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COVID-19
RESPONSE
VACCINES

UNCT RESULTS REPORT 2020 MONTENEGRO



UNITED NATIONS
MONTENEGRO
.....

March 2021



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Foreword

We are pleased to present you the UNCT Montenegro Results Report for 2020- the year when unprecedented crisis hit the world. While it started as a health crisis, we were soon aware the impact of COVID-19 pandemic would be much more far-reaching, as it affected families, communities, societies, and economies at their core. The impact of the pandemic does vary from country to country, but poverty and inequalities both at national and global scale have undoubtedly increased, posing risks to undermine progress made thus far in implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Montenegro is not an exception to this, as the country has been hit hard by the crisis. The health and socio-economic impact of COVID 19 pandemics not only put into spotlight but also exacerbated existing structural weaknesses. The already vulnerable have been affected hardest, and the new groups of people emerged who are at risk of being left behind. As you will see from the report, UN's work in 2020 was strongly focused on supporting the Government of Montenegro with immediate response and coping with crisis through evidence collection and analysis, procurement of medical equipment, advocacy, and ongoing programmatic work, showcasing the strength of partnership and flexibility to respond effectively and efficiently to the new reality.

After one year of stepping into what was the unknown battlefield, it's time to reflect on the positive side and lessons we learnt from it. The lock-down provided an opportunity to re-design the way UN works, understanding not only limitations but also power of online communication platforms in ensuring business continuity. But going beyond UN walls, institutions in Montenegro were also supported to adjust their working arrangements in the same manner, by designing digital tools and enhancing their ICT capacities. Without this, obstacles in service delivery in social protection, education, health, public administration, would have led to even harder impact of the crisis.

NGOs have been our key allies in collecting evidence and reaching out to vulnerable people on the ground in order to mitigate impact of the crisis. Opportunities were wide open to youth and all the individuals and

groups whose voices hadn't been heard to have their say and contribute with their ideas and actions into paving the way forward to sustainable recovery of Montenegro. And putting all those ideas into action would not have been possible without generous support of traditional and emerging partners from international community and private sector. We would like to extend our deepest admiration and appreciation for them all.

Now is the time and a unique chance for Montenegro to board onto sustainable trajectory which will prioritize inclusive and green economic development, decent work, health and education for all, poverty reduction, and improving resilience to future shocks. In order to achieve that, we need to build cohesive and gender-equal society based on mutual respect, valuing diversity and trust in institutions which have to be transparent, effective and people-centered.

The new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the work on which has been initiated in 2020 as in its full swing now, will set the strategic direction to tackle these complex but equally important priorities. We will need to invest more concerted efforts into enhanced operational coordination, but also to better position SDG policy coordination within the Government. The complementarity with EU accession has been already assessed through Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) process, and following that dual approach is agreed to be a win-win strategy: to both increase chances of Montenegro becoming part of the European Union, but also to succeed with the overall impact of the Agenda 2030, as we have only nine years to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Let us use the time wisely and for the benefit of all the people in Montenegro.



Đorđe Radulović
*Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Montenegro*



Peter Lundberg
*UN Resident Coordinator
in Montenegro*

UN Country Team Montenegro



Photo: UN Montenegro / Miloš Vujović

Agencies under the Cooperation Framework



Key development partners of the UN in Montenegro



Government
Of Montenegro

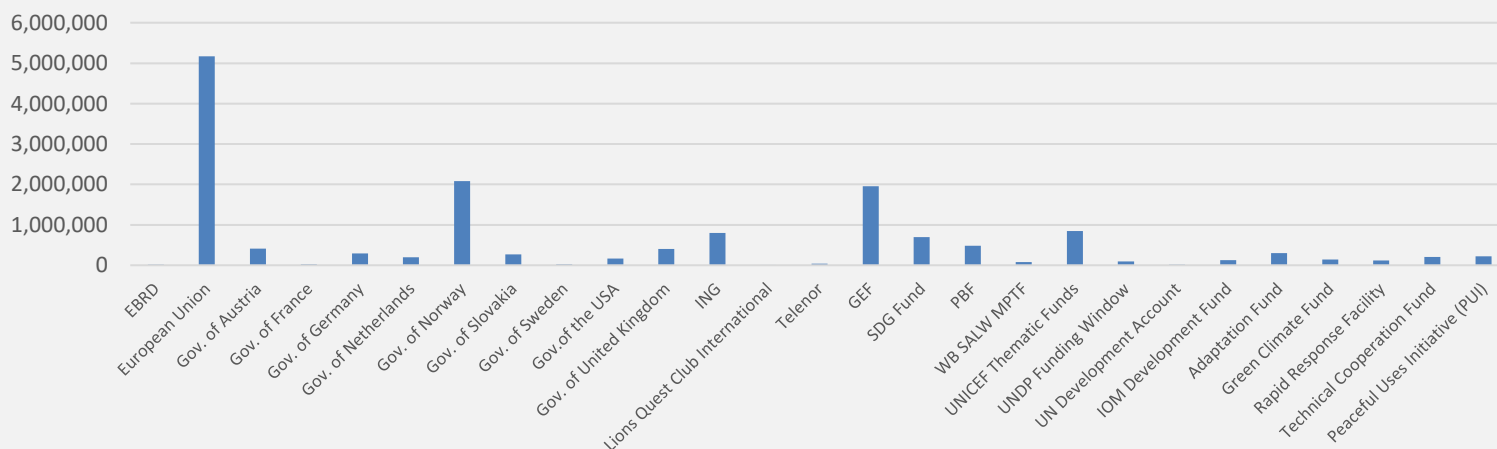
Investing partners in 2020



Other international partners



Sources of funds in 2020 (in USD)



* The graph doesn't include national partners and core funds of UN agencies.

Chapter 1: Key developments in the country and the regional context



Photo: Miloš Vujović / UN Montenegro

Montenegro was making progress towards the SDGs prior to COVID-19 crisis which is reflected in its development indicators, such as reducing poverty and improving Human Development Index scores.

Since 2017 **poverty**, as measured by the upper middle-income poverty rate (\$5.5 in 2011 purchasing power parity), has **decreased from 19.4 percent to 18.1 percent**. Country entered 2020 with record high employment and an average GDP growth of 4 percent in the previous five years.

Montenegro's 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) score (0.829) places it 48th in the global HDI, and at the highest level in the Western Balkans (excluding

Croatia and Slovenia). Still, Montenegro's Gender Development Index (GDI) reveals a score that is below the average of countries from the very high human development group, the most notable difference between men and women being the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita: 20,634 USD for men and 14,457 USD for women. Preliminary data indicate that, **when COVID-19 is factored in, Montenegro's HDI score worsens to 0.812**, risking Montenegro returning to its 2014 level.

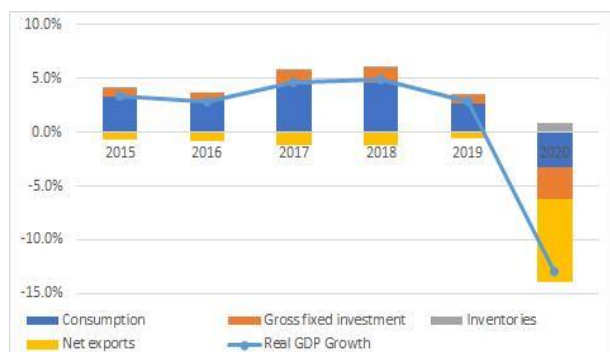
The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant negative impact on the country and its people and has affected progress on the SDGs. It exacerbated structural vulnerabilities of Montenegrin economy: 1) growth has become heavily dependent on public investment, showing a lack of a private sector engine of growth, 2) service sectors contribute most of the

gross value added at around 60 percent of GDP, with direct and indirect contributions from tourism bringing in approximately EUR 1 billion each year or around 25 percent of GDP, while relying on a narrow base of production - industry, agriculture and manufacturing contributing 16, 6 and 4 percent, respectively, 3) economy has substantial external imbalances, with a substantial current account deficit, the largest in the Western Balkans.

Lower tourism receipts, with foreign tourist arrivals declining by over 80 percent in 2020, meant a slowdown in overall economic activity. World Bank has estimated that the economy would contract by around 15 percent and that poverty would rise to 20.4 percent in 2020, with the emergence of new groups of vulnerable people ("new poor"), whose household income largely depends on the informal economy and who are not covered by social protection and/or eligible for employment benefits. Family income might shrink by 5-10 percent, meaning that 9,000-20,000 citizens might slip below the poverty line due to the pandemic. Most of them are currently not accessing social welfare services, which means that the number of beneficiaries of such services will rise in the forthcoming period.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased a share of women's unpaid work to the economy, reaching the monetary value of 122 million euros during the first three months of the pandemic. The women's unpaid and care work exceeded that done by men by 92%.

Indeed, as shown in the graph down below, Montenegro witnessed sharp fall of real GDP growth, net exports, gross fixed investment and consumption in 2020.



Source: MONSTAT

approx. **21%** employees experienced salary reduction

1/3 had their salary reduced by 21–40%

almost **21%** respondents did not have any income

20% either not receiving a salary or losing their job

approx. **40%** of women found it hard to cover expenses during this period

12% of those reporting having incomes from work were not socially insured

COVID-19 has also had a severe impact on the ability of families with children to provide food and ensure appropriate hygiene. **About 70% of households can see through the crisis up to one month only.** COVID-19 has had an impact on employment levels.

Employment agency data shows that the **number of unemployed persons increased by almost 10,000** in September 2020 compared to same month in 2019.

Source: Rapid Social Impact Assessment, 2020

In order to support businesses and citizens that have been hit by COVID-19, **the Government adopted four economic packages** which include: direct subsidies to companies for salaries, subsidizing the interest rate for loan rescheduling, postponing in tax payments, reduced VAT rate, new credit lines with the Investment Development Fund for liquidity, subsidies for private accommodation rental and tour operators, financial help to most vulnerable citizens, etc.

EU Accession continues to be a major driver of the reform processes in the country that aims to join the EU by 2025. Progress had been made in structural reforms which has placed Montenegro as the next potential EU member state. All 33 EU chapters have been opened, of which 3 are provisionally closed. Despite the progress made, EU's clear expectation is that accelerated reforms are needed in the areas of Justice sector and Rule of Law reforms, as well as freedom of media and fight against high-level corruption. Montenegro has benefited from the EU's

financial assistance under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), which consisted of EUR 279.5 million in support between 2014-2020.

Montenegro has witnessed fragile **social cohesion** in recent years. There has been low level of trust in institutions and elected representatives, and the perception that the law is not applied to everyone equally. Incidents of hate speech and other hate crimes, in particular against ethnic and religious minorities, women, as well as LGBTI community have been on the rise. Patriarchal norms continued to strongly affect the whole society, creating challenging environment for the promotion and effective protection of human rights, in particular when it comes to the rights of women.

The adoption of the Law on religious freedoms in December 2019 led to strong reactions from the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro and Serbia. This dynamic played out in the pre-electoral environment in Montenegro and contributed to a change of the ruling party for the first time since the

multi-party system was introduced in 1990. The Law on religious freedoms was then overruled in December 2020 by new ruling coalition. Members of winning coalition agreed on foreign policy priorities, giving priority to EU accession process.

Regional cooperation is an important element and one of the three pillars of the Montenegrin foreign policy. Montenegro contributes actively to the stability and security at the regional level through participation in around 35 regional organizations and initiatives. However, even with the perspective of EU accession, for the Western Balkan countries and the numerous regional cooperation processes, tensions exist nationally and regionally. There is mistrust, lack of sense of togetherness, but also populism and divisions, together with degraded values, as reasons for lack of connectedness of citizens with their communities and governments of the Western Balkans region. The root causes of these are disagreements around identity issues – ethnicity, language and religion.



Photo: Miloš Vujović / ILO Montenegro

Chapter 2: UN socio-economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic

206,000 PEOPLE



reached by crisis
communication and
community engagement

USD 3.3 mill



urgently needed health
and personal protective
equipment procured

As 2020 was marked by COVID pandemics, UNCT Montenegro adjusted its strategic directions to help country to respond to health and socio-economic crises.

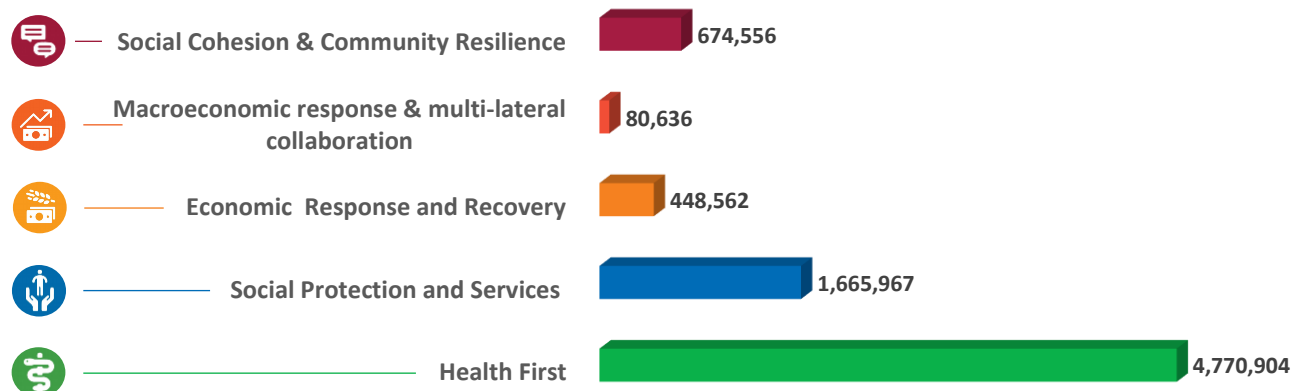
As immediate reaction, UNCT helped national health authorities to conduct needs assessment, **develop Country Preparedness and Response plan (CPRP)** and **set up a COVID-19 response coordination mechanism**. In order to reduce health system capacity gaps, through the EU technical assistance, necessary medical equipment for both protection of health workers and improved diagnostic and medical treatment of COVID-19 patients was procured. UN also supported equipping quarantine facilities. With the aim to set the context, assess immediate, medium and long-term needs and to better streamline UN assistance in helping country to respond and recover from Covid-19 crisis, the UNCT in Montenegro developed Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP) in line with UN global framework, as a universal framework of support to countries' path to social and economic recovery. The SERP outlines priority actions in five key areas (health, social protection, economic recovery, macro-economic response, and social cohesion) and identifies UN programmatic support as well as advocacy, support for evidence building, technical assistance and policy support. The response plan strongly focuses on the most vulnerable, groups at risk of being left behind as well as the new groups of vulnerable people. SERP has been fully integrated into UN Joint Workplan and globally set indicators, applicable to Montenegrin SERP, have been regularly monitored and reported through UNINFO.

Under the SERP, by December 2020 the UN in Montenegro spent **7.64 mn \$ (5,96m of new funding and \$1,67m of re-programmed)** to support the COVID-19 response. This SERP also informs the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and brings a COVID-19 analytical basis through the Common Country Analysis for Montenegro.

Key focus of SERP implementation in 2020, especially when it comes to urgent response, was in

the area of health (Pillar I) and social protection of those mostly hit by the crisis (Pillar II). The whole COVID response was informed by substantial evidence collection work conducted from the outset of the crisis through assessments in the area of social and economic impact (Pillar IV).

Economic recovery (Pillar III) and Social cohesion (Pillar V) were to the great extent mainstreamed throughout ongoing programs in the relevant Outcome areas of UNDAF.



PILLAR I HEALTH FIRST

In the area of health, in addition to **procurement of medical equipment and PPE**, the UNCT provided technical assistance and resources to strengthen **risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)**, including development of an RCCE Strategy, research and data collection, development of communication material and support to national RCCE capacities.

Over 14,000 people participated in COVID-19 engagement actions and about 2,400 shared concerns and asked questions about available support services.

The key objective was to promote better adherence to recommended public health and social measures, which remain critical to suppressing transmission, reducing exposure, protecting the vulnerable, and reducing morbidity and mortality.

Disease surveillance and public health capacities were strengthened to identify, isolate, trace and quarantine contacts, and implement and adjust public health and social measures, key to suppressing transmission until vaccines are widely and equitably available, but also capacities for real time data management.

Support to **Clinical management** was also provided, to ensure that the health sector has access to continually updated multidisciplinary guidance on clinical care, safe clinical facilities and home care, and access to the tools, training and resources that translate the guidelines into practice. The work on

setting up the comprehensive Integrated Health Information System further contributed to improvement of the quality and standard of health services.

Capacities of health system to cope with COVID-19 were also strengthened through the provision of essential supplies for COVID-19 response, such as specialized medical equipment and personal protective equipment for health personnel, using the COVID-19 supply chain system. Support was provided to the Institute of Public Health to strengthen diagnostic laboratory testing.

PILLAR II Social protection and services

Urgent COVID response through **social protection** was mostly directed towards setting up support services for asylum seekers, refugees, stateless/persons at risk of statelessness and migrants, as well as children, whereas for the other groups in need it was re-adjusted through regular programmatic work. Provision of social services to elderly population in day care centers had been readjusted so it could both meet the needs of the beneficiaries and minimize their exposure to the additional health risks.

Over 90% of the entire national financial cash transfers envelope of Euro ~80M annually is administered by UN-developed e-Social Card Information System. Due to the COVID crisis, the focus from upgrading and fine-tuning the System functionalities shifted and the Social Card, since

March 2020, has been greatly utilized to serve to directly implement the packages of the Government social measures: continuation of the social rights for 1350 beneficiaries on monthly basis (since March 2020), efficient provision of ad hoc assistance to the poor and vulnerable, in response to higher demand of social data for social assistance provision and planning, etc. As a response to limited access to health care of asylum seekers and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, two medical doctors were seconded to the Asylum Centre in Spuz. COVID-19 prevention measures were reinforced by providing videoconferencing equipment to the Asylum Centre to enable connectivity, including for the possibility of contactless refugee status determination interviews, Access to online education of asylum seeker/refugee children during the pandemic was strengthened by providing electronic equipment to asylum seekers/refugee children in higher grades at elementary school. Refugees, asylum seekers and persons at risk of statelessness were continuously provided with clear, factual and updated information through COVID-19 information materials. Asylum seekers, refugees and stateless/persons at risk of statelessness were included in the national vaccination plan for COVID-19.

Additional efforts were made to improve conditions for adequate provision of health care to migrants residing or transiting through Montenegro by engaging medical workers, continuous supply and provision of PPE, medicines and medical supplies, as well as awareness raising among migrant population.

The UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment of COVID-19 revealed the impact of the health and socio-economic crisis on the most vulnerable groups, children and families, elderly, victims of gender-based violence (27% increase in SOS calls), domicile Roma, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons (at risk of statelessness), migrant workers. Cross-sectoral cooperation proved to be a crucial strategy to ensure routine preventative services such as home visitation, family support and protection from violence.

Close to 33,000 individuals and 23,000 children in vulnerable situations were reached with humanitarian support in child protection, education and water,

sanitation and hygiene. National partners provided **29,000 children and parents with psychosocial assistance**. The Association of Youth with Disabilities provided psychological and legal support to 250 children and families with disabilities – assisting 817 family members, out of which 139 children. To ensure continuity of education and prevent drop out 965 Roma students (504 boys and 461 girls) received learning support, including through paper-based materials. Roma students in primary (295) and secondary schools (75 students in first grade) received support throughout the 2020/21 school year to compensate for learning loss and improve educational outcomes. In partnership with Special Olympics and the Ministry of Education, 240 families with children with disabilities received support for implementation of the Young Athletes preschool sports program at home. Through the regional 'Voice for Every Child' project, tablets to enhance speech and communication skills supported 26 children with disabilities at home. UN also supported development of mobile education app #UčiDoma to support enlarged outreach of online education. Strong advocacy efforts by UN and CSO stakeholders contributed to the decision to re-open schools in January 2021.



PILLAR III

Economic Response and Recovery

Economic recovery was supported through continuous evidence collection work that enabled situation monitoring and trend analyses throughout the year. Evidence and analyses were used to inform national policies and strategies. New legislative framework for accelerating the innovation and technological development in the Country was adopted which set key preconditions and enabled implementation of the Government's 'third package of support measures' in support to the businesses to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19. In addition, ongoing programs in competitiveness, green businesses and support to MSMs were adjusted to support enterprises to cope with the crisis. A number of green financing schemes for two major national financing institutions - Investment

development fund and Eco Fund of Montenegro were designed, which will lead to targeted revenue generation to boost the green recovery. Inclusive Labour Market Solutions were applied to help some of the most affected categories such as unemployed women, men and young people to start and run their own businesses through a mentoring scheme.



PILLAR IV: Macroeconomic response & multi-lateral collaboration

The [Rapid Social Impact Assessment](#) was conducted in April and repeated in June 2020, enabling deeper insight into the social impact of the crisis on vulnerable groups and their most pressing needs. The report provided the evidence for decision-makers to tailor ongoing and future policy and programmatic interventions to alleviate the negative consequences of the epidemic on the people of Montenegro, with a particular focus on protecting the fundamental rights of those most vulnerable.

In addition to evidence collection in the areas of health and social protection, the UNCT has conducted comprehensive analyses on economic impact of the crisis:

- [Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Business Sector and the Growth Prospects of the Montenegrin Economy](#), to gauge the magnitude and speed of economic downturn but also to identify future directions of economic recovery. The assessment provided specific recommendations on how to tackle the uncertainties and overcome the bottlenecks and encouraged decision makers to look beyond the crisis, and shape recovery scenarios that will strive towards 2030. The report particularly highlighted the vulnerability of the economic sector and presented measures to strengthen the economy that have been implemented through government support packages.
- [COVID-19 and the World of Work: Rapid Assessment of the Employment Impacts and Policy Responses](#) - the report looks at the situation of vulnerable workers and at-risk enterprises in multiple sectors in Montenegro. It

strives to generate evidence and options to improve the structuring of dialogue and negotiations around plausible policy measures.

- [Socio-economic Impact Assessment of Covid19 to Cultural Sector in Montenegro](#), which identified systematic impact of the crisis by capturing information on public measures and provisions to support the cultural institutions, artists, and cultural and creative industries.

Gender Rapid Assessment provided review of impact of Covid-19 on women's lives focusing on personal resources, on employment and livelihoods and access to basic services and safety. Impact was recognized measuring economic cost than women experienced in the crisis context. Following the assessment findings, exact values of financial contribution of women to Montenegrin economy including in care were relieved in the publication [Care Economy Utilization](#) and gender equality advocates and policymakers equipped with evidence for urgent need for more robust gender equality policies.



PILLAR V Social Cohesion & Community Resilience

Social cohesion and community resilience were boosted using a number of innovative platforms for engaging with citizens. **Coronathon competition** has led to design and implementation of solutions aimed to help Montenegro adjust, respond and recover from the crisis caused by COVID-19. Solutions were focusing on three priority areas: Protecting life and public health and enhancing community resilience; Accelerating recovery and help the business sector to adapt and offer new services and Securing sustainable future through green economy. Dialogues with citizens were supported resulting in mainstreaming recommendations through public policy development. At least 20 organisations (employers, trade unions, community and women and youth NGOs) had their capacity built capacity to respond to the crisis, while social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement spaces were facilitated with participation of at-risk populations and groups.

Chapter 3: UN development system support to national development priorities through the Cooperation Framework



PHOTO
UNIDO Montenegro

3.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

OVER 1% POPULATION JOINED #UN75 DIALOGUE



More than 7,100 citizens have been mobilized to actively take part in global #UN75 dialogue

In parallel to COVID response, the UNCT initiated preparations and managed to set the solid ground for the next programming cycle. In addition to **evaluation of the current programme** (2017 – 2021) and agreed management response, the UN system has also facilitated UN75 campaign at national level and [mobilized more than 1% of Montenegrin population to actively participate in the global UN75 consultations](#) and share their views about emerging global priorities that UN should focus by 2030. In 2020, the [UNCT prepared internal background paper: Leave No One Behind](#), identifying most marginalized groups in Montenegro, describing the rights they are deprived of and causes of their deprivation. The findings from the research were incorporated in the Common Country Analysis, and will inform the design of the next Cooperation Framework.

In 2020, the **Common Country Analysis (CCA)** has been prepared by UN through internal process and the work of four results groups.

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND BACKGROUND PAPER



Identifying most marginalized groups, describing the rights they are deprived of and causes of their deprivation

The CCA identifies root causes of the key development challenges, impacts on SDG progress and provides clear recommendations for way forward and acceleration of 2030 Agenda in national context. Wide consultations were organized in the last quarter of 2020 with civil society sector, youth and women on key development challenges in Montenegro. Finally, in December 2020, UNCT initiated the process of internal consultations on key development challenges in Montenegro and identified 3 key priority areas for future interventions.

UN was active in the area of prevention, through advocating on a number of occasions for the use of speech in a responsible manner in particular by those in positions of leadership and condemning hate speech.

Throughout 2020, a regional eligibility request to the UN's Peace Building Fund (PBF) was being prepared. The aim of the request is to seek long-term funding for regional programmes and activities to further the objectives as set out in the UN's Action Plan on the Western Balkans on sustaining peace, through trust-building, dialogue and reconciliation. By end of the 2020, a draft request setting out four themes for potential future programmes had been prepared, and Government had been informed of the potential opportunity by the PBF.

When it comes to human rights, the UNCT provided inputs into two review processes by UN human rights mechanisms, in January for the *List of Issues* prepared by the Human Rights Committee that oversees implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in May to the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women* on the status of implementation of urgent recommendations made by the Committee to Montenegro in 2017. Inputs were related to the situation of various groups, including LGBTI persons, Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities, women, children, and key issues of concern, including discrimination, violence against women and children including child marriage, hate speech and crime, the denial of legal capacity and the lack of meaningful participation.

The foreseen April 2020 review of Montenegro by the Committee Against Torture was postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UN further developed knowledge and skills of 27 officials on how to use the Government's national recommendations database that brings together observations and recommendations by various UN human rights mechanisms to Montenegro, many of which highlight gaps and concrete actions to further the realization of rights. Significant efforts were still needed by the end of year to populate the system to serve its key aim of informing Government planning for implementation and monitoring and reporting on human rights obligations.

As observers on a Government-led working group, several UN Agencies provided advice on the draft Strategy on the Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro. Inputs were based on agency analysis and observations and recommendations by various UN human rights mechanisms to the country since 2017.

SDG implementation in 2020 was contextualized around COVID response, and the greatest focus was on SDGs 1,3, 4 and 16.





SDG 1- UN system has continued with the support to Montenegrin social protection system, including with development of facilities and strengthening the quality of provision of social welfare and childcare services, establishing and maintaining Social Welfare Information System and supporting evidence-based policy planning and monitoring. Social services for the elderly were integrated within the national protection system with earmarked funding by the Government.

After COVID crisis hit in 2020, major efforts have been invested to alleviate the impact on the most vulnerable and to identify those at risk, as described in Chapter 2. In addition, system was supported with strong evidence collection through comprehensive sectoral analysis of social protection system and an [analysis of multidimensional child poverty](#), setting the basis for informed and targeted policy changes in the forthcoming period.



SDG 3- For the first time, and due to the pandemics, the greatest annual share of investments in SDGs went to SDG 3. Besides procurement of 2 mill pieces of PPE and other equipment to support Montenegrin health system (**110 ventilators, 10 X-ray devices, PCR kits**), key focus of UN was on establishing and maintaining COVID coordination structure, risk communication and community engagement, but also introducing mental health programs.



SDG4- UN continuously strengthens national capacities to improve quality and inclusive education and pre-school services with the focus on access to education for the most marginalized children, and especially in 2020 in the context of “out of school” education. Despite Montenegro’s swift shift to

distance learning, longstanding equity and quality issues were exacerbated during the lockdown. Children affected by poverty, children with disabilities, and Roma children were most affected by school closures and remote learning due to lack of access to learning materials, as well as insufficient support. The number of children enrolled in preschool education dropped by 8% in 2020/21 in comparison to the previous year. The number of Roma children enrolled in preschools plummeted by as much as 18%. As already noted, a number of ad hoc services, trainings and advocacy initiatives were launched to mitigate negative impact of the crisis.



SDG 16- Despite remaining challenges, UN’s interventions have induced some progress in public administration reform through continuous mainstreaming gender in the work of public administration and through keeping the continuity of public services. Ten (10) key institutional data registers were connected through and 30 institutions expressed interest to join Single Information System for the electronic data exchange (SISEDE). SISEDE platform was significantly used during Covid 19 pandemic for data exchange between institutions where **over 1.8 million web service requests were processed** only in 2020. The successful exchange of the data among state registers contributes to improvement of quality, transparency and accessibility of public services.

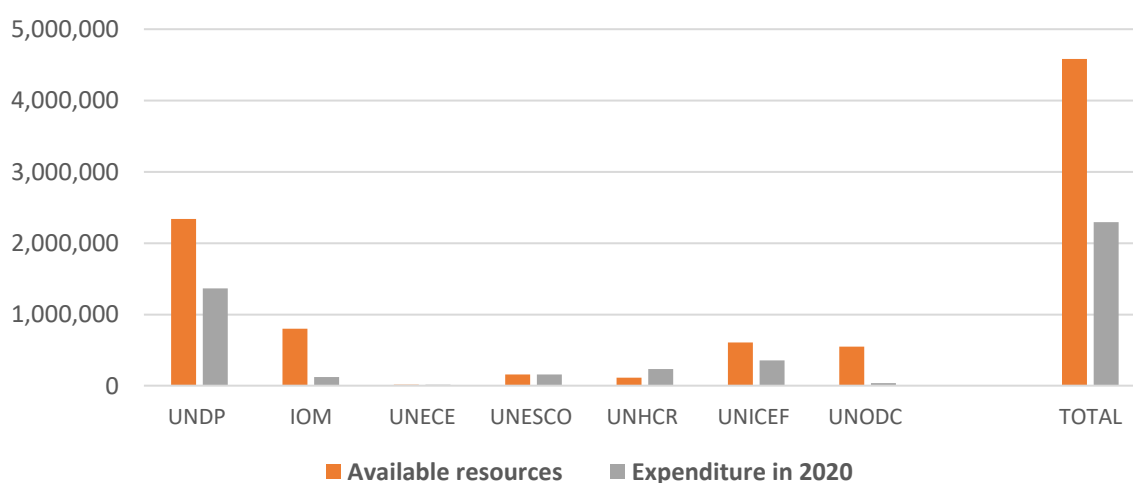
In the area of Public finance management reform, the Country’s capacities were strengthened for more transparent, accountable and participatory budget creating, execution and monitoring at the local level through the preparation of, thus far, 6 municipal Citizen Budget Guides and an appropriate ICT tool ([web portal](#)) for systematic visual presentation of all local budget data.

3.2. Cooperation Framework priorities, outcomes and outputs

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE



Total available vs. spent budget in 2020



Output 1

Citizens' participation

The UN continued to support reform **in the public administration**, enhancing transparency, developing further **human resources capacity**, supporting **delivery of services** and assisting **digitalization**. To support transparent citizen-centered sustainable development, the UN assisted the Government to

design the www.javnepolitike.me website that provides information on strategy papers, the level of implementation and impact these have on development in the country.

Digital governance was boosted with UN support for system wide interventions and cross-sectoral data exchanges, in line with the EU benchmark for data

exchange. **A central data interoperability platform allowed 22 institutions to exchange data from 10 data registers for the first time**, and enabled the development and implementation of two new e-services for citizens.



For the first time in 2020, parents were able to enroll their children in kindergartens and schools electronically, with enrolment rates of over 80% and 95% children respectively.

A digital **medical equipment inventory platform** supported by the UN was launched and used by 33 medical institutions, including all major hospitals, enabling effective tracking of expenditures of Personal Protective Equipment and other medical supplies and equipment.

At the local level, UN assisted the establishment of an IT system for sharing data, that is crucial for tracking and administering local revenues and planning local policies to better meet citizen's needs, while UN support for participatory budgeting at the local level resulted in the development of municipal citizens' budget guides. The [Montenegro National Human Development Report](#) was launched in late 2020, and the recommendations therein will serve as guidance to the UN and the country on how to address remaining challenges to digital transformation.



Output 2:

Institutional capacities to deliver transparent, gender-sensitive and people-centered services

Progress was made in building knowledge and skills on **gender equality and gender mainstreaming**. Based on an assessment of knowledge, perceptions and attitudes on gender equality in the Parliament and Government, a more systemic approach to gendermainstreaming in public administration reform was adopted.

Twenty-four gender mainstreaming trainers were certified with the Capacities of Human Resource Management Authority and mandatory gender mainstreaming training for public employees was initiated, while tailored education for 128 employees from local or national levels was conducted in 2020.



[Gender Map](#), a web platform and source of educational and research publications was designed, and a [mobile application 'Be Safe'](#), for gender-based violence (GBV) reporting, in the context of COVID lock-down.

The application enables multisectoral response in crises and raises awareness of the need to protect victims of GBV. **60,000 persons had accessed the gender map** by end 2020, while **30% of GBV cases** reported to the National Helpline were reported through the be-safe app during the lockdown period.

1,377 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees had knowledge of options of voluntarily return or reintegration in countries of origin through the Voluntary Return and Reintegration info campaign.

The Ministry of Interior's Directorate for Asylum (DfA) received UN support in refugee status determination and protection, as well as in re-establishing access to application procedures in safe conditions in the COVID-19 pandemic.



Output 3

Improved policies in line with international commitments and EU accession

Migration management in the region enhanced, with UN support for coordination between the Heads of Border Police from the Western Balkans and for the development of a National Road Map on Migration Statistics for each of the six countries in the region.

The UN also supported the drafting of a Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Readmitted Nationals in Montenegro (2021-2025) and a 2021-2022 Plan, which by end of year, were under review by the European Commission. Capacity development of front-line practitioners resulted in better cultural awareness of the situation and challenges faced by migrants.

In the area of **organized crime and corruption**, UN support resulted in stronger capacity of customs and border control agencies' capacities to tackle illicit drug trafficking and other organized crimes, and Government was assisted to submit a self-assessment checklist as part of the process to report under the UN Convention Against Corruption. A gap analysis on harmonization between the firearms legislation in Montenegro with the UN Firearms Protocol was produced, the recommendations of which should feed into amendments of the Criminal Code.



Output 4

Stronger capacity, efficiency and transparency of the judiciary

To improve **access to justice for children**, standards on child friendly justice and child equitable access to justice, addressing gender and equity gaps affecting boys' and girls' access to justice were strengthened. With UN technical assistance, the Ministry of Justice further aligned criminal laws with EU and UN standards in child rights and developed *Guidelines for Police and Prosecution on cases of gender-based violence and violence against children*.

Almost 3,000 children (1,333 boys and 1493 girls) and 1000 family members from most marginalized communities had better knowledge of the right to equitable access to justice as a result of educational activities by civil society and the Protector for Human Rights and Freedoms. In juvenile justice, progress was made, as a result of capacity development with judicial actors.

By the end of 2020, 60% of judicial staff working with girls and boys in contact with the law qualified to apply child friendly and gender sensitive justice principles, including restorative justice. For children in conflict with the law, in 30% of cases alternative, diversion measures were applied rather than criminal sanctions.

To ensure reliable and comprehensive statistics in judiciary, UN continued to support development of software for the Courts and the prison system, and built capacity of 25 officials on database administration.

A set of internationally comparable indicators for children in all court proceedings for the new Judicial Information System were developed and validated by the Ministry of Justice, the Judicial Council and MONSTAT.

Modeling of child friendly spaces in six courts and prosecutors' offices was initiated in 2020, with UN support. UN technical assistance also enhanced the role of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms in Montenegro in monitoring children's rights. The Protector's Office adopted a *Strategy and Work Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights for the period 2021-2025*, while staff capacity to handle individual complaints submitted by children and other members of the public on alleged violations of children's rights was also developed with UN support.

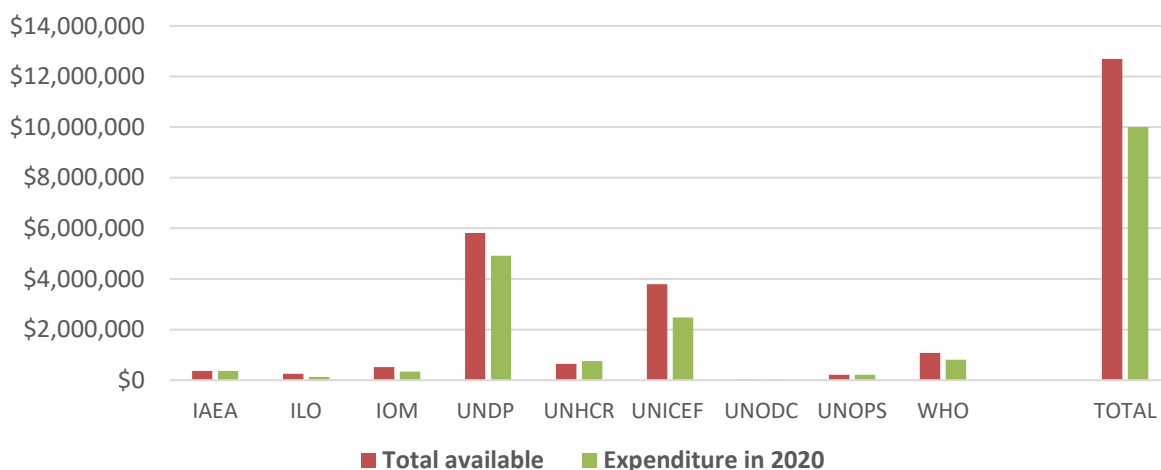
Democratic governance on the ground:

- [Why was it important for professionals to receive training on better protection of children on the internet?](#)
- [How the grassroots work of the NGOs shaped the positive narrative to respond to COVID crisis?](#)

SOCIAL INCLUSION



Total available vs. spent budget in 2020



Outputs 1 & 2

Multisectoral cooperation and institutional capacities for services provision

In addition to further strengthening of social protection system capacities, continuous support was provided to the Government to deliver COVID 19 crises measures such as continuation of social rights, facilitation of cash assistance to poor and vulnerable groups and adjustments of social services to minimize virus transmission.

Development and provision of user-oriented community based social services prevents

One-off humanitarian cash assistance was provided by Centres for Social Work to 1,200 families with 3,363 children.

institutionalization and enables provision of services in least restrictive environment through the non-institutional forms of protection. This has enhanced access of socially vulnerable groups to quality social and child protection services, eventually resulting in improved quality of life of beneficiaries and enhancing individuals and families to have an independent and productive life.

Asylum seekers, refugees, stateless/persons and migrants

Together with the Ministry of Interior a survey was conducted which identified delayed issuance of biometric documents and limited knowledge of local language as main obstacles to socio-economic integration of refugees. The survey findings served as a baseline for advocacy, including the drafting of the National Strategy on Migration and Reintegration 2021 – 2025 and its 2021 and 2022 action plans.

Free legal aid and legal counselling provided by UNHCR's partner organization Civic Alliance, assisted about 150 asylum seekers and refugees to get access to socio-economic rights enabling their integration in Montenegrin society. Advocacy efforts among service providers and decision makers on the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and stateless/or at risk of statelessness was continued.

One of the key achievements in 2020 was the **opening of the Reception Center for migrants and asylum seekers located at Karaula Bozaj**. The leading role of the Government and the establishment of cooperation (through SOPs) among institutions involved in the process has been of essence and remains a priority together with ensuring predictable and sustainable funding of the Reception Centre. Establishment of the coordinated registration and referral system for migrants and asylum seekers is yet another important achievement in 2020.

Unemployed people

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (now Ministry of Economic Development) was provided technical assistance in creation of a set of internal procedures (both on the central and local level - 67 in total), for the work of the Employment Agency of Montenegro (EAM), required for implementation of laws on mediation and unemployment rights. In addition, a Gap Analysis of Collective Bargaining was conducted.

Capacities within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Montenegrin Employers Federation were

strengthened through trainings, including for using statistical softwares for Labour Market Analysis and Measuring Skills Mismatches. Capacities of the Employment Agency of Montenegro were increased through the revision of procedures for service provision through digitalisation and by designing two human-centred services for labour activation of women. Employment Agency staff were also trained on monitoring and evaluation of activation measures.

Innovative tools such as **individualized service delivery** were introduced to the institutional partners in employment and social sectors, enabling them to address the labor activation challenges more effectively.

Children

To strengthen national systems UN partnered with the Ministry of Health and Primary Health Centre Podgorica to strengthen home visitation services for preventative mother and child health. Guidelines on preschool nutrition and marketing of unhealthy foods and research on iodine deficiency in lactating women were finalized. Following UN advocacy, preschool nutrition was included in the draft early childhood education strategy for 2021–2024.

In the area of education, the program for developing the social and emotional skills of students was further expanded to a total of 94 schools. To create a quality, inclusive and resilient education system, technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Education to develop a new digital learning platform.

To help schools make optimal use of new digital tools capacity building was provided to over 4,500 teachers, benefiting 55,000 primary and secondary students (24,750 girls and 30,250 boys).

An education sector analysis conducted with the Ministry of Education was expanded to take into account the pandemic's effects on the education system, including quality, equity, financing and infrastructure. The findings will inform planning and

budgeting for a multi-year education sector plan.

A comprehensive review of the foster care system was undertaken and **30 social welfare professionals were trained** to recruit specialized and emergency foster-carers for children with disabilities, babies and victims of violence.

Training of 50 front-line professionals improved services to 33,397 beneficiaries of social and child protection services.

Montenegro's long term reform efforts were recognized in the **'Realizing Rights, Changing Lives'** report that was launched at a UN Human Rights Council high-level event - highlighting a more than 50% decrease in the number of children in residential care in the period 2010-2019.

Elderly

One of the prioritized social services for elderly - Home assistance to around 1,200 beneficiaries has become integral part of the social services delivery system.

The Day-Care Centre service for the elderly, which significantly contributes to the socialization of the elderly population, has so far been provided in nine municipalities and includes 12 Day-Care Centers for up to 200 beneficiaries. Considering situation caused by the novel coronavirus outbreak, the service provision has been successfully readjusted, as described in Chapter 2, pillar II.



Output 3

Gender-based violence (GBV)

Legislative and policy frameworks were improved to prevent discrimination and violence against women. 12 women's NGOs were supported to develop and upgrade their capacities in order to provide quality, specialized, 24/7 service support to women victims of gender base violence. Also, additional accommodation for victims has been provided through the support of women's NGOs.

Strategic dialogue with the Government resulted in development of Crisis Action Plan on specialized service provisions for victims of GBV and Instructions for implementation of Code of Conduct on GBV cases in the period of COVID pandemic.

UN also supported development of universal price list for the costs of specialized service providers for GBV, as well as draft National Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

Insufficient multi-sectoral coordination and inadequate victims-centered support continue to pose challenges for effective provision of support to victims of gender-based violence - this was exacerbated during the pandemic.



Output 4

Youth participation

The Youth Innovation Lab adapted its programmes (UPSHIFT, Hackathon for Social Change and socio-emotional skills workshops) for online deployment. It developed new activities on well-being and mental health and a #StudyBuddy programme, promoting peer learning support.

Some 10,000 adolescents participated in at least one skills building and empowerment programme in 2020.

Montenegro hosted the second Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge resulting in two mobile apps designed to improve well-being and resilience and connect adolescents with volunteering and internship opportunities. A new school-to-work transition programme was launched in partnership with the TUI Care Foundation.

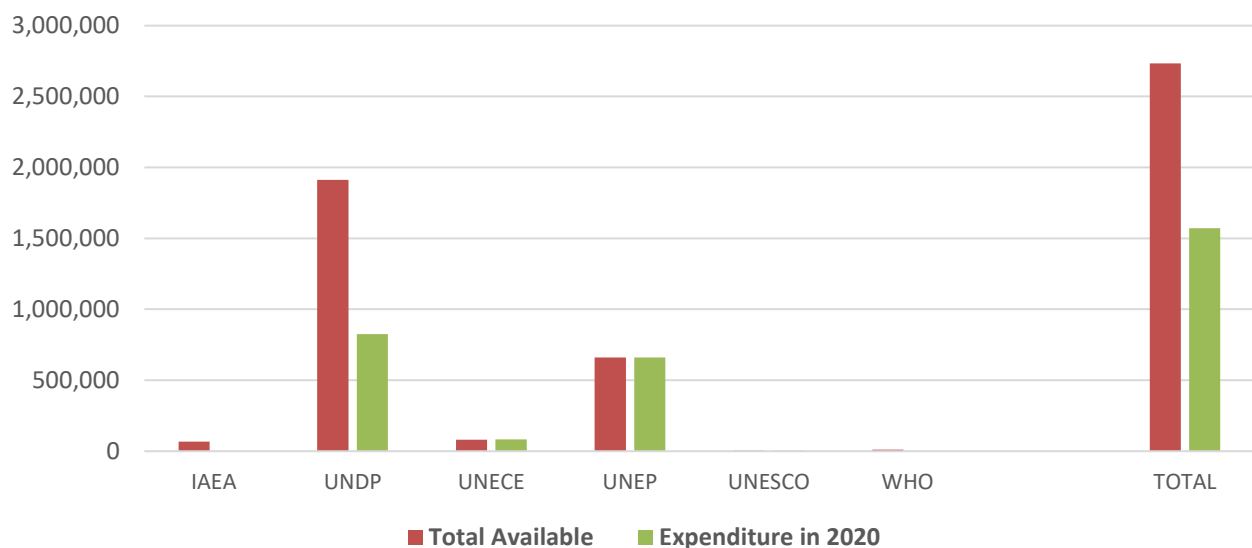
Social inclusion on the ground:

- [Mobile Teams supporting migrants stranded in Montenegro](#)
- [How children with disabilities and their parents are benefiting from online platform?](#)
- [Refugees making a new life for themselves in Montenegro](#)

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY



Total available vs. spent budget in 2020



Output 1

Climate change and environmental targets integrated into national policies and programming

UN's contribution in the area of environmental sustainability enabled the country to progress against EU accession negotiations within **Chapter 27**. This included the strengthening of internal legal acts, institutional capacity building in the area of EU acquis implementation and the establishment of products related to green business financing through Eco Fund.

Following its international commitments to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Montenegro submitted its Third National Communication, which demonstrated that Montenegro had reached its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) target already in 2018.¹

Around \$13mn was leveraged for green investments in tourism by the private and public sector which will contribute to GHG emission reductions of 121.8kt.

¹ With revision of the NDC, Montenegro sets a new target value of GHG reduction of 35% by 2030, excluding the measure related to the construction of small hydro-power plants.

When it comes to **management of protected marine areas and coastal ecosystems**, UN supported Institute for Marine Biology to conduct Biological survey, and Nature and Environmental Protection Agency to develop draft of **three nature protection studies for the areas of Platamuni, Stari Ulcinj and Katic**. Public hearing procedures for Draft Nature Protection Study Platamuni and Act of proclamation were conducted during November-December 2020.

In the area of **enhancing environmental performance and climate proofing of infrastructure**, the Baseline Assessment and Gap analysis of climate change framework, an Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment were produced with a focus on road infrastructure, which includes a set of recommendations to improve Montenegro's institutional, legal and policy framework.

As a step towards enhancing **evidence-based environmental governance** and sustainable environmental policies in support of the 2030 Agenda, UN helped develop policy packages, which include air protection (strategy, programme and rulebooks) and climate change (rulebooks).

A Post COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements for countries in the ECE region was developed, with recommendations for the four pilot cities (such as Podgorica) for upgrading informal settlements and supporting the cities in the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic. These are expected to contribute to enhancing the socio-economic recovery following the pandemic and urban resilience.



Output 2

Energy efficiency and Co2 emissions reduction

As a response to the main obstacle to the implementation of e-mobility in MNE - lack of charging infrastructure - **11 public EV charging stations were installed throughout country** and enabled EV owners to charge their cars for free.

Cooperation with the Municipality of Tivat and Local

Tourism Organization resulted in a local incentive program for eco-certification of tourism facilities. Energy passport for the public lighting system in Pljevlja, Danilovgrad, Kolasin, Cetinje and Budva have been developed (see section 3.3).



Output 3

Waste management

A significant amount of data on contaminated equipment and PCB waste were collected, setting the grounds for the disposal of 280 tons of hazardous materials. Additionally, progress has been made with the Chamber of Economy on the development of the **Circular economy Roadmap** to further contribute to waste reduction and environment protection. An assessment of the current practices in medical waste management within healthcare service providers that are part of the public system has been developed. The assessment raised awareness of institutions and the public that stronger connection between activities and initiatives of producers, retailers, consumers and recyclers is required in order to prevent and reduce food waste.



Output 4

Disaster risk reduction

In the area of climate-resilient transboundary flood risk management, the detailed design of 2 structural measures was initiated in Montenegro: i) Establishment of full-scale flood protective embankment system on Bojana River in Montenegro and ii) Flood resilient reconstruction of the bridges on the Gracanica River. Onsite ground investigations were completed, as well as hydrological analysis for both rivers. For the Bojana River, a hydraulic study was prepared in order to model high waters for the return periods of 20, 50 and 100 years, according to the best international practices.

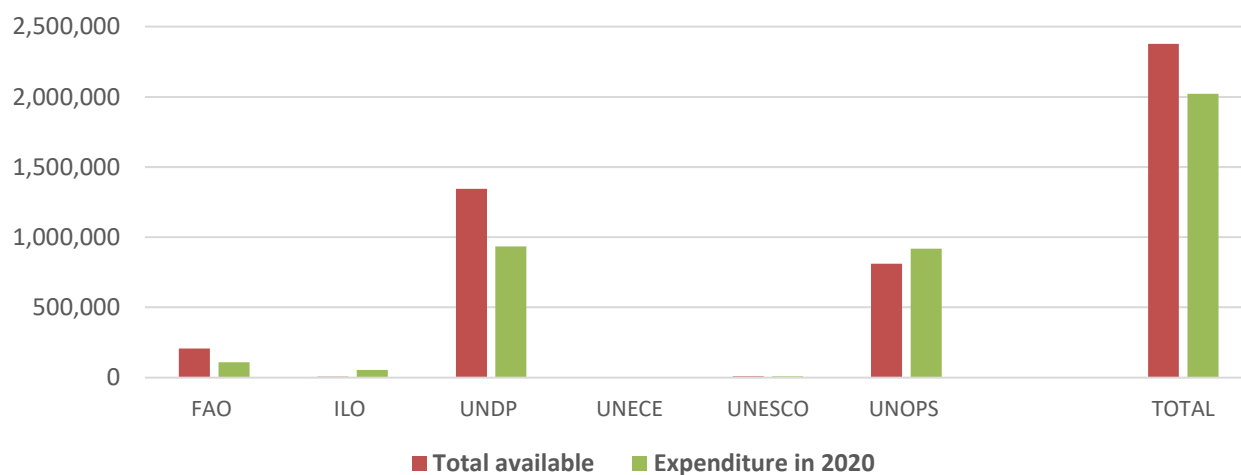
Environmental sustainability on the ground:

- [What free e-vehicles charging stations mean to the citizens of Bar and beyond](#)

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE



Total available vs. spent budget in 2020



Outputs 1

National policies fostering good business environment and competitiveness

Within the initiative to **improve access to employment** and enhanced social inclusion through improved local infrastructure in the less developed areas of Montenegro, [21 supported Small and Medium sized Enterprises](#) and [10 Vocational Education Training providers](#) ensured that 68 people were trained and 45 jobs created; [9 Business support entities](#) were selected and supported with purpose to generate business growth among 160 small businesses in targeted municipalities; [seven infrastructural projects](#) were selected with purpose to improve living conditions of the citizens and generate economic

growth in targeted areas (3 of them finalized in the last year). Support to 47 grant beneficiaries from 4 different grant schemes, resulted in maintenance of the business continuity of SMEs, enabling approx. 50 individuals to save their jobs.

10 Vocational Education Training providers ensured that 68 people were trained and 45 jobs created.

As part of the **green businesses portfolio**, the *Study on Policies and incentives for green business in Montenegro* was developed with a focus on agriculture, energy and tourism, and with a roadmap for future climate action in these areas, aiming to

promote low-carbon business initiatives, create green jobs and decarbonize the Montenegrin economy.

The **competitiveness** of the Montenegrin economy was enhanced through: further consultancy support to 21 Montenegrin municipalities in the preparation of strategic development plans; assistance to the Ministry of Economy in preparing promotional material for ten lines of technical and financial support to entrepreneurs and MSMEs, taking into account national emergency response to COVID-19 related measures; and implementation of the concept of a national brand through conducting national public opinion survey in order to identify the competitive advantages of the state.

Cultural heritage is one of the most valuable country's assets that supports development of tourism sector and hence the source of economic revenues. Therefore the action of UNCT was focused on the safeguard, promotion and enhanced management of this resources. This is particularly important with regards to the promotion of UNESCO's World Heritage properties (Kotor multiple WH designated property, Durmitor – multiple UNESCO designation and Stecci property – shared with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia). Cultural heritage was revitalized through conservation and other construction works. Ganić tower, the new cultural monument in Rožaje, was restored after many decades of decay. Execution of the works for rehabilitation of Forte Mare fortress enabled further elaboration for its nomination for the World Heritage list of UNESCO. The first phase of the reconstruction of Museum in Bijelo Polje started in 2020.

Cultural tourism and economic valorisation of cultural heritage were additionally enhanced through a number of initiatives:

- New web pages [Living Culture](#) and [Art Market](#)
- [Innovation challenge Španjola](#): 1st ever International Architectural competition for innovative solutions for reuse of cultural heritage sites taking into consideration SDGs as evaluation criteria (Španjola fortress in Herceg Novi). Turning fortress into an international creative hub was

made possible thanks to more than 60 participants of the competition and three best awarded solutions.

- Opening the first 3D cinema in Mojkovac- the refurbished modern cinema enriches the cultural offer of the city and makes Mojkovac the northern hub for 3D movies.
- Digitization of Cultural Centre in Ulcinj: 1st time after 15 years how it is reconstructed, Cultural Centre is finally equipped with modern technology, including a completely new lighting system
- Public call for acquainting the interested public with the plan for revitalization of the immovable cultural property "Jusovača" in Podgorica contributes to proceed with creative adaptive reuse of former prison for new ICT Creative hub.

In the final phase of promoting **sustainable agrifood value chains** through linkages with tourism, the roadmap to link smallholders to tourism was endorsed at a traditional food fair in Podgorica. For the fruit and vegetable project, dedicated technical assistance was provided in order to add value to local horticultural products, improve sector coordination, and enhance its overall competitiveness, through the strengthening of buyer/supplier relationships and quality upgrading. Producers' groups were supported in formalizing or strengthen cooperatives and associations and the cooperation with EBRD also supported smallholders in commercializing their traditional products under a local brand. These activities formed the basis for a digital food hub and e-commerce solution as well as set the groundwork to develop a transformative working relationship between smallholders and a major national retailer



Outputs 2

Improved Institutional capacities leading to jobs creation and formalization of the economy

Inclusive Labour Market Solutions enabled a mentoring scheme for unemployed who established their businesses through government financial support. The action has helped reduce vulnerability on

two levels: **it supported 65 unemployed women, men and young people to start and run their own businesses**, and it contributed to the sustainability of small, new businesses, which were vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic. Labour market activation of most vulnerable was additionally boosted through the development of a software to enable interoperability/automatic data exchange between Employment Agency and Social Welfare Information System (SWIS).

A strategic plan for a **Green business incubator** was developed and it will have the ambition to play a regional role. It will evolve towards online mentoring and supporting green development.

Creative industries gained prominence through a number of initiatives:

- **MIKRO 020** - Reviving abandoned urban pockets in Podgorica: square of Princess Ksenija enriched with the permanent contemporary art installation, giving a 'facelift' to this neglected public space
- Virtual exhibition *Let's develop* presented and promoted rich Montenegrin cultural heritage for development of cultural tourism and creative industries as driver for creative economy and an educational role for young architects and other professionals worldwide.
- More than 100 entrepreneurs and young creators took part in Public Discussion for **establishing of Centre for development of creative industries in Bijelo Polje**, assessing its capacities to boost economy and stimulate growth.
- **Innovation challenge**: reuse of the Cerovo military complex. International competition to establish a new center for development of creative industries (Creative Hub) in Bijelo Polje resulted in more than 110 participants from 17 countries and with five best awarded solutions for Transforming old military complex into creative hub.

A support mechanism for **women-run-companies and entrepreneurs** was developed to transition towards an online economy, and **123 private sector companies (micro, small, medium enterprises) and**

start-ups of women entrepreneurs were supported during the COVID-19 pandemic by trainings on the concept of online economy, online business running and available web-based platforms for business.

More than 100 ideas were submitted to the first Coronathon competition. The best 15 ideas were chosen to compete, with more than 30 mentors and 15 jury members included. The best 6 ideas were awarded. The post competition support led to design and implementation of ideas into solutions to benefit citizens and small businesses negatively affected by Covid 19 and their promotion to public. Beside Blood Transfusion platform, Online Education platform (YouLearn), Online E-commerce platform (Trguj.me), Chat Bot platform (DoorG), and Mobile app platform for promotion, e-commerce, logistics and collaboration were developed (Moja Crna Gora, Korzo)

Key challenges

- uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, threats of management of COVID-19 health and socio-economic impact
- lack of focus on a secondary/hidden impact of the pandemic (such as violence and exploitation)
- systemic structural, alongside with political and fiscal instability due to ongoing transition in government and insufficient financial investments/resources in proposed actions.
- Covid-19 impact on the economy which resulted in the new priorities emerging, delaying the planned private sector investments.
- weak financial instrument for strengthening sustainable, low-carbon development in Montenegro, while achieving both economic and environmental goals and combating the negative effects of climate change

Economic governance on the ground:

- [How the mentorship support for the unemployed resulted in the new start-ups?](#)
- [How Montenegrin's farmers seized the opportunities of rural tourism?](#)

3.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda



PHOTO
UN Montenegro -

The UN continued to maintain strong cooperation with the Government to support the COVID-19 response and recovery and to build more resilient systems. Innovative solutions in advancing public service delivery, especially relevant under the circumstances of COVID-19 crisis were also supported- such as services in education, health and social sectors.

Cooperation with IFIs, donors, diplomatic corps, and other international partners was expanded. Key partnerships with civil society organizations such as Red Cross, organizations of people with disabilities, women`s NGOs and Roma NGOs were crucial to reaching the most vulnerable children and families.

Several standing reference groups, such as women and youth, took part in the process of preparation of the CCA and helped identification of the key development challenges in Montenegro.

Additionally, partnerships with the private sector (Telecom, ING, TUI care Foundation...) have contributed to achieve important results for most vulnerable groups in Montenegro and set the ground for further expansion.

UN also started its advocacy efforts and the dialogue with the new Government leading to consensus over the key development challenges and most effective ways to accelerate 2030 Agenda, while using its

evidence collection and analytical work together with advocacy strategies and employing these resources through consultations, policy and technical assistance.

Examples of partnerships

UNDP partnership with the EU Delegation to Montenegro and the Government showed its responsiveness and flexibility during the most critical time of COVID-19. Namely, just when it was most needed a successful 3 million EUR **purchase of medical and personal protection equipment** successfully took place.

Partnership of the Ministry of Interior, Border police, IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF, in the light of the establishment of the **new Reception Center for migrants and asylum seekers**, proved successful in addressing COVID-19 crises and providing support for the most vulnerable groups. The capacity of the "Božaj" Watchtower (postrenovation) is estimated at 120 people under regular conditions and 200 persons under extraordinary conditions. Partnership extended to four CSOs aiming to strengthen community resilience and social cohesion among migrants and local population by fostering mutual adaptation through supporting the implementation of joint, concerted and participatory initiatives.

The active engagement of a number of **Organizations of Persons with Disabilities** (OPDs) in the design of a UNCT Expression of Interest to the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), helped getting its submission approved. OPDs were consulted at various stages in the process. The project, with an envelope of \$ 400,000, will commence in 2021, and will be designed and implemented in close partnership with OPDs.

In late 2017, **Women's Political Network (WPN)** was established as a result of long-term process of political empowerment of women. Financed by the EU, in partnership with UNDP and the former Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, WPN is a unique cross-party alliance of women from 18 political parties, who are overcoming political differences to unite for gender equality through this unique platform. Till date

WPN is comprised of more than 30 certified trainers for gender equality who created specific knowledge hub for development of next generation of gender leaders. One of the key results so far include allocation of 0.5 mn Euro to 16 women's groups in political parties based on changes in the Law on Financing of political parties. Parliamentary Working group for the electoral legislation reform integrated amendment of 40% women quota in the Electoral Law amendment proposal, approval of which is subject to the renewal of the electoral system reform process. Funding for women economic empowerment at local level was integrated as permanent budget line in 16 municipalities which led to the allocation of 265,000 Euro to support women's entrepreneurship. These efforts led towards increased interest of women in entrepreneurship at local level, with more than 100 women involved in training programs, and 46 received individual consultancy and mentorship for development of their businesses.

Long-standing partnership with the Government of Montenegro in the area of environment sustainability, and the need to ensure stable and sustainable sources of funding for environmental activities, resulted in **setting up the Eco Fund** which initiated its operations in 2020. Eco Fund is a central national institution for financing and providing technical support to projects / programs in the field of the environment, climate change and energy. The "polluter pays" principle is one of the economic instruments by which the Eco Fund collects funds and promote the reduction of environmental burdens. In 2020, a new partnership with Slovenian Government resulted in their commitment to invest 1.5mil EUR for financing of Energy Efficiency programmes to be implemented and governed by the Eco Fund.

Partnerships with municipalities of Pljevlja, Danilovgrad, Kolasin, Cetinje and Budva in introducing **energy passports** for the public lighting system laid the basis for the local administrations to plan and implement investments to increase energy efficiency of street lighting. Pljevlja municipality invested more than 0.5 million euro in Energy Efficiency measures in nine public and residential buildings that will significantly reduce the energy consumption and CO2 emission.

3.4. Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

UN reform was in its full swing in 2020. Improved RC system capacity to support UNCT work, information sharing and coordination mechanisms led to increased collaboration among UN agencies, which resulted in better tailored support to national development priorities and better integrated policy advice. This was mainly achieved through joint programs and analysis.

Two joint Programs were ongoing in 2020, financed through pooled funds:

- Dialogue for the Future (Peacebuilding Fund)
- JP Activate! (SDG Fund).



The overall goal of the joint regional programme, Dialogue for the Future (DFF), is to help create more spaces for constructive dialogue between various communities, between citizens and their highest elected leaders, thus promoting peaceful coexistence, increased trust and genuine respect for diversity. The programme is implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO in Montenegro, Republic of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- 700 adolescents, youth, women, journalists and students, gained leadership and technical skills for active engagement and contribution to social cohesion
- 500 citizen and multiple stakeholders who participated in dialogue platforms provided recommendations for improving social cohesion through citizen activism, respect for diversity, trust among people and trust in institutions

Recommendations from dialogues fed into the regional funding facility where 12 cross-border, NGO-led projects were supported in Montenegro, 5 of them funded through MNE DFF component, and 7 were partners of organisations supported through un agencies in BiH and Serbia. Non-formal groups of

youth were supported to design and implement cross-border community actions, resulting in 10 cross border youth-led initiatives.

Eleven priorities identified at national and regional dialogue platforms to strengthen social cohesion within and across borders, were integrated into a new national Strategy for women entrepreneurship and youth policy documents, thus achieving their sustainability and citizen voices to be heard and mainstreamed into national policies.

The program has also enabled **sustainable partnership with 5 government sectors** – foreign affairs, youth, human rights, culture and education, convened through the coordination body, as well as with civil sector, through the support to cross-border initiatives. In addition, project partnered with IOM, through building capacities of CSOs from the municipalities of Podgorica and Pljevlja implementing local social cohesion projects focused on the inclusion of migrants in local communities.

and marginalized, focusing on young men and women, thus accelerating sustainable human development.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, Activate! gained additional relevance due to its dual approach to strengthening social protection system and improving services for the most vulnerable. Implementation of the programme mainly focused on real time evidence generation on the impact of COVID-19, consultations with partners and adjustment of programme approaches, preparations for technical assistance for effective social policy reform and improved service delivery for the most vulnerable groups.

Within the JP Activate, two rounds of the UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment (RSIA) have been conducted in 2020, providing real-time data on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, with particular focus on vulnerable groups.



The JP Activate!, implemented jointly by UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, ILO and IOM, aims to enhance the capacities of the social protection system to better serve people in need – through a dual focus on improving the effectiveness of social policies as well as delivery of social services. It focuses on youth, children, migrants and refugees, and addresses the root causes of human trafficking while supporting decent work and employability/skills development. The vision is that by 2022, Montenegro has improved capacity to design impact-oriented, evidence-informed social protection policies and deliver integrated human-centered services that reduce poverty and social exclusion of the most vulnerable

Following data collection and consultations with vulnerable groups, the UN proposed recommendations to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable groups - a powerful tool that was used by the UNCT for advocacy and programme guidance for the COVID-19 response for the UN, Government and civil society organisations.

Joint UN Communications and Advocacy

Coherent outreach and consolidated messaging of the UN System ensured consistent One UN Voice in the areas of human rights and sustainable development, with special focus on strategic areas:

- Five joint UN reports on COVID impact and 24 COVID Situation Reports were produced and distributed. Enhanced media monitoring on COVID-19 related matters, regular placement of COVID related products, results and messages in online arena, both on UN Montenegro website and on social media.
- Coordinating media outreach including 14 press releases, two TV interviews and two radio interviews, as well as placement of three global UN press releases and OpEds in Montenegrin media.
- Enhancing digital presence of UN Montenegro including transition to the new UNCT website and regular administration of five official social media platforms, with average increase of the outreach on social media for 15%.
- Supporting increase of global visibility of the UN Montenegro's work including three placements of UN success stories on the global UN platforms as well as featuring UN Montenegro's work twice in the UN Secretary General's Spokesperson daily briefing.

The relevance of the UN as a reliable partner of people of Montenegro has been strengthened in 2020 with the strong, clear and consolidated One UN Voice, aligned with UNCT strategic objectives.

Business operations

Harmonisation in Business operations was also enhanced. To protect staff from COVID, a set of measures have been implemented in the UN House in 2020, such as procurement of protective equipment, engagement of additional cleaning staff, work in shifts, prescription of maximum number of staff for

each room etc. In 2020, UNCT Montenegro has adopted Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0. Gender and disability requirements were integrated into new BOS, through a few common services lines.

Disability, gender and youth inclusion

The UNCT assessed the level of integration of internal working procedures and joint programming with key principles related to disability, gender and youth inclusion through reporting on the Scorecards.

The youth and disability inclusion assessment, done for the first time in 2020, will serve as a baseline, with concrete actions identified to improve programming and operations. The Gender Scorecard has been used on an annual basis for several years now and shows continuous progress by the UNCT in gender mainstreaming.

3.5. Evaluations and Lessons Learned

A final independent evaluation of the UNDAF was conducted between May and July 2020 to assess the UNDAF's relevance and coherence; progress towards achievement of UNDAF outcomes; implementation arrangements; transformational contribution of the UNDAF towards key development; and progress toward implementing UN's normative work, programming principles and cross-cutting issues.

Although conducted under challenging circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemics, the Evaluation Team consulted 147 partners, beneficiaries and UN representatives, representing a wide range of stakeholders to validate the findings and recommendations. Agency-specific programme evaluations (i.e. those of UNDP and UNICEF) were also consulted.

The evaluation findings will inform the development of the Cooperation Framework between the Government and the UN system in Montenegro, especially where the evaluation highlights areas where progress on the SDGs has been slower than anticipated.

The evaluation **concluded** that (1) the UNDAF has been relevant in addressing the national priorities (2) the agencies followed their normative mandates and international norms and standards (3) the UNDAF provided a platform for UN's own internal coordination and cooperation and with the government and other partners (4) UNCT could benefit from expanded genuine integrated programming (5) the synergies among the Results Groups set up for the substantive execution of the UNDAF could improve (6) the UNDAF has been

responsive to the EU accession priorities linking them to the SDGs (7) the involvement of national stakeholders enhanced sustainability of results and national ownership (8) the approach of "communicating as one" has generally been used effectively and (9) through the UNDAF, the UN Country team has contributed to mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment.

The evaluation report **recommended** that (1) the new Cooperation Framework should focus more on the inclusion of vulnerable groups and full implementation of LNOB (2) UNCT should remain flexible and responsive to emerging priorities such as digital transformation, green growth, integrated programming for youth, area-based development to address regional imbalances, building policy coherence, and managing demographic transition, among others (3) UNCT should intensify its normative work as one of its comparative advantages (4) UNCT should consider expanding the membership of the Results Groups to include external partners (5) UNCT should improve its monitoring and evaluation system by clearly defined baselines, indicators and targets and (6) the next Cooperation Framework should include a sustainability strategy and clearly analyze and articulate risks and assumptions. The final evaluation report was validated and shared with the Government.

All recommendations were accepted by the UNCT, and a plan to implement these has been outlined in the Management Response. The action points from Management Response were duly operationalized through the process of CCA preparation and Cooperation Framework design, while the rest will be taken on board in the period to come.

3.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

USD 55,6 mn

UNDAF
funding plan

92,5%

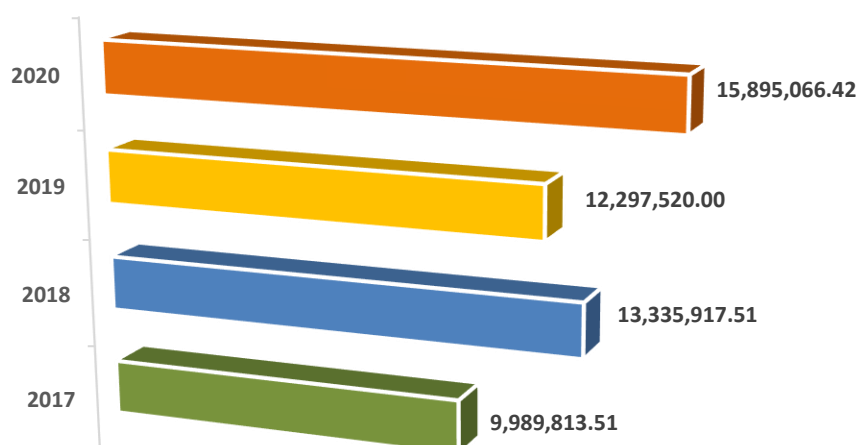
of UNDAF
funding plan
delivered by end
of 2020

up to 32%

expected increase of
total UNDAF delivery
in relation to the
original funding plan

2020 marked the fourth year of UNDAF (2017-2021) implementation in Montenegro. Out of total UNDAF funding plan of \$55,68 million, as shown in the graph below, by the end of 2020, 51,51 million USD has been delivered², i.e. 92.52%. With 22 mn already available for operations in 2021, it is to expect that UNDAF financing promise will be exceeded by up to 32 percent.

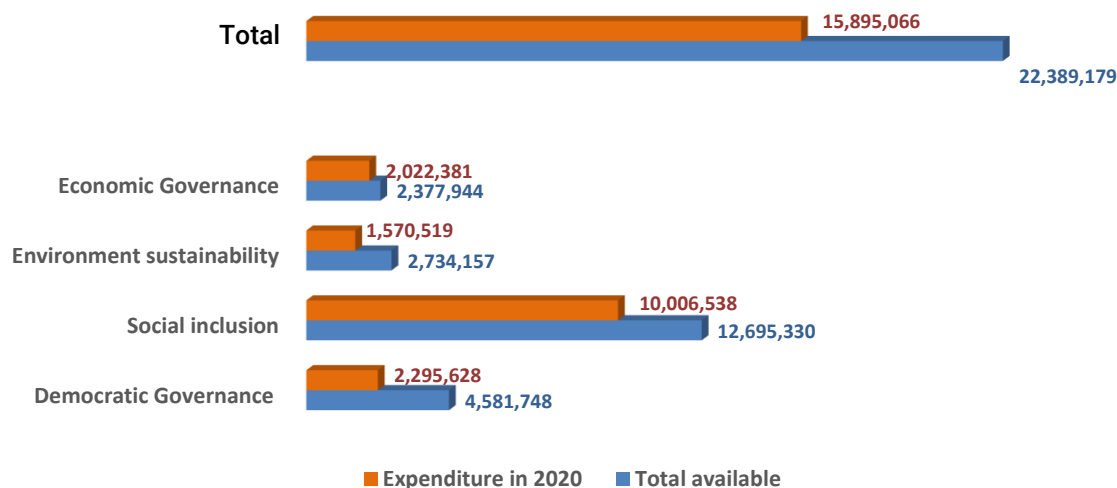
UNDAF annual delivery



In relation to Results areas, greatest investments have traditionally been made in Social Inclusion, followed by Democratic Governance, while Economic Governance and Environmental Sustainability have been on an almost equal level.

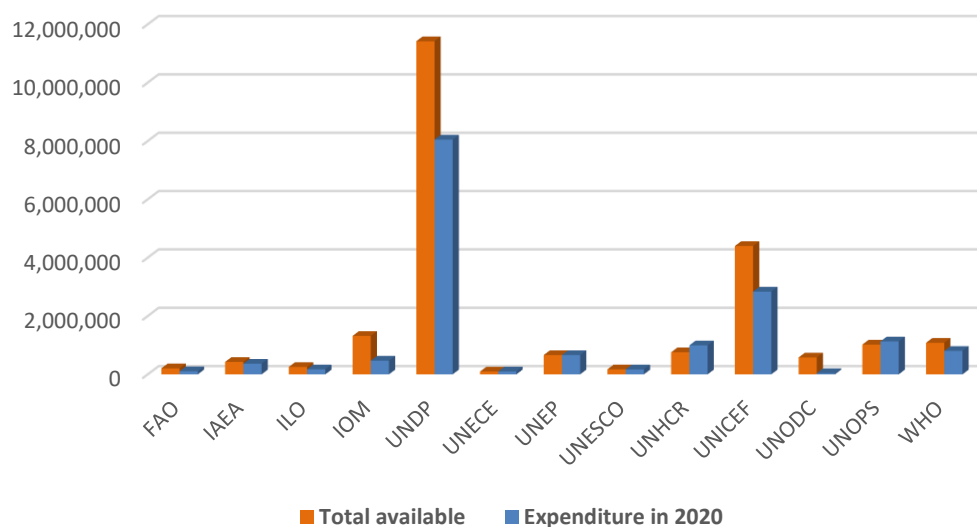
² Total amount of UN contribution does not include institutional budget of agencies or coordination budget of Resident Coordinator's Office, only the amounts directly related to implementation of four outcomes of UNDAF

Available vs. spent per Results area



Budget breakdown by agency is shown in the graph below.

Budget breakdown by agency



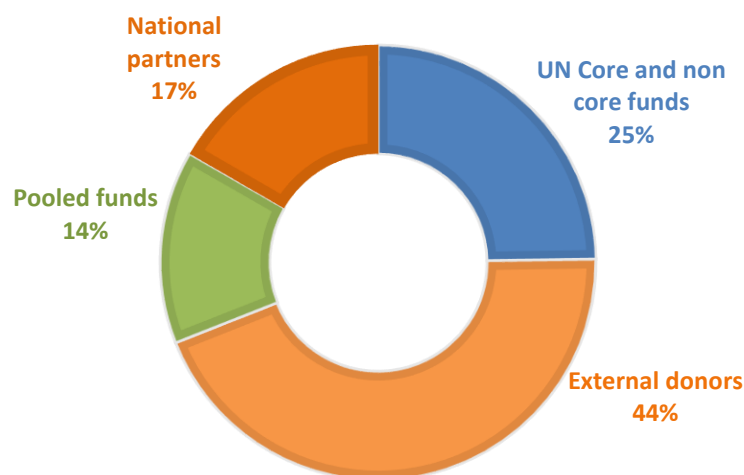
Just like in the year before, in 2020 UNDAF was funded by external funding sources (including direct investments from member states and private sector), pooled UN funds supported by member states, other UN agencies core and non-core funds³, as well as contributions from the national Government.

As shown in the graph below, the ratio of different sources of financing remained at almost the same level, with a slight decrease of share of national partners⁴ (from 25% in 2019 to 17% in 2020), as would be expected due to COVID crisis, and increase in external donor financing, also as a result of urgent COVID response (from 36% in 2019 to 44% in 2020).

³ Non-core refers to UN thematic funds and other UN-supported funding mechanisms, which are also partly funded by member states.

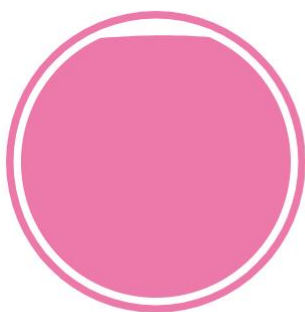
⁴ Government of Montenegro with its ministries, Airports of MNE, Islamic community of Montenegro, Municipality of Danilovgrad, Municipality of Golubovci, Union of municipalities.

Sources of UN financing in 2020

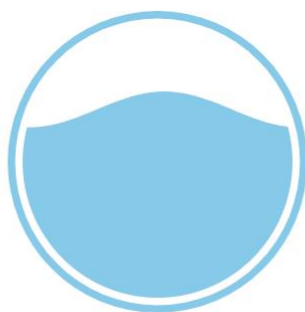


As opposed to 88% of budget delivery in 2019, the overall delivery rate in 2020, as seen in the graph below, decreased to 71%, due to difficulties in implementation induced by COVID crisis.

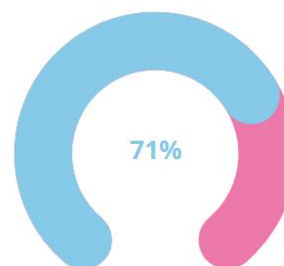
Available Resources (Annual)
\$22,389,179



Expenditure
\$15,895,066



Delivery rate
Ratio of **Expenditure** vs **Available Resources**
(Annual)



As part of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the UN will develop a Financing strategy to address funding for the period 2022-2026. In the past twelve months, the UN has developed a Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP) and Socio-Economic Response Plan to respond to the immediate health systems needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CPRP outlined the financing needs for Montenegro to respond

effectively in the immediate term to the COVID-19 pandemic, outlining the needs in terms of communications, medical equipment, personal protective equipment, surveillance and managing points of entry. It was uploaded to the CPRP portal for development partners to allocate contributions to elements of the plan. Under the CPRP, UNDP successfully secured €3mn from the European Union for the procurement of medical supplies and

personal protective equipment. The UN also developed the Socio Economic Response Plan to address the broader socio-economic impacts of COVID for a period of 12-18 months.

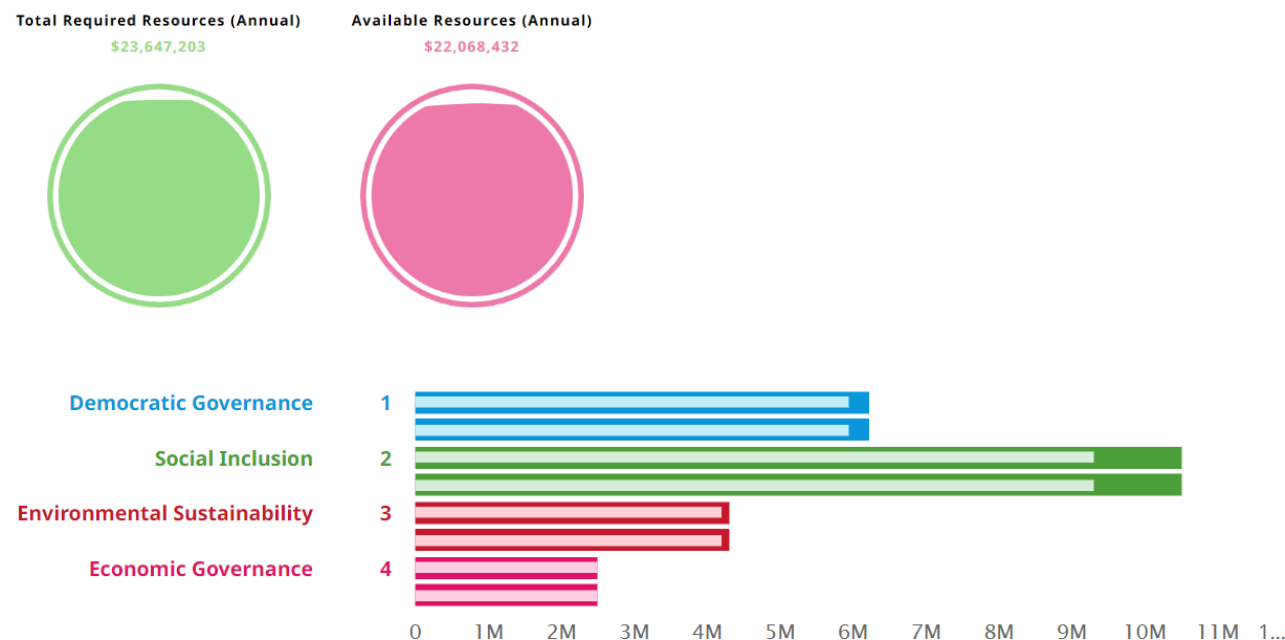
Through the Socio Economic Response Plan \$5.96mn of new funding and \$2.55mn of re-programmed funding were allocated to support the response to COVID-19.

UN agencies applied jointly for various funding opportunities during the year. Submissions were made to the SDG Fund, Secretary-General's UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, the Migration Multi Partner Trust Fund, and under to the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The latter application was successful, with a 2-year project to further improve disability inclusion to start in 2021 with a total envelope of USD 400,000.



PHOTO
UNDP Montenegro

Chapter 4: UNCT key focus for next year



COVID RESPONSE

In the forthcoming period the UNCT will seek to implement main recommendations from the SERP and support Montenegro to build back better from the negative impacts of the pandemic. The UNCT will also look to build on the framework set by the SERP in its new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2022-2026. As part of these efforts the UNCT will support strengthening of health systems for the effective delivery of health services.

This will also include support to health authorities

in national vaccination programme through provision and deployment of vaccines within COVAX facility (84.000 doses indicatively).

This will go hand in hand with UN joint efforts to support risk communication and community engagement through evidence collection and analyses of socio-behavioral data and trends and risk communications activities targeting specific communities, groups and general population.

UNCT will also look at the means to support those affected by the negative impacts of the economic shock of COVID, ensuring that social protection is targeting the most vulnerable and exploring the means to

support the economic recovery. Support will also come through the UN's ability to conduct evidence and analysis to inform better decision-making and response/recovery policy planning. With this purpose a third round of Rapid Social Impact Assessment will be conducted.

SDG IMPLEMENTATION

In 2021, the UNCT will focus on implementation of the current UNDAF in its final year, continue with preparations and finalize the work on the new UNSDCF along with configuration of the new UNCT.

Through existing UN joint programme "Activate", the UNCT will continue supporting the Government's policy planning, with policy simulations and modeling for poverty reduction through developing tools for planning and implementation of more effective social policies. Innovative labour market activation measures targeting young people and women affected by Covid-19 crisis, will be implemented with the aim to facilitate welfare-to-work transition for these two particularly sensitive groups.

UNCT will provide continuous support to national statistical office of Montenegro – MONSTAT, to advance their current business processes and data dissemination systems with the objective to increase the availability, quality, comparability and timeliness of high quality and policy-relevant statistical data, especially with regards to SDG targets and indicators. Coherent outreach and consolidated communication and messaging of the UN System will remain UNCT priority.

Strong One UN Voice in the areas of human rights and sustainable development, with special focus on key strategic areas in 2021 will include: supporting country in COVID response, strengthening impact of joint UN programmes; fight against domestic violence; enhancing internal communications, as well as further advancing of UN in digital arena.

Finally, the UNCT will support the Government to enhance, and ideally help better position, overall SDG institutional coordination mechanism in line with the National Strategy for Sustainable Development.

PREVENTION

The UN in Montenegro will continue to support the implementation of the UN's Action Plan for the Western Balkans on sustaining peace, through trust-building, dialogue and reconciliation. Together with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the UN will bring the cross border joint UN Dialogue for the Future project (DFF) to a successful conclusion and ensure that lessons learnt from the DFF initiative will inform the design of new programmes and activities to strengthen social cohesion. The UN aims to draft, adopt and implement a UN Strategy on Hate Speech, and support the Government in developing a National Strategy on Combatting Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.

In addition, the UNCT will adopt a standard operating procedure on how to implement the UN's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces at the country level.

STRATEGIC FINANCING AND PARTNERSHIPS

In 2021, the UNCT will enhance its advocacy efforts and the dialogue with the new Government leading to consensus over the key development challenges and most effective ways to accelerate 2030 Agenda. To this aim, the UNCT will use its evidence collection and analytical work together with advocacy strategies and will employ these resources through consultations, policy and technical assistance. In parallel, the UNCT

will continue regular communication with IFIs, donors, diplomatic corps, and other international partners, using its convening powers and advocacy, to create platform to examine new possibilities for SDG financing and to reach closer to Agenda 2030.

UNCT will engage private sector and civil society through regular consultations with numerous standing reference groups, such as women entrepreneurs and youth, trying to ensure wider societal understanding and commitment to 2030 Agenda. UNCT will continue to support innovative solutions in advancing public service delivery especially relevant under the circumstances of Covid-19 crises - such as services in education, health and social sectors. Innovative human-centred design methodology will be also applied in social protection and employment sector.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE 2030 AGENDA

The UNCT will continue to analyse the situation of the most marginalized groups in close consultation with representatives of these groups, or under their leadership. This will include analysis of key gaps in realizing the rights of persons with disabilities under a new joint UN agency project funded by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD).

Consultations with representatives of the most marginalized groups will be conducted in the design of the Cooperation Framework.

UN and partners will undergo UN led capacity development on how to ensure disability inclusion in law and decision-making, as well as programming, facilitated under the UNPRPD funded project.

The UN will undertake a range of actions to make progress on implementing the UN Disability Inclusion

Strategy, on integrating gender and youth, following concrete commitments made in the 2020 scorecards on disability, gender and youth. In parallel, the UNCT will make sure gender is properly mainstreamed through all the phases of new Cooperation Framework Development, and comprehensive Gender Scorecard re-assessment exercise will be organized by Gender and Human Rights Working Group.

The UNCT will advise Government on concrete actions to further advance the rights of marginalized groups, based on joint UN analysis carried out in country, the use of modeling tools to predict impact of potential policy decisions in support of groups left behind, but also by drawing upon observations and recommendations made by UN human rights mechanisms, that are brought together in a national recommendations tracking database (NRTD).

Relevant government bodies and officials in the new Government will have enhanced knowledge how to use the NRTD database in planning, monitoring and reporting, including on the situation of groups which are left behind.

BUSINESS INNOVATION

UNCT will advance implementation of Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0. in 2021. This will include greater promotion of UN common business operations in 2021, to enable joint work and generate greater efficiencies, synergies and coherence and compliance with BOS 2.0.

All common services from BOS will be issued or renewed. Procurement process for office supplies, media monitoring, travel management services and rental of sound equipment will be conducted through renewed LTAs. UNCT will conduct Housing survey and Common service survey in 2021.

2020 UN COUNTRY ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

MONTENEGRO