options for extending social protection coverage and benefits developed and assessed at the national and municipality levels.
Implementation progress

The available body of evidence suggests that violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation of children continue to exist both in the family and in institutional settings in Albania, and that the phenomena remain often unaddressed and even socially accepted. The child protection system is yet to be consolidated in a way that provides a comprehensive coordinated response to children in need of protection, and at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, including in the online environment. The newly adopted legislation on child protection and rights has clarified roles and responsibilities, as well as accountability lines both at the central and local levels and has set the grounds for an integrated child protection system. However, despite an improved normative framework for child protection, its implementation is weak and the establishment of a comprehensive and integrated national system of child protection is yet to be accomplished. Specific bottlenecks are related to inefficient, overlapping, issue-based and fragmented interventions, as well as lack of investments. Local action is predominantly dependent on services provided by NGOs.

High expectations are associated with the newly defined role of the municipalities in the provision of social services, particularly through municipal Child Protection Workers (CPWs). However, the number of CPWs is much lower than the legal requirements, and even fewer of them, less than 30 percent, have an adequate background in social work. The State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child has been taking a more active stance recently, initiating a review of the national vision for child protection and of the existing legal framework. Nevertheless, the agency lacks the capacities to implement fully the wider mandate and the higher responsibility vested in it by the new legislation.

Recent evidence on children’s experiences of the Internet shows that child abuse, exploitation and violence happening in the digital environment is increasingly emerging as a concern for children and parents in Albania. Fourteen percent of Albanian children using the internet have reported experiencing upsetting experiences in the digital space, while nine percent reported at least one unwanted sexual experience online. Despite the large number of referrals of child sexual abuse materials being reported to authorities, only a handful have been investigated and even fewer brought before justice. While the legal framework for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation online is not far from international standards, considerable gaps have been found in the institutional response and professional capabilities of the authorities in charge of preventing and responding to such cases.

Albania is also a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, with children at risk of being trafficked for labor or as victims of sexual exploitation. In 2020, UNICEF and its partners conducted a national assessment of the legal framework and institutional readiness to address Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Online in Albania, highlighting gaps in both legal and institutional capacities.

Contributing UN Agencies
UNICEF, WHO, IOM, ILO

Contributing Partners
Government of United Kingdom, Ending Violence against Children (EVAC) Fund, UNICEF Global Thematic Funds

Financial Amount (USD)
724,651

Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 1, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17

Targets: 1.3, 1.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.7, 10.2, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 17.6, 17.9, 17.17, 17.18

78. For instance, the 2017–2018 Albanian Health and Demographic Survey revealed that even though trends have been improving as compared to the previous (2008–2009) survey, almost half (48%) of the children surveyed were discipline with some form of psychological or physical aggression. https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/albania-demographic-and-health-survey

80. UNICEF 2020, One Click Away: Children’s Experiences of Internet in Albania. https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2066/files/one_click_to_om.png


or%20Assessment%20-%20CSEA%20Online%20in%20Albania.pdf

Since 2012, the Agency is operating with seven employees, including finance and administration staff, and relies on donor funding for the implementation of its programmatic activities.

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for adult and child victims of human trafficking. Chil-
dren, particularly those in a street situation, youths
and young girls, along with sudden stress, such as follow-
ing the death of a family member.

In 2019, UNICEF’s support to the government result-
ed in the completion of a legal framework for child
protection, with the focus shifting to implementation of
the improved policy and legal framework. MoHSP
finalised and adopted a full range83 of by-laws with
regard to the Law on the Child Rights and Protection.
The State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the
Child (SARPCH) enhanced the capacities of local child
protection structures to fully understand and effective-
ly implement the revised legal framework. Meanwhile,
government coordinated its strategic interventions for
development of the national child protection system
through the work of the Child Protection Coalition,84
which assisted SARPCH in (a) organising an annual na-
tional conference of CPWs;85 (b) developing a child
friendly version of the Law on Child Rights and Pro-
tection,86 and (c) mobilising an effective coordinated
response to the November 2019 earthquake, resulting
in addressing the psycho-social needs of 2,988 individ-
uals, including 2,315 children. Moreover, the Alliance
B.7 Pathfinder Country Strategic Workshop,87 organ-
sed by MoHSP in cooperation with ILO and OSCE,
identified national priorities to combat the hazardous
situation of child labour in the country. Albania joined
Alliance B.7 in July 2018, whose intention is to reach
zero child labour by 2025. In November 2019, the
National Committee for the Protection of Children’s
Rights approved a two-year action plan prepared by
MoHSP on Combating the Economic Exploitation of
Children, and committed to preparing a national child
labour report.

Strengthening the child protection work force is a pri-
ority. UNICEF, in support of MoHSP, revised the exist-
ing in-service training curricula for child protection and
social workers to reflect the new legislation on child
protection and juvenile justice. This was followed by a
memorandum of understanding signed with the Alba-
nian School of Public Administration (ASPA) to incor-
porate the new curricula in their standing programme.
This is a remarkable achievement and ensures sustain-
ability and mainstreams this critical training course as
part of the accredited continuous learning system for
civil servants. Nearly 50 CPWs were trained in the new
training module in 2019. In addition, supported by
IOM, capacities of CPUs to identify and assist (poten-
tial) Victims of Trafficking were increased throughout
the country, in accordance with the SOP for Protection
of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking. This re-
sulted in 59 (potential) Victims of Trafficking identified
by CPUs in 2019 compared to 26 in 2017.

MoHSP has been spearheading the childcare reform
currently under way in Albania, with direct technical
support from UNICEF, aiming to ensure a transition
from institutional to family- and community-based
care. To support this critical shift, UNICEF supported
social services workforce training and the develop-
ment of plans for the progressive transformation and
closure of children institutions. As a result, some 240
children residing in nine public residential institutions
were comprehensively assessed and their Individual
Development and De-institutionalisation Plans devel-
oped. Advancing the de-institutionalisation agenda for
children deprived of parental care is a crucial build-
ning block of the social protection system, thus contrib-
uting towards the achievement of the SDG 1, target
1.3, indicator 1.3.1, and their social inclusion, thus
contributing also to the achievement of SDG 10, tar-
get 10.2, indicator 10.2.1. Throughout 2020, the pub-
lic authorities will be supported to implement these
plans, with support and services also for the family
of origin. Another important step in the year will be
the transformation of two public residential care in-
stitutions into family support hubs. UNICEF will also
provide technical support to establish a viable model
of foster care families in Albania and to improve the
normative framework to make de-institutionalisation
possible and implemented in the best interests of the
child, for every child.

In 2019, as part of the direct technical support to MoI
and the Albanian State Police, UNICEF carried out an
in-depth assessment of the systemic, procedural and
human capacity gaps in enforcement of the law, deal-
ing with the investigation of online child sexual abuse
in the country. The assessment report ‘The Lost Cases’,
which was shared with the responsible government
authorities,88 revealed a staggering gap between the
volume of referrals of potential child abuse materials
coming from international law enforcement agencies
(5,000–15,000 per year), and the number of cases in-
vestigated (3 or 4 cases in 3 years), and also identified
structural and procedural gaps. Following UNICEF’s
active advocacy in 2019 and efforts to increase aware-
ness among the public and relevant institutions of
online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) in
Albania, an agreement was reached with the Chief
Prosecutor of Tirana and MoI to establish a dedicated
Task Force that will look into the investigative bottle-
necks of online crimes against children.89

Online abuse of children was addressed through mul-
tiple channels. Two dedicated studies on children’s
online experiences—One Click Away: Research into
Children’s Experience of Internet Use in Albania, and
WebFactor: Assessment of the Legal Framework and
Institutional Readiness to address Child Sexu-
al Exploitation and Abuse online in Albania90—laid
a solid foundation to current and future programme
interventions (local and global) and also contributed
to the national and global knowledge generation on
this rapidly emerging new area for child protection. A
strategic partnership agreed between the National Cy-
ber-Security Authority and MoESY on violence against
children illustrates how many different government
agencies can be engaged on this topic. The Peer-to-
peer Programme on Online Safety91 was designed to
gether with and implemented by more than 312 peer
educators, thus generating a strong feeling of owner-
ship and participation. As a result, more than 12,286
school children (6,250 girls and 6,036 boys) benefit-
from the peer-to-peer programme, in 46 schools
in seven counties of Albania.92 Joined efforts in this
regard, contribute to reducing all forms of violence

83. According to UNODC (2018), 30 percent of trafficked persons in the world are
children, particularly those in a street situation, youths
and young girls, along with sudden stress, such as follow-
ing the death of a family member.
84. Twelve DCMs and five Instructions.
Protection in Albania, and Council of Europe.
86. The conference National Coalition in support of child protection working
took place on 24–25 April 2019. 182 CPWs and directors of social services at the
local level from all municipalities participated in the conference. The objective was
to establish a community of CPWs professionals and identify the key challenges
and gaps in the existing capacities of CPWs for identification, coordination and
management, and in reporting cases of children in need of protection, and to
identify the best possible ways to support them. https://www.facebook.com/
search?query=%22UNICEF%20Albania%20%20%20Protection%20in
Albania%22"
87. The final draft is in the final stages of development and will be available for the
public in 2020.
89. Given the national emergencies of the 2019 earthquake and COVID-19, the Task
Force was not established formally with a MOU or SCM.
90. One Click Away, https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/one-click-
away; WebFactor, https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/webfactor; PEER,
https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/peer;
91. In line with the INSPIRE and the PROTECT model national response, UNICEF placed
children in the centre of its action as key change makers: https://www.unicef.org/
albania/reports/peer-educators-online-safety
92. Beral, Giber, Elisson, Fier, Jukies, Leona and Franca.
against children as envisioned in the SDG 16, with particular reference to targets 16.1, 16.2 and 16.3 and all indicators under these targets.

UNICEF Albania partnered with Tirana Municipality to promote the Friendly Wi-Fi Albania initiative, an innovative solution that protects children and families from harmful online content while accessing free Wi-Fi in public spaces. Five Friendly Wi-Fi public spaces are already operating in Tirana.93 Remarkably, data from June to December 2019 show that just one friendly Wi-Fi spot alone blocked on average 32,000 Internet requests per month for access to blacklisted or adult sites, 150 various blacklisted or adult websites, and 3,000 items of material content of child sexual abuse or pornography. In the long run, this initiative sets an example in placing the best interests of a child in a business or profit-making endeavour, as more Internet service providers and telecommunication companies join this initiative.

As a result of UNICEF’s continuous advocacy over the last decade, the National Child Helpline ALO 116 received financial support from the government for the first time in 2019, nine years after its creation in 2010, marking a significant shift in terms of the recognition of its central role in the child protection system and its sustainability. As a result, 893 children received direct help and counselling through the Helpline in 2019. All cases (100%) that required referral were referred to the necessary services. Meanwhile, nearly 4,500 children and adolescents have received psycho-social counselling online through the web-based platform nukjevetem.al, supported by UNICEF. In 2019, this platform was extended with a new counselling service providing chat sessions, adding to its direct support on mental health and child protection-related issues.

Challenges

The Justice reform and the vetting process have side-lined more than half of the judiciary, delaying the engagement of judges and prosecutors in the capacity building activities of UN agencies. In the framework of UNICEF’s rolling work plan for 2020 and 2021, agreement was reached with the School of Magistrates on the inclusion of children’s protection issues on the list of thematic lectures in the academic year.

The 6.4-magnitude earthquake that struck Albania on 26 November 2019, left 51 people dead and some 14,000 homeless, and about 2,000 injured. UNICEF’s child protection priority, alongside all LGUs and civil society partners, was significantly shifted towards a life-supporting emergency response.

A major challenge regarding investigation of child sexual abuse through the Internet has been the identification of adequate expertise in the country, or even abroad, that would address the capacities of the law enforcement and prosecution sectors. UNICEF struggled to identify a reputable consultancy group outside the country, available and willing to provide long-term assistance to Albanian law enforcement on the issue of online crimes against children. Assistance from two UNICEF offices (Ghana and Jordan) has been precious in engaging an international digital forensic investigator to assist the Sector for the Investigation of Computer Crimes for a six-month period.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNICEF support to government and the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child will focus on implementing the revised architecture of the national child protection system, through the capacitation of the child protection workforce, as well as the support to core child protection services for children at risk of abuse, violence exploitation and neglect, including reporting of violence, emergency support and psycho-social support to children and families. The implementation of the De-Institutionalisation Plan will continue with the second phase focusing on the facilitation of reunification of children living in residential state institutions with their biological families, as well as increased access to alternative, family-based, care services. Addressing the protection of children and youth at risk of human trafficking will be the focus of the current workplan, and also on the most affected regions in the northern part of the country. Separate attention will be paid to children’s protection from online sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, as this is a new and rapidly emerging area of child protection. Building on the support provided to earthquake-affected populations, with psycho-social support and child protection services, UNICEF will support government in the development of child protection preparedness plans for emergencies. MoHSP and the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child will be also supported by ILO, WHO and IOM to (i) coordinate the collective efforts invested by various actors in the area of children’s economic exploitation, in the framework of the global Alliance 8.7 intending to eliminate child labour by 2025, and in preparation of the Child Labour Report for Albania; (ii) capacitate the health-related workforce around child protection issues and local health authorities to monitor child protection issues and cases, and support GoA in developing an emergency-related preparedness plan; and (iii) enhance monitoring mechanisms and CPUs for pro-active identification and implementation of SOPs for protection of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking.
Implementation progress

Official data reaffirm that violence against women and girls in Albania is widespread and still a serious human rights violation. In 2018, the third population-based national survey on violence against women and girls, conducted by INSTAT in cooperation with UNDP and UN Women, and with the support of the governments of Australia and Sweden, showed that more than one in two Albanian women (52.9%) have experienced one or more forms of violence during their lifetime, and more than one in three (36.6%) have experienced violence in the last twelve months. For the first time, this survey makes possible the baseline measurement of three SDG 5 indicators: 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.3.1. Similarly, the latest qualitative study on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions with regard to child marriage, prepared by UNICEF and UNFPA, indicates that the communities affected in Albania still have preferences for child marriage, though people are aware of its illegality and the harm it causes. The social norms fuelling this phenomenon and viewing it as the best option for girls are influenced by gender stereotypes, as well as by realities of social exclusion and living in poverty.

In September 2019, the outcome report of the UPR on Albania was approved in a plenary session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Report made some 197 recommendations in multiple human rights areas, including gender-based violence and harmful practices, and received a very large number of recommendations (around 33) from other states. Despite progress achieved with the 2018 amendments introduced on the Law on Measures against violence in family relations (‘Domestic Violence, DV’ Law) and the Law on Free Legal Aid (FLA Law), implementation of these laws and respective key by-laws has yet to be ensured. According to the recent functionality assessment of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs) for preventing and responding

Contributing UN Agencies
UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNFPA, IOM, WHO

Contributing Partners
Governments of Australia, Korea, Sweden, the EU, Intesa Sanpaolo Bank of Albania, UN regional/global funds

Financial Amount (USD)
1,186,122

Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 5, 8, 16

Targets: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 8.7, 16.1, 16.2

Addition, the recent Demographic and Health Survey (2018), supported by UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA, indicated an increase in the prevalence of child marriage (from 10% to 13% compared to the 2009 Survey), affecting eleven percent of girls and two percent of boys. This survey contributed to measure achievements made toward SDG 5 and 16, specifically to targets 5.2, 5.3 and 16.2, indicators 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1, and 16.2.1.

In September 2019, the outcome report of the UPR on Albania was approved in a plenary session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Report made some 197 recommendations in multiple human rights areas, including gender-based violence and harmful practices, and received a very large number of recommendations (around 33) from other states. Despite progress achieved with the 2018 amendments introduced on the Law on Measures against violence in family relations (‘Domestic Violence, DV’ Law) and the Law on Free Legal Aid (FLA Law), implementation of these laws and respective key by-laws has yet to be ensured. According to the recent functionality assessment of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs) for preventing and responding
to gender violence,103 35 out of 40 CRMs are oper- 
alional, and function with varying degrees of effec-
tiveness. Some progress has been made to pro-
vide on-site emergency services relying on local resources, 
but specialised services and long-term re-integration 
services are largely scarce. Moreover, capacities of 
state institutions, CSOs and NHRLs need to be fur-
ther strengthened for reporting on and monitoring 
Albania’s progress in Elimination of Violence against 
Women (EVAW).

During 2019, UN support to the government result-
ed in an improved legal framework related to EVAW 
and alignment with international human rights and 
practices. For example, UNDP supported MoHSP and 
MoJ to develop several by-laws, adopted in 2018,102 
related to the Law on Measures against violence in 
family relations, and entering into force in February 
2019.103 The Council of Ministers and MoJ adopted 
(in March 2019) several key by-laws,104 with UNDP 
support, that enable effective implementation of the 
FLA Law and a safer environment for women victims 
of domestic violence to report to authorities. Three 
other by-laws related to the DV and FLA laws are 
awaiting MoJ approval. MoHSP established and led a 
multi-stakeholder dialogue for the drafting of a com-
prehensive Law on Violence against Women, as well as 
a policy and procedures against harassment and 
sexual harassment to protect women and men in the 
workplace. The Minimum Standards of Social Care 
Services for GBV-DV Victims and Survivors in public 
and non-public (short-term) residential emergency 
centres were approved (15.11.2019), along with ten 
by-laws pertaining to amendments to the 2018 
and FLA laws, supported by UNDP, while other by-
laws are being drafted. UNFPA supported review of 
five SOPs, including one for GBV, to align them with 
the legal changes to the DV Law, currently awaiting 
MoHSP approval. All these efforts contribute to the 
achievement of SDG goal 5, target 5.1, indicator 
5.1.1 - legal frameworks are in place to promote, 
enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination 
on the basis of sex.

The year marked an improvement in the moni-
toring and assessment capacities of governmental 
and non-governmental actors, through UN Women’s 
provision of on-the-job learning and training, to pre-
pare and submit national reports and reviews on inter-
national and national commitments on human rights 
and women’s rights. These reports include: i) a na-
tional report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform 
for Action >25 process led by MoHSP and MEFA, and 
the CSO shadow report for BDPfA submitted by the 
Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence; 
ii) a UPR shadow report and CEDAW follow-up report 
prepared by the Monitoring Network against Gender-
Based Violence; iii) a CEDAW alternative report 
currently being prepared by the People’s Advocate; and 
iv) monitoring of implementation of Objective 3 
(GBV) of the National Strategy on Gender Equality 
(NSGE) 2016–2020 in five new municipalities.105 In 
addition to six municipalities where monitoring has 
been ongoing since 2018106 by leading women’s 
rights CSOs.

Other efforts focused on improving capacities of au-
thorities, or strengthening community awareness and 
the ability of individuals to seek assistance. With 
the support of UNDP, improved VAW–DV implementa-
tion capacities of local actors and law enforcement 
agencies were ensured through provision of certified 
trainings by ASPA, the School of Magistrates, bene-
fitting 21 trainers, 329 police officers, 43 DV local co-
ordinators and 34 judges, prosecutors and judiciary 
chancelleries. Furthermore, around 200 service pro-
viders107 received training by CSOs, supported by UN 
Women, to implement in practice changes stemming 
from amendments to the DV Law to effectively pro-
tect and support survivors of DV. On the community 
side, around 1,800 women and girls, men and boys 
were better informed about harmful stereotypes that 
enable violence and mechanisms to report violence 
at the local level. Women from vulnerable commu-
nities (R&E, LBT and women with disabilities) had 
the chance to learn about inter-sectional discrimina-
tion; and the availability of existing services through 
awareness-raising meetings and art as a tool to shed 
light on their stories (photo exhibition, booklet and 
video of real life stories and radio shows). Further-
more, the need for tailored resources and response to 
violence against these groups was addressed through 
tailored training for service providers and members of 
the referral mechanisms in several municipalities.108 
Improving protection and support services for survi-

101. MoHSP took the lead supported by UNDP.
and model of risk assessment for cases of violence in the family model’ and joint 
instruction no. 912, date 27.12.2018 ‘On procedures and model of order for 
prominory measures of immediate protection’.
104. DCM no. 110, date 06/03/2019 ‘On the Procedures and documentation 
rules for NGO authorisation in offering free legal aid services and benefitting from 
state budget and funding’; DCM no. 55, date 06/02/2019 ‘On the Procedures and 
documentation rules for NGO authorisation in offering free legal aid services and 
benefiting from state budget and funding’; DCM no. 4, date 05/02/2019 ‘On 
changes to DCM no. 4, 9/12/2012 for ‘Statutory & regulatory procedures for 
administration of information’ (as per FAO law article 7)’; Rules & procedures for 
administration of information’; Prime Minister Order no. 78, date 25.03.2019 
‘On the approval of the structure and organisational chart of the Directory of Free 
Legal Aid’; Prime Minister Order (PM) no. 2, date 25/03/2019 ‘On the procedure, 
periodically and on change of ‘rules of procedure’ (article 111)’; Prime Minister Order, 
procedure & rules on change of ‘ordinance’; Prime Minister Order no. 39, date 
25/03/2019 ‘On the approval of the structure and organisational chart of the 
Directory of Free Legal Aid’ (as per FLA law article 4), and; Prime Minister Order no. 
1, date 25/03/2019 ‘On the structure of Free Legal Aid’ (as per article 7, 17 and 
19 of FLA). DCM no. 226, date 25/03/2019 ‘On approval of the contract models for 
free legal aid services’ (as per article 7 and 18, the model contract with non-for-
profit organisations for primary legal aid services). UNDP has provided support 
in MoJ for the Office of the Access to Justice programme with UNDP core funding.
DELIVERING RESULTS FOR ALBANIA

vors of violence encourages reporting and non-acceptance of violence as a normal occurrence and private part of life. In general, reported cases have increased in recent years. However, prevalence is higher as reporting remains low, albeit increasing. Working towards more efficient services for survivors directly contributes to SDG target 16.1 (indicator 16.1.3) and target 5.2 (indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2) as the end goal is to eliminate violence against women and girls by offering support services, and thus an alternative to continued violence.

Generation of evidence-based knowledge and data on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women was ensured, through UNDP and UN Women support, from the National Population Based Survey on Violence against Women and Girls (2018), establishment of baselines for monitoring and reporting on GBV indicators related to SDGs 5 and 16, and functioning of CRMs in municipalities. The CRMs data generation in REVALB show a total of 637 GB–DV cases recorded during 2019, compared to 545 in 2015. Field data show 2,834 protection orders issued by the state police in 2019, compared to 2,174 in 2015.

In addition, the scaling up and consolidation of CRMs is crucial as these mechanisms serve as an institutional response to VAW at the local level. Through UNDP support, eight new CRMs109 were established in 2019, bringing the total number established across the country to 49 (80% of 61 municipalities), while four existing CRMs110 were consolidated. Meanwhile, UN Women supported the monitoring by women’s CSOs of the proper functioning of CRMs in eleven municipalities, and data show an overall increase in the number of CRM meetings and cases treated between 2017 and the end of 2019.

In an important milestone for Albania, the first pilot centre for survivors of sexual violence, the Lilium centre, opened its doors.111 In its first year of operation, Lilium offered a range of specialised integrated support services to 39 survivors of sexual violence (24 children and 15 adults; 30 females and 9 males). The centre upgraded the database recording sexual violence cases in compliance with adopted national standards and operational procedures of services for victims and increased professional capacities of the multi-disciplinary, including psycho-social, staff at Mother Theresa University Hospital (23 persons).112

Awareness raising on GBV–DV issues among others has been at the focus of UN in Albania work in 2019, aiming to shift attitudes and societal norms regarding gender roles and ultimately prevent violence from occurring in the first place whenever possible, contributing directly to SDG 5.2, (indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. The main campaign was 16 days of activism against GBV–DV, with the slogan “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!”, launched on 25 November 2019 by MoHSP with the support of UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF and UNFPA, in partnership with civil society and local state institutions. Multiple events113 were organised to raise awareness of GBV–VAW, including child marriage and early unions that reached more than three million people across the country114 through a diverse range of tools: videos, art exhibitions, infographics, TV interviews and social media. Following the theme of the 16-day campaign, innovative tools and forms of engagement were employed by UN Women and its partners. The Kuboddy street art exhibition elaborated upon the experiences of violence against women115.

109. Divjake, Dropull, Fushe-Arrez, Has, Kucove, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq and Selenice municipalities supported by UNDP.
110. Bulqize, Himara, Klos and Roskovec municipalities supported by UNDP.
111. Lilium centre functions under the leadership of MoHSP with UNDP support.
112. Gynaecologists, psychiatrists, forensic medics, nurses and psycho-social staff.
113. 61 awareness-raising activities on GBV–VAW organised in 21 municipalities.
114. This figure is calculated with inclusion of the reach of the social media campaign, mobilised discussions by users and views of the videos published by Anabel Media, and UNDP data collected via social media.
115. "What were you wearing?" The art installation “What were you wearing?” featured clothing built around 20 testimonials of survivors of rape, addressing the universal experience of victim blaming.
and girls (VAWG) at home or in public spaces. An online magazine campaign engaged young Albanians on the issue of rape, using Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. The campaign reached almost two million people with a total view count of 440,000. The art installation ‘What were you wearing?’ featured clothing built around 20 testimonials of survivors of rape, addressing the universal experience of victim blaming. In addition, around 120 girl students and women from different walks of life and survivors of domestic violence and trafficking received training in self-defense, personal safety, and how to de-escalate different forms of violence. Empowerment Self-Defence (ESD), a set of tools to gain confidence and respond to situations that might be uncomfortable or violent, was combined with Aikido martial arts. In addition, building around 20 testimonials of survivors of rape, addressing the universal experience of victim blaming.

**Implementation of activities**

Implementation of activities planned in the framework of the 16 days of activism campaign against GBV was launched on 25 November, the day before the major earthquake struck. These and other activities were re-adjusted in each municipality to accommodate solidarity interventions, along with awareness-raising activities using CRM local resources, and continued beyond the planned closure of the campaign on 10 December.

To further consolidate and sustain Lilium centre’s integrated multi-sectoral emergency services to sexual violence survivors and even to scale it up into other regions in the country, there is an urgent need for allocation from the annual state budget and provision for additional staff to (i) provide responsive services to the needs of the sexual violence victims, (ii) mitigate the burn-out of the current staff, leading to staff turn-over, (iii) address staff burn-out through psychological supervision, and (iv) improve the data management system to ensure data safety and accessibility by the courts.

**Challenges**

The local elections of June 2019 brought changes to leadership in many municipalities, posing risks with regard to CRM staff retention and commitment to GBV implementation, especially for financing rehabilitation and reintegration services for GBV survivors. Respective UN agencies have established contacts with the newly elected mayors to gain their political support and commitment for smooth implementation of the programmes.

Despite continuous efforts at the community level, harmful societal norms and behaviours are difficult to uproot. Issues of GBV are seen to a great extent to belong to the domestic sphere, with a reluctance to report to relevant institutions. The perceived role of women continues to reflect a dominant patriarchal mentality. More wide-scale and all-inclusive efforts should continue to shift current paradigms on women’s role in society, especially vis-à-vis family responsibility, that encourage and justify violence against women and girls. Meaningful change requires increased actions, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

**Way Ahead 2020–2021**

Efforts of UN agencies (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, ILO) will aim to contribute to the overall goal of eliminating violence against women, girls and children through supporting the adoption, reform and implementation of laws, by-laws, policies and strategies to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls, and boys, including victims of trafficking, as well as harmful practices, such as child marriage. Specific output level results in 2020–2021 include (i) a strengthened normative and accountability framework related to VAWG, including harmful practices, (ii) improved institutional practices, services and coordination for survivors of VAWG, and (iii) challengenorms pertaining to VAWG (including child marriage) at the state, community and individual levels with a keen focus on the most vulnerable women and girls. All major interventions will be guided by existing evidence, along with relevant knowledge-generation exercises, and contribute to implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2016–2020, and all other relevant strategies targeting vulnerable women and girls.

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116. Medical and psycho-social staff.

117. Currently only two staff are serving in the Lilium centre, and are on call on a daily basis.

This outcome supports the Government of Albania in achieving four priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Growth through increased competitiveness, 3) Investing in people and social cohesion, and 4) Growth through sustainable resources and territorial development. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 8, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20 and 26.

In 2019, the total available budget for implementation of Outcome 3 was USD 3 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Austria, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, as well as the EU, and Peacebuilding Fund. The outcome delivery was 86 percent.

**Outcome 3 - Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture**

**Economic growth priorities, policies, and programmes of the Government of Albania are inclusive, sustainable, and gender-responsive, with greater focus on competitiveness, decent jobs and rural development.**

Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that out of 13 targets, eleven (85%) are on track and two (15%) are partially on track. For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline 2016-2017</th>
<th>Status 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. new businesses established by sex of owner</td>
<td>Total 16,731</td>
<td>Total 16,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female 1,947</td>
<td>Female 1,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male 14,784</td>
<td>Male 15,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment rate (young men and women (15 – 29) who are without work, available for work, and seeking work)</td>
<td>Total 34.2%</td>
<td>Total 33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female 35.9%</td>
<td>Female 33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male 33.3%</td>
<td>Male 33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of agriculture sector 2016 - 2020</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture mainstreamed within development programmes at all levels, by means of providing an evidence base on the impact of culture for development and implementing an evidence strategy for culture</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Approval of Law 27/2018 “On Cultural Heritage and Museums” (May 17, 2018); Adoption of the national Strategy for Culture 2019 - 2023 and Action Plan (May 2018).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Albania is an upper middle-income country on its path to EU accession. In 2018, GDP per capita was USD 13,364 in PPP (World Bank, WB; PPP international), and in 2019, the country ranked 69th in the UNDP Human Development Index. Albania's economy has grown by an average of 2.4 percent during the past decade, grew by 2.2 percent in 2019, and is projected to grow by 2 percent in 2020 (revised 2020 projections following the earthquake of November 2019). Expansion of the tax base and reduction in the informal economy are major government challenges (WB Enterprise Survey 2019). Household consumption fuelled by remittances continues to be one of the main drivers of growth. In the short to medium term, post-earthquake investments and recovery will assist growth while a reduction of foreign investment (especially after completion of large projects in 2019 but also challenges in friendliness to business) and vulnerability to climate variability (especially rainfall for hydro dams) present risks.

Albania ranks 81st in the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Economic Competitiveness Index. The country scores well in terms of its human capital but is considered not to be competitive in terms of innovation, research and development capabilities, entrepreneurial culture and transport infrastructure. The WB World Enterprise Survey shows that Albanian companies lag far behind many other countries with a similar level of per capita income on several factors mainly associated with innovation. Indeed, the lack of business sophistication due to low levels of productive know-how, lack of modernisation and limited interaction with the financial sector are some of the main concerns of the private sector.

In 2019, UNCTAD supported the participation of the chairwoman of the Albanian Competition Authority in the annual meeting of the Inter-governmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy organized in Geneva in July 2019.

Albania’s economy could benefit from competition and consumer protection given their direct and important role in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty. Empowered consumers who know and enforce their rights are subject to fewer abuses. Over the years, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recommendations on competition policies have contributed to improving the overall welfare of consumers and to creating a level playing field for businesses, which must apply a common set of standards, supporting competition. Competition creates possibilities for small- and medium-sized enterprises, removes barriers that protect entrenched elites and reduces opportunities for corruption.

In 2019, UNCTAD supported the participation of the chairwoman of the Albanian Competition Authority in the annual meeting of the Inter-governmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy in Geneva.
121. Following the workshop, nation-terminate housing and urban development in Albania’ on ‘Evidence-based policies to achieve SDGs: sus-
sibility UNECE, organised in Tirana a national workshop of achievement of SDG 11, MoFE, supported
and urban development and to support the reali-
tion towards more sustainable housing in the country
could have an extremely positive impact.

Housing is a fundamental human need that can in-
fluence public health, security and the wellbeing of both present and future generations. In 2018, Alba-
nia passed Law no. 22/2018 ‘On social housing pro-
grammes’ and developed a programme for low-cost
housing. With more than 50 percent of Albania’s in-
habitants currently residing in urban areas, a transi-
tion towards more sustainable housing in the country
could have an extremely positive impact.

To strengthen national capacity for the development of evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development and to support the realisation of achievement of SDGs, MoFE, supported by UNECE, organised in Tirana a national workshop on ‘Evidence-based policies to achieve SDGs: sustainable housing and urban development in Albania’ (2–3 May 2019). Following the workshop, national programmes for social and low-cost housing in the country, including development of an online system for collection of applications for housing by vulnerable groups, will be finalised by the end of September 2020. A second workshop on the same theme will take place in 2020, again in Tirana.

Challenges

From the perspective of entry into the European common market, informality, despite continued government action, is still of major concern to econom-
ic growth, competitiveness and public finances, and negatively affects new investments in the country.

The Territorial–Administrative Reform process in Alba-
nia has emphasised decentralisation and local autono-
my. At the same time, central government has shifted
the struggle in housing and urban development to the local level, requiring support from all partners.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNCTAD will continue supporting government and relevant institutions to strengthen the country’s trade policy framework to adapt to EU standards in key areas such as debt management, investment promotion, trade facilitation, enterprise development and competition. The Albanian Customs Administration will be enabled to implement a harmonised data model across all stakeholders according to the Business Process
Model to facilitate the movement of goods across the Western Balkans and implementation of a National Single Window. In the area of housing policies, UNECE efforts will focus on strengthening national capacity to collect data, as well as on developing evidence-based policies on housing, urban development and land administration.

Implementation progress

Although Albania has stable economic growth, acceleration of that growth is paramount for achieving convergence with the EU standards the country needs as an aspiring member. Albania is still one of the poorest countries in Europe with an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 23.4 percent in 2018 (INSTAT and EU–SILC 2019). The national minimum monthly wage is USD 232, compared with an average of USD 470 (31% of the EU average). During the fourth quarter of 2019, the employment rate of the working-age population (15–
64 years) was 61.6 percent, an increase of 3.1 percent upon that of the same quarter of 2018. The annual employment growth rate by main economic sector was 6.4 percent in industry, 2.3 percent in services and 2.3 percent in agriculture. The official unemployment rate in Q4 2019 was 11.2 percent. Although youth unemployment remained high, at 21.4 percent, it is experi-
ing a slight decrease annually. Unemploy-
ment in Albania is largely long term and structural, with long-term unemployed (more than one year) comprising 66 percent of the unemployed. Women, youth and those with little education are more exclud-
ed from jobs. At 26 percent, Albania NEET youth (Not in Employment, Education and Training) is the highest in the region.

The government has committed to promoting quality

123. LFS INSTAT, Q4 2019.
jobs and skills opportunities for all Albanian women and men with the aim of supporting equitable and sustainable economic growth in the country. This goal is being achieved through ensuring effectiveness of labour market policies, offering quality skills development opportunities, promoting equality and social inclusion, and strengthening the education, training and labour market governance framework. The three main laws of the sector have been adopted, including Law no. 15/2019 ‘On promotion of employment’, providing a new context for moving forward with the restructuring of the employment governance system.

In addition, in 2019, based on the Law on Social Enterprises (approved in 2017), MoHSP sent an invitation to interested entities to apply for the status of social enterprise,124 fulfill social objectives and use the profits gained to expand their activity and encourage entrepreneurship by creating new opportunities for involvement in active schemes of social protection and employment and of particular benefit to women.

The National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2019–2022 is focused on not only modernising the structures and functions of national agencies (National Agency for Employment and Skills, National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification), but also on designing policies and programmes that aim to address the specific needs of vulnerable youth, people with disabilities, rural inhabitants and those who face difficulties in joining the labour market. A NESS 2014–2020 mid-term review125 was finalised in 2019 with technical support provided by the UNDP programme ‘Skills Development for Employment’ to MoFE, as a milestone of the monitoring and evaluation plan of this Strategy from its adoption in 2014 until 2018. This comprehensive review assessed the entire set of outputs for 52 actions, 16 sub-objectives and the four strategic priorities. The report was presented to and endorsed by the Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG) for Employment and Social Policy. Findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review form the basis for the implementation extension of the Strategy and for revision of its Action Plan 2019-2022.

Paying attention to the above contextual development, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)-funded programme Skills Development for Employment (SD4E), implemented by UNDP, commenced its consolidation phase in January 2019 and focused on implementation of the priority actions to support the government’s reform in the employment and skills development sector. Key achievements during 2019 include:

- Revision of the Action Plan of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019–2022, based on the findings of the mid-term review and wide consultations with stakeholders, and adopted by the Council of Ministers (DCM no. 659, dated 10.10.2019); ii) Conducting of a comprehensive functional analysis of MoFE and the National Employment Service (NES), and a new organisational structure and modern functions proposed to transform NES into the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES), with the proposals adopted by DCM no. 554, dated 31.07.2019; and iii) Development of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for all institutions responsible for implementing employment and VET policies that was consulted with MoFE, NAES and National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification (NAVETQ).

- Impact evaluation report on the Employment Promotion Programmes (EPPs) implemented in 2016–2017 by NES; ii) Assessment and revision report of the current typology and implementation approach of the Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) to better address the needs of unemployed jobseekers registered in the employment offices. (The ALMPs were reconceptualised based on an approach that focuses on the profiling and needs of the jobseekers, existing programmes were re-designed with regard to delivery mode, and new packages, such as the Community Employment Programme, were introduced and endorsed by MoFE and NAES Management.); and iii) Ensuring the sustainability of the previous phase of SD4E initiatives. (The Self-Employment Programme has been taken on board by MoFE as an integral part of the EPPs and as part of the EPPs reform, targeting unemployed jobseekers registered in the employment offices.)

- A comprehensive VET review, including a description of the current level of implementation of the reform, an output analysis of the system and a road map for systemic private sector engagement in VET126 being carried out by SD4E with a first draft report in place on this process; ii) More than 100 representatives of government (MoFE, NAVETQ, NES), VET providers, private companies and VET students consulted in focus group discussions and through in-depth interviews; iii) Self-Assessment of 44 public VET providers carried out for the first time and a full report developed and endorsed by NAVETQ; and iv) Support to NAVETQ on implementation and further development of the Albanian Qualifications Framework commenced with a study visit by key national stakeholders to Ireland, the first country to develop a National Qualifications Framework based on a social partnership approach.

One key novelty of the Employment Promotion Law is the establishment of a Social Employment Fund, which will be managed by NAES and finance various types of employment programmes for people with disabilities. Based on UNDP’s pre-analysis and recommendations, the law introduces a quota, or levy, scheme for public and private employers and establishes an Employment Social Fund to finance programmes that aim to support training and employment programmes for PWDS and their families.127 To tap the potential of this legal provision, UNDP commissioned one international expert to explore the typologies of ALMPs and a skills matching tool for PWDS. In close collaboration with the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) and in consultation with NAES, a set of programmes were designed for on-the-job training, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship and start-ups, employment programmes, and workplace adjustments, among others. UNDP will continue to support NAES in reforming its employment services, profiling techniques and matching tools to better address the needs of PWDS who are clients of the employment offices. Furthermore, UNDP worked directly with the working group established at MoFE to design two crucial by-laws that would ensure implementation of the quota, or levy, scheme, i.e. the composition, criteria and roles of the board of the Employment Social Fund administrations and the

124. The law aims to provide a good legal framework for ‘social enterprise’ subjects in line with best European practices. It also sets the characteristics, as well as the social and economic criteria, an organisation shall fulfil to be legally considered and recognised as a social enterprise. A package of by-laws has been drafted and endorsed that makes the necessary conditions for development of social enterprises as a growth sector and agents for positive change. Completion of the legal framework on social enterprises in Albania opens opportunities to provide a new context for moving forward with the restructuring of the employment governance system. A comprehensive review of the mid-term review of the National Employment and Skills Strategy–2014–2020.html

125. The consultation process for a systemic private sector engagement in VET commenced with a study visit by key national stakeholders to Ireland, the first country to develop a National Qualifications Framework based on a social partnership approach.

126. The consultation process focused on engagement of the private sector in all labour market disciplines and skills needs analysis, b) design of VET qualifications and programmes, c) work-based training implementation, and d) assessment of professional competences.

127. This newly introduced quota or levy scheme firms that any employer with more than 25 employees should employ one person with one or more disabilities, and an additional person for every 50 employees thereafter. If the employer fails to fulfil this obligation, the Employment Social Fund an amount of 100 percent of the minimum wage per month for each obligation not fulfilled. The current qualification of employees at the Tax Administration office in Albania, based on the data provided by the General Directory of Taxes, in August 2019, if this provision of the law were to be fully implemented, 6,857 PWDS would be employed. On the other hand, if the employers were to only contribute to the Employment Social Fund, around EU 25 million would be collected each year (public and private employees included).
In line with the Law on Employment Promotion, the ILO enabled the core staff of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Qualification (NAVEQ) and MoFE to upgrade their knowledge and capacities on how to establish and operate a Sector Skills Committee, through a dedicated training conducted in Turin at the International Training Centre of ILO. Besides, in line with the above law as well as the NESS priority on rural areas, the ILO in collaboration with Business Albania, Employers’ representative and the ILO constituent, supported the conducting of a skills anticipation research (wine production value chain). During this process, a methodology was prepared to capacitate Sector Skills Committees to conduct skills research that correspond to selected value chain/private sector needs and requirements. The methodology will be used by NAVEQ with other sectors skills committees to be eventually established. The ILO efforts under this output contribute to the achievement of several SDGs such as SDG 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16 and 17, targets 4.1, 4.3, 5.5, 5.b, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8, 8.9, 8.b, 9.3, 9.b, 9.c, 10.1, 10.2, 16.3, 16.6, 17.3, 17.8, and indicators, to mention a few, 4.3.1, 4.4.1, 5.5.2, 8.5.2, 8.8.2, 8.9.1, 9.3.1, 9.b.1, 16.3.1, 16.3.3, 16.6.2, 16.7.2, 16.8.1.

FAO also supported the local government to deliver promotion and training activities on safety and quality standards, geographic indications (GIS), and organic and traditional products to a total of 200 farmers and agro-processors, along with the extension service, in six municipalities of Albania: Gjirokaster, Korce, Lezhe, Malesi e Madhe, Permet and Tirane. In collaboration with SIDA, the ILO initiated a three years project on Access to Justice in Labour Disputes through Mediation and Conciliation. The Project “support to building an effective system for Labour Dispute Resolution in Albania” will look into fixing the legal gaps and inconsistencies, building the professional skills among the state mediators and conciliators, and raising the awareness among the workers, employers, and their organizations on the advantages of the availability of a professional, fast and free of charge service granted by the state for the settlement of labour related disputes.

The ILO support to all its constituents in Albania aims at enabling a fair, fast and inclusive access to justice for all, including vulnerable categories of workers, through peaceful settlement of labour disputes, collective bargaining, collective agreements and creation of informed policies on prevention and amicable settlement of labour disputes. In the area of labour relations and social dialogue, the ILO provided technical support to the Secretariat of the National Labour Council (NLC), the highest platform of social dialogue for the world of work in Albania established under the Ministry of Finance and Economy. In strengthening capacities on the operation of the case management system of the Labour Dispute Resolution in line with the provisions in the Labour Code of Albania, the Secretariat is expected to provide for more effective proceedings of the NLC.

Challenges
The employment sector continues to face many challenges: lack of employment and skills development services in rural areas; insufficient and uncoordinated labour market information; lack of meaningful private sector engagement in VET; weak absorption capacities of institutions to implement employment and VET reform; unstable institutional set-up; and a need to introduce and roll out an accreditation model for public and private VET providers. Moreover, the two recent national emergencies the country is dealing with—the earthquake of 26 November 2019 and COVID-19—constitute major hurdles for the smooth operations of both central and local governments, as well as for the technical support provided by the UN. While the country is making efforts to cope with these emergencies, government has announced an economic plan to address, over the very short term (three months), the needs of businesses and laid-off workers, in an effort to counter the expected severe economic repercussions and an increase in the unemployment rate. Besides continuing to support the government in carrying forward the labour sector reform, the UN is also revisiting its programmes to best align them with the emerging needs and priorities of Albania in response to the two emergencies.

Way Ahead 2020–2021
The SDC-funded SD4E programme, implemented by UNDP, will focus its interventions in the following areas: 1) Employment and VET Policy Design will support MoFE for an Annual Work Plan; roll out the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for the employment and VET sector; support improvement of the legislative and institutional framework; develop a Roadmap for a Labour Market Observatory; and finalise the Outcome analysis of the Albanian VET system and a roadmap for systemic private sector engagement in VET; 2) Employment Policy Implementation will finalise the reform process of the employment services; conduct an impact assessment of the Self-Employment Programme; and support NAES in rolling out the Programme as part of ALMPs; and 3) VET Policy Implementation will develop an accreditation model for VET providers; develop a national model for continuous professional development of VET teachers; and support implementation of the Albanian Qualifications Framework.

ILO will support upgrading of Out-of-Court Resolution of Labour Disputes through raising awareness and providing relevant information and mediation skills to the ALDR system in Albania. The ILO will continue its technical support to NAVEQ in establishing Sector Skill Committees as per the obligation deriving from the Employment Promotion Law. Bearing the importance of working conditions in the wellbeing of the workers as well as in the productivity level of the enterprises, the ILO will support the State Labour and Social Service Inspectorate in upgrading their capacities in the area of Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace. The Labour inspectors will be trained in building appropriate OSH protocols and monitoring the compliance of the enterprises to the set protocols as per different sectors and industries. As provided for in the OSH policy paper, these activities will benefit not only labour inspectors but also employers’ and workers’ representatives, contributing to the achievement of SDG 8.

The ILO and FAO will collaborate in replicating the value chain skills anticipation methodology in other sectors of agriculture (i.e. dairy value chain). FAO will focus on VET and skills for farm diversification (produce and types of farms) and agri-tourism, climate change and disaster resilience, sustainable and innovative agriculture and rural development.
OUTPUT 3.3 - AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There is increased capacity to design and implement policies and strategies for sustainable rural development and modernisation of the agricultural sector that are gender sensitive and empower rural women.

Implementation progress

Agriculture continues to be one of the main pillars of the Albanian economy contributing 19 percent to GDP (INSTAT 2019) and providing jobs to one-third of employed people in the country. The mean annual growth rate in the sector over the last five years is estimated at 3–3.5 percent.130 Growth value added (GVA) in agriculture has increased by two- to three-fold since 2007, reaching about EUR 2.33 billion in 2018. Over the last decade and a half, the sector has become more efficient, farms have become more productive and profitable, and labour productivity, measured as GVA per full-time employee, has more than doubled. Nevertheless, its development is still below potential, mostly as a result of problems in the sector stemming from rural exodus, the small size of farms, land ownership, marketing of agricultural produce, irrigation and drainage, low level of technologies employed, weak organisation of farmers and a low level of development of the agro-food industry in the country. A considerable proportion of working-age women who work on farms are engaged, and 1.8 times more likely than are men, in unpaid family-farm labour (INSTAT 2019). The average size of the family farm in Albania is only 1.3 hectares, compared to an EU average of 14.2 ha (Eurostat 2019). Agricultural activity is made difficult due to increased transport and production costs, limited maximisation of investment effects, and the utilisation of advanced technologies made virtually impossible.


Accelerating economic growth and reducing rural-urban disparities requires the modernisation of Albania’s agriculture and agro-food processing sectors. In particular, value chain development involving food production linked to tourism, promotion and development of local products, increased financial literacy and improved access to finance are some of the main drivers of rural development (SDG MAPS 2018).

Ever since it obtained EU candidate status, Albania has emphasised agriculture and rural development reform as a means to maintain competitiveness while the country opens up gradually to the EU and the rest of the Western Balkans. In January 2018, government endorsed priorities in the field of agriculture and rural development for the period 2018–2020, with a focus on increasing rural income through diversification and rural tourism activities.

In 2019, UN agencies in Albania supported the government’s key priorities, with increased focus on smallholders, rural women and youth, diversification of economic activities, mainly in three geographical areas (Belsh, Korce and Malesi e Madhe), and promotion of GI, organic and traditional products in the same areas. Attention was placed on strengthening MoARD capacities for statistical reporting and technical negotiations in agriculture and trade with the EU, as well as on SDG data collection and monitoring, focusing on SDGs 2, 5, 14 and 15. Furthermore, as Albania was hit by a strong earthquake in November 2019, UN agencies activities were focused on development of the PDNA and Post-Disaster Recovery Programme.

Advancements in the agriculture and rural development sector framework were made in 2019, supported by FAO, through the development of an Action Plan on e-Agriculture strategy 2021–2027, which will be used for the Digital Summit to be held in Tirana in 2020, as well as development of a concept note and ToR for the new ISARD 2021–2027, endorsed by MoARD. In 2020, GEZ will support the ministry with preparation of a new 2021–2027 Agriculture and Rural Development Sectoral Strategy.

Awareness is growing of the pivotal role of rural women in agriculture. Within the framework of the 3rd edition of the country’s largest agricultural fair, Albania Working the Land, which took place during 16–17 November, FAO and UN Women raised awareness on best practices in relation to typical organic products, slow food and rural women products, by (i) promoting information materials on the work of UN Women and FAO in the country; (ii) inviting a slow food team to demonstrate their cooking methods using typical produce from Albania; and (iii) promoting honey products by two women beekeepers and honey producers from Gjinar, Elbasan, formerly supported by UN Women. As the fair received more than 1,000 visitors a day, the outreach of this joint awareness activity was significant.

FAO continued in 2019 its support to smallholders for diversification of their economic activities, and committed to an additional programme for the year 2020. Main product chains were selected in the project areas of Belsh, Korce, Malesi e Madhe and Permet, and related support programmes to be implemented from 2020 were validated with stakeholders. In addition, in the same areas, GI, organic and traditional products were promoted, and networking of producers, targeted consumers, local restaurants and tourist shops was strengthened to encourage marketing of their produce. Moreover, 102 women gained access to the national subsidy schemes of MoARD, partly credited to UN Women’s technical work in engendering the budget programmes of the ministry. However, the number of such women is still very small, constituting only five percent of all beneficiaries. This FAO and UN Women support contributes to achievement of the SDG targets 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.3, 8.2 and 8.5, and related indicators for Albania, such as 1.a.1, 1.2.1, 1.4.1, 2.3.1, 8.2.1 and 8.5.1.

Through FAO support, a pilot national school food and nutrition project started in Baldushk, Tirana, in collabor-
indicator 2.1.1, among others. the SDG targets 1.1, 1.2, and, especially, 2.1, and related rural areas. This support contributes to achievement of a pilot model will also be replicated to the communities and training to school teachers, children and parents. The purpose of the project is to (i) establish a coordinating channelled into one primary school in Tirana for a ‘milk and snack break’ for the pupils. The private company is supporting the cost of the milk produced and delivered to school. The support government, delaying the start of implementation.

Way Ahead 2020–2021
Building on the recommendations of the latest Commission on the Status of Women regarding rural women, UN Women will collaborate with FAO and MoAARD in strengthening the roles and contribution of women to rural development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its core principle of leaving no one behind. During 2020–2021, effort will focus on providing models of change for rural communities, analysing data and stakeholders at the local level, exploring the potential of groups that can later be transformed into local action groups (LAGs), and later be transformed into local action groups (LAGs), and will identify local interest groups that are able to effectively utilise and invest available funding in supporting their rural economy and tourism. The focus of FAO will be on increasing rural income through support provided to smallholders and family farms, focused on rural women and youth, in the diversification of economic activities, as well as absorption capacities of smallholders for national and IPARD funds; formulating and endorsing with government new investment opportunities and schemes targeting smallholders, women and youth; strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for agri-food production and climate change resilience for increased competitiveness and sustainability of the agri-food sector; continuing the support for MoAARD with regard to agriculture statistics, data collection, reporting, economic and policy analysis for technical negotiations in agriculture and trade with the EU, as well as on EU approximation, for Chapter 11; starting preparatory work for ISARD 2021–2027; promoting GI, organic and traditional products; and continuing support for government on DRR and the Post-Disaster Recovery Programme. Moreover, FAO, UN Women and ILO will collaborate to enhance farmers’ access to finance, land, VET, advisory services, ICT and digitalisation, including e-Agriculture, aiming to create investment opportunities for this group. Meanwhile, FAO and ILO will design a model that incorporates the development of milk value chains through farmer participation in a school milk programme.

In the framework of GoA’s 100 Villages Project, UN Women and FAO will be starting (inception phase in 2020) a three-year joint programme, GREAT, aiming to strengthen women’s roles and contribution to rural development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its core principle of leaving no one behind. Efforts in 2020 will entail providing models of change for rural communities, analysing data and stakeholders at the local level, exploring the potential of groups that can later be transformed into local action groups (LAGs), and will identify local interest groups that are able to effectively utilise and invest available funding to support their rural economy and tourism. The development of value chains, including short value chains, will be framed by the FAO guiding principles on developing sustainable food value chains, and by the development of gender-sensitive value chains. The intervention aims to contribute to and support government in implementation of the SDGs, in particular the targets for SDG 5 (reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, and to eliminate all forms of VAW in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, and sexual and other types of exploitation) and SDG 8 (policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products, and strengthens the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all).

MoAARD capacities have been strengthened with regard to agriculture statistics, data collection, reporting, and economic and policy analysis for technical negotiations in agriculture and trade with the EU, supported by FAO. The 2019 Statistical Annual Report was produced in collaboration with MoAARD. In addition, FAO experts participated in the national and international teams assessing the post-disaster damages and losses in agriculture, following the November earthquake, feeding the analysis into the PDNA report produced by government.

Challenges
Limited capacities of MoAARD with regard to EU integration negotiations might influence preparations on Chapter 11, as well as preparation of the approximation plan and renewal of the Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (ISARD) 2014–2020. The low absorption of both national and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development (IPARD) funds, especially for smallholders, who remain a marginalised stratum, remains a problem and is delaying the emergence of results of the impact of the support (already provided by government, IPARD and development partners) to the smallholders. Moreover, economic strengthening of rural women continues to face difficulties in terms of property ownership, rights to resources, and access to financial and advisory services. To address this issue, UN Women and FAO have developed a project, Gender Rural Equality and Tourism (GREAT), which is pending finalisation of the funding commitment from the Italian government, delaying the start of implementation.

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Implementation progress

In the last couple of years, Albanian institutions have increased their ability to monitor, safeguard, preserve, restore and protect the country’s rich cultural heritage as a means for promoting sustainable development and economic growth. The country is aiming to tap the potential for cultural creativity and innovation, provide opportunities to stimulate growth, integrate more quickly with the EU and enhance its international image. All efforts and actions taken by government, specifically the Ministry of Culture, with the support of UNESCO over the years and during 2019, aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, the targets of SDGs 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 and related key indicators 11.4.1, 13.3.2, 14.2.1, 14.5.1, to name a few.

Yet, the contribution of culture to development needs to be promoted further. Cultural heritage is mostly used as a tool and means to boost tourism development. Despite possessing a number of world heritage properties the country still needs to improve policies and mechanisms for their proper utilisation and long-term protection and thus provide benefits for its communities. The recently developed legal framework provides sufficient elements for proper management and promotion of culture and cultural heritage, but its implementation needs to be further enhanced. The main achievement in this area in 2019 are the UNESCO and partners'131 efforts in

131. Ministry of Environment and of Culture of Albania and of North Macedonia and the municipalities of Pogradec, Ohrid and Struga.

the enhancing, safeguarding and sustainable development of the Lake Ohrid region by strengthening cooperation between Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia over the region’s shared cultural and natural heritage.132 In this regard, following the 2018 official submission of the natural and cultural heritage of the part of the Lake Ohrid region that lies in Albania to the World Heritage Centre by the authorities of the Republic of Albania, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed the extension on the World Heritage List.

Challenge

Although progress has been made in the culture sector, Albania still lacks the design of an adequate legal framework and assurance of further capacity development actions to address emerging issues in the preservation of Albania’s rich cultural heritage.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNESCO’s support will be focused towards targeting inclusive policies to foster cultural and creative industries, improve access to cultural markets, protect cultural diversity, and improve the management of cultural heritage as drivers and enablers for sustainable development that ensure equal participation, access and contribution to cultural life of all people, including vulnerable groups, and regardless of their gender. It will also support reporting on the role of culture as an enabler for all people to develop to their full potential within the SDG 2030 Agenda.

132 All implemented activities supported protection of the trans-boundary region of Lake Ohrid, one of the world’s oldest lakes with one of the largest centres of endemism in Europe, by addressing threats against the natural and cultural heritage of the region, such as unplanned urban development, waste management issues, habitat alteration, lack of effective management, and destruction and depletion of natural resources.
Outcome 4: Environment and Climate Change

Government and non-government actors adopt and implement innovative, gender-sensitive national and local actions for environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

Outcome 4—Environment and Climate Change—consists of two outputs focusing on 1) DRR and Climate Change, and 2) Natural Resources.

This outcome supports the government in achieving four priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Growth through sustainable resources and territorial development, 3) Investing in people and social cohesion, and 4) Good governance, democracy and rule of law. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 15 and 27.

The total available budget for implementation of Outcome 4 in 2019 was USD 2.6 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Croatia, Germany, Italy and Norway, as well as the GEF and UN regional and global funds. The outcome delivery was 70 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline 2016-2017</th>
<th>Status 2019</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which comprehensive measures—plans, strategies, policies, programmes and budgets—are being implemented to achieve low-emission and/or climate-resilient development objectives</td>
<td>34.2% RES in energy portfolio</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of farmers accessing disaster early warning system</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of sites including World Heritage sites, with drought/DRR plans interventions, that are gender-sensitive</td>
<td>0 (UNESCO) sites</td>
<td>3 (UNESCO) sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected areas and Biosphere reserves, with tracking, sustainable financial and legal mechanisms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 biosphere reserve (Gizhgal, Prishtina Biosphere Reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence and quality of the First Biennial Update Report of Albania to the UNFCCC that is gender-sensitive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>First Biennial Update Report is being prepared, to be finalized in 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that all ten indicators are on track.

For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.
Implementation progress

Albania’s commitment to climate action and environmental protection has multiple motivations: its commitment to SDGs, requirements as part of EU accession, the importance of the environment to tourism and its economy including through electricity generation, and of course the genuine desire of the population to live in a healthier environment. As of July 2019, the country is the first in the region with an endorsed Strategy on Climate Change and related Action Plan, representing a general cross-cutting strategy with policy objectives and concrete actions that contribute to implementation of the Paris Agreement and the National Determined Contribution (NDC) target. Albania is preparing its First Biennial Update Report (BUR), and as part of this process intends to review the NDC in line with the EU Green Deal.

Further to the support provided for preparation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, UNDP provided government with a position paper and technical advice in the frame of the 2019 Climate Action Summit. UNDP is supporting government in preparing BUR under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The support comprises updating several of the sections (National Circumstances, Institutional Arrangements, Constraints and Gaps, Financial and Technical Needs, Capacity Needs), as well as the time series for the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the years 2010–2016 for the sectors of energy, agriculture, forestry and land use, industrial processes and product use, waste and wastewater, involving quality assurance and quality control. Gender issues are also being mainstreamed into BUR through UNDP support. Efforts contribute towards achievement of SDG goal 13, indicator 13.2.1.

Further, WHO support focused on strengthening the institutional capacities in DRR through (i) development of a Roadmap for the National Action Plan of Health Security; (ii) completion of an Albanian Strategic Risk Assessment with the main outcomes of preparation of a Public Health Risk Profile, Register of Risks, and Workplan for Emergency Preparedness Actions; (iii) formulation of a National Emergency Operation Plan of MoHSP, an Emergency Operation Plan for the Infectious Disease Department at Mother Teresa University Hospital Centre; (iv) assessment of IPH laboratories with regard to high threat pathogens; (v) a tabletop exercise on a flash floods scenario with 35 participants from various institutions, including MoHSP, IPH, GDOHS, NCEM, NHI, FSVI and MoARD. Efforts contribute towards achieving SDG goal 3, indicator 3.4.1.
Multiple efforts by UN agencies focused on the management of water resources. The development of the Trans-boundary River Drin Strategic Action Programme, supported by UNDP, marks a milestone as the first strategic document for the water resources in the region, guiding the Drin Riparians to address the key trans-boundary issues. UNESCO’s focus during 2019 remained on improving DRR for UNESCO designated sites in Albania. In this regard, national DRR capacities were strengthened through (i) elaboration and adoption of a management plan for World Heritage property, specifically Natural Heritage and Cultural Heritage of Ohrid Region; and (ii) development of a Hydrogeological Conceptual Model of the Skadar/Shkoder–Buna/Bojana Trans-boundary Aquifer System (Albania and Montenegro). The latter included elaboration of a conceptual model of the system, a risk assessment, identification of groundwater bodies, and development of an Aquifer Comprehensive Vulnerability Map (ACVM) to be used as a tool for territorial planning and exploitation of the trans-boundary aquifer to protect groundwater quality. Moreover, a groundwater monitoring network and programme for the trans-boundary aquifer between Albania and Montenegro was developed based on Water Framework Directive (WFD) criteria. Accordingly, the main groundwater bodies (GWBs) set goals and will use the monitoring programme to identify priorities.

Lake Ohrid, a World Heritage site shared between North Macedonia and Albania, was the subject during 2019 of preparatory actions to determine whether or not it might be added to the list of sites in danger. UNESCO supported preparations for a joint World Heritage Centre–ICOMOS–IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region property, to take place in January 2020, to address the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee (Decision 43 COM 88.9) regarding the threats facing the cultural and natural attributes of the property. The Committee (with Decision 43 COM 78.36) requested the State Parties submit by 1 February 2020 an updated report on the state of conservation of the property. The World Heritage Committee plans to consider at its 44th session in 2020 the potential or ascertained danger to its Outstanding Universal Value and its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

WHO continued its support to Albanian institutions towards achievement of the obligations of Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes, and provided technical support to MoHSP for piloting water safety plans in small water utilities in Petrelë, Tirane.

Albania’s first draft country programme to engage with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was developed with UNEP support. Actions included (i) a comprehensive desk review of Albania’s climate, environment, waste management, and strategies of industry, agriculture and energy; (ii) two multi-stakeholder consultation meetings with an average participation of 33 participants; (iii) one workshop on GCF accreditation with participation of 22 multi-stakeholders; and (iv) an assessment report identifying knowledge, capacity gaps and needs of the National Focal Point Coordination Team. A brochure and leaflet containing information on GCF in Albania, as well as guidelines on how to engage with the Fund, were produced in 2019. Moreover, the National Designated Authority, MoTE, launched a call for proposals (2 September–14 October) to further strengthen the pipeline of projects that will be included in the Country Programme and widen the range of stakeholder involvement, ensuring a better consulted and inclusive programme formulation process. This is a step forward in contributing to the achievement of SDG goal 13, target 13.2 and indicator 13.2.1 making Albania one of the countries that is working towards the establishment of an integrated plan that increases the country’s ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change as well as foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production. It also contributes significantly to SDG target 13.3 and indicator 13.3.2 with increased communication and strengthened institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions.

Environmental governance was the subject of additional actions by UNDP. The agency worked towards increased public participation and transparency by supporting the National Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System. Its establishment, also in line with EU legislation, resulted in twelve regional environment agencies and local government actors sharing protocols on monitoring and reporting on environmental indicators (biodiversity, land protection, air quality and climate change). A Land Degradation Neutrality Base-line for Albania and Soil Erosion Measurement Norms and Standards were prepared, through UNDP support, focusing on the multiple services that land provides, creating coherence among sustainable development policies and a clear direction for action. Two MoUs were signed with Gjirokaster Polytechnic University, UNDP and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, promoting triangular knowledge sharing and the experience of academia in environmental and climate data collection, processing and distribution with direct application at the local level. In addition, the first hackathon on environmental governance, organized by UNDP, explored innovative solutions to improve Albania’s environmental governance through new and collaborative ways of working among the public, private and civic sectors to make the most of new digital technology opportunities, and (ii) capacity development of the Albanian government and agencies to promote sustainable development and counter the risks of climate change and environmental degradation. In addition, UNCC’s efforts towards evidence-based environmental governance and sustainable environmental policies in support of the 2030 Agenda in South-East Europe resulted in the finalisation of (i) a review of the implementation of the recommendations coming from Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) vis-à-vis the SDGs and targets, and (ii) a need assessment to determine and address gaps identified in the EPRs between the current conditions and the desired achievements of the relevant SDGs. The national validation process of these reports will be conducted in 2020.

UNDP’s efforts to support Albania’s alignment with EU requirements in the area of marine protection and biodiversity were focused on financing mechanisms to strengthen marine and coastal protected areas (MPAs) and resulted in several achievements during 2019, contributing to the achievement of SDG 14, indicators 14.1.1, 14.1.1.2, 14.1.5 and SDG 15, indicators 15.5.1 and 15.9.1:

- Maritime legislation compliance with EU requirements: A detailed gap analysis with a road map and timeline on approximation of the maritime
sector legislation with the EU acquis and the Barcelona Convention was developed, and 22 pieces of legislation prepared. The General Maritime Directorate was supported for enhancing performance and financial sustainability.

- Sustainable tourism activities in Vlora Bay and management of marine debris: A risk assessment of pollution from marine oil spills and hazardous pollution in ports and sea waters was developed, and two exercises on response measures and management of oil clean-up operation organised. Personal protection equipment was distributed in four ports. Recycling activities for used cooking oil in Vlora involved the participation of 42 economic operators. For one year, through these recycling efforts, a total of 4,200 kg of such oil was collected and shipped to specialised recycling facilities. 

- Piloting interventions in revenue generating mechanisms at four national parks: A national planning framework for the institutional development of the National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA) and a medium-term Financial Plan for the Protected Area System were developed and endorsed, feeding from the baseline assessments138 and business plans prepared in the country’s four main national parks: Dajti, Divjaka-Karavasta, Llogara, and Karaburun-Sazan. A mobile application was prepared for Android platforms and iOS for the national parks, with user access and materials provided on the MPA of Karaburun-Sazani website: https://www.karaburnumsazanmpa.com/index.php/al/ with interfaces for tourism, culture and nature conservation, including tracks and paths, photographs, maps, a questionnaire and feedback. Four information centres in the four main national parks became operational over the year and youth involvement was promoted through seasonal and other work. A model of practice for MPAs in Albania was attested to the priority management needs of the Vlora Protected Area administration, including: area monitoring and surveying, training and capacity building, provisioning of supplies (i.e. logistic equipment, signalling and anchoring buoys, Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Centre), availing the administration with appropriate and adopted patrolling capacities, and enabling provision and operation of a new speedboat for surveying the MPA.

All the above efforts are contributing to the achievement of SDG 14 and 15. The management of the only Marine Park Karaburun–Sazan is improving as measured by the progress in the performance indicator, which has increased from 47 percent in 2015 to 53 percent in 2019. The number of tourists visiting the protected areas in 2019 increased to 916,660, or by 30 percent compared with 2018.

UNEPA’s implementation of its new project ‘Promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Albania through Integrated Restoration of Ecosystems’ resulted in several achievements in 2019, which contribute to the achievement of SDG Goal 15, targets 15.2 and 15.6, indicators 15.2.1 and 15.6.1: MoTe approval of a comprehensive assessment and legislative gap analysis for SLM, including recommendations for revision; identification of sub-legal acts for drafting (starting in 2020) in support of a new draft law on forestry, development of a report proposing the most adequate legal and economic instruments for stimulating investments in land productivity; finalisation of a capacity needs assessment at both central and local levels and training of fourteen officials from state and local governments in Austria on SLM practices; and organisation of three successful awareness-raising campaigns on soil conservation and land degradation issues. An assessment is ongoing into current capacities and training needs of farmers for adoption of SLM practices, with 50 farming households selected to adopt SLM practices in Kolonja Municipality.

Management of genetic knowledge of Albania’s resources also received support during 2019. UNDP assisted the preparation of a legal framework for access and benefit sharing (ABS) of genetic resources and a structure for establishment of an inter-sectoral committee along with a database to generate the information. In addition, UNDP supported development of recommendations on Traditional Knowledge protocols, prioritising the benefiting species. An information dissemination strategy and materials on ABS and traditional knowledge were produced. Moreover, cooperation between the Albanian Genebank and Tirana Agriculture University at Kamza is serving to enhance the national database for local and autochthonous plant genetic resources and evaluating resources of high economic potential for bioprospecting. A national mapping of genetic resources of plants and livestock was also developed.

FAO has been proactively engaged in activities aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change on agriculture, such as raising awareness and capacitating central and local institutions, extension services and farmer communities on climate-smart agriculture, integrated pest management and disaster risk management, including post-disaster needs assessment in agriculture. FAO efforts in 2019 for disaster risk reduction included the training of 15 experts from the Extension Service Sector, at MoARD and regional offices, on disaster risk prioritisation, emergency response preparedness and contingency planning for natural disasters affecting the agriculture sector. In addition, FAO is supporting improvements to the valuation of inland fishery assets with regard to their contribution to livelihoods.
recreation and food security, while policymakers are being provided with reliable and comparable information on which to base decisions that affect fishery habitats.

UNIDO supported the drafting of a policy and regulatory financial support schemes and measures for establishing an enabling environment for a rapid uptake of bio-energy technologies production. Support included the preparation of guidelines for policymakers and guidance on how to develop quality infrastructure in support of national renewable energy technology markets and consultations with major stakeholders (policymakers, agro-processing lines in the olive-oil sector, and relevant agro-industrial associations). As a result of technical assistance provided to 40 enterprises to prepare feasibility studies and business plans, and to complete a grant application procedure, seven pilot enterprises received grant support and have installed several pieces of bio-energy equipment. More technology will be installed in 2020 with the aim of helping reduce costs and increasing the adoption of bio-energy equipment. Enterprises will be less dependent upon fluctuating energy costs and will manage their waste in a sustainable manner. UNIDO’s efforts in Albania have contributed to enhanced stakeholder cooperation and investments in clean energy technology, increased share of renewable energy and access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, set up the market environment that allows and promotes the use and replication of bio-energy technologies, leading to significant greenhouse gas emission reductions and help Albania in its transformation towards low carbon development – contribution to SDGs 7, 9, 13, targets 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 13.2, indicators 7.1.2, 7.2.1 and 13.2.1.

Challenges

The key challenges affecting the sector relate to the continuing weak human and technical capacities to address an integrated policy on environment and climate change at both the central and local level, while the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change needs to become functional.

Although the GCF National Designated Authority (NDA) has been established, there is no formal coordination mechanism for its effective engagement in the country, and no formal no-objection procedure exists. Whereas Albania has adopted numerous strategies and action plans in the last couple of years, there is a strong need for a comprehensive desk review in order to ensure coherence of the national approach to climate finance and prioritisation needs. Meanwhile, the country has not adopted a national programme or a similar prioritisation-based document.

The existing legislative framework does not support the integration of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) approaches into relevant laws and regulations, and SLM is not identified as a priority action in relevant plans and strategies. Local authorities responsible for land management are not capacitated to manage land resources, while financing mechanisms for investment in SLM practices are not functioning. Meanwhile, natural resource managers and farmers are unaware of the importance of soil conservation and of SLM approaches.

The new Law on Protected Areas and the respective by-laws are a step forward in support of government for an effective management of those areas. However, enforcement and control mechanisms need to be strengthened. Finally, sustained tourism activities and visitor centres require additional resources, both human and financial.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UN agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNICE, FAO, UNIDO, WHO) will focus on building institutional capacity, including for data provision and knowledge to integrate the environment and climate considerations more fully into the national regulatory framework, and to develop new capacities and systems for implementation and compliance monitoring across the major sectors.

Key UNDP activities include: i) revitalisation of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change; ii) policy support and reporting in line with UNFCCC and EU requirements, in both climate change mitigation and adaption areas, and revision of the First Albanian National Determined Contribution; iii) mainstreaming of gender issues into national policies on climate change; iv) national capacity assessment and national platform for DRR in line with EU and Sendai (Japan) requirements; v) alignment with EU requirements in the area of nature protection and biodiversity with focus on financing mechanisms for protected areas; vi) sustainable tourism activities in Vlora Bay and management of marine debris; vii) piloting of interventions in revenue-generating mechanisms in four national parks; viii) support for actions towards EU horizontal legislation involving public participation in decision making through increased transparency in an indicator-based national environmental information and management system; and ix) further support for maritime sector compliance with EU requirements in a twinning and exchange with Norway.

UNEP’s main focus for the SLM project will be application of SLM in Kolonja Municipality, with the drafting of local plans and identification of 120 ha of degraded sites, and supporting MoTE in drafting sub-legal acts deriving from the new draft law on forestry. With regard to GCF, two knowledge products on the Fund and Albania’s involvement, responsibilities and possibilities will be developed, along with a web-based dissemination mechanism. The GCF country programme will be finalised.

FAO efforts in the area of DRR and Recovery will include restoring productive capacity for farmers, support for sustainable investments, and decreased vulnerability and increased resilience of communities and authorities to disasters. This will be completed through provision of FAO technical guidance on policy and agricultural statistics, and support in strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for agri-food production and climate change resilience. Regarding natural resources, FAO will continue its work towards improving sustainable management of inland fisheries through developing standardised methodologies and scientific cooperation, improving capacity for fisheries monitoring, training in data collection, formulation of fisheries management strategies and harmonised legislation to help policymakers and stakeholders, such as anglers associations and fishing communities, to facilitate sustainable management of freshwater fisheries in Albania.

UNIDO will continue supporting the drafting of the policy and regulatory financial support schemes and measures for establishing an enabling environment for a rapid uptake of bio-energy technologies.

UNESCO’s focus will be on supporting the organisation of a Reactive Monitoring mission, reviewing the overall state of conservation of the Natural and Cultural heritage of the Ohrid Region property, as well as making progress in implementation of the World Heritage Committee Decision 43 COM 8B.9, including its specific recommendations (paragraph 6 points a–n), and previous Committee decisions and mission recommendations.

WHO support will continue on strengthening the institutional capacities for DRR in the health and environment sectors, and towards achievement of the obligations of the Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes.
Supporting the Western Balkans collective leadership on reconciliation: building momentum and sustainability for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, RYCO

The Western Balkans RYCO and UN Albania have launched a partnership and joint project valued at USD 2.1 million, supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund. This partnership is focused on enhancing reconciliation in the WB6, as measured by increasing the embracing of diversity and reducing prejudice and discrimination. RYCO’s establishment in and of itself illustrates the political will of leaders across the region to work on such issues. This inter-governmental initiative will work towards achieving its objectives by supporting youth activism, mobility and exchange, and social inclusion. Implementation of the joint programme began in the final quarter of 2018, with an intense period of preparation and coordination among UN agencies UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, and RYCO across the WB6.

In 2019, the partners focused on project start-up: setting up implementation mechanisms and mobilising human resources. A regional introductory meeting took place in January 2019 and the first steering committee meeting took place in April. A regional survey on youth peace perceptions was added as a new project component, to be followed by youth-led dialogue and advocacy.

RYCO also launched a second open call for proposals in 2019, with PBF resources of USD 600,000, and co-sharing EU funds of EUR 500,000, aiming to support regional CSOs and secondary schools in the areas of regional youth cooperation, mobility and exchange, dealing with the past, inter-cultural dialogue and advocacy.

• UNFPA has been working on adapting the Y-Peer methodology (a youth networking initiative) towards peacebuilding. Western Balkan contexts are being analysed in parallel with the development of an outline of the training manual, based on youth peer-to-peer methodology. The training manual outline and draft are being widely consulted and are planned to be finalised within first half of 2020. Fifteen implementation workshops in the six WB contracting parties (minimum two workshops in each country) at the local level will focus on participation of hard-to-reach marginalised groups, reaching a total of 600 youth and 12 grassroots organisations inclusive of Roma/Egyptians, LGBTI, young girls and women. This training tool and package will be expanded with innovative ideas and solutions for further use by the more vulnerable youths and by grassroots.

• RYCO concluded the recruitment processes for its central office staff based in Tirana, with one project leader, one project assistant, one M&E advisor, one administrative and financial assistant, one communications assistant, as well as five local branch office assistants and one M&E advisor for the WB6 contracting parties. The project priority is now enhancement of RYCO staff and institutional capacities, informed by the recommendations of the micro-assessment report carried out by UNDP in August 2019. Through its second call for proposals, RYCO received support to consolidate the small grant facility, and lessons learned from that round of open calls were implemented in the next call.

• An inception workshop for the newly added research component, bringing together RYCO, UN agencies, researchers, CSOs and youth from the WB6, took place in early October 2019. The workshop collected inputs for the design of the methodology and thematic areas of regional research into young people’s perceptions on peace and security, and discussed questions on inclusive, youth-led research and advocacy. The survey’s outline of methodology and trainings will be drafted and consulted among the stakeholders in early 2020, and finalised within the first quarter, followed by fieldwork, validation consultations with youth and dialogue events.

The project results are expected to be launched in regional events at the end of 2020.

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[140] The team is working to revise the annual workplan to adapt to Covid-19 situation and restrictions/delications. The target will be the same, but the methodology and tools might be revised, leading into adapting part of the workshops and trainings into online sessions, to the level possible and feasible.
UN in Albania immediate response to the earthquake
December 2019

On 26 November 2019, Albania experienced a powerful earthquake of magnitude 6.4, the strongest the country had experienced since 1979 and which killed 51 people. It is estimated that 220,000 people, some seven percent of the population, were affected by the quake. A post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) undertaken by the EU, UN, World Bank and Government of Albania appealed to, and received Euro 1.08 billion from, the international community to rebuild houses, schools, businesses and other vital infrastructure, with the pledges exceeding the support originally requested. Following the earthquake, the United Nations family immediately began mobilising and organising their support on the ground, as follows:

WHO (Country and Regional Office)
• Deployed four additional Health Emergency experts and repurposed the WHO Country Office staff.
• Supported national health authorities in assessing medical needs and repurposing facilities and personnel, focusing on primary health care, in order to:
  • coordinate the response and recovery of the Health Sector
  • map the actors working in health with regard to who does what, where and when
  • conduct a Needs Assessment for the Emergency Medical Team field hospital to ensure continuity of health services
  • procure emergency medical devices to equip three ambulances
  • conduct Public and Risk Communication and Re-source Mobilisation for MoHSP
• ensure the early warning and surveillance system is fully functional among the displaced population, including monitoring of water quality and hygiene conditions
• prepare the Health Sector Post-Disaster Need Assessment (HS-PDNA).

UNHCR
• Mobilised 400 m3 of Core Relief Items, donated through the General Directorate of State Reserves in close coordination with the Ministry of Defence, the General Civil Emergency Directorate and EU Civil Protection Team. Items included 171 family tents and their winterization kits, 12,304 sleeping bags, 9,990 rubber mats, 876 plastic mats, 370 tarpaulins, 13,800 blankets and 12,000 raincoats.

UNDP
• Deployed a team of international advisers for the post-disaster emergency response and early recovery efforts. It also provided broad support to the PDNA process, leading several sub-sectors and supporting the overall process alongside the EU.
• Applied the household and building damage assessment methodology and tool, in partnership with government, generating data for emergency relief and for planning the support for recovery. Government adopted the methodology and tool to their needs in order to undertake a building damage assessment in seven affected municipalities.
• Signed an agreement with the Albanian Institute of Statistics to run a mini Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) to assess the living conditions of affected citizens through innovative methodologies for data collection and analysis.

UNICEF
• Addressed critical child protection and education needs, with more than 1,400 children benefiting through six Child Friendly Spaces and four Temporary Learning Spaces, guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.
• Co-led Working Groups on Education, Child Protection and Humanitarian Cash Transfers.
• Provided technical assistance to MoESY for taking stock of the damage and losses faced by the education sector and providing estimates of the recovery and reconstruction needs.
• Invested in building the capacity of national and local actors involved in the child protection response to improve their knowledge and skills in implementing and monitoring child protection standards, providing psychological first aid, and supporting assessment and determination of the child’s best interests. More than 50 front line workers were trained in a process that will continue in 2020.

UN WOMEN
• Supported the PDNA training with a UN Women regional humanitarian specialist, helping international and national assessment teams understand the implications of mainstreaming gender across the PDNA exercise.
A GLIMPSE OF WHERE THE UN IS WORKING?
CHAPTER 4
THE UN DELIVERING AS ONE IN ALBANIA IN 2019
One Programme

Throughout the year, the Albanian government and the UN employed joint mechanisms at the strategic and technical levels to guide UN assistance. The Joint Executive Committee—co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Resident Coordinator, and comprising key line ministries and UN agencies—met in October 2019 to discuss achievement of the SDGs in the context of implementation of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017–2021, and the allocation of SDG Acceleration funding to areas that promote multiplier SDG achievement results. The four Result (Outcome) Groups, aligned with the government’s coordination structure and inclusive of development partners, met during the first half of the year to discuss and approve the rolling Joint Workplans for 2019–2020. The Workplans are published online: Governance and Rule of Law; Social Cohesion; Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture; and Environment and Climate Change. The UN supplemented these formal governance structures with standing UN coordination groups to interact with INSTAT and independent human rights institutions (e.g. People’s Advocate).

The development of a United Nations Country Team Resource Mobilisation Strategy in 2019 and the establishment of a dedicated UNCT Resource Mobilisation Task Force has enabled increased joint Resource Mobilisation efforts resulting in successful joint programmes’ funding, including sharing of pipeline plans across agencies, an indication of increased coordination and potential joint collaboration. A key mechanism to support joint programming is the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, established by the UN and the Government. The Fund supports specific joint programmes, as well as the overall joint workplanning process. In 2019, the government contributed USD 0.5 million to the Fund, the first tranche of a commitment of USD 6.5 million for the remaining years of the PoCSD 2017–2021. The government contribution focuses on community social services, reintegration of repatriated children, disaster risk management, support for the earthquake PNDA, and employability enhancement. In 2019, the Fund received contributions from other sources, comprising continuing contributions of new contributions, or both, detailed under the section Common Budgetary Framework below.

Besides contributions to the Fund, individual UN agencies resource mobilisation efforts in 2019 have resulted in establishment of new bilateral collaboration and partnerships, such as the Swedish support for labour mediation (ILO), UK support for area-based programming in the north (UNDP) and anti-trafficking (UNICEF), Italian planned support for rural women (UN Women and FAO), Austrian support for legal aid (UNDP), and health policy support from the Swiss government (WHO).

UNCT also won the first round of the Global Joint SDG Fund grants for social protection, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection building on the success of Leave No One Behind. It involves UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UN Women as implementing agencies, enlisting expertise from UNFPA, ILO and UNHCR.

Moreover, the partnership with RYCO continues to be strengthened through the second year of implementation (UN agencies in the WB—UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF—and RYCO) of a project financed by the Fund, engaging the UN in the WB6 and RYCO to enhance mutual trust and reconciliation across the region, by building the capacity of RYCO and aiding its ability to engage hard-to-reach youths and high-school pupils and teachers. (Details on 2019 implementation are provided at the end of Chapter 3.)

In 2019, UNCT undertook a System-wide Action Plan—Gender Equality Scorecard, assessing its gender mainstreaming practices and performance, aiming at ensuring accountability and improving UNCT performance. The assessment was organised around seven dimensions that address key gender equality and empowerment of women: planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation; partnerships; communications and advocacy, leadership and organisational culture, gender architecture and capacities; resources and results. The assessment showed that UNCT Albania meets the minimum standards in almost all dimensions. An action plan was drafted by the UN Gender Thematic Result Group for UNCT Albania to implement in 2020, aiming to further improve gender mainstreaming practices and performance, to exceed minimum standards in all seven dimensions.

During 2019, the UN in Albania became part of the UN INFO platform, a planning, monitoring and reporting system to track how the UN system at the country level supports local and central governments to deliver on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The system is currently available to UN personnel only. A public version of the system will be available in 2020, included in the new, revamped UNCT Albania website.

146. On 17 February 2020, at the Together for Albania Donor Conference organised by the EU, the international community pledged more than EUR 1.15 billion in donations, grants and loans to help Albania recover from November’s devastating earthquake. The amount is expected to cover the country’s recovery needs after the strongest earthquake in decades increased the poverty level by 2.3 percent and reduced Albania’s GDP by more than one percent.
The UN received a medal of honour from the Prime Minister in appreciation of the organisation’s rapid mobilisation and support efforts.147

Efforts in the next year

Recovery: Earthquake and COVID-19—UN agencies will prioritise support to the government’s earthquake efforts as per the PDNA areas.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN will keep all programmes running as much as possible and undertake processes that look at how programming can be adjusted or expanded to assist with recovery. The focus on COVID-19 will be placed on its socioeconomic impact upon the vulnerable population in the country and new programmes will be formulated to assist.

New Cooperation Framework 2022–2026—In 2020, UNCT Albania will embark on preparation of a new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Albania for the period 2022–2026. The Roadmap for the preparation of UNSDCF 2022–2026 has been prepared and approved by UNCT and government. The Evaluation and Management Response of the current PoCSD 2017–2021 and a Common Country Assessment will be conducted during the first half of 2020. The UNSDCF design and formulation, including a strategic planning workshop with government and partners in the country, as well as the funding of the cooperation framework, will be conducted during the second half of the year.

Sub-regional cooperation—Accelerating across the UN system in the sub-region to enable joint work ( requisite of the new UNSDCF) and the sharing of knowledge and practices, while the production, sharing and use of quality data will continue. Taking into consideration the good experience of the UN Peacebuilding Fund-supported RYCO, work in exploring regional application for eligibility to access the long-term window of the Fund will be explored in 2020. For this purpose, a sub-regional meeting will be hosted in February 2020 in Tirana to develop the concept further.

SDGs—Key priorities will include supporting government for finalisation of SDG target setting, Vision 2030 and formulation of the new National Strategy for Development and Integration 2020–2024 with SDGs integrated into the document and in the SDG Roadmap and Action Plan for Albania. In addition, government will be supported in bringing the SDGs to the local level. Work will continue with civil society, academia and Parliament to strengthen their engagement in SDGs and build capacities of INSTAT and line ministries on M&E to improve data availability and quality in the country. Support to EU integration structures on the negotiation process will be provided, aiming to insert the SDGs into the structures’ working agenda. UN will engage in the ICT Western Balkan Digital Summit to be held in spring 2020.

A Common Budgetary Framework, or One Fund-Albania SDG Acceleration Fund

The UN Albania costed results are presented in a single financial framework. Biannually, at mid and end of year, UNCT Albania and implementing government partners provide information on progress made against the planned results and actual expenditures. The PoCSD for 2019 had an available budget of USD 21 million (Figure 1), with core resources of USD 5.4 million (26%) and mobilised resources of USD 15.6 million (74%). The large proportion of the non-core resources highlights the importance of local resource mobilisation. By year end, the programme had reached a delivery rate of 89 percent, with the balance carried over into 2020. For a financial overview of the 2019 total budget, including all sources of funding, see Annex C.

**BUDGET AND DELIVERY (USD MILLION), JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2019**

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<td>15,623,722</td>
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<tr>
<td>13,784,523</td>
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Sixteen UN agencies, eight resident and eight non-resident agencies (NRAs), contributed to PoCSD implementation in 2019. The available budget of the resident agencies made up 88 percent of the total UN Albania available budget, and that of the NRAs, twelve percent (Figure 2).
### UN Agencies Budget (USD), 2019

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Available Budget (USD)</th>
<th>Total Expenditures (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>UN Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>375,000</td>
<td>360,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td>101,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
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<td>1,350,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNECE</td>
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<td>2,384,672</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>375,000</td>
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</table>

### Outcome Delivery (USD Million), 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Available Budget</th>
<th>Total Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1</td>
<td>Governance and Rule of Law</td>
<td>8,427,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2</td>
<td>Social Cohesion</td>
<td>7,545,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3</td>
<td>Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture</td>
<td>6,734,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 4</td>
<td>DRR and Climate Change</td>
<td>2,585,284</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Output Delivery (USD), 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Available Budget (USD)</th>
<th>Total Expenditures (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Human Rights</td>
<td>326,318</td>
<td>325,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Anti-corruption and Rule of Law</td>
<td>1,415,847</td>
<td>1,064,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Local Governance</td>
<td>2,728,357</td>
<td>2,292,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Access to Justice</td>
<td>291,526</td>
<td>291,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Mainstreaming Gender and Gender Responsive Budgeting</td>
<td>138,404</td>
<td>117,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Migration and Asylum</td>
<td>3,527,140</td>
<td>3,454,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Health</td>
<td>1,135,611</td>
<td>1,119,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Education</td>
<td>824,003</td>
<td>680,688</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3 Social Inclusion and Protection</td>
<td>3,068,998</td>
<td>3,024,173</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4 Child Protection</td>
<td>724,651</td>
<td>724,651</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5 Gender-Based Violence</td>
<td>1,294,281</td>
<td>1,186,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Economic Development</td>
<td>405,000</td>
<td>384,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Labour</td>
<td>1,473,922</td>
<td>1,443,761</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>1,090,000</td>
<td>720,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Culture</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 DRR and Climate Change</td>
<td>1,029,038</td>
<td>701,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Natural Resources</td>
<td>1,556,246</td>
<td>1,103,671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the Outcome level (Figure 3), Outcome 1—Govern-
ance and Rule of Law had the highest available bud-
get (40%), followed by Outcome 2—Social Cohesion (33%), Outcome 3—Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture (14%), and Outcome 4—DRR and Climate Change (12%).

A closer look at the budget, at the Output level (Figure 4), shows the substantial work of the UN agencies in specific areas. The biggest outputs in terms of fund-
ing are, in decreasing order, Outputs 1.6 (Migration and Asylum), 2.3 (Social Inclusion and Protection), 1.3 (Local Governance) and 4.2 (Natural Resources), in line with increased efforts of the UN and develop-
ment partners and the focus at the local level on mi-
gration and asylum issues. UN agencies efforts under these outputs have driven progress towards achieving SDGs 1, 5, 10, 13, 16 and 17, to name a few. Chapter 3 reports the relationship of each output work with the SDGs, providing also a few illustrative examples to 

The UN Albania joint One Fund is an important element of the mobilised resources (non-core) and contributes to greater UN coherence and efficiency. In 2018, the Albanian government and the UN re-launched the 

In 2019, this fund received contributions from four 
sources, comprising 20 percent of the UN Albania 
available budget for the year.

- USD 2.2 million from the Swiss Confederation (third tranche) in support of the efforts of UN agencies UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women towards social inclusion and protection needs and priorities in line with the project Leave no One Be-

The Swiss contribution is part of a four-year commitment, 2017–2020, of approximately USD 8 million.

- USD 855,000 from the government of Norway for implementation of activities in accordance with the PoCSD 2017–2021, as indicated in the signed 

- USD 500,000 from GoA (upon signature of Stan-
dard Administrative Arrangement, SAA) and com-
mitment of USD 2 million annually for disburse-
ment in 2020–2021. The 2019 allocation to key 
deployment areas was conducted and approved by the JEC in October to: Improve municipal social 

In addition to the contributing partners in the SDG 

- A UNDP–UNICEF–WHO–UN Women project, 2020–2022, focused on improving social protec-
tion service delivery at the local level, financed by the Joint SDG Global Fund to an amount of USD 1.35 million. 

- Another effort in the pipeline including EU sup-
port for gender equality work, for which a project 
document will be developed by UN Women and 

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Coordinating UN Assistance and UN Reform

On 1 January, 2019, the reform of the United Nations Development System went into effect worldwide, guided by resolution 72/279, dated May 2018, mandating the system to strengthen its capabilities and coordination systems to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The reform created a full-time UN Resident Coordinator, focused on coordination, advocacy and dialogue with partners, managed by the UN Secretariat in New York. Restructuring is just the first step, with the longer term objective set on more efficient business operations and inter-operability, continuously improving coordination, whole-of-UN accountability to government and partners, increased use of pooled funding mechanisms and increased attention to regional links for sustainable development, among other measures. The government and its development partners have been continuously briefed in various fora with updates on the UN reform.

UNCT organised joint engagements with key development partners in 2019 and is keen to continue this approach in 2020. For example, in October 2019, it exchanged views with Sida on development of the results strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with the Western Balkans 2021–2027 and the identification of areas of common interest to pursue in the coming period. Furthermore, UN Albania used the donor coordination fora, Donor Technical Secretariat,
Coordination efforts culminated in organising UN humanitarian and response efforts in response to the earthquake emergency in Albania on 26 November 2020 at 6.4 Richter magnitude, the strongest the country had experienced since 1979 and that killed 51 people. This was followed by joint coordinated efforts in the PDNA preparations, undertaken jointly by the government, the EU, the UN and the World Bank. Based on the solid PDNA, effective coordination enabled significant partners’ engagement for the joint post-quake recovery support by UN agencies.

In view of the UN reform, cooperation at the regional level is taking on an increased dimension. This is demonstrated through participation of resident coordinators from the region in UNCT Albania’s annual retreat, preparation of a workshop on regional application for eligibility to access the long-term window of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, to be organised in February in Tirana.

Part of the UN reform involves strengthening the capacity of the Resident Coordinator’s Office, including through the recruitment of a Strategic Planner and Head of Office, a Results Monitoring and Reporting Officer, a full-time Communications Officer, an international Economist and a Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation Officer. The last two posts will be deployed in 2020.

Operating as One

The role of the UN Operations Management Group (OMT) has evolved during the UN reform in support of harmonised and common business practices. OMT continues to demonstrate readiness towards achieving higher milestones in respect of harmonised business practices—common procurement, services, recruitment, ICT, among others—and to search for efficiencies through economies of scale and collective bargaining on behalf of all participating UN agencies and revisiting long-term agreements (LTAs), to explore further possibilities of cost optimisation.

To increase cost effectiveness and efficiency of common premises, eight UN agencies (ILO, UNDP, UN, UNDSS, UNIFPA, UNEF, UNHCR and UNODC) residing in UN House signed an MoU on common premises, while an online booking system has been created for the conference rooms on the second floor of UN House. UNICEF and WHO are based in the same building, with separate leases and sharing some costs, though they have not signed a formal MoU. The agencies residing entirely outside of UN House are IOM, FAO and UN Women. Due consideration is given to the safety of the premises, access to security and the environment. Pre-environmental efforts include LED lighting, motion sensors lighting, paper recycling, energy consumption monitoring, office bicycles and increasing UN staff awareness. In view of the continuous efforts of UNCT/OMT to improve the quality of service, as well as explore possibilities of savings, the share of the UN agencies’ part of UN House was reduced. This was made possible by redistribution of office space for some agencies and maximising the usage of common areas. Thus, a considerable reduction (around USD 20,000 in total) in the common costs of UN House was achieved.

The OMT continues to search for efficiencies through economies of scale and collective bargaining on behalf of all participating agencies, while revisiting inter-agency LTAs for further possibilities of cost optimisation. By the end of 2019, the UN agencies in Albania were benefiting from 19 LTAs covering thirteen service lines. Event management remained the largest part of procurement volumes (49%), and ensured approximately USD 31,000 in savings in 2019 due to reduced transaction costs, staff time and prices. Several reviews were conducted, including daily subsistence allowance and an interim salary survey. The process for establishment of a roster of individual professionals to provide translation, interpretation and editing services was launched in 2019, and successfully finalised at the beginning of 2020, while the process for establishment of a roster of consultants in some communication areas will be finalised in 2020. The total joint amount of disbursement through these agreements in 2019 was USD 889,670, and estimated savings from their use came about as a result of reduced transaction costs, staff time and prices from economies of scale (larger procurement volumes).

The savings from Common Services and Business Practices are presently too insignificant to be transferred to programming. However, they represent a large change in mindset, illustrating the intention of the UN to coordinate itself better internally and control costs through a constant search for practical and commercially feasible improvements in support of programmes.

The aim of the use of common services in Albania as indicated by OMT is to promote efficiencies in UN procurement, maximise the use of funds in support of differing agency mandates and operations, and locally acquire commonly procured commodities and services more effectively and efficiently through collaboration, thereby reducing transaction costs and improving value for money. UN in Albania has undertaken a considerable amount of work to identify the potential tangible and intangible benefits of common services, including (i) reduction in parallel processes and transaction costs, (ii) increased value for money through improved planning, requirements gathering, bulk discounts and better negotiation power, (iii) faster programme implementation, and (iv) better procurement risk management.

Albania was one of the countries selected for a common back-office country study and consultation in the context of advancing common business operations in the UNCTs. Analytical data on expenditure, personnel numbers, time allocation and quantitative indicators were provided by each agency for six back-office service areas: administration, finance, human resources, ICT, logistics and procurement. The data collection was followed by a visit by the BOS project team to Albania in July 2019, and preparation of a country report that fed into the Common Back Office Synthesis Report.

In view of the November earthquake, additional measures were taken to ensure that the office is structurally stable, with a structural and seismic assessment conducted for UN House. The owner was also requested to take structural reinforcement measures.

In view of the UN reform, the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) has been provided with all required operational support—office refurbishment, procurement of furniture and IT equipment—in addition to day-to-day business.

Following the latest developments in the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2017–2021 and launch of the BOS online platform, UNDP Operations Manager attended a TOt in Istanbul to learn more of the transition of BOS to the new platform. The Operations Manager had already conducted a training with local OMT members on the new guidelines, to be able to timely complete the transition to the new platform. Some of the steps required to ensure the transition of the BOS to the new platform are already initiated.

The Memorandum of Agreement for the Medical Response to Diplomatic Corps (MRDC) was extended by
twelve months to enable the continuation and facilitation of health services to all UN staff members and their recognised dependents.

The UN in Albania is determined to comply fully with the requirements of the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Framework, with increased focus on risk management and capacity building, as well as costing for joint assurance activities to serve as a benchmark in measuring efficiency gains in HACT implementation. Implementation of the framework was guided by a joint HACT working group, established in 2018 with staff from UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women.

Communicating as One

Communications at UN Albania were further strengthened during 2019. The UNCT Communication Group was expanded during the year by full participation of all 16 resident and non-resident agencies.

To maximise reach, UN Albania harnessed the potential of both traditional channels and new media or digital communication channels, while recognising that the dividing line between these is already fading. Traditional communication was focused on announcements and interviews in print and audio-visual media, public activities, meetings and dialogues with audiences, speeches by UNRC and UNCT representatives during events, publication of the quarterly Delivering for Development newsletter and the UN Albania website. In the new media space, the communications exploited the vast potential of presence on social media networks, namely on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

Because Facebook is the most widely used social media, the UN Communications group prioritised this channel for Albanian language products. The frequency of publications increased to match the information demand and ensure better targeting of all segments of the audience. Twitter was attuned to ensuring better networking with programme partners and stakeholders and continues to be provided in English. This approach proved effective, with an audience growth of more than 20 percent for both channels and an organic reaction increase of more than 50 percent (Facebook).

Raising awareness and stimulating action on the SDGs was aided by systematic planning of communication efforts, with each month focused on one SDG, following a global strategy led by the UN Department of Global Communication. Content sharing platforms such as Trello and utilisation of digital media tools such as hashtags and tagging were used to enhance cross-agency cooperation and ensure delivery of consistent and well-targeted messages to the audience throughout the year. All communications followed UN and SDG branding guidelines.

In September, UN Agencies in Albania celebrated the 4th anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs through the traditional awareness-raising activity SDG Week with a wide reach across the country. A dedicated SDG Day had the UN Albania team transfer to the city of Gjirokaster to communicate and interact with local partners and development partners from Italy and advocate on issues of Gender Equality, Child Protection, Quality Education and Leave No One Behind. A meeting at the town hall brought together the mayor, members of the municipal council and representatives from civil society, and served as a platform for exchange of ideas, establishment of partnerships, engagement of communities, fostering of public support and promotion of actions for achievement of the Goals at the local level. Meanwhile, more school pupils were introduced to the Goals through the World’s Largest Lesson.

Progress with PoCSD was communicated through the annual progress report, which was published in May 2019, and shared with all partners and the public electronically via email, on the website and in social media. The report’s audience exceeded 90,000 impressions by the first quarter following publication. Also, the quarterly newsletters showcased PoCSD activities of UN agencies in Albania. The Resident Coordinator conveyed to the public progress of the programme through five exclusive interviews with major television channels and newspapers, and in more than 20 interviews and speeches at key events. The four components or outcomes of the programme were presented to the general public in four informative videos that were widely distributed on all digital channels.

The 74th anniversary of the UN was organised in the form of interaction among all stakeholders who can influence action on the climate emergency. It was run as an outdoor outreach event designed to serve as a model for climate action. The event was hailed as a smart call to illustrate that everyone has the responsibility and the opportunity to do something about the environment and climate. The event was followed by numerous publications in the local media focusing on an immediate increase in awareness to act on climate. A special video was prepared for the occasion in which members of the public from all walks of life, UNRC and the Prime Minister clearly expressed the importance of acting quickly on climate.

The UNCT response to the devastating earthquake of 26 November was supported by the UNCT communication team working in coordination with government, the EU and the World bank to provide accurate and timely updates on the response through joint press releases.
Annex A: Progress against PoCSDResults framework

Output 1.1 Human Rights — Constitutional, ministerial and independent mechanisms are reinforced to identify and report human rights violations and enable evidence-based policy making and improve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>IOM</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>ANNEXES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of networks of CSOs that monitor and prepare reports or submissions on implementation of international instruments on women’s rights and gender-based violence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stakeholder reports</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

Output 1.2 Women’s Political Rights: Women’s increased participation in politics, decision-making and leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>IOM</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>ANNEXES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of population who believe women are capable political leaders</td>
<td>46% of population believe that women do not compare favourably with men for leadership qualities (31% women, 58% men)</td>
<td>65% of population believe that women are capable political leaders</td>
<td>Project data, surveys</td>
<td>Results of Freedom of Vote and Family Voting survey 2017 (UN WOMEN, IOM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Output 1.3 Men’s Violence Against Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>IOM</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>ANNEXES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of monitoring reports on refugee and migrant rights situation in the country</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Physical monitoring</td>
<td>2</td>
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Participating Agencies

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<tr>
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<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
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<th>UN</th>
<th>ANNEXES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value of Indicator, 31 December 2019</td>
<td>Albania Report for 2019 not yet published</td>
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Outcome Target (2021)

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<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>IOM</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>ANNEXES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Means of Verification</td>
<td>Parliament Central Election Commission (CEC) Women and Men annual publication</td>
<td></td>
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Baseline 2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>IOM</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>ANNEXES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Means of Verification</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior/ Ombudsman Office</td>
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Grade: A

Participating Agencies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
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Grade: C

Participating Agencies

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</tbody>
</table>

Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law

State and civil society organisations perform effectively and with accountability for consolidated democracy in line with international norms and standards

National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Good Governance, Democracy and the Rule of Law

EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas: 5, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24

SDGs: 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17

Participating Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>UNODC</th>
<th>IOM</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>UNESCO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Means of Verification</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior/ Ombudsman Office</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Value of Indicator, 31 December 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
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</table>

Indicator Baseline 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>

Outcome Target (2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Output Target (2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UN WOMEN</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
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</table>

Value of Indicator, 31 December 2019

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Output 1.2 Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law

**UNFPA**

- **Number of RASD CSS and LGU collocations for customers-care service delivery (cumulative):** 16
- **Number of legal and policy measures and operational tools utilized and adapted against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects:** 0
- **Number of events and activities to strengthen media accountability and libel and information literacy in Albania:** N/A
- **Number of databases on potential victims of Stop-Shops for service delivery:** 61
- **Number of municipalities implementing the transparency legal requirements:** 27
- **Number of fiscal laws, by-laws and regulations:** 2
- **Number of secondary legislation:** 1
- **Number of community action plans at national level and 61:** 38
- **Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting:** 11
- **Number of municipalities with fully costed-social care plans, reflected in MTBP:** 11

**IOM**

- **Existence of Legislation that recognizes a child’s right to be heard in civil and administrative proceedings that affects children (Article 12 of the CRC):** 2
- **Existence of public procurement policies reflecting compliance with gender mainstreming strategies and plans engendered:** 2
- **Existence of consolidated monitoring systems:** 2
- **Existence of unconsolidated monitoring systems:** 1

**UNODC**

- **Existence of public procurement policies reflecting compliance with gender mainstreming strategies and plans engendered:** 4

**UNESCO**

- **Existence of public procurement policies reflecting compliance with gender mainstreming strategies and plans engendered:** 2

**Output 1.3 Local Governance—Local Government Units (LGUs) are able to deliver equitable, quality services and strengthen influence of citizens in decisionmaking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>Number of LGUs operating One-Stop Shops for service delivery</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gender-responsive budgeting (2019)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of municipalities with websites meeting transparency</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>requirements</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gender-responsive budgeting</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of municipalities implementing the transparency</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>performance measurement system</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of municipalities publishing Council Sessions online</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Output 1.4 Access to Justice—Children and vulnerable adults and groups have equitable access to a friendlier justice system, and juvenile justice is administered to international standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Output 1.5 Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Children**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.6 Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.7 Gender Mainstreaming in Policy-Making and Implementation**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.8 Children and Young People’s Rights**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.9 Child-Friendly Environments**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.10 Protecting Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.11 Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Older Persons**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.12 Political and Civil Rights**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.13 Economic and Social Rights**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.14 Access to Justice**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.15 Children and Young People’s Rights**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.16 Child-Friendly Environments**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.17 Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.18 Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Older Persons**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.19 Political and Civil Rights**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |

---

**Output 1.20 Economic and Social Rights**

| SDCR | Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive budgeting | 5 |
Output 1.6 Migration and Asylum — Government authorities have strengthened capacities to enhance effective migration and asylum management

UNICEF
UNHCR
UN Women

Outcome 1.6 Migration and Asylum

Governance implemented of National Strategy on Migration

Number of measures of Action Plan

migrant children developed

unaccompanied refugee and

SOPs for case management of

Diaspora mechanisms for skills

including sex-disaggregated data

Mapping of Albanian diaspora,

Passenger Information

for the introduction of Advance

framework and IT infrastructure

Assessments of the current legal

refugee law and the EU acquis

Extent to which Asylum Procedures

No Yes Ministry of Interior

60% 70%

215x332

(15 persons)

30% reduction

No

Yes

3 (Study and two other
citations)

0,1

30% reduction

No

Yes

55% 40%

0 3 (Italy and two other
countries)

Total 26

Total 26

29 (100/257 or 11.2%)

25 (20% reduction)

55% 40%

Male 14

Female 12

Total 26

Male 10 (30% reduction)

Female 8.5 (30% reduction)

Total 9 (30% reduction)

World Bank reports

ESCAP

Total 0

Not available 2019 data

World Bank reports

All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights, while more

Data on Violence Against Children

Rape

Female

Total

Data not available

Sexual violence

Male

Female

Total

Violence

Male

Female

Total

23.7% 21% UN, EU and stakeholders’ platform

22 (75% increase)

23 (75% increase)

21 (75% increase)

20 (75% increase)

83 (2017)

Data are not available to report on this indicator
### Output 2.1 Health — There is increased access to quality, inclusive, equitable, and affordable health care services, and community demand is increased

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>UNDP</th>
<th>IOM</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>FAO</th>
<th>IAEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation reports on comprehensive national health policies and action plans on UHC, NCD control, RH, HIV and TB</td>
<td>Reports produced by MoHSP</td>
<td>4: SRH, HIV, TB, Cervical Cancer Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of health institutions that have conducted self-assessment on compliance with approved Quality of Care Standards</td>
<td>Reports produced by the National Centre for the Quality, Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions</td>
<td>6: Primary Health Care Centres, 11: Municipality Hospitals, 4: Regional Hospitals, 3: University Hospitals, 5: University Hospital Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of patients diagnosed with cancer using imaging nuclear medicine techniques and treated with radiation therapy in public hospitals</td>
<td>Reports produced by Mother Theresa University hospital</td>
<td>20% (compared to 2017)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOSC identification and coordination mechanism for out-of-school children and children at risk of drop-out for all relevant actors</td>
<td>1200 2100 4: SRH, HIV, TB, Cervical Cancer Control</td>
<td>2100 50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanism for preventing drop-out developed</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25% 50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools and children reached with prevention against trafficking in human beings and education</td>
<td>Number of municipalities identify out-of-school children 10% teachers trained</td>
<td>250 teachers trained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of CSE (certain sexual exploitation) in all schools at all levels, private and public, for children of age 10–18 years</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science, Minister approval letter 20% 50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools and children reached with prevention against trafficking in human beings and education interventions</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science, Minister approval letter 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of patients treated with breast cancer and Therapax) of which 225</td>
<td>1000 2100 4: SRH, HIV, TB, Cervical Cancer Control</td>
<td>20% +40% by 2021; 100% for children of age 10–18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women diagnosed with breast cancer</td>
<td>40% (compared to 2017)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of patients treated with breast cancer and Therapax) of which 225</td>
<td>1000 2100 4: SRH, HIV, TB, Cervical Cancer Control</td>
<td>20% +40% by 2021; 100% for children of age 10–18 years</td>
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<td>20% (compared to 2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of patients diagnosed with cancer using imaging nuclear medicine techniques and treated with radiation therapy in public hospitals</td>
<td>Reports produced by Mother Theresa University hospital</td>
<td>20% (compared to 2017)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Output 2.2 Education — Education policies, mechanisms, community partnerships and actions are strengthened for quality inclusive education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF</th>
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<th>UNICEF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of inclusive mechanisms for prevention and response towards out-of-school children and children at risk of drop-out for all relevant actors</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1200 25%</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers trained in inclusive and preventive methodologies; Number of municipalities identify out-of-school children by implementing mechanism for OOSC identification</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science, Minister approval letter 50%</td>
<td>25% 10% 100% 50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools and children reached with prevention against trafficking in human beings and education interventions</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science, Minister approval letter 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of municipalities identify out-of-school children</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science, Minister approval letter 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Output 2.3 Social Inclusion and Protection — Social protection measures and mechanisms at national and local levels are strengthened with budgets and clear targets that reflect equity and social inclusion standards

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social protection measures and mechanisms at national and local levels are strengthened with budgets and clear targets that reflect equity and social inclusion standards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (CSE)</td>
<td>0 1 (CSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and budgetary frameworks that explicitly address child poverty and disparities available</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>UNICEF supported ©SNAP in collecting data in 2018 following child poverty and child deprivation module. ©SNAP reported officially for the first time child poverty and deprivation index in 2018, using EU indicator ‘Children at risk of poverty’. ©SNAP has in place a roadmap to measure child multiple deprivation using ©SNAP deprivation index. Data 2017–2018 showed 20.4% of Albanian children are reported at risk of poverty, with girls more affected by poverty: 38.6% compared with 20.3% boys in 2018, and 31.8% and 27.7%, respectively, in 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems established at national and local levels</td>
<td>0 7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 municipalities</td>
<td>0 0 7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems</td>
<td>Government progress report on implementation of NAPBRE – ELEB project progress report. 300 R&amp;E children and 218 families in 11 municipalities benefit from Integrated Social Services Model 6 EU-ENP 372 R&amp;E benefited from integrated community-based social services 372 R&amp;E benefited from integrated community-based social services</td>
<td>7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems</td>
<td>11 municipalities have in place revised social care plans and clear guidelines and workflows on how social welfare departments will implement social protection policies effectively to harmonise social care. Secondary legislation has been adopted. 312 R&amp;E benefited from integrated social services</td>
<td>7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems</td>
<td>11 municipalities have in place revised social care plans and clear guidelines and workflows on how social welfare departments will implement social protection policies effectively to harmonise social care. Secondary legislation has been adopted. 312 R&amp;E benefited from integrated social services</td>
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<td>7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
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<td>Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems</td>
<td>Government progress report on implementation of NAPBRE – ELEB project progress report. 300 R&amp;E children and 218 families in 11 municipalities benefit from Integrated Social Services Model 6 EU-ENP 372 R&amp;E benefited from integrated community-based social services 372 R&amp;E benefited from integrated community-based social services</td>
<td>7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
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<td>7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems</td>
<td>Government progress report on implementation of NAPBRE – ELEB project progress report. 300 R&amp;E children and 218 families in 11 municipalities benefit from Integrated Social Services Model 6 EU-ENP 372 R&amp;E benefited from integrated community-based social services 372 R&amp;E benefited from integrated community-based social services</td>
<td>7 municipalities GoA and MoHSP annual reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Output 1.4 Child Protection — Child protection systems are strengthened to prevent and respond to cases of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children, with a particular focus on vulnerable children and families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline 2016</th>
<th>Outcome Target (2021)</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of children identified by CPUs</td>
<td>16,731</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of (potential) VoT identified by CPUs</td>
<td>5,947</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of municipalities with functional CRMs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of training courses for Protection staff and other officials</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trainings for judges in specific sectors</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trainings for officials and judges in specific sectors</td>
<td>7,124</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual 10% increase</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>National Registration Centre Annual reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Registration Centre annual reports</td>
<td>2018 NRC Report, p.33</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Output 2.5 Gender-Based Violence — Capacity of institutions and service providers to implement legislation and normative standards on Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) and other forms of discrimination is strengthened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline 2016</th>
<th>Outcome Target (2019)</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of municipalities with functional CRMs</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of instruments facilitating implementation of legal framework for child protection in place</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new businesses established, by sex of owner</td>
<td>Total, 18,624</td>
<td>Total, 21.4%</td>
<td>National Registration Centre Annual reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Doing Business (score)</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>World Bank Doing Business Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of agriculture sector</td>
<td>Total, 34.2%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>INSTAT Labour Force Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female unemployment rate</td>
<td>Total, 20.5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>INSTAT Labour Force Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of unemployment insurance beneficiaries</td>
<td>Total, 31,843</td>
<td>Total, 20.5%</td>
<td>INSTAT Labour Force Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only 1.5% of economically active population is unemployed</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>INSTAT Labour Force Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate: women</td>
<td>Male, 7376</td>
<td>Male, 73.7%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate: men</td>
<td>Female, 11,248</td>
<td>Female, 21.5%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate: total</td>
<td>Total, 18,624</td>
<td>Total, 21.4%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcome 3 — Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture

Economic growth policies, practices and programmes of the Government of Albania are inclusive, sustainable and gender-responsive, with greater focus on competitiveness, decent jobs and employment generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline 2016</th>
<th>Outcome Target (2021)</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth</td>
<td>Total, 3.5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Output 2.1 Economic Development — Central and local governments are able to deliver effective economic support services and implement urban development policies that promote gender equality; the green economy and inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline 2016</th>
<th>Outcome Target (2021)</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of trainings for Competition and Consumer Protection staff and other officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of regional strategies and action plans inclusion of resettigation schemes for VoT</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>National Development Strategy and Action Plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Output 2.2 Labour — Labour market governance, tripartite dialogue and collective bargaining are strengthened and reduce informal employment, improve occupational health and safety, and enhance the employability of women, men and other vulnerable groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline 2016</th>
<th>Outcome Target (2021)</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of trainings for VoT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of VoT identified by CPUs</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees working in the informal sector</td>
<td>Total, 857</td>
<td>Total, 21.5%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate: women</td>
<td>Male, 7376</td>
<td>Male, 73.7%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate: men</td>
<td>Female, 11,248</td>
<td>Female, 21.5%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate: total</td>
<td>Total, 18,624</td>
<td>Total, 21.4%</td>
<td>MoFE/NES reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANNEXES
UNESCO Inter-institutional mechanisms

- The tourism workforce, protect cultural diversity, and improve the management of cultural heritage as drivers and enablers for sustainable development.
- State institutions have inclusive and equitable policies to foster cultural and creative resources, improve access to cultural markets, improve gender balance in modernisation of the agricultural sector that are gender sensitive and empower rural women.

FAO

- There is increased capacity to design and implement policies and strategies for sustainable rural development and extension service beneficiaries of agriculture and rights in agriculture and rural areas disseminating organic products, slow food and rural women products.

Output 3.4 Culture

- State institutions have inclusive and equitable policies to foster cultural and creative resources, improve access to cultural markets, improve gender balance in modernisation of the agricultural sector that are gender sensitive and empower rural women.

UN Women

- Women's share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service.
- Women's share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service.

Output 4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change

- Scaling-up action on DRR and climate change mitigation and adaptation across sectors.

UN Women

- Women's share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service.

Output 4.4 Culture

- State institutions have inclusive and equitable policies to foster cultural and creative resources, improve access to cultural markets, improve gender balance in modernisation of the agricultural sector that are gender sensitive and empower rural women.

UN Women

- Women's share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service.

Output 4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change

- Scaling-up action on DRR and climate change mitigation and adaptation across sectors.

UN Women

- Women's share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service.

Output 4.4 Culture

- State institutions have inclusive and equitable policies to foster cultural and creative resources, improve access to cultural markets, improve gender balance in modernisation of the agricultural sector that are gender sensitive and empower rural women.
**Annex B: Administrative agent financial report on Albania SDG Acceleration Fund for 2019**


**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS**

- Economic Commission for Europe
- Food and Agriculture Organization
- International Atomic Energy Agency
- International Labour Organization
- International Organization for Migration
- Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS
- Joint United Nations Programme on tuberculosis
- UN Conference on Trade and Development
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Environment Programme
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**CONTRIBUTORS**

- ALBANIA, Government of
- AUSTRIA, Government of
- Delivering Results Together
- EUROPEAN UNION
- Expanded GoF Funding Window
- FINLAND, Government of
- NETHERLANDS, Government of
- EUROPEAN UNION
- NORWAY, Government of
- SPAIN, Government of
- SWEDISH INTL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
- SWISS ADG FOR DEVELOPMENT & COOPERATION
- SWITZERLAND, Government of

**Output 4.2 Natural Resources**

Central and local institutions and communities are strengthened to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Activities and Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Categories of Protected areas and Biosphere reserves with working, sustainable financial and legal mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Two Partnership 11 Factories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>Ministrystates of Infrastructure and Energy reports, Ministry of Interior reports Project documents PMT report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>Work underway to finalise an inventory of public building stock and to place data on a server of Energy Efficiency Agency by 2020 and continuing them in the national electronic register, and (2) audit entire stock of buildings for 3 years, allowing data access and cost-effectiveness analysis of renewal, according to requirements of the Act No 176/2016 of 10/11/2016 on energy performance in buildings. Planned partnerships to become operational subject to endorsement of GEF support for Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnerships</th>
<th>Activities and Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 partnerships</td>
<td>11 Factories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 partnerships</td>
<td>15 demonstration plants or factories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Categories of Protected areas and Biosphere reserves with working, sustainable financial and legal mechanisms**

- Protected areas
- Biosphere reserves
- Partnership 11 Factories

**Implemented in Grades 7 and 5**

- Reports from MoE and MoIFS
- Educational programs for the local secondary schools are being implemented at the Visitor Centre of Pogradec.

**Implemented in other Grades**

- First BUR being finalized, technical chapter undergoing peer review, publication to be submitted by end of 2020

**Reporting**

- First BUR finalised, technical chapter undergoing peer review, publication to be submitted by end of 2020
- First BUR being finalised, technical chapter undergoing peer review, publication to be submitted by end of 2020

**Development Programme**


**Annexes**


**Additional Information**

- Annex B: Administrative agent financial report on Albania SDG Acceleration Fund for 2019

**Conclusion**

The Administrative Agent for the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund has continued to support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in Albania, focusing on capacity building, institutional strengthening, and the provision of resources to address key development challenges. The report highlights progress made in various sectors, including energy efficiency, environmental education, and biodiversity conservation. Further efforts are anticipated to continue supporting the country’s development agenda.
PROJECT OPERATIONAL CLOSURE
A project or programme is considered operationally closed when all programmatic activities for which Participating Organization(s) received funding have been completed.

PROJECT START DATE
Date of transfer of first instalment from the MPTF Office to the Participating Organization.

TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET
This represents the cumulative amount of allocations approved by the Steering Committee.

US DOLLAR AMOUNT
The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars and due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up.

INTRODUCTION
This Consolidated Annual Financial Report of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund is prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) in fulfillment of its obligations as Administrative Agent, as per the terms of Reference (TOR), the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the UNDP MPTF Office and the Participating Organizations, and the Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA) signed with contributors.

The MPTF Office, as Administrative Agent, is responsible for concluding an MOU with Participating Organizations and SAAs with contributors. It receives, administers and manages contributions, and disburses these funds to the Participating Organizations. The Administrative Agent prepares and submits annual consolidated financial reports, as well as regular financial statements, for transmission to contributors.

This consolidated financial report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2019 and provides financial data on progress made in the implementation of projects of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. It is posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY (http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100).

The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars and due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up.

DEFINITIONS

Allocation
Amount approved by the Steering Committee for a project/programme.

Approved Project/Programme
A project/programme including budget, etc., that is approved by the Steering Committee for fund allocation purposes.

Contributor Commitment
Amount(s) committed by a donor to a Fund in a signed Standard Administrative Arrangement with the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), in its capacity as the Administrative Agent. A commitment may be paid or pending payment.

Contributor Deposit
Cash deposit received by the MPTF Office for the Fund from a contributor in accordance with a signed Standard Administrative Arrangement.

Delivery Rate
The percentage of funds that have been utilized, calculated by comparing expenditures reported by a Participating Organization against the ‘net funded amount’.

Indirect Support Costs
A general cost that cannot be directly related to any particular programme or activity of the Participating Organizations. UNDG policy establishes a fixed indirect cost rate of 7% of programmable costs.

Net Funded Amount
Amount transferred to a Participating Organization less any refunds transferred back to the MPTF Office by a Participating Organization.

Participating Organization
A UN Organization or other inter-governmental Organization that is an implementing partner in a Fund, as represented by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MPTF Office for a particular Fund.

Project Expenditure
The sum of expenses and/or expenditure reported by all Participating Organizations for a Fund irrespective of which basis of accounting each Participating Organization follows for donor reporting.

Project Financial Closure
A project or programme is considered financially closed when all financial obligations of an operationally completed project or programme have been settled, and no further financial charges may be incurred.
### 2019 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

This chapter presents financial data and analysis of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund using the pass-through funding modality as of 31 December 2019. Financial information for this Fund is also available on the MPTF Office GATEWAY, at the following address: http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100.

This consolidated financial report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2019 and provides financial data on progress made in the implementation of projects of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. It is posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY (http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100).

The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars and due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up.

### 1. SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

As of 31 December 2019, 12 contributors deposited US$ 47,461,153 in contributions and US$ 429,280 was earned in interest.

The cumulative source of funds was US$ 47,890,433.

Of this amount, US$ 46,407,064 has been net funded to 18 Participating Organizations, of which US$ 42,593,341 has been reported as expenditure. The Administrative Agent fee has been charged at the approved rate of 1% on deposits and amounts to US$ 474,611. Table 1 provides an overview of the overall sources, uses, and balance of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund as of 31 December 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>Annual 2018</th>
<th>Annual 2019</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions from donors</td>
<td>4,431,061</td>
<td>4,025,060</td>
<td>47,461,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund Earned Interest and Investment Income</td>
<td>11,579</td>
<td>14,996</td>
<td>307,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Income received from Participating Organizations</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>121,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refunds by Administrative Agent to Contributors</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund balance transferred to another MDTF</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: Sources of Funds</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,442,913</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,040,453</strong></td>
<td><strong>47,890,433</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Funds</th>
<th>Annual 2018</th>
<th>Annual 2019</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfers to Participating Organizations</td>
<td>2,208,835</td>
<td>5,402,404</td>
<td>49,438,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refunds received from Participating Organizations</td>
<td>(53,714)</td>
<td>(150,333)</td>
<td>(3,031,771)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Funded Amount</td>
<td>2,155,121</td>
<td>5,252,071</td>
<td>46,407,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Agent Fees</td>
<td>44,311</td>
<td>48,251</td>
<td>474,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Costs (Steering Committee, Secretariat...etc.)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Charges</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Expenditures</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: Uses of Funds</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,199,435</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,292,403</strong></td>
<td><strong>46,882,567</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Change in Fund cash balance with Administrative Agent | 2,243,478 | (1,251,950) | 1,007,866 |
| Opening Fund balance (1 January) | 16,338 | 2,259,816 | - |
| Closing Fund balance (31 December) | 2,259,816 | 1,007,866 | 1,007,866 |
| Net Funded Amount (includes Direct Cost) | 2,155,121 | 5,252,071 | 46,407,064 |
| Participating Organizations’ Expenditure (includes Direct Cost) | 2,112,025 | 3,353,099 | 42,593,341 |

| Balance of Funds with Participating Organizations | - | - | 3,813,723 |

Table 1. Financial Overview, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)
2. PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

Table 2 provides information on cumulative contributions received from all contributors to this Fund as of 31 December 2019.

The Albania SDG Acceleration Fund is currently being financed by 12 contributors, as listed in the table below. The table below includes commitments made up to 31 December 2019 through signed Standard Administrative Agreements, and deposits made through 2019. It does not include commitments that were made to the fund beyond 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>Total Commitments</th>
<th>Prior Years</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
<th>Total Deposits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALBANIA, Government of</td>
<td>2,653,747</td>
<td>153,747</td>
<td>580,080</td>
<td>653,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRIA, Government of</td>
<td>1,214,737</td>
<td>1,214,737</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,214,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering Results Together</td>
<td>3,116,737</td>
<td>3,116,737</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,116,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROPEAN UNION</td>
<td>3,474,781</td>
<td>3,474,781</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,474,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded DaO Funding Window</td>
<td>3,825,000</td>
<td>3,825,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,825,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINLAND, Government of</td>
<td>394,240</td>
<td>394,240</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>394,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETHERLANDS, Government of</td>
<td>3,845,789</td>
<td>3,845,789</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,845,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORWAY, Government of</td>
<td>4,183,719</td>
<td>3,353,891</td>
<td>855,530</td>
<td>4,183,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA, Government of</td>
<td>4,060,080</td>
<td>4,060,080</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,060,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA, Government of</td>
<td>11,158,833</td>
<td>10,742,908</td>
<td>416,125</td>
<td>11,158,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWEDISH INT’L DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION</td>
<td>11,121,693</td>
<td>8,868,288</td>
<td>2,253,406</td>
<td>11,121,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWITZERLAND, Government of</td>
<td>461,553</td>
<td>461,553</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>461,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>46,051,153</td>
<td>43,436,093</td>
<td>4,025,060</td>
<td>47,461,153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deposits by contributor, cumulative as of 31 December 2019

3. INTEREST EARNED

Interest income is earned in two ways: 1) on the balance of funds held by the Administrative Agent (Fund earned interest), and 2) on the balance of funds held by the Participating Organizations (Agency earned interest) where their Financial Regulations and Rules allow return of interest to the AA.

As of 31 December 2019, Fund earned interest amounts to US$ 307,897. Interest received from Participating Organizations amounts to US$ 121,384, bringing the cumulative interest received to US$ 429,280.

Details are provided in the table below.

Table 3. Sources of Interest and Investment Income, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Earned</th>
<th>Prior Years</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration Agent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund Eearned Interest and Investment Income</td>
<td>292,900</td>
<td>14,996</td>
<td>307,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fund Earned Interest</td>
<td>292,900</td>
<td>14,996</td>
<td>307,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>1,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>84,678</td>
<td>84,703</td>
<td>169,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>2,310</td>
<td>2,310</td>
<td>4,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>22,154</td>
<td>22,154</td>
<td>44,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNODC</td>
<td>4,926</td>
<td>4,926</td>
<td>9,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWOMEN</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>121,897</td>
<td>121,897</td>
<td>243,794</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Total | 413,088 | 413,088 |
4. TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Allocations to Participating Organizations are approved by the Steering Committee and disbursed by the Administrative Agent. As of 31 December 2019, the AA has transferred US$ 49,438,835 to 18 Participating Organizations (see list below).

4.1 TRANSFER BY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION

Table 4 provides additional information on the refunds received by the MPTF Office, and the net funded amount for each of the Participating Organizations.

Table 4. Transfer, Refund, and Net Funded Amount by Participating Organization, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Organization</th>
<th>Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018</th>
<th>Current Year Jan-Dec-2019</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfers</td>
<td>Refunds</td>
<td>Net funded Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>79,500</td>
<td>(9,575)</td>
<td>69,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>315,300</td>
<td>(36,811)</td>
<td>278,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td>94,661</td>
<td>94,661</td>
<td>94,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>(3,821)</td>
<td>71,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>304,956</td>
<td>334,956</td>
<td>6,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>(1,999)</td>
<td>28,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>185,915</td>
<td>(651)</td>
<td>185,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>178,500</td>
<td>(1,974)</td>
<td>176,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>10,541,103</td>
<td>(36,575)</td>
<td>10,504,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>934,118</td>
<td>(126,001)</td>
<td>808,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>5,113,096</td>
<td>(41,344)</td>
<td>5,071,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>(125,000)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>10,133,583</td>
<td>(81,070)</td>
<td>10,052,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>(1,999)</td>
<td>28,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>5,244,566</td>
<td>(49,046)</td>
<td>5,195,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>898,516</td>
<td>(36,644)</td>
<td>861,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>44,036,431</td>
<td>(2,881,438)</td>
<td>41,154,993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transfers amount by Participating Organization for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2019

5. EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL DELIVERY RATES

All final expenditures reported for the year 2019 were submitted by the Headquarters of the Participating Organizations. These were consolidated by the MPTF Office.

Project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each Participating Organization, and are reported as per the agreed upon categories for inter-agency harmonized reporting. The reported expenditures were submitted via the MPTF Office’s online expenditure reporting tool. The 2019 expenditure data has been posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY at http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100.

5.1 EXPENDITURE REPORTED BY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION

In 2019, US$ 5,252,071 was net funded to Participating Organizations, and US$ 3,353,099 was reported in expenditure.

As shown in table below, the cumulative net funded amount is US$ 46,407,064 and cumulative expenditures reported by the Participating Organizations amount to US$ 42,593,341. This equates to an overall Fund expenditure delivery rate of 92 percent.

Table 5.1. Net Funded Amount, Reported Expenditure, and Financial Delivery by Participating Organization, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Organization</th>
<th>Approved Amount</th>
<th>Net funded Amount</th>
<th>Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018</th>
<th>Current Year Jan-Dec-2019</th>
<th>Cumulative Delivery Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>79,500</td>
<td>69,925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>415,300</td>
<td>278,489</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td>94,661</td>
<td>94,661</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>304,956</td>
<td>334,956</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>28,001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>185,915</td>
<td>185,264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>178,500</td>
<td>176,526</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>10,541,103</td>
<td>10,504,528</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>934,118</td>
<td>808,118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>5,113,096</td>
<td>5,071,752</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>10,133,583</td>
<td>10,052,513</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>28,001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>5,244,566</td>
<td>5,195,520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>898,516</td>
<td>861,872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>44,036,431</td>
<td>41,154,993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transfers amount by Participating Organization for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2019

ANNEXES

ANNEXES
5.2 EXPENDITURE BY UNDAF OUTCOME

Table 5 displays the net funded amounts, expenditures incurred and the financial delivery rates by UNDAF Outcome.

Table 5. Expenditure by UNDAF Outcome, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Sector</th>
<th>Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018</th>
<th>Current Year Jan-Dec-2019</th>
<th>Net Funded Amount</th>
<th>Net Funded Amount</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Delivery Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>7,281,673</td>
<td>7,213,074</td>
<td>54,490</td>
<td>4,828</td>
<td>7,227,183</td>
<td>7,217,094</td>
<td>99.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALB 2012 P1 Governance</td>
<td>1,317,467</td>
<td>1,320,852</td>
<td>1,317,467</td>
<td>1,320,852</td>
<td>99.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALB 2012 P3 Regl&amp; Local Devt</td>
<td>1,447,181</td>
<td>1,446,871</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1,447,181</td>
<td>1,446,907</td>
<td>99.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALB 2012 P4 Inclus Soc Policy</td>
<td>7,194,753</td>
<td>7,175,217</td>
<td>(117,716)</td>
<td>(1,735)</td>
<td>7,183,037</td>
<td>7,173,482</td>
<td>99.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Services</td>
<td>8,070,310</td>
<td>8,024,560</td>
<td>8,070,310</td>
<td>8,024,560</td>
<td>99.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>8,870,310</td>
<td>8,078,310</td>
<td>8,078,310</td>
<td>8,078,310</td>
<td>99.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance and Rule of Law</td>
<td>230,531</td>
<td>253,480</td>
<td>253,480</td>
<td>253,480</td>
<td>99.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>2,189,722</td>
<td>2,134,686</td>
<td>2,189,722</td>
<td>2,134,686</td>
<td>99.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Developement</td>
<td>480,000</td>
<td>480,000</td>
<td>480,000</td>
<td>480,000</td>
<td>99.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Expenditure</td>
<td>4,194,150</td>
<td>4,187,038</td>
<td>4,194,150</td>
<td>4,187,038</td>
<td>99.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 EXPENDITURE REPORTED BY CATEGORY

Project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each Participating Organization and are reported as per the agreed categories for inter-agency harmonized reporting. In 2006 the UN Development Group (UNDG) established six categories against which UN entities must report inter-agency project expenditures. Effective 1 January 2012, the UN Chief Executive Board (CEB) modified these categories as a result of IPSAS adoption to comprise eight categories. All expenditure incurred prior to 1 January 2012 have been reported in the old categories; post 1 January 2012 all expenditure are reported in the new eight categories. See table below.

2012 CEB Expense Categories
1. Staff and personnel costs
2. Supplies, commodities and materials
3. Equipment, vehicles, furniture and depreciation
4. Contractual services
5. Travel
6. Transfers and grants
7. General operating expenses
8. Indirect costs

06 UNDG Expense Categories
1. Supplies, commodities, equipment & transport
2. Personnel
3. Training counterparts
4. Contracts
5. Other direct costs
6. Indirect costs

Table 6. Expenditure by UNDG Budget Category, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018</th>
<th>Current Year Jan-Dec-2019</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Programme Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supplies, Commodities, Equipment and Transport (Old)</td>
<td>1,830,091</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel (Old)</td>
<td>6,223,909</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of Counterparts (Old)</td>
<td>371,723</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts (Old)</td>
<td>8,276,589</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other direct costs (Old)</td>
<td>1,217,459</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff &amp; Personnel Cost (New)</td>
<td>1,830,459</td>
<td>70,078</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies, Commodities (New)</td>
<td>301,665</td>
<td>80,778</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment, Vehicles, Furniture and Depreciation (New)</td>
<td>488,675</td>
<td>121,129</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual Services (New)</td>
<td>9,570,680</td>
<td>1,629,475</td>
<td>20.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel (New)</td>
<td>995,815</td>
<td>155,709</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers and Grants (New)</td>
<td>2,894,369</td>
<td>615,454</td>
<td>8.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Operating (New)</td>
<td>2,761,551</td>
<td>427,854</td>
<td>8.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Costs Total</td>
<td>36,082,025</td>
<td>5,190,477</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Support Costs Total</td>
<td>2,507,618</td>
<td>352,634</td>
<td>7.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Indirect Support Costs charged by Participating Organizations, based on their financial regulations, can be deducted upfront or at a later stage during implementation. The percentage may therefore appear to exceed the 7% agreed-upon for on-going projects. Once projects are financially closed, this number is not to exceed 7%.
6. COST RECOVERY

Cost recovery policies for the Fund are guided by the applicable provisions of the Terms of Reference, the MOU concluded between the Administrative Agent and Participating Organizations, and the SAAs concluded between the Administrative Agent and Contributors, based on rates approved by UNDG.

The policies in place, as of 31 December 2019, were as follows:
- The Administrative Agent (AA) fee: 1% is charged at the time of contributor deposit and covers services provided on that contribution for the entire duration of the Fund. In the reporting period US$ 40,251 was deducted in AA-fees. Cumulatively, as of 31 December 2019, US$ 474,611 has been charged in AA-fees.
- Indirect Costs of Participating Organizations: Participating Organizations may charge 7% indirect costs. In the current reporting period US$ 252,621 was deducted in indirect costs by Participating Organizations. Cumulatively, indirect costs amount to US$ 2,824,039 as of 31 December 2019.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

In order to effectively provide fund administration services and facilitate monitoring and reporting to the UN system and its partners, the MPTF Office has developed a public website, the MPTF Office Gateway (http://mptf.undp.org). Refreshed in real time every two hours from an internal enterprise resource planning system, the MPTF Office Gateway has become a standard setter for providing transparent and accountable trust fund administration services.

The Gateway provides financial information including: contributor commitments and deposits, approved programme budgets, transfers to and expenditures reported by Participating Organizations, interest income and other expenses. By providing easy access to the growing number of narrative and financial reports, as well as related project documents, the Gateway collects and preserves important institutional knowledge and facilitates knowledge sharing and management among UN Organizations and their development partners, thereby contributing to UN coherence and development effectiveness.

Annex C: Financial overview of 2019 total budget, including all sources of funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes/Outputs</th>
<th>Available Budget</th>
<th>Total Expenditures</th>
<th>Delivery Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1.1 Human Rights</td>
<td>326,318</td>
<td>325,141</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1.2 Anti-corruption and Rule of Law</td>
<td>1,415,687</td>
<td>1,064,134</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1.3 Social Protection</td>
<td>2,728,357</td>
<td>2,292,046</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1.4 Access to Justice</td>
<td>291,526</td>
<td>291,526</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1.5 Mainstreaming Gender and Gender Responsive Budgeting</td>
<td>138,404</td>
<td>117,584</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1.6 Migration and Asylum</td>
<td>3,527,140</td>
<td>3,454,592</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2.1 Health</td>
<td>1,135,611</td>
<td>1,119,049</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2.2 Education</td>
<td>824,003</td>
<td>800,680</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2.3 Social Inclusion and Protection</td>
<td>3,060,908</td>
<td>3,024,173</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2.4 Civil Protection</td>
<td>724,651</td>
<td>724,651</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2.5 Gender Based Violence</td>
<td>1,294,281</td>
<td>1,186,122</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2.6 Social Cohesion</td>
<td>7,047,544</td>
<td>6,734,683</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3.1 Economic Development</td>
<td>405,000</td>
<td>384,000</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3.2 Labour</td>
<td>1,473,922</td>
<td>1,443,761</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3.3 Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>1,090,000</td>
<td>720,000</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3.4 Culture</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3 Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture</td>
<td>2,582,922</td>
<td>2,551,761</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 4.1 DRR and Climate Change</td>
<td>1,029,038</td>
<td>701,273</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 4.2 Natural Resources</td>
<td>1,193,671</td>
<td>1,193,671</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 4 DRR and Climate Change</td>
<td>2,582,922</td>
<td>1,804,944</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>21,043,342</td>
<td>18,646,411</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex D: National implementing partners, participating UN organisations, funds and programmes, and their acronyms and websites

KEY IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Central Election Commission
Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
Department for Development and Good Governance
National Institute of Statistics
People’s Advocate
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Finance and Economy
Ministry of Health and Social Protection
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
Ministry of Interior
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Tourism and Environment
Minister of State for Diaspora
Minister of State for Entrepreneurs
Minister of State for Relations with Parliament

PARTICIPATING UN ORGANISATIONS, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations www.fao.org
IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency www.iaea.org
ILO International Labour Organisation www.ilo.org
IOM International Organisation for Migration www.iom.int
UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development www.unctad.org
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees www.unhcr.org
UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization www.unido.org
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime www.unodc.org
UN WOMEN United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women www.unwomen.org
WHO World Health Organisation www.who.int

Annex E: UN and UN-supported organisations publications in 2019

- Towards strengthening governance of the shared trans-boundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region; Final report, UNESCO
- National Population Survey: Violence against Women and Girls in Albania, UNDP
- Infographics DV survey, UNDP
- Research brief Help-Seeking Behaviors of Women Who Experience Violence in Albania, UNDP
- Research brief Impact of Domestic Violence in Women and Children in Albania, UNDP
- Research brief, Violence Against Women in Albania: In Comparison to the European Union, UNDP
- Final Report 2019 Analysis of the functioning of the coordinated referral mechanism of cases of domestic violence at the local level in Albania, UNDP
- Sexual Harassment and other Forms of Gender based Violence in Urban Spaces in Albania, UN WOMEN
- Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania, UN WOMEN
- Voices, UN WOMEN
- Report of CSOs for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Albania, UN WOMEN
- Infographics: Perceptions On Violence Against Women And Girls, UN WOMEN
Infographics: Perceptions on violence against women, UN WOMEN

Quantitative and Qualitative Data on violence against women, UN WOMEN

The intersection of Gender equality and Education in South-East Europe: a regional situation analysis of the Nexus between SDG4 (Quality Education) and SDGs (Gender equality), UNESCO
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000369980

Appraisal of the Pre-University Education Strategy 2014-2020

Lessons Learned, UNICEF

Four brochures for magistrates describing the role of psychologists in various legal processes affecting children, UNICEF
https://www.unicef.org/albania/sq/raporte/pjes%C3%ABmarrja-e-psikologut-n%C3%AB-procese-t%C3%AB-drejt%C3%ABsis%C3%AB-p%C3%ABr-t%C3%AB-mitur

National Justice for Children Strategy, UNICEF
https://www.unicef.org/albania/sq/raporte/strategjia-e-drejt%C3%ABsis%C3%AB-p%C3%ABr-t%C3%AB-mitur

GRB manual for public administration at central and local level, UN WOMEN

Gender Equality and Discrimination in Appointed Local Government Bodies

Women and Men 2019, UN WOMEN

2020 budget for citizens, UN WOMEN

TB and HIV care guidelines (9 guidelines), WHO: Management and treatment of MDR-TB; Management and treatment of TB and LTB; Management and treatment of TB in children; TB medicine management guideline; TB and MDR-TB infection control guidelines and screening policy for health workforce; Operational Protocol on Patient-Centered Services for TB within PHC, HIV treatment Protocol and ARV regimen; Management of HIV/TB and HIV/Hepatitis; National data collection and reporting in the frameworks of regional and global level reporting on HIV

Assessment of the HIV/AIDS and TB laboratories accompanied by a budgeted action plan, UNICEF

Analysis of the procurement system and the SOPs for quantification, forecasting, inventory management and quality assurance of medications, UNICEF

Study on size estimation of the national and regional levels of key populations: people who inject drugs (PWID), sex workers (SW), men having sex with men (MSM), UNICEF

Report on Situation Analysis of Measles Outbreak 2018, WHO

Report on Point of Prevalence Survey in Albania, WHO

Leishmaniasis Action Plan 2020-2022, WHO

Guideline for the Surveillance of Leishmaniasis, WHO

Guideline for the Case Management of Visceral and Cutaneous Leishmaniasis, WHO

National Report on Child Nutrition, WHO

Evaluation Report of the National Cervical Cancer Control, WHO

Assessment of the challenges and needs of PHC providers in meeting the requirement of Mental Health legislation in Albania, WHO

Assessment of Sexual, reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent (SRMNCAH) health services in the context of universal health coverage, WHO

Report on Methods and process to develop the outpatient reimbursed medicines list in the Republic of Albania with considerations on the introduction of health technology assessment (HTA) to inform decision-making, WHO

Report on Strategic Risk Assessment in Albania, WHO

National Emergency Operation Plan, WHO

Assessment Report of the Institute of Public Health laboratories with regard to high threat pathogens, WHO

Assessment of Sexual, reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent (SRMNCAH) health services in the context of universal health coverage, WHO


A Report on Needs Assessment of Social Services in 12 Regions of Albania, May 2019, UNDP

Trainer Guide for Child Consulting Centres, UNICEF

Working protocols for the social welfare directories at municipalities, Guide for municipalities, UNICEF
https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/working-protocols-social-welfaredirectories-municipalities

Fact Sheet me gjetjet e anketimit me të rinjët e Bashkisë së Pogradecit, UNFPA

Fact Sheet me gjetjet e anketimit me të rinjët e Bashkisë së Pogradecit
http://jotabu.al/fact-sheet-me-gjetjet-e-anketimit-me-te-rinjte-e-bashkise-se-pogradecit/
• Buxhetimi për rininë dhe me rininë në Bashkine Pogradec, UNFPA
  http://otabu.al/buxhetimi-me-rinine-dhe-per-rinine-ne-bashkine-pogradec/

• Fact Sheet me gjetjet e anekitimit me te rinjte e Bashkisë të Dibrës, UNFPA
  http://otabu.al/fact-sheet-me-gjetjet-e-anequitmit-me-te-rinjte-e-bashkise-se-dibres

• Analiza e buxhetimit për rininë në Bashkine Dibër, UNFPA
  http://otabu.al/analiza-e-buxhetimit-per-rinine-ne-bashkine-diber/

• Fact Sheet me gjetjet e anekitimit me te rinjte e Bashkisë e Lezhës, UNFPA
  http://otabu.al/fact-sheet-me-gjetjet-e-anequitmit-me-te-rinjte-e-bashkise-e-lezhes

• Analiza e buxhetimit për rininë në Bashkine Lezhë, UNFPA
  http://otabu.al/analiza-e-buxhetimit-per-rinine-ne-bashkine-lezhese/

• Research Brief, Measuring Organized Crime: Assessment of Data in the Western Balkans, UNODC

• Best Practices Manual on Local Government Archives, UNDP
  https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/plani-i-kujdesit-social-.html

• OSSH Best Practice Manual, UNDP
  https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/plani-i-kujdesit-social-.html

• Integrity Plan, Municipalities of Elbasan, Mallakaster, Mat, Gjirokaster, Durres, and Patos, UNDP
  https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/plani-i-kujdesit-social-.html

• Corruption and Integrity Risk Assessment Methodology, UNDP
  https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/plani-i-kujdesit-social-.html

• Operational Toolkit on Public Engagement and Consultation, UNDP
  https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/plani-i-kujdesit-social-.html

• Budget briefs for social care services
  https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2451/file

• Op-ed: Honouring Albanian Rural Women, Michele Ribotta, UN WOMEN Representative in Albania

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