

PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2017-2021

# 2021

## Progress Report



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS



UNITED NATIONS  
ALBANIA





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# Foreword



In our capacity as the Co-Chairs of the Joint Executive Committee of the Government of Albania and United Nations in Albania, we are pleased to present to you the 2021 Annual Progress Report. The report highlights UN Albania's collective contributions, in partnership with more than 100 partners, to poverty reduction, equitable development, improved environmental measures and acceleration of the implementation of the sustainable development goals during the fifth and final implementation year of our Albania–UN Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017–2021.

We started the year 2021 in the midst of serious Covid-19 concerns for our families, friends and colleagues, and with much work ahead on strengthening resilience and the earthquake recovery. However, it is important to remind ourselves of our achievements: supporting the Covid-19 vaccine rollout in the country; being one of the first countries within the UN system to receive and implement the Covid-19 vaccine programme for staff and partners; addressing the multi-dimensional impact of Covid-19 to protect the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic; rebuilding after the earthquake with focus on the most vulnerable groups, and people who risk being left behind—from textile factories to small farm holders; the wonderful new schools constructed and small businesses supported; initiatives conducted with youths, refugees and asylum seekers to further support their causes; marathons run; contributions to hundreds of remarkable actions in the #16DaysofActivism to end violence against women; the holding of exchange events with the Albanian diaspora; and a renewed focus on private sector partnerships that saw agreements signed to accelerate action on SDG implementation.

The years 2021 and 2022 are very important as we have developed and will implement together our next Cooperation Framework for Albania for the period 2022–2026, aligned closely with the government's priorities. Together with government, we are committed to assisting all Albanians in the achievement of the Sus-

tainable Development Goals, an ambition inextricably linked to the EU integration agenda. We have proudly continued to develop cooperation in a wide variety of areas, strengthening democratic institutions, improving the business climate, closing gender gaps, improving health and labour standards, increasing access to equitable and quality basic services, increasing public access to information, environmental protection and disaster preparedness, reducing disparities, expanding education and the rights of children, promoting human rights in general while reaching out to those left behind the furthest. We celebrated the 75th anniversary of UNICEF and also applauded 30 years of success of the UNDP programmes in Albania. And much, much, more.

On behalf of the government of Albania and the entire UN Country Team in Albania, we express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all our partners for their contribution alongside our joint efforts to support the country's priorities in 2021. Given the current challenges we face, multilateralism is not an option but a necessity as we build back better and greener for a more equal, more resilient and more sustainable world. The solidarity and sense of shared responsibility we have witnessed this year gives us reasons to be optimistic for a more peaceful and prosperous 2022 for all.

*With all-hands-on-deck we can advance the Sustainable Development Goals for all Albanian people!*



**Mr. Arben Ahmetaj**  
Deputy Prime Minister,  
Minister of State for Reconstruction  
and Programme of Reforms



**Ms. Fiona McCluney**  
United Nations  
Resident Coordinator

# United Nations Country Team in Albania

Albania joined the United Nations in 1955 and, in 2007, became one of eight countries worldwide to pilot the UN Delivering as One reform.

As a family of specialised agencies, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Albania fully supports and works towards the complementary agendas of Albania's commitment to achieving Agenda2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), European Union integration and the national priorities expressed in the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI), the human rights commitments of Albania and other agreed international and regional development goals and treaty obligations, as well as harmonisation and aid effectiveness.

Amidst Covid-19 and the earthquake-related challenges facing the country, during 2021, the fifth and final year of implementation of the current Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017–2021 was conducted in close cooperation with government (central and local level) and partners, duly operationalised by four Joint Work Plans (JWPs) prepared and signed jointly by the ministers or deputy ministers of the relevant implementing ministries and the heads of the contributing UN agencies. Coordinated by the four Outcome Results Groups, co-led by the heads of two UN agencies and the minister from the key implementing line ministry of the Outcome area, the implemented initiatives are attributed to advancing progress in four areas (see section 2.2 *Delivering Results for Albania*): 1, Governance and Rule of Law; 2, Social Cohesion; 3, Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture; and 4, Environment and Climate Change.

As part of the preparation of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF; following on from the previous PoCSD) 2022–2026 for Albania, UNCT undertook a configuration exercise in January 2021 to assess the UN capacities and resources required to deliver on the UNSDCF results. As part of this process, three UN agencies—International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV)—that were not signatories to PoCSD 2017–2021, committed to signing the new UNSDCF and deliver across its results. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will not participate in the UNSDCF implementation.

By the end of 2021, 19 UN agencies, funds and programmes comprised UNCT in Albania, strengthened with three new UN agencies chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator, the designated representative of the UN Secretary General for development operations in the country. Among these, nine had a physical presence in Albania, either through a stand-alone representative office, project staff or a capacity embedded in the Resident Coordinator.<sup>1</sup>

The recent UN reform, including appointment of an independent Resident Coordinator, and a strengthened RC Office, are in support of and aim to strengthen further coordination efforts for a more harmonised and efficient UNCT in Albania to deliver on UNSDCF 2022–2026, the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.



## UNCT in Albania in 2021

### RESIDENT UN AGENCIES



### NON-RESIDENT UN AGENCIES



1. Resident agencies: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, UNOPS; non-resident agencies: IAEA, ILO, ITU, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNODC, UNDRR, UNV.

# Key development partners of the UN in Albania

The UN in Albania worked closely with all partners in 2021 to achieve the PoCSD outcomes, including mechanisms and processes for steering, review and adjustment.

PoCSD 2017–2021 and its successor, UNSDCF 2022–2026, represent a commitment for the UN in Albania to work in close partnership with all stakeholders to attain results that will help all people in the country to enjoy a more prosperous and sustainable economy and a more fair and liveable society.

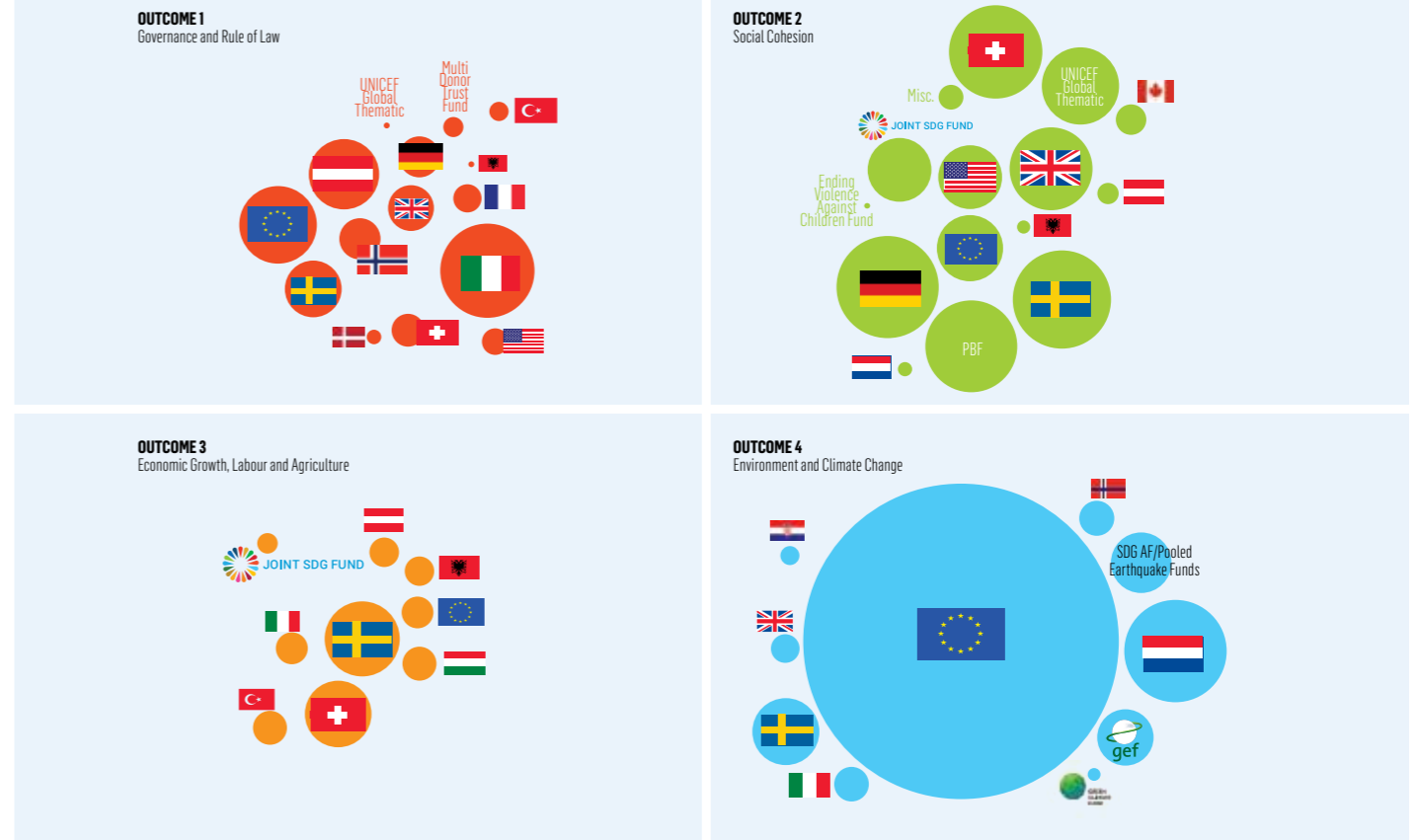
Aiming at increased participation of stakeholders and groups in decision making, leading to more informed and sustainable policies, and more effective and accountable public institutions, the UN in Albania worked closely with all partners in 2021 to achieve the PoCSD outcomes, including mechanisms and processes for steering, review and adjustment. Progress reporting against PoCSD indicators uses official data provided by INSTAT and the statistical bodies of line ministries, as well as administrative and programme-related data from cooperation partners.

Also, the UNSDCF strategic priorities and outcomes were informed by the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and validated through reflection and consultation with all country partners: more than 230 partners from civil society, the private sector, international organisations, and government. A Youth Advisory Board collected opinions and insights from a survey of more than 400 young people. As such, UNSDCF is anchored in national development priorities and strongly aligned with government and development partner agendas.

Partnerships with the Government of Albania, specifically with the offices of the prime minister and the deputy prime minister, line ministries and local government, were instrumental in supporting implementation of PoCSD in 2021 and the Agenda 2030 in the country.

Key cooperation partners include Parliament, prime or deputy minister's office, line ministries and other government bodies, including but not limited to the State Probation Services, the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania (ADISA), the Albanian State Police, the School of Magistrates, the Serious Crimes Prosecution Office, and the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, National Institute for Statistics (INSTAT), Institute for Public Health (IPH), the Health Insurance Fund, Audio-visual Media Authority (AMA), Electronic and Postal Communication Authority (AKEP), National Agency for Information Society, National Youth Agency, National Environmental Protection Agency and Environmental Inspectorate, national human rights institutions, National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security, Council of Ministers, courts, prosecutors' offices, local governments, local Child Protection Units, Civil Society Organisations including women's organisations, professional associations, employers and workers organisations, trade unions, business associations, chambers of commerce, Women Councillors' Alliances, Youth Networks, the Refugee Organisation, Albania Media Council, Agency for Support to Local Government (ASLG), Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution (ALSAI), the Chamber of Notaries, electoral bodies, the alliance of women MPs, and political parties, academia, national and local media, the private sector, including banks, community organisations, European Union Commission, international bilateral donors and International Finance Institutions (IFIs).

## Contributing Partners in 2021



As the UN interventions in Albania are mostly donor financed, mobilisation of the resources of partners is essential for their deployment, done either bilaterally by UN agencies or through the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund**. Several partners, such as the World Bank, OSCE and the private sector, may not make a financial contribution to the UN in Albania, but their work is synergised with that of the UN, resulting in greater coverage of vulnerable or marginalised groups in the country. The UN continues to play a constructive role in the country's coordination forums, such as the Donor Technical Secretariat, Development and Integration Partners, Integrated Policy Management Groups, bilateral engagement with the EU Delegation, World Bank, IFIs and EU member states, the Development Partners Coordination Group on Gender as well as in the regional fora. Some positive examples resulting from stronger coordination and collaboration in 2021 include: (i) post-earthquake and Covid-19 recovery support; (ii) consultations for the preparation of the

new UNSDCF 2022–2026; (iii) joint analysis, policy recommendations and synergies achieved; (iv) new NSDI 2022–2030 and Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) preparation; (v) heightened private partnerships with local and international chambers and business associations; (vi) a Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) regional project proposal; and (vii) keeping abreast of each other's work in Albania and investigating areas of joint collaboration.

Overall, there is a strong alignment of areas supported by the UN in Albania with government and international development partner priorities, consistent also with the perceived comparative advantages of the UN's work in the country, as well as with the specialisation and strategic positioning of UN agencies' development work vis-à-vis other development agents. Section 2.6. *Financial overview and resource mobilisation* provides in-depth information on partners' type of funding and areas of support in the country.

# Albania at a glance\*

## Macroeconomic Indicators



<b>GDP per capita</b>	EUR 4,819 (2019)
<b>Economic Growth</b>	6.99% (Q3 2021)
<b>Inflation (annual %)</b>	3.7% (Q4 2021)
<b>FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)</b>	6.5% (Q2 2021)
<b>Public Debt (% of GDP)</b>	80.21% (2021)
<b>Government Budget Expenditure (% GDP)</b>	10.3 % on social protection 3.4% on health 2.7% on education
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	11.4% (Q4 2021)
<b>NEET</b>	27.9% (2020)

## Demographic & Social Indicators



<b>Population</b>	2.83 million (1 January 2021)
<b>Fertility rate</b>	1.34 (2020)
<b>At- risk of poverty rate in Albania</b>	21.8% (2020)
<b>Maternal mortality rate</b>	7 (2020)
<b>Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births</b>	10.0 (2020)
<b>Gross Enrollment Rate</b>	82.8%

**Geographical Area**  
28,748 km<sup>2</sup>

**Capital City**  
Tirana



## Selected Global Rankings

<b>Democracy Index</b>	Democracy Percentage 46/100 Transitional or Hybrid Regime Democracy Score 3.75
<b>Corruption Perception Index</b>	2021 Rank 110/180 2021 Score 35/100
<b>Global Corruption Barometer</b>	25% of public service users paid a bribe in the previous 12 months
<b>Rule of Law Index</b>	Overall Score, 2021 0.49 Global Rank 83/139
<b>Human Development Index</b>	Index 0.795 Rank 69/189
<b>Gallup survey for migration</b>	Desire to migrate 60%
<b>Human Flight and Brain Drain Index</b>	Human flight and brain drain index, 0 (low) - 10 (high) in Europe 8.30
<b>Economic freedom Index</b>	Score 65.2 - World Rank 66, Regional Rank 35. Overall score is below the regional average but above the world average
<b>World Bank Doing Business Report</b>	2020 Rank 82 2020 Score 67.7
<b>SDG Index</b>	Rank 64/165 Score 71.0
<b>Global Health Security Index</b>	Score 45 Rank 59/195 (-1.2 change from 2019)

\* For Macroeconomic indicators 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8 the source of data is INSTAT: LFS, Albania in Figures 2020, Income and Living Conditions in Albania 2020, various publications and statistical database. For the other indicators, the source is the Ministry of Finance and Economy and EU: Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023 and 2023-2025; EU Candidate Countries' & Potential Candidates' Economic Quarterly (CCEQ) 3rd Quarter 2021  
For all demographic and social indicators, the source of data is INSTAT: Albania in Figures 2020, Income and Living Conditions in Albania 2020, various publications and statistical database.

## CHAPTER 1

# Key developments in Albania and regional context

Albania is an **upper middle-income country** of about 2.8 million people with a **high level of human development**. The country is a **member of NATO** and of the **UN Security Council 2022–2023**, and is on a path toward **accession with the EU**. Overall, and despite the challenges posed by the double shock of the earthquake of November 2019 and the Covid-19 pandemic, Albania has continued to show its commitment to EU-oriented reforms and delivered tangible and sustainable results. It has fulfilled all the conditions set out in the Council Conclusions of March 2020 for the first Inter-governmental Conference. Albania is the only country in the region that has signed cooperation agreements with all justice and home affairs agencies of the EU. Yet, public sector performance is uneven, especially at local levels, impeding more effective design and implementation of policies and programmes associated with EU accession.

The **political environment** in Albania is still facing challenges, which need to be addressed especially in the context of European Integration Process for the country. A democracy score rating by Freedom House reports that Albania's Democracy Score declined from 3.86 in 2016 to 3.75 in 2021. General elections were held on 25 April 2021, and a new government was constituted on 17 September 2021, in which twelve of the 15 ministers were female. The Socialist Party was confirmed for a third consecutive mandate in the 2021 elections, with its focus on recovery and reconstruction. With a renewed mandate, the government is well positioned to address many challenges facing Albania. In this spirit, the third NSDI (2021–2030) is under preparation with interim nationalised SDG indicators and targets.

Albania's **economy growth** rebounded to a projected 7.2 percent by the end of 2021, after the pandemic hit the Albanian economy hard. The country was subject to a smooth vaccination rollout, with no further lockdowns and continued recovery in services, led by tourism, and construction. The labour market started its recovery in Q2 due to employment in construction and manufacturing, though agriculture continued to shrink.<sup>2</sup> The unemployment rate declined to 11.3 percent in Q3 with youth unemployment at 19.9 percent, from 20.7 percent in the same quarter of the previous year. Good progress was made to refocus health services at the primary level, introduce digital health services and improve transparency and accountability. Yet, public spending on health, as a share of both GDP and total public spending is too low and created dependence of the health system on out-of-pocket payments. Increased investment is needed to drive and sustain more equitable growth. The 2021 Sustainable Development Report index score of 71 suggests that Albania is more than two-thirds of the way towards achieving the status of highest-rank, with a position of 64th out of 165 countries. Despite this progress, poverty remains high, at over 23 percent.<sup>3</sup>

Albania is party to the nine core international **human rights** treaties. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the main Council of Europe human rights instruments have been ratified. The most recent UPR process for Albania was completed in 2019 (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle), with the country accepting 186 of 197 recommendations. However, full and consistent implementation of the existing legislation is insufficient. Gender discrimination, a gender divide in the labour market and occupational segregation, and gender-based violence are concerns affecting particu-



larly vulnerable women (Roma and Egyptians, people with disabilities, or from the LGBTQI+ community, rural and elderly). The Voluntary National Review report notes that '*inclusion is especially unsatisfactory for the poor, Roma and Egyptians, and persons with disabilities, posing significant challenges for achievement of the SDGs*'. Children and women, particularly those in rural areas and from excluded groups, are most affected by poverty, which is concentrated in the mountainous central and northern prefectures (aligned with counties). Albania is a transit country for economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the majority from Iraq and Syria. Effective migration governance and border management is an important requirement for EU accession. The strong influence of politics and business over the media remains a key source of concern for freedom of expression in the country.

Strengthening **regional cooperation** rests at the centre of Albania's foreign policy and leads the country's constructive approach and active leadership in the region. Albania has maintained its engagement in a number of regional cooperation initiatives such as the Regional Economic Area

(REA) for the Western Balkans, the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) for economic development in the region, Energy Community, Transport Community, the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Regional Cooperation Council. The country hosts the secretariats of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) and the Western Balkans Fund (WBF), highlighting the belief that neighbourly relations and mutual trust can strengthen the security and stability of the entire region. As of January 2021, Albania has held the Chairmanship-in-Office of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC).

On 29 July, political leaders from Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia launched the Open Balkan Initiative, aiming to remove economic barriers between the three countries by 2023. By end of the year, five agreements were signed between the three countries covering labour market access, interconnection of electronic identification schemes, and cooperation on veterinary medicine and food safety. There were two further agreements on economic cooperation between Serbia and Albania, and between North Macedonia and Albania.

2. World Bank–Western Balkans Regular Economic Report, No. 20, Fall 2021.

3. UNSDCF for Albania 2022–2026.

## CHAPTER 2

# UN in Albania support to national development priorities

### 2.1. Executive Summary

The Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017–2021 is the third five-year programme developed under the Delivering-as-One approach. PoCSD was operationalised through biennial joint work plans, delivering USD 135 million over five years, with 80 percent provided by government and development partners in the country, including national, regional and global. More than 90 percent of the results planned at the beginning of the programme were achieved on time or are on track. Alignment of UN support with national plans was strengthened through monitoring of indicators against the results framework, joint annual reviews and reports and periodic dialogue with government and other partners.

The assessment of UN in Albania interventions matched against the SDG goals and targets indicate the greatest focus on SDGs 4, 17, 16, 9, 10, 8 and 5. Meanwhile, an assessment of gender equality and human rights focused activities on SDGs indicates a strong presence of gender equality in SDGs 1, 16, 10, 5 and 8 and of human rights in SDGs 16, 1, 5, 10 and 8.

Over the five years of UN support under the PoCSD, government noticeably increased its ability to monitor progress on implementation of the recommendations from international Human Rights conventions, treaties and regular national reports, improve evidence for actions taken in line with observations and

SDGs delivery (2021)



#### Greatest Focus



#### Gender Equality



#### Human Rights



### PoCSD alignment to National Priorities, EU Integration and Agenda 2030

#### Outcome 1

Governance and Rule of Law

Alignment with SDGs



Alignment with National Development Goals



Alignment with EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas



#### Social Cohesion

Alignment with SDGs



Alignment with National Development Goals



Alignment with EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas



#### Outcome 2

recommendations and establish tracking mechanisms, and generate stronger political engagement from Parliament and the human rights institutions in the country to strengthen public accountability mechanisms and increase outreach to vulnerable people.

Government is paying more attention to gender equality, including significant advancement in women in leadership positions and political representation. Gender

#### Outcome 3

Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture

Alignment with SDGs



Alignment with National Development Goals



Alignment with EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas



#### Environment and Climate Change

Alignment with SDGs



Alignment with National Development Goals



Alignment with EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas



#### Outcome 4

Equality is now a core principle in the Organic Budget Law (2016), enabling Albania to stand out among many European countries, representing a significant institutional change. Similarly, a wide array of sector policies includes an evidence-based statement on gender inequality in relevant sectors and provides for measures to combat the phenomenon.

Coverage and validity of mechanisms and obligatory





UN Albania contribution to PoCSD achievements in 2021



core curriculum for tracking, reporting and addressing all forms of violence against women and children and trafficking in human beings has improved substantially.

Ground-breaking achievements have been achieved for child rights and juvenile justice in Albania. Major results include significant advancements in legal and policy frameworks, for example those encouraging alternatives to detention.

UN efforts for the development of Albania's social system, through significant advancements made in the legal and policy framework, including explicit social inclusion targets incorporated in most sector-specific policies, contributed to an increased public ownership of vulnerability and more empowered vulnerable persons and groups. By the end of 2021, the country experienced a stronger provision of social and health services, establishment of institutional coordination mechanisms and increased capacities of human resources.

Citizen-centric public service delivery reform advanced with expansion of customer-care services in municipalities and operationalisation of the OSSIS, benefitting the citizens of Albania. Municipalities are enabled to strengthen transparency, accountability and participatory governance.

Concerning environmental protection, the government increased its commitment to integrating DRR into the country's development agenda and improving governance and financial sustainability of protected areas. In 2021, Albania submitted its more ambitious and robust NDC with an action plan to achieve the almost doubled target of 20.9 percent by 2030.

Joint efforts in the last two years were particularly vested to respond to the needs that arose from both the earthquake and the Covid-19 crisis, supporting the most vulnerable communities in solidarity and leadership for coordinated, multi-lateral action with government and other partners.

*and much, much more...*

## 2.2. Overview—Delivering Results for Albania

By end-2021, a few flagship results were evidenced, as reported below, and supported by UN in Albania, for each of the four Outcomes. Reference is made to key SDG targets towards which these results contribute. A full account of progress and results can be found in the In-Depth Results chapter that accompanies this summary.



**OUTCOME 1**

# Governance and Rule of Law

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



**Indicators for Outcome 1**

■ Baseline 2016-2017 ■ Status 2021

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2021
Percentage of women in government ministerial positions		
MPs	21%	34.28%
Municipal Councillors	35%	43.7%
Public Sector	44.6%	55%
Government ministerial positions	50%	70.58%
Perceptions of performance of public institutions		
Parliament	10%	24.2%
Government	14%	36.4%
Local Government	13%	41.6%
Rate of children in detention (per 100,000 population aged 14–17)	33.3	14
Out of all child-related valid complaints, proportion for which a remedial action was taken by the People's Advocate, annually	65% 65/100 cases	10% increase 125/226 cases
Existence of legislation that recognises a child's right to be heard in civil and administrative proceedings that affect them (in line with Article 12 of the CRC)	1 Law	4 Laws <sup>4</sup>
Extent to which Asylum Procedures are compliant with international refugee law and the EU <i>acquis</i>	60%	70%
SOPs for case management of different categories of migrants and refugees within the management of mixed movements	0	3 <sup>5</sup>
No. Free Legal Aid Centers at District Court level to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice to the most vulnerable persons	0	10
Extent of gender mainstreaming in the central budgeting process	24 MTBPs	45
No. GoA draft laws, policies, strategies and plans engendered	2	20 <sup>6</sup>
No. of fiscal laws, by-laws and policies reflecting compliance with gender-responsive budgeting	2	27
No. municipalities adopting and implementing gender responsive MTBP	3	54
Reception capacities at the border increased, with a differentiated approach for women and children at risk.	1 centre	3 centres
No. of measures of Action Plan of National Strategy on Migration Governance implemented	0	40 implemented and 55 on-going
No. of ADISA CSCs and LGU colocations for customer-care service delivery (cumulative)	1	23
No. LGUs operating OSS for service delivery	3	61
No of municipal action plans that have a budget line for youth, including education and SRH.	0	16
No. LGUs with a physical archiving system and increased capacities, legal knowledge and skills on physical archiving.	0	61
No. LGUs with web pages meeting transparency legal requirements	21	61 (13 from STAR)
No. LGUs implementing the transparency performance measurement system	0	61
No. LGUs publishing Council Decisions online	27	61
No. of Municipalities with Integrity Plans	6	12

<sup>4</sup> Family Code; Child Rights and Protection Law; Criminal Justice for Children code; Anti-discrimination Law (revised), and related sub-legislation  
<sup>5</sup> SOPs on UASC case management, on access to territory and management of vulnerable groups at access to territory, and on health care.  
<sup>6</sup> Revised law on Protection from Discrimination (Law No. 114/2018); Amendments to the Law "On measures against violence in family relations" (Law No. 96/19, dated 18.12.2006); Law on Social Housing adopted by the Albanian parliament (No.44/2018, adopted on May 4th, 2018); Social Inclusion Policy document; National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030; National Strategy on Gender Equality and Action Plan 2016-2020; Strategy for legal education of the community (2019-2023); Strategy of Security in communities (2021-2026); National Strategy for Development Integration (NSDI) in 2015-2020 (4 gender-sensitive objectives are under the Gender Equality section) & NSDI Monitoring framework; Social Protection Strategy; National strategy on social protection (2019-2022); Public finance management strategy (2019-2022); National Plan for Roma and Egyptian minorities 2021-2025; National Plan for LGBTI 2021-2027; National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (adopted by the Government on 11.09.2018); GoA strategic response to IPA III & EU IPA III 2022 Action documents (Good Governance & Public Administration, EU Integration Facility, Social Inclusion, Health and Water); National Programme of Official Statistics 2022-2026; Local Gender Action Plans in 5 Municipalities (Tirana, Durres, Elbasan Korca and Shkoder).

## Human Rights

5.5, 16.2, 16.3, 16.6, 16.9, 16.10, 16.b, 17.18

During implementation of the PoCSD, the UN agencies made progress in ensuring the government's ability to (i) monitor progress on implementation of recommendations from international human rights conventions, treaties and regular national reports, (ii) improve evidence for actions taken in line with observations and recommendations and establish tracking mechanisms, and (iii) generate stronger political engagement by Parliament and human rights institutions to strengthen public accountability mechanisms and increase outreach to vulnerable people. By the end of 2021, the Law on Aliens was adopted, the Instruction establishing a statelessness determination procedure drafted, and the Census 2022 questionnaires include a focus on statelessness persons and those at the risk of statelessness. Government had bolstered the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through its commitment to the preparation of the second National Action Plan to implement Resolution 1325. [The National Action Plan for Children 2021–2026](#)<sup>7</sup> was finalised and approved. Improvements in the child focused statistics availability are marked with the [Visualisation Platform \(dashboard\) with 58 child-specific Statistics](#) and INSTAT publication on [Children, Adolescents and Youth-Focused Well-being Indicators 2016–2019](#). The new 'Friends of Children' group was reconstituted in November, to mark the International Day of Children. Efforts to combat statelessness resulted in the opening of 181 new court and administrative cases of children affected by statelessness and whose access to core services and rights had been jeopardised because of the pandemic, and the addressing of 24 cases of children and their caregivers repatriated from war-affected zones, requiring longer-term settlement of their legal status in the country and necessary paperwork allowing them to fully enjoy Albanian citizenship.

### 4 LAWS

in 2021 that recognise a child's right to be heard in civil and administrative proceedings that affect them



Stronger collaboration between the People's Advocate (PA) and the CPD safeguarded an adequate policy and legal framework implementation and the upholding of human rights standards to address social exclusion and discrimination and ensure equal and fair access to social assistance benefits and protection for families in need and women and men with special status. The PA finalised the legislative processes leading to the adoption of the minimum subsistence as a legal instrument, where social protection for the groups in need in Albania is built upon and guaranteed. To safeguard protection and human rights of the refugees and migrants arriving in Albania as part of mixed movements, the PA monitored the pre-screening exercise, conducted profiling interviews with new arrivals and identified persons with specific needs. The PA received a multi-fold increase in the number of complaints submitted directly from children (from 15 in 2020 to 102 in 2021).

### Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law

3.5, 3.7, 8.7, 16.3, 16.4, 16.6, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 16.b

The national public administration has a greater capacity to improve access to information, address corruption and organised crime, and engage CSOs and media in efforts to strengthen monitoring of reform efforts. In Preventing and Combating Violent Extremism, implementation of the National Strategy advanced for providing assistance to citizens returned from conflict zones for their long-term repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration

into community life. In a participatory approach through all the institutions involved, re-integration support was provided to five families in one municipality in Albania. On 1 August 2021, Albania repatriated 19 people from the Al-Hol camp in Syria, fourteen of whom were children and five, women. In addition, CCCVE is establishing a filing case management system for the registration and follow-up of all the individual reintegration plans, for their resocialisation into the community (in schools, etc.), and which are being prepared by several reintegration ad hoc multidisciplinary groups in a whole-society and inter-institutional approach.

A comprehensive review was undertaken on the strategic and regulatory framework for citizen-centric public service delivery in Albania, and recommendations were identified on areas to address. In addition, a snapshot assessment was conducted of the state of public service standards in Albania involving 119 public agencies. The nationwide expansion of customer care standards advanced and by the end of 2021 had benefitted 368,000 inhabitants in the thirteen municipalities where such joint centres are functioning. Meanwhile, an integrated citizen service centre for larger municipalities was inaugurated by ADISA in Kamza, bringing the number of such centres to ten.

### Local Governance

3.7, 16.3, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10

Governance and public service delivery improved at the central level. By the end of 2021, 23 ADISA CSCs and LGU colocations were established for customer-care service delivery, 61 LGUs are operating OSSs for service delivery, have a physical archiving system and increased capacities, legal knowledge and skills on physical archiving, have web pages meeting transparency legal requirements, and publish council decisions online, while twelve municipalities have an integrity plan in place.

The Youth Voice platform was established in 16 municipalities, and the Youth Voice Media Platform in ten municipalities. Media reporting on SRH and youth improved in 2021, doubling the number of published articles compared with the same period last year (from 60 to 126). Youth education and SRH are budgeted for in 16 municipalities. Meanwhile, the JoTabu portal, apps and the Facebook page had a total reach of 300,000 people.

### Access to Justice

5.8, 5.a, 16.2, 16.3

Implementation of the new juvenile criminal code and the national Free Legal Aid (FLA) legislation framework advanced to adequately respond to the needs of the most vulnerable groups. Aiming at reducing the number of children in detention (pre- and post-trial) and improve their access to justice, the Ministry of Justice developed a communication plan to accompany the National Justice for Children Strategy, government established a Centre for Juvenile Criminality Prevention and its website, seven police departments' interview units were fully furnished and equipped in a child-friendly way, safeguarding children's right to justice be less traumatic, the Magistrates' School produced six teaching mock court videos with elements of judicial determination of the best interest of the child, which became part of the online learning platform for magistrates, an online Integrated Data System on Criminal Justice for Children is now in place, along with a user's manual enabling the police to record 247 cases by December 2021, and INSTAT finalised the mapping of Albania's legislation against the International Classification of Crime Statistics (ICCS) and prepared

20% DECREASE

in the the rate of children in detention, from 33.3% in 2016 to 14% in 2021



7. The drafting has entailed a large consultation among all relevant governmental institutions, including the local government. It largely stands in alignment with the EU Strategy for Children and the priorities identified both in [UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents](#) (published in 2021) and UNICEF's new Country Programme Framework.

a plan towards its adoption and adaptation for administrative data. By the end of 2021, the rate of children in detention had decreased substantially, to fourteen percent from 33.3 percent in 2016.

By end-2021, ten FLA centres were operational and functioning at the District Court level to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice for the most vulnerable persons. A total of 2,242<sup>8</sup> vulnerable individuals, of whom 1,138 were women, received primary and secondary FLA services in these judiciary regions in an undistruptive, inclusive and equal manner considering also the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Judges were capacitated in the use of International Labour Standards as a valuable labour law source and as a guide to interpret labour law, strengthen court decisions and settle labour disputes.

## Mainstreaming Gender and Gender-Responsive Budgeting

5.1, 5.4, 5.c, 17.18

Significant achievements were noted by the end of 2021 in an increased uptake of Gender-Based Budgeting in the public financial management system in the country. Government recognises gender equality as one of the principles of its planning and budgeting process and over the years there has been in an increase of budget allocations for GE results. GRB elements constitute nine percent (approximately USD 490 million) of the total planned annual budget in 2021, compared to just one percent in 2015. For the 2022–2024 Medium-Term Budget Program (MTBP) 45 budgetary programmes (60.8% of the total) are engendered. For the first time, gender expenditures can be tracked, and the impact measured due to the improved and engendered Albanian Finance Management Information System (AFMIS). With data from AFMIS, the First Gender Expenditure

Monitoring Report 2021 was issued. Twenty government draft laws, policies, strategies and plans have been engendered and 27 fiscal laws, by-laws and policies reflect compliance with GRB. A total of 54 municipalities (20 in 2021 alone) have strengthened capacities to apply GRB within local budgets with a focus on gender mainstreaming in policies and related budgets associated with municipal services. The 2022 budget is open and transparent to citizens and oversight mechanisms due to the Gender-Sensitive Citizen's Budget being published by MoFE for the first time. Oversight bodies are more proactive in demanding accountability of public institutions for budget allocations and application of GRB. Ten economy journalists are now more knowledgeable on how to report on GE financing due to receiving the first-of-its-kind training from UN Women in GRB and its importance for reporting.

Significant progress was made to mainstream gender into national and local policies and strategies, including the Government's Strategic Response to IPA III, the Business and Investment Strategy 2021–2027, and five EU IPA III Action documents. Progress was also made in improving production, availability, and use of gender statistics and engendering the INSTAT's new 5-years statistical plan.

## Migration and Asylum

5.2, 8.7, 10.7, 10.b, 16.2, 16.3, 17.16, 17.18

Systemic changes at the policy level were enabled through, to name a few, the development of the National Strategy on Migration 2019–2022 and Action Plan and three SOPs<sup>9</sup> for case management of different categories of migrants and refugees within the management of mixed movements, updating and costing of the Contingency Plan for Massive Influx of Migrants and Asylum Seekers to Albania, drafting of a technical legal analysis



around the regulatory framework on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), provision of recommendations to government on what needs to change, revision of the case management SOP for UASC, adoption of the Law on Aliens and on Asylum and several by-laws for their implementation. A coordination and monitoring mechanism was operationalised for the Strategy and Action Plan. The NSM mid-term review indicated that out of 127 measures contained in the Action Plan (2019–2022), 40 were implemented, 25 were not implemented within the time foreseen and 55 measures are ongoing.

A DCM to allow for the issuance of ID cards for refugees, with the overall aim of facilitating greater access to public services, was finalized at the end of 2021. UNHCR and IOM successfully advocated for the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the national vaccination programme, with a positive governmental response. The UN Migration Network was established

in April 2021, co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM and with the membership of UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, FAO, ILO, UN Women and WHO, aiming to contribute to leveraging the Global Compact on Migration implementation for achievement of the SDGs. MoI also updated and costed the Contingency Plan for Massive Influx of Migrants and Asylum Seekers to Albania approved by the Council of Ministers by the end of 2021.

Systemic changes to institutional capacities were enabled by improvement of the infrastructure and capacities for registration and temporary accommodation of irregular migrants. Conditions for children, women and girls in a vulnerable situation improved at the Temporary Reception Facilities in Gjirokaster, Kapshtica and Korce. Humanitarian assistance was provided to new arrivals, including provision of food for 15,931 persons, non-food items for 1,782 persons and information leaflets for 16,079 persons. Support was provided to 286 migrant

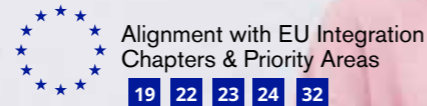
8. The category that has benefitted the most (1,172 persons) is that of persons with low or no income, followed by the elderly (598 persons), PwD (236 persons), members of the R&E communities (211 persons), victims of GBV (120 persons) and LGBTI+ (23 persons). Out of 2,242 FLA beneficiaries, 2,198 have received the primary legal aid service, benefiting almost equally the genders (women 1,138; men 1,104).

9. SOPs on UASC case management, on access to territory and management of vulnerable groups, and on health care

**OUTCOME 2**

# Social Cohesion

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



## Indicators for Outcome 2

■ Baseline 2016-2017 ■ Status 2021

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2021
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	26	9
Schoolchildren's learning outcomes (as measured by PISA)		
Reading	394	405
Math	394	437
Science	397	417
Rate of children (age 0-17 years) in residential (public and non-public) care per 100,000 child population	84	80
No. instruments facilitating implementation of legal framework for Child Protection is in place	0	At least 17
No. of national mechanisms collecting evidence and addressing violence against children	4: police, CPUs, schools, helpline	At least 6: police, CPUs, schools, helpline, health centres, online and web-based platform
% of Child Protection Units that perform case management of children at risk and need for protection	26%	87%
No. of health-care institutions that have conducted self-assessment on compliance with approved Quality of Care Standards	5 hospitals	At least 12 hospitals and hospital services, 6 PHC Centers, 4 non-public clinics
Presence of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in all schools at all levels, private and public including 10-18 years of age	20%	75%
No. of sector-specific policies with explicit social inclusion targets	4	47
No. Roma and Egyptian women and men with improved access to basic social protection services is increased.	357	At least 10,000
Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems established countrywide	0	6
% Women who have experienced physical violence during their lives	23.7%	18%
No. municipalities with functional CRMs	27	61
No. cases of gender-based violence addressed through CRMs	312	Over 4,000
No. of GBV-related laws and by-laws adopted or amended to align with international and regional standards	2 laws 0 by-laws	At least 3 laws, 3 policies, 13 by-laws, protocols, guidelines and 1 global Convention ratified/ admitted
Existence of improved knowledge on child marriage	No	Yes
Proportion of population covered by social protection floors or systems, by sex, gender, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, R&E, PWD, migrants, refugees, pregnant women, new-born, work-injury victims and poor and vulnerable	N/A	70%



women and girls to access counselling sessions, 91 women and girls to access medical services, and 383 women and girls to separate interviews with police officers in the presence of a woman translator. Some 199 UASC received child-friendly assessments in 2021, seven of whom have been supported with emergency sheltering, basic services and psycho-social support. Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) counselling was provided to 2,924 irregular migrants, including one Nigerian and one Algerian in 2021.

## Health

2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c, 3.d, 8.2, 11.6, 16.5, 17.18

UN supported government along four tracks: (i) country response to Covid-19, (ii) continuity of essential health services, including equal access to services, (iii) strengthening of the health system, focusing on resilience, and (iv) advocacy and partnerships on the rights to health and reduced inequalities.

20 ambulances, 3 GeneXpert and an Open PCR system were delivered to the National Center for Medical Emergencies and the Public Health Institute, among other Covid-19 related equipment. More than 100,000 children were reached through communication activities in 313 schools; 60,000 health staff and volunteers developed capacities on infection prevention and control, surveillance, outbreak investigation, emergency; 7,000 new-born benefitted from improved quality of neonatal care in Tirana maternity wards, including 40 Covid-19-positive new-born hospitalised in 2021; 10,000 children and adults were reached with personal and family hygiene supplies to ensure key recommended hygiene practices were implemented at the family and community level in the context of Covid-19; 270 teachers obtained knowledge on healthy nutrition and prevention of obesity and being overweight using accredited training modules, and 16,200 children benefitted from school-based interventions and were reached with communication messages; 1,425 families were

reached with home visiting services; 9,000 women are reached via HPV testing credited to implementation of the Cervical Cancer Screening Programme at the national level, while 1,560 patients were treated with radiotherapy (with Linear Accelerators and the Therapax Orthovoltage machine), of which there were 326 cases of breast cancer, and 2,159 patients were diagnosed or treated using nuclear medicine. By end-2021, 40 percent of people younger than 18 years of age had received two doses of a vaccine against Covid-19.

## Education

4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7

Significant contributions were made by the UN to mainstream principles and practices of inclusive education through the introduction of new instructions on quality of education, inclusiveness, innovation in education technology for learning, new curricula, new training, protocols and standards for learning and for teaching. The whole reform of pre-school education has been supported and designed with significant UN support, in a consorted effort with government. The capacity development of local and central government capacities was achieved through a considerable number of teachers at all levels of education, who were trained to improve their classroom practices.

By the end of 2021, at least 1,200 teachers became skilled in DRR strategies and other inclusive methodologies; 350,000 children were accessing online learning (in school or via other distant learning opportunities), 200,000 virtual classes had taken place, 20,127 video lessons developed and made available online, including 1,000 videos prepared for children with hearing and visual difficulties, while new interactive and high-quality pre-school content has been added to the platform, and 100,000 children who do not have access to devices and the Internet were reached through the dedicated programme 'RTSH Shkolla'; 16,000 teachers had their knowledge and skills developed in the use of technolo-



gy as a means to improve child learning outcomes; 448 teachers, 56 school directors, 150 psychologists, social workers and security staff developed capacities and 18,000 students and 12,000 parents were informed on CSE in 2021; 380 high-school teachers (85% females) were trained in-person on the effective use of the optional module Education for Prevention and Resolution of Disputes in the Workplace; and 34 local high-school teachers are currently delivering this optional subject to 2,040 general high-school students who selected it in the academic year 2021–2022.

## Social Inclusion and Protection

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

The rich legal and policy framework established in the area of social inclusion and social protection was complemented with efforts to sustain implementation at the local level and clarify regulatory and financing frame-

works. The UN contributed towards provision of direct technical support at the local level to fulfil obligations linked to the provision and management of social care policy and services at the local level. This has included support that benefits all municipalities in Albania (e.g., methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, plus tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation), as well as specific support provided in selected



municipalities to pilot test different mechanisms at the local and regional level, so as to learn practical lessons prior to facilitating the wider roll-out and scaling up of the range of initiatives to be undertaken by the partners in the coming years.

At the community and local level, vulnerable groups were empowered over their rights and entitlements to social services and participated meaningfully in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms. Municipal institutional capacities were strengthened in implementing social inclusion policies at the local level and providing inclusive services, while CSOs were enabled in holding municipal authorities accountable for social care services delivery.

A few key achievements for the year include the following: almost all of Albania's municipalities have in place social care plans, with more than half approved, with costing and clear targets to reach at least 60 percent of all children in poverty or in a vulnerable situation in the municipality, and enabled to populate and use MIS for social care services; five municipalities<sup>10</sup> developed five-year local social housing plans allowing them to assess and address the social housing needs of the most vulnerable in their territory; Tirana Municipality was assisted with the development of a Plan of Action for PwD and for R&E that will be an integral part of the new Local Social Care Plan 2021–2025, which is also in development; 17 municipalities were enabled to implement the social fund through grant funds allocated for innovative community-based social care services, and six municipalities<sup>11</sup> to apply GRB within local budgets; ten grassroots CSOs were capacitated to demand accountability for GE and related allocated resources through six watchdog reports on integrated social care services, expenditure monitoring and accountability; and more than 10,000 R&E women and men now have improved access to basic social protection services. For the first time, the SDG indicator 1.3.1 is measured in Albania.

## Child Protection

1.3, 1.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 8.7, 10.2, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 17.6, 17.9, 17.17, 17.18

Bringing about systemic change and strengthening the systemic response to child protection risks and harm to boys and girls is at the heart of the cornerstone legislation for child protection, four laws<sup>12</sup> and more than 20 by-laws were developed and adopted with a strong contribution of UN agencies in recent years, and at least 17 instruments facilitate their implementation and at least six national mechanisms are collecting evidence and addressing violence against children. The Child Helpline ALO116 was modernised to provide diversified reporting options (phone line, via the Internet and mobile app.) countrywide, has become legally recognised as a key child protection service and is now financially supported from the state budget. Online professional psychological and mental health counselling has become more assessable to children and youth, through the [www.nukjevetem.al](http://www.nukjevetem.al) platform, which keeps on expanding. The emergency service for children at high risk of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect has been replicated in other municipalities and been used as the standard service model for the national standards of emergency services. The curriculum for on-the-job training of child protection workers has been updated with the new legislation and is now an integrated part of the curricula of ASPA.

The UN significantly contributed to developing the capacities of child protection workers, social welfare workers, police officers, digital forensics professionals, NGOs and human rights institutions in addressing various aspects of child protection, including online protection. Private companies have been targeted with the aim of strengthening their capacities in providing safe digital environments to children. All major free public Wi-Fi spots in Tirana are equipped with the content filtering

mechanism 'Friendly Wi-Fi', which managed to block more than one million attempts to access internationally blacklisted or adult sites. To date, 87 percent of Child Protection Units (CPUs) perform case management of children at risk and in need of protection.

The first ever National De-Institutionalisation Action Plan 2020–2022 was drafted, and its implementation facilitated, allowing the three important processes to be tested in the municipalities of Korca and Vlora, including (i) a model for a Child and Family Support Hub, (ii) model guidelines for child-family reunification, and (iii) a model for an alternative professional foster care service. Furthermore, through the Social Fund, government allocated a financial package of around USD 120,000 to each of the two pilot municipalities of Korca and Vlora, recognising their efforts and helping to advance the development of alternative childcare services.

## Gender-Based Violence

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

A solid legislation on GBV, developed and adopted with a strong contribution of UN agencies in previous years, and improved law implementation capacities of local actors and law enforcement agencies, tailored to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, guaranteed access to specialized services and justice for women and girls, victims of GB–DV, including from marginalized and vulnerable groups despite ongoing isolation measures. An enhanced and improved national response to GB–DV and harassment in the workplace (national and local levels) was in place by the end of 2021. Key achievements include, to name a few, a reduction in the percentage of women who have experienced physical violence in their

lives, to 18 percent from 23.7 percent in 2017<sup>13</sup>, all municipalities have in place a functional Coordinated Referral Mechanism, from 27 (44%) in 2017, more than 4,000 cases of GBV addressed through CRMs, from 312 in 2017, and survivors of sexual violence receiving integrated support services from the multi-sectoral socio-medical staff at the LILIUM Centre.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, ILO Convention 190, on 'Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the Workplace' was endorsed by the government and submitted for ratification to Parliament in early 2022. Civil society organisations now have a stronger voice in influencing policies, through monitoring and reporting on national legislation and international standards, seeking public accountability at local and national level, supporting survivors and challenging negative social norms on GBV to ensure that progress is being made on safeguarding that women and girls live a life free from violence. Government, for the first time, prioritised addressing child marriage and early union in its budgeted national policy framework. The National Gender Equality Strategy,<sup>15</sup> the National Action Plan on LGBTI and the National Agenda for Child Rights approved in 2021<sup>16</sup> contain objectives and measures to combat this harmful practice.



10. Korca, Permet, Tirana, Vau i Dejes and Vlora.

11. Fushe-Arrez, Pogradec, Polican, Puke, Rrogozhine and Skrapar.

12. Family Code; Child Rights and Protection Law; Criminal Justice for Children Code; Anti-discrimination Law (revised), and related sub-legislation

13. <https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/national-population-survey--violence-against-women-and-girls-in-.html>

14. The LILIUM Centre, named after the flower, is the first crisis management centre for sexual violence cases in Albania that provides integrated services to victims of sexual violence. All health-care services, forensic examination, evidence gathering through criminal justice, and psycho-social services are provided at the same time, at the same place, and by professionals dealing with cases of sexual violence. The centre serves as a model for similar services.

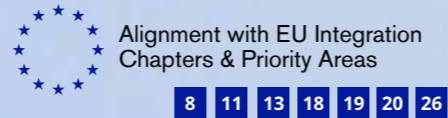
15. [Strategjia-Kombetare-per-Barazine-Gjinore-2021-2030.docx \(live.com\)](#)

16. [Agjenda Kombetare për të Drejtat e Femijëve 2021–2026. UNICEF Albania](#)

**OUTCOME 3**

# Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture

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



**Indicators for Outcome 3**

■ Baseline 2016-2017 ■ Status 2021

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2021
Ease of Doing Business (score)	60.5	67.7
No. new businesses established	16,731	17,319
Youth unemployment rate		
Total	34.2%	19.9%
Female	35.9%	20.7%
Male	33.3%	19.3%
Growth of agriculture sector 2016 - 2020	2.25%	4.3%
% of regional strategies and action plans inclusive of reintegration schemes for VoT	25%	100%
		<p><b>All Prefectures and Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees have incorporated reintegration schemes for VoT in their regional action plans.</b></p> <p><b>Action Plans of the 12 regions of Albania prepared by Regional Anti Trafficking Committees include specific measures referenced to reintegration of VoTs focusing on employment.</b></p>
Inter-institutional mechanisms in place for cultural and natural heritage management, including for sustainable tourism	No mechanism in place	<p><b>Mechanism in place. Nomination file for extension of WH property Natural and Cultural heritage of Lake Ohrid Region submitted to World Heritage Centre (2018) and extension inscribed by WH Committee (2019).</b></p>
Culture mainstreamed within development programmes at all levels, by means of providing an evidence base on impact of culture for development and implementing a national strategy for culture	No	<p><b>Approval of Law 27/2018 'On Cultural Heritage and Museums' (May 17, 2018)</b></p> <p><b>Adoption of national Strategy for Culture 2019–2023 and Action Plan (May 2019)</b></p> <p><b>Preparation of SERP for Culture Sector</b></p> <p><b>Preparation of Culture Sector PDNA</b></p> <p><b>CDIS report is being completed</b></p>





## Economic Development

1.1, 4.4, 8.3, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.b, 11.c, 12.a, 17.14

Efficient and innovative digitalised customs operations are leading to better regional and international trade integration and increased trade opportunities for Albanian entrepreneurs with concomitant generation of incomes. The Albanian Customs Administration benefitted from an Automated System for Customs Data (UNCTAD ASYCUDA), including a new combined nomenclature to be introduced in 2022 with a focus on integration of new Foreign Trade Agreements and enhancement of the Albania–Kosovo Common Transit system and capacity development to become more competitive. The ITU Office for Europe developed the Digital Development Country Profile for Albania to build a reference for discussions on digital development at the country level. The office is carrying out a regional macro-assessment of the national approaches for digital skills development in nine countries, including Albania, and has conducted a fully-fledged national digital skills assessment, which will lead to the elaboration of a national strategy on digital skills development in the country.

## Labour

2.3, 2.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.b, 4.c, 5.5, 5.b, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9.3, 9.b, 9.c, 10.1, 10.2, 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.b, 17.3, 17.8

Policy, legal and institutional changes in the employment and skills sector have progressed steadily, including through UN contributions, leading to reductions in unemployment and, particularly, youth unemployment. Systemic change is enabled through the ongoing consolidation of the Out-of-Court Labour Dispute Resolution System, use of the Participatory Inclusive Assessment of the active labour market measures by the National Employment Service, which reached out to the most vulnerable groups, with the value chain skills anticipation as a standard methodology to be used by the sector skills committees established by NAVEQ to feed into their



Supplier's Development Methodology - UNDP supporting Albanian businesses

decisions on the skills and curricula to be introduced in the VET schools and centres, addressing the labour market demand and offer mismatch. This change has been also supported by the legal framework of VET, including some crucial by-laws adopted,<sup>17</sup> approval of the criteria, standards, and procedures for accreditation of the public and private VET provider, the law on Employment Promotion (2019) and secondary legislation, Mid-Term Review of the National Strategy of Employment and Skills and annual reports, upgrading of the National Employment Agency to the National Agency for Employment and Skills, implementation of the third round of self-assessment, supported by the recently launched self-assessment online platform [www.scvet.al](http://www.scvet.al), a crucial dimension of quality assurance, among others. The Albanian Qualifications Framework was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) on 27 October 2021 and represents a milestone for the entire education system reform in Albania, including the VET system, that allows all qualifications acquired in Albania to carry a reference to the corresponding EQF level, valid and understood in all EU member states.

17. On the organisation and functioning of VET provides, on procedures and criteria for inspection of VET providers and on recognition of prior learning.

## Agriculture and Rural Development

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 5.a, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6, 12.1, 12.2

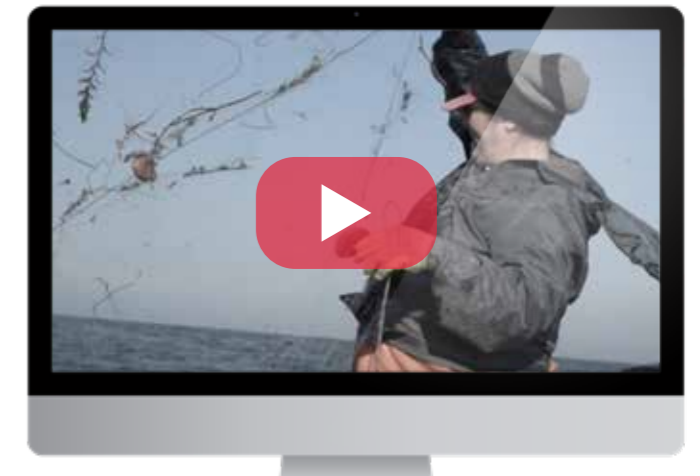
Government was supported with the design of an integrated service to farmers, leading to a more inclusive and efficient government financial support programme. Smallholders were supported for diversification of their economic activities and local governments in delivering promotion and training activities on safety and quality standards, geographic indications, and organic and traditional products to more than 200 farmers and agro-processors, along with extension of the service to several municipalities in Albania. Some 45 representatives and teachers from vocational schools, agricultural extension offices and the Agriculture University built knowledge on developing online learning modules in agriculture, uploaded onto [www.mesovet.com](http://www.mesovet.com), for easy access for users, while around 100 livestock farmers increased their knowledge on the use of digital skills in their daily work and the use of the ABA platform.

Progress was made in the empowerment of rural women and their role was strengthened to promote rural development. FAO contributed to improvement of the nutritional status of schoolchildren and developed food safety and quality capacities of small-scale dairy farmers through linking smallholder dairy producers to a sustainable school food and nutrition pilot programme. Engendering of the new Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development 2021–2027 is ongoing and will benefit significantly rural women through greater access to rural services and increased ownership of productive assets, identified as a major bottleneck for achieving gender equality in SDG 5.a.

## Culture

11.4, 13.3, 14.2, 14.5, 15.9, 16.6, 17.7

UN's work in culture has ensured multiple effects and benefits for the community at the local level, regional level, and the national level. Efforts made by government and supported by UNESCO ensured further enhance-



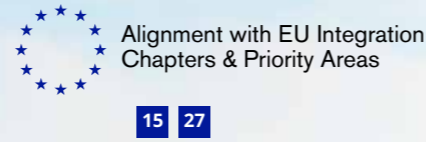
International Day of Rural Women in Albania

ment of capacities of responsible institutions to monitor more adequately, safeguard, preserve, restore and protect the country's rich cultural heritage as a means for promoting sustainable development and economic growth, and further promote the sector as a driver of development. The recent inscription of the natural and cultural heritage of Ohrid Region to the World Heritage list of UNESCO creates benefits for the communities concerned and at the national level. The culture sector also benefitted from digitisation of the archive of the National Institute for Cultural Heritage and the establishment of a protocol for emergency evacuation of the archive, resulting in the safeguarding of a rich collection for future generations, comprising 4,100 technical dossiers of various monuments and sites, 47,700 film and microfilm negatives, 256,000 photographs in colour and in black and white, and 28,500 materials in various formats, in colour and in black and white. Meanwhile, completion of culture development indicators (CDIs) are providing valuable inputs into new policies and strategies, as the results and data collected are directly contributing to advancement of the SDG agenda.

**OUTCOME 4**

# Environment and Climate Change

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



**Indicators for Outcome 3**

■ Baseline 2016-2017 ■ Status 2021

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2021
Extent to which comprehensive measures - plans, strategies, policies, programmes and budgets - are being implemented to achieve low-emission and/or climate-resilient development objectives	34.22% RES in energy portfolio	36%
% of farmers accessing disaster early warning system	0%	5% Female, 30 %
Number of hectares of land that are managed sustainably as protected areas under a conservation, sustainable use or access- and benefits-sharing regime	9,424 ha	Total 76,284 ha - Butrinit 9,424 ha, Prespa 27,750 ha, Divjaka 22,230 ha, Dajti 3,300 ha, Llogara 1,010 ha, Karanburun - Sazan 12,570 ha
Nº of sites, including World Heritage sites, with costed DRR plans/ interventions, that are gender-sensitive	0 (UNESCO) sites	1
Categories of Protected areas and Biosphere reserves with working, sustainable financial and legal mechanisms	0	3
Presence and quality of the First Biennial Update Report of Albania to the UNFCCC that is gender sensitive.	0	Revised NDC and BUR submitted to UNFCCC
Number of financial mechanisms and 'pipelines' developed to access climate finance, including GCF	0	National GCF country programme developed, identifying 6 pipeline programs
No of targeted children and parents/care givers benefiting from child protection in emergency services.	500	At least 5,000 (children 75%)
No of targeted child protection professionals capacitated to deliver quality protection services in emergency settings	0	At least 450
Number of teachers skilled in Disaster Risk reduction strategies and other inclusive methodologies	500	At least 1,200
Number of children (boys and girls) accessing online learning (in schools or via other distant learning opportunities)	300,000 children of all ages and cycles of pre-university education.	At least 350,000 children
No. of households restoring agriculture production and dependent livelihoods	0	35
No. of households supported through guarantees and microfinance credit lines	0	30
No. of schools, community infrastructure facilities revitalized and refurbished	0	19 education facilities are repaired/reconstructed
No. of earthquake affected cultural heritage properties are rehabilitated and revitalized, incl. gender sensitive infrastructure/design and socio-economic measures	0	1 - Rubik Monastery Church rehabilitated/revitalized 6 sites are in ongoing work, 2 sites in solicitation phase, and the designs for 6 sites is completed and await final certification allowing for works to begin.

## DRR and Climate Change

7.2, 9.1, 11.2, 11.b, 12.1, 12.2, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 15.1, 15.3, 17.9

## Natural Resources

3.9, 3.d, 6.1, 12.1, 12.4, 13.1, 13.2, 14.5, 14.a, 15.1, 15.3, 15.5, 17.9, 17.14, 17.19

Systemic changes were achieved at the central level, and also at the LGU level, for gradually consolidating the responsibility to act for the present protection and future resilience of the environment. Work with the line ministries focused on building a broader ownership of the climate agenda and stronger inter-institutional partnerships. This effort provided a governance basis for the establishment of innovative funding mechanisms that can incentivise and help to pay for improved energy efficiency and renewable solutions (SDGs 13 and 7) in synergy with international and regional financial institutions. The work with the scientific community mapped climatic risks and cooperation with communities, especially women and youth, helped local authorities identify and implement adaptation measures (SDG 9).

Albania's partnerships with homologue institutions in riparian countries of the River Drin (South-South cooperation) were institutionalised and strengthened, and implementing procedures developed for management of this trans-boundary basin are in line with the commitments already undertaken through the Strategic Action Plan.

Management structures for protected areas and water management are now established and functional, reinforcing the role of local authorities and prefectures as an important institution standing between local and central government. For the first time Albania has a special fund<sup>18</sup> for protected areas that will preserve the country's natural assets and strengthen monitoring in 18 percent

of the territory.

Albania's first draft country programme to engage with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) has been developed, with the aim of exploring additional environmental financing resources.

As part of the climate promise, Albania submitted its more ambitious and robust NDC with an Action Plan to achieve the almost double target of 20.9 percent by 2030. NDC is also informing the Integrated Plan of Energy and Climate. Meanwhile, the Climate Change Adaptation Planning initiative was launched in 2021 to provide for sectoral and local-level interventions to increase resilience and sustain livelihoods.

## Earthquake Response

1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.a, 4.c, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.9, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5, 9.b, 10.2, 10.4, 11.4, 13.1, 16.2, 17.3

Aligned to PDNA and in collaboration with government to support the reconstruction and recovery efforts to Build Back Better,<sup>19</sup> successful resource mobilisation efforts resulted in EUR 11.69 million unearmarked contributions to the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund** from the governments of Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Romania and the UK to support national earthquake efforts in the areas of (i) education, (ii) economic recovery and resilience, (iii) agriculture, (iv) community infrastructure, (v) social protection, (vi) child protection, (vii) gender equality, and (viii) DRM. Besides the allocation to the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund**, direct funding was provided by EU, with (i) EUR 75 million provided to UNDP for 63 school reconstructions or refurbishment in the eleven municipalities impacted,<sup>20</sup> affecting the life of 1,087,897 people and ben-



efitting 1,372 teachers and 23,157 children and students, and (ii) EUR 40 million provided to UNOPS for rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites damaged by the earthquake.

By the end of 2021, at least 5,000 children and parents and caregivers had benefitted from child protection in emergency services, 450 child protection professionals were capacitated to deliver quality protection services in emergency settings, 1,200 teachers were skilled in DRR strategies and other inclusive methodologies, 350,000 boys and girls accessed online learning, 35 households restored agriculture production and dependent livelihoods, 30 households were supported through guarantees and micro-finance credit lines, 19 education facilities were repaired or reconstructed, one cultural heritage property (Rubik Monastery Church) was rehabilitated and revitalised while six sites have work ongoing, two sites in solicitation, while the designs for six sites are complete, awaiting final certification allowing for works to begin. At least 777 women and girls were provided with livelihoods and essential services in areas affected by the earthquake, including psycho-social and legal aid, self-defense training and economic empowerment interventions.

## Main lessons learned

- The PoCSD is well aligned with the national strategic framework and development priorities and has promptly adapted its programmes and interventions to the changing development context in each outcome area, due in part to the strong partnership developed with national counterparts and the flexibilities incorporated into its design through the mechanism of joint biennial work planning.
- The lack of national funding appropriated to meet obligations arising from endorsed policies, such as the case of consistent underfunding by the state budget of NHRIs, and social protection policies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, hamper effective achievement of results. In general, the lack of financial and human resources may have a serious detriment upon the effectiveness of results.
- The degree of development and maturity of national policies in each sector is a crucial factor underlying the prospects to achieve results effectively and efficiently. In relatively more mature sectors national institutions are likely to be more adequately equipped to understand development challenges and address them effectively, including through support from the UN. In less mature sectors, institutions are often not capacitated to fully absorb the assistance provided and hold partners accountable for their contributions.

18. DCM no. 19, dated 20.01.2021 'On the extent of the special fund for environmental protected areas, on the sources of its creation, and the rules for its use'.

19. All construction will follow the Build Back Better (BBB) principle, applying sustainable building norms and providing an opportunity to sustainably reduce future risk. BBB will guide rebuilding stronger, safer and more disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems. This agenda will also contribute to building sustainable infrastructure. In terms of environmental sustainability considerations, the special measure will bring improvements to energy efficiency, which will be pursued through the reconstruction and rebuilding process of public buildings and at cultural heritage sites. This will help manage the carbon footprint for the buildings and sites and reduce cost for the beneficiaries.

20. Durres, Kamza, Kavaja, Kruja, Kurbin, Lezha, Mirdita, Rrogozhina, Shijak, Tirana and Vora.

## Supporting the Western Balkan's collective leadership on reconciliation: building capacity and momentum for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office

The project 'Supporting the Western Balkan's collective leadership on reconciliation: building capacity and momentum for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)' focused on enhancing reconciliation in the Western Balkans countries as measured by increasing the embracing of diversity and reducing prejudice and discrimination.

It was implemented from October 2018 to May 2021 in six Western Balkans (WB6) countries—Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,<sup>21</sup> Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia—by three UN agencies (lead: UNDP Albania; UNFPA Albania; UNICEF Albania) in partnership with RYCO as the implementing partner and supported by the PBF with some USD 3 million. In 2019, the joint project included a regional component of research into youth perceptions of peace and security in the Western Balkans region, in cooperation with UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub and UNFPA Eastern Europe and the Central Asia Regional Office. In 2020, twice challenged by *force majeure*—the massive earthquake that hit Albania in November 2019, and the Covid-19 pandemic—partners adjusted the workplan and implementation to the new situational reality, and a project extension was granted by the PBF, until May 2021.

### Key highlights of the project achievements include the following:

- Mapping of best peacebuilding practices in the WB6 region and consultations with 4,500 young people from Albania, Kosovo and BiH through U-report methodology; and two fundraising tools for schools, entitled *Fundraising made possible: A guide for the future*, and *Fundraising made possible: Raising funds together*. One School Peacebuilding Manual formed the basis for wider consultation and for training teachers from 22 schools in the WB6. Teachers were mentored to implement peacebuilding ideas in their schools. Teachers' project ideas and the Peacebuilding Manual were made

available to a wider teaching audience in the region through the development of a digital platform to be used as an online learning resource for teachers in WB6 (led by UNICEF).

- The **Y-Peer Peacebuilding Manual** was developed to build the skills of young people, especially those hard to reach, to address peacebuilding and conflict transformation by using youth peer-to-peer methodologies and to reflect aspects of young people's personal development and their experiences in the context of the WB6 region. A total of 21 young people from the WB region were trained as Trainers-of-Trainers (ToTs) on topics of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. They facilitated 15 Y-Peer local workshops in WB6, with participation of more than 300 young people with implementation of 15 best innovative ideas with regard to youth grassroots and NGOs on reconciliation and peacebuilding across the region. A regional Youth Peace Lab was implemented with the participation of 120 young policymakers from WB6 who developed 20 policy solutions to the most pressing regional issues, from mobility to connectivity, and transformation of the legacy of war, among others. An awareness and advocacy campaign was developed and implemented, communicating the importance of young people's engagement in building mutual understanding and reconciliation, dealing with the past and intercultural learning and advocating at policymaking levels to develop an enabling political and social environment that empowers and facilitates youth exchanges. The campaign promoted the project outcomes and benefits to youth in the WB6, by reaching more than 30,000 young people in the region through social media (led by UNFPA).
- A capacity assessment for RYCO paved the way for the financial disbursement of funds to the Office and assessment of the internal capacities for its institutional strengthening



needs. Based on the findings, RYCO's institutional capacity building plan was built, including provision of technical support to the Office for the development of new HR policies, a Risk Assessment and Risk Management Guidelines, Safety and Security in the workplace policy, and an IT solution to facilitate internal e-Processes. In addition, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework was developed, to enable RYCO to monitor and measure its institutional performance, according to a results-based management approach for institutional effectiveness, in compliance with its Strategic Plan for 2019–2021. The processes included capacity building activities to enable the Office to make use of the new documents. RYCO managed 44 grants across WB6 that comprised programmatic and financial support, financial monitoring, expert monitoring and capacity building for RYCO staff in the Head Office and Local Branch Offices for financial management of grants (led by UNDP).

- **Regional research into youth peace and security** in WB6 during 2019–2021 was held in consultation with the youth advisory group and consisted of 24 youths

across WB6 who were contributors to the process but also recipients of a series of trainings on research methods, peacebuilding, conflict analysis, dealing with the past, gender equality and gender-sensitive peacebuilding and advocacy. The research data collected, analysed and validated with the youth research advisory group were published in a report launched at a regional high-level dialogue with youth and policymakers. An advocacy campaign was held to promote the findings of the implemented research (led by UNDP IRH in partnership with UNFPA EECA Regional Office).



21. For the UN, all references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

# UN Albania support to Covid-19 Recovery Efforts in Albania

UN agencies are working together with government on how to overcome the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Several UN projects and programmes re-oriented the assistance to support the Covid-19 response. The UN in Albania has produced periodic newsletters on the support of UN agencies to recovery efforts. These are available on the UN Albania website.

Following the Secretary General's launch on 4 May of the UN's global framework for immediate socio-economic response to Covid-19, UNCT Albania also completed its Socio-Economic Recovery and Response Plan (SERP) for Albania.<sup>22</sup>

The response provides a scanning of the current situation and sets out the UN's consolidated offer of socio-economic recovery and response support. The SERP is operationalised through PoCSD JWPs and year 2021 global SERP indicators data are reported in UNINFO.

As of 31 December 2021, a total of 2,763,100 vaccine doses arrived in the country. Albania received 1,164,700 Pfizer doses, 538,400 AstraZeneca doses, 1,000,000 Coronavac doses, and 60,000 Sputnik V doses. There were 331,800 doses shipped through COVAX. Since the start of vaccination, a total of 1,212,288 doses of COVID19 vaccine have been administered and 40% of people >18 years of age have received 2 doses of vaccine.

22. <https://albania.un.org/en/86279-un-albania-covid-19-socio-economic-recovery-and-response-plan>

Pillar 1 - HEALTH FIRST: Protecting health services and systems during the crisis		
Number of people accessing essential (non-COVID-19 related) health services, disaggregated by sex, age group and at-risk populations	Vaccination Programmes	25 885
	including through outreach and mobile services	7 mobile vaccination units
Number of health facilities that received UN support to maintain essential immunization services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of health worker and type of support	Provision of Immunization training and supplies	3 cold rooms and 2 refrigerated vehicles
	with a set of core essential services to be maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic defined	Yes
Whether the country is protecting health services and systems, Yes/No, with a set of core essential services to be maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic defined	with health sector policies informed by socio-economic impact assessment focused on at-risk populations being implemented	Yes
	with multisectoral mental health and psychosocial support technical working group	Yes
Number of community health workers receiving UN support to maintain essential services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support	Health workers based at health care facilities	751
	Community health worker	240
	Provision of PPE and RCCE material	19 200
	Other (Healthcare facility staff trained in infection prevention and control)	1 931
Pillar 2 - PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social protection and basis services		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services, disaggregated by sex, age group and at-risk population	Girls (0-17 years)	60 316
	Boys (0-17 years)	63 975
	Women (18 years and above)	4 544
	Men (18 years and above)	40 555
	Migrants, Refugees, stateless and internally displaced persons	169 390
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning, disaggregated by sex	Disaggregated total	375 000
	Ensure access to justice build capacity of key services to prevent impunity	Yes
Whether the country has measures in place to address gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic, which, Yes/No, Integrate violence prevention and response into COVID-19 response plans	Ensure continued functioning of shelters for victims of violence and expand their capacity	Yes
	Integrate violence prevention and response into COVID-19 response plans	Yes
	Provide options for women to report abuse and seek help without alerting perpetrators	Yes
	Raise awareness through advocacy and campaigns with targeted messages to both women and men	Yes
Number of beneficiaries of social protection schemes and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic, disaggregated by type of programme, territory (rural/urban), sex, age group and at-risk population	Female Cash transfer programmes	12 753
	Female Legal aid services	1 762
	Male Legal aid services	1 104
	Female Human right protection services	685
	Male Human right protection services	136
	Female Psychosocial support services	3 918
	Male Psychosocial support services	1 534
Pillar 3 - ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and vulnerable workers in the informal economy		
Number of private sector companies and formal and informal sector workers supported during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Number, Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs)	Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs)	760
	Private sector companies, excluding MSMEs	10
	Formal sector workers	420
Whether the country adopting fiscal, monetary and legislative stimulus packages for COVID-19 economic response and recovery that are, Yes/No, Climate and environmentally sensitive	Climate and environmentally sensitive	No
	Gender Responsive	No
Pillar 4 - MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION		
Whether the country undertook socio-economic impact assessments in response to the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on vulnerable groups, directed at-risk populations	Gender sensitive impact assessments	Yes
	Labour market impact assessment	Yes
	Multi-sectoral and sectoral needs assessment	Yes
Whether the country is implementing policies informed by socio-economic impact assessment, directed at-risk populations	Fiscal Policy	Yes
	Social Protection Policy	Yes
	Labour market policies, including food security assessment	Yes
	Socio-economic policy including employment	Yes
	Women's empowerment policy	Yes
Pillar 5 - SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE		
Number of organizations benefiting from institutional capacity building so that governments, employers' and workers' organizations can work together to shape socio-economic policy responses	Employers' and business organizations (EBMOs)	2
	Trade unions	2
Number of community-based organisations capacitated to respond to and mitigate the pandemic, fight against COVID-19 related domestic violence, racism, xenophobia, stigma, and other forms of discrimination, prevent and remedy human rights abuses (NHRIs)	National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)	4
	Community organization representing other at-risk population	17
	Community-based organisations providing livelihoods support and basic services delivery	11
	Women's organizations	15
	Youth organizations	24
Number of social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement spaces facilitated with participation of at-risk populations and groups	Social dialogue spaces at national level	1
	Spaces at national level for either or both of social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement	1
	Spaces at sub-national level for either or both of social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement	1

### 2.3. Support to partnerships and financing the 2030 Agenda

In 2021, UNCT intensified its efforts in support of creating solid partnerships and strengthening joint and inclusive actions to accelerate achievement of the 2030 Agenda and protect the needs and rights of the most vulnerable groups and those being left behind. The mobilisation of contributions to the SDG Acceleration Fund, mainly in response to the earthquake recovery and the pandemic, continued to be the main mechanism of resource mobilisation throughout the year. While maintaining the longstanding cooperation with Switzerland and Sweden, UNCT expanded and consolidated further its partnerships with the EU, and the governments of Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Poland and the UK.

Extending partnerships with the private sector was in the focus of UNCT's work throughout 2021, while promoting the UN Global Compact (UNGC) and Women Empowerment principles (WEPS) and enhancing knowledge of the private sector around specific SDG goals and the available UNGC tools. Actions were complemented by awareness-raising efforts through conducting of several SDG advocacy initiatives, involvement of private partners in the broader UN sustainability framework, including the UN Global Compact, and development of knowledge instruments such as the SDGs Business Toolkit, jointly launched with the UN longstanding partner the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), aiming at providing direction to business stakeholders in Albania on how to embrace the SDGs. Moreover, UNCT strengthened and extended private partnerships with other local and international chambers and business associations, including the Foreign Investors Association of Albania (FIAA), American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) and Women Economic Chamber (WEC).

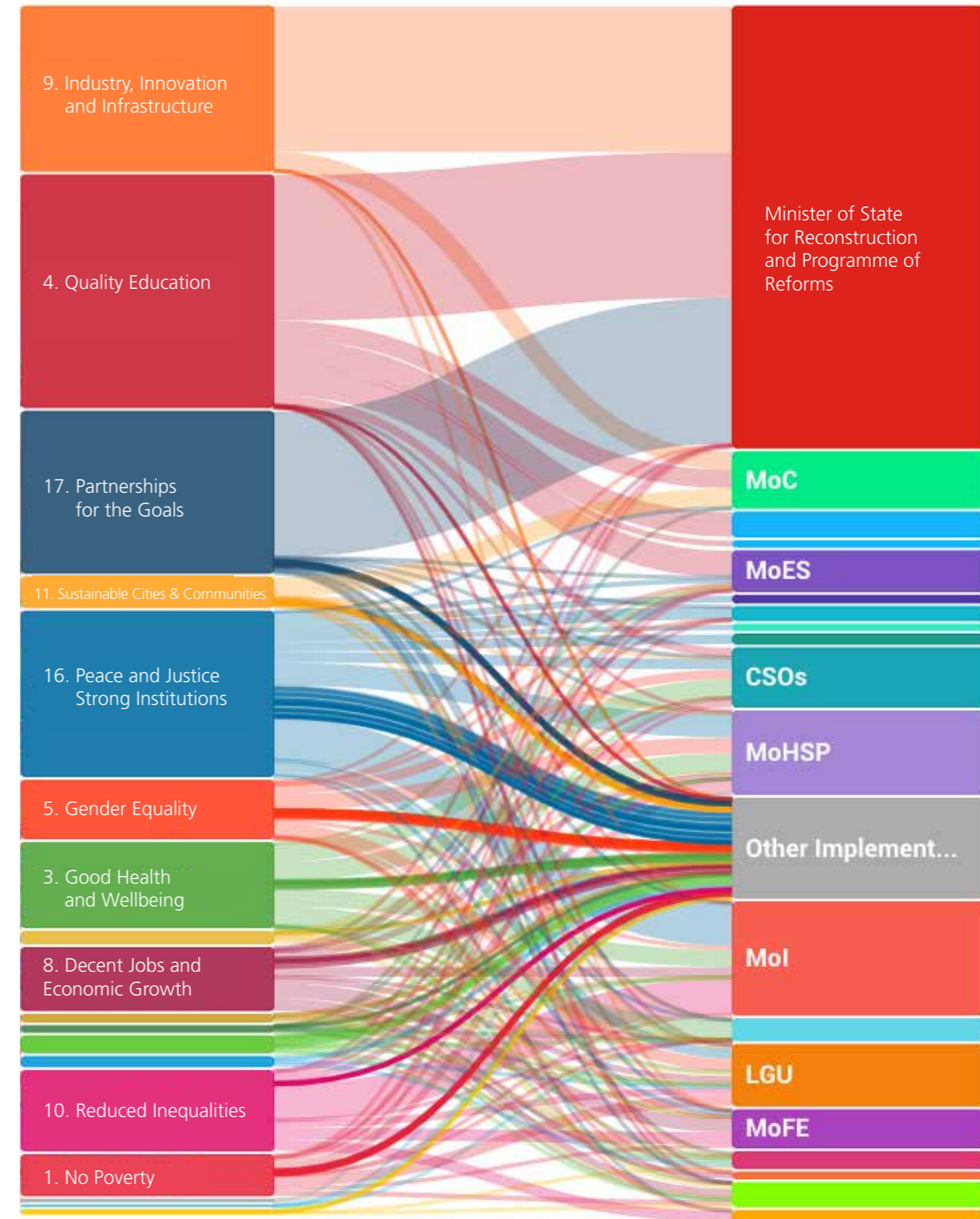
Likewise, UNCT under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator reinforced advocacy actions for the

achievement of the SDGs through locally tailored partnerships and resource mobilisation initiatives. In December 2021, a Joint Declaration of Intent on cooperation in meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Albania was signed with Vodafone Albania, as a strategic partnership framework that supports Albania's drive to attain the SDGs. Similarly, six new partnerships were signed with private companies, part of a regional UNFPA project aiming to establish and promote gender-responsive family policies in the private sector in Albania. Lastly, bringing together the collective capacity of the UN agencies and aiming to further scale up the assistance in the private sector in Albania, and enhance support and improve understanding and engagement on the SDGs, the UN, through FAO, ILO, UNDP and UNIDO, and a contribution from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) mobilised new resources to develop the new project 'Business Partnerships and Solutions for SDGs' based on Swedish exchange of knowledge.

With the support of the government of Albania, the UN contributed to influencing and aligning investments towards the SDGs through the completion of several studies and assessments under the joint programme Support to SDG Financing, supported financially by the Joint SDG Fund.

- Analysis of SDG-related budgetary spending during 2015–2019 documents Albania's efforts towards pursuing the SDGs through economic and social development policies and tracking of its public expenditure. Approximately USD 17 billion (ALL 1,990 billion), or 85 percent of total budget outlays between 2015 and 2019 (from domestic and foreign sources) have contributed towards the achievement of SDG-related targets in Albania. The main cost driver for the overall development strategy is social development and cohesion, which accounts for approximately half of the total budget for the 2015–2019 period. Tackling poverty and inequalities costs

Linking Investments, Partners and the Sustainable Development Goals in Albania



about 43 percent of all public resources in Albania, while another 21 percent of expenditure is allocated to health and education. The report also provides a deep dive into patterns, emerging trends and underlying factors for progress in two SDGs, related to the development of human capital and education and poverty, highlighting that increased spending levels are desirable, but not necessarily sufficient to achieve sustainable progress.

- Analysis of the impact of investment in childcare, the child and family on poverty reduction and human development investigates the fiscal space to increase spending upon childcare infrastructure by undertaking simulations of the investment for gender-disaggregated employment creation, poverty reduction and reduction in time on unpaid work. The study was able to quantify economically a broad range of benefits from investment in universal childcare. The costing exercise gives an indication of the main factors that influence costs and the relative trade-offs to make the investment.
- A study on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Social Cash Assistance Programme (*Ndihma Ekonomike*, NE) addresses i) coverage and adequacy for the number of beneficiaries, benefit level and expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), ii) effectiveness, targeting accuracy, impact on poverty reduction, social inclusion, iii) eligibility criteria and the complaint and appeals mechanism, iv) impact on decentralisation, with municipal provision of NE and social services, v) impact of the reform with exit rules and the appropriateness of limiting NE eligibility to five years, and vi) recommendations for policy change.
- A feasibility study on long-term care in Albania, which analyses the current system of providing care for the elderly in view of the rapidly growing need due to ageing. The recommendations include measures

to secure the workforce for providers facing a shortage of carers, partly due to the substantial levels of emigration, by an innovative mechanism of public-private partnership and a government-NGOs partnership.

The process of drafting the first Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) for Albania was initiated in 2021. Liaising with technical staff at MoFE, a draft inception report and preliminary roadmap was prepared internally. Field work will begin in January 2022 and is expected to conclude in July 2022. Potential synergies between INFF and the process of drafting the new NSDI were discussed with the PMO, which proposed integrating the framework oversight mechanism into the existing Inter-ministerial Committee and Inter-institutional Working Group on SDGs. This would provide the appropriate political and technical fora for the INFF oversight.

MoFE has been supported in establishing a dedicated research unit for a data-driven and evidence-informed approach to policy making. The Policy Research Unit will conduct trend and macroeconomic analyses and modelling, provide input to monitoring and evaluation for improved fiscal management and economic development, and produce actionable policy recommendations. A team of four (1 team leader and 3 junior consultants) was recruited in Q4 2021 and will begin working with the Minister's cabinet in January 2022 to identify impending research priorities.

The UN joint programme "EU for Gender Equality in Albania—Implementation of the EU Gender Equality *acquis*", which started implementation in 2021, has a particular significance for the UN in Albania not only due to its strategic importance but also as a model of partnership of the UN and the EU when it comes

to promoting gender equality and ensuring that national policies and standards promote women's full enjoyment of their human rights. Through this project, for the first time, the EU has agreed to share its contributions through the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund**, which mirrors the importance that the EU attributes to the principle of Delivering as One and of interagency coherence and collaboration. These efforts in support of SDG 5 on gender equality will continue during the implementation of the new UNSDCF 2022-2026, which includes a dedicated outcome on gender equality and women's empowerment.

*In conclusion, the UN's presence in Albania has contributed to building trust and partnerships with governmental authorities and a broad range of other stakeholders, and its work has capitalised on past results in a long-term and consistent way. The results achieved so far, presented in Chapter 2: UN in Albania support to national development priorities of the present report, provide an excellent basis for future work. UN's convening role and strategic focus on building partnerships and networking with a broad range of stakeholders (central and local government agencies, public oversight bodies, CSOs and donors) helps donor coordination, avoids overlapping and maximises synergies and results. Strong partnerships facilitate a greater reach and impact. Beyond its own expertise and resources, the UN can use its significant reach to help mobilise the vast network of partnerships required for a whole-of-society engagement. The UN has extensive connections with CSOs, which play an indispensable role in reaching out to vulnerable people and in getting to remote places.*

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

The whole of the integrated and joint UN support for Albania can be greater than the sum of its parts. In 2021, UNCT Albania finalised the last year of implementation of the current PoCSD (2017–2021), as well as preparations for a new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026, which was signed on 25 October 2021 by the deputy prime minister, the UN Resident Coordinator and the heads of 19 UN agencies.<sup>23</sup> This new Cooperation Framework marks the fourth of its kind in Albania and builds upon significant experience and built-in adjustments<sup>24</sup> by the UN system in Albania as one of the first Delivering as One (DaO) pilot countries. UN Albania's DaO approach is valued by the government and partners as helping to consolidate and harmonise UN programming, communications, advocacy, investment mapping and reporting. Lessons from the previous cooperation cycles using a DaO approach are embedded fully in the UNSDCF theory of change and configuration of the UN system, including existing mechanisms for joint work with government and other programme partners.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UNSDCF expected cooperation results and strategies for the period 2022–2026 offer seven major differences from the current GoA–UN PoCSD 2017–2021, as follows: 1, More strategic engagement with civil society; 2, Engagement with the private sector to promote shared value opportunities; 3, Young people's participation; 4, Outcome A: Fiscal options to increase investment in people; 5, Outcome B: Green economy integration; 6, The SDG acceleration fund; and 7, Expanding UN business operations. Delivering on these

23. Three UN agencies—ITU, UNDRR and UNV—that were not signatories to the PoCSD 2017–2021 signed the new UNSDCF and committed to delivering across its results. However, IAEA will not participate in the UNSDCF implementation.

24. For example: 1, UN programme staff and partners have worked over two full previous cycles in joint inter-agency results groups and using JWPs where working methods and performance expectations are now considered 'business as usual'; 2, A joint fund for strategic, coordinated UN system work has been in continuous operation since 2007 and is a preferred funding modality for government and offers broad appeal to the international community.

commitments will require additional capacities and expertise for UN system performance. These shifts were informed by consultations involving more than 230 partners from civil society, the private sector, international organisations and government. A Youth Advisory Board collected opinions and insights from a survey of more than 400 young people.

Overall, the expected shifts in cooperation do not require major changes to UNCT configuration. Additional capacities and expertise for the UN system to respond to the seven programmatic shifts mentioned above will be secured within existing business models for cooperation. These will rely mainly on the deep policy and technical capacities made available from regional offices and headquarters of both resident and non-resident UN system agencies, and short- and long-term technical assistance. Additional support will be front-loaded during the first years of UNSDCF implementation, drawing mainly on core UN system resources and other resources mobilised from donors. To capitalise on major trends in the country that are working in favour of EU accession and the SDGs,<sup>25</sup> and based on clear partner demands, the UN system will also increase, compared to past frameworks, initiatives on its normative, catalytic, convening and facilitating roles. Again, this does not require an explicit change in UN system configuration. Additional knowledge assets and expertise will be secured from regional offices and headquarters, and with technical assistance.

The new programme cycle 2022–2026 will be governed by a revitalised management structure, empowering a greater involvement of government partners in the strategic oversight of UN Albania's work. This has been achieved mainly through affiliation of two line ministers, instead of one previously, as co-chairs of the Result (Outcome) Groups along with pairs of UN agency heads.

For implementation of the PoCSD last year, UN agencies followed a robust coordination and collaboration approach to jointly implement initiatives, report on contributions and focus on a programme approach and results-based management. Focus was placed on supporting the most vulnerable population by, among others, intensifying recovery efforts from the earthquake and Covid-19, with UN agencies being flexible to adjusting or expanding programming and resources to assist with a swift recovery. WHO and UNICEF supported the delivery of 120,000 doses that have been shipped through COVAX to Albania.

UNCT Albania has successful experience with joint programming, credited to well-established inter-agency coordination and collaboration, and is committed to generating more joint planning and joint programmes (JPs). Joint programming comprises 15–25 percent of UNCT Albania's annual budget. By the end of 2021, twelve JPs were under implementation, three of which started that year. Eight JPs are financed by the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund**, two by the Joint SDG Fund, and one by a bilateral donor agreement with the implementing UN agencies, while one is a regional project financed by the PBF. UNCT Albania has already in the pipeline two new JPs to start implementation in 2022.

A key mechanism to support joint programming is the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund**, established by the UN and the Albanian government in 2007 as the One UN Coherence Fund and rebranded in 2018 as the latter. The fund supports specific joint programmes, as well as the overall joint work planning process. In 2021, phase II of the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund** was established to accompany UNSDCF 2022–2026 implementation, while the current fund closure date was extended to 31 December 2023 to allow for implementation of the earthquake recovery projects.

25. These include: 1, migration and population ageing; 2, the human rights agenda (aligned with EU accession priorities) and increasing calls for social and gender justice; and 3, municipalities emerging as agents of change. UNCT Albania, *Trends and assumptions to guide cooperation to 2030*, Working paper for preparation of UNSDCF, 2022–2026, July 2020.



Signature of the new Cooperation Framework

Detailed information on UN Albania efforts is included in Section 2.2. *Delivering Results for Albania*. Consolidated implementation progress and results are captured in the Annual Review prepared in October, and in various reports to contributing donors and funds (local, regional and global), as well as in this Annual Progress Report. Results were published on the UNCT Albania website and communicated widely on UN Albania social media channels. UNCT Albania also reported quarterly in 2021 on its contribution to the global SERP indicators through UNINFO, available on the Covid-19 global data portal.<sup>26</sup> As far as possible, programme reviews and reporting contributed to the work of the IPMGs and other government thematic and sector reviews.

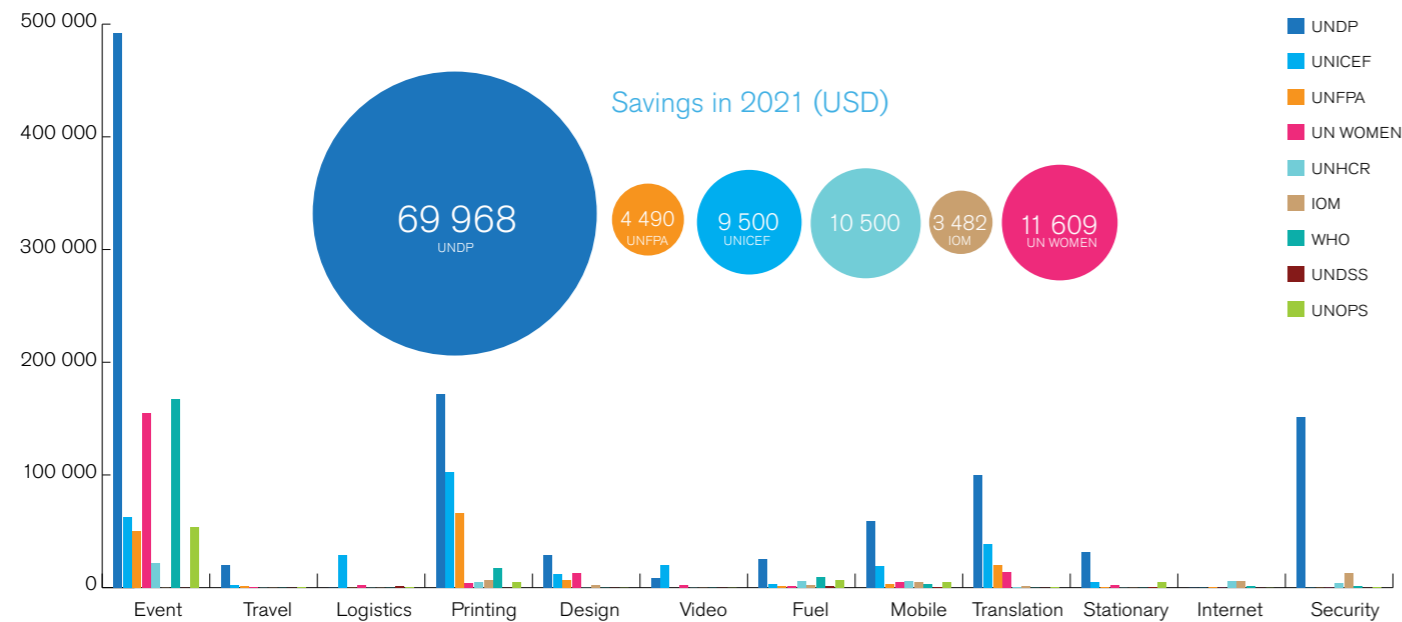
Progress made in UNCT human rights work includes the addition of an annex to the UNSDCF 2022–2026 to

link its outcomes with the human rights commitments of Albania. Official communication on Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) on UN support to non-UN security forces was sent to the government. Ten UN agencies were appointed HRDDP focal points and jointly developed SOPs for HRDDP implementation that were endorsed by UNCT. An HRDDP training for UNCT Albania, both for the heads of agencies and the focal points, was successfully organised with Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). A General and Preliminary Risk Assessment Framework to facilitate and speed up the process of individual risk assessments that have to be undertaken by each UN entity under the HRDDP is in development. In addition, a Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) was established with ToR endorsed by UNCT. Twelve UN agencies appointed PSEA focal points who

26. <https://data.uninfo.org/>



Expenses from common LTAs in 2021 (USD)



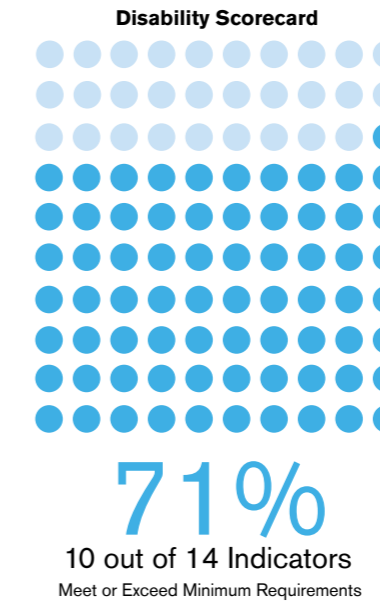
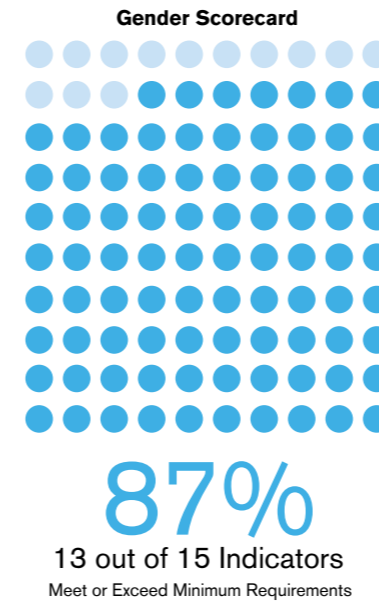
jointly worked for submission of the 2021 Country-Level Action Plan on PSEA by the RC and are currently developing Inter-Agency SOPs for receiving, recording and processing SEA complaints. Moreover, the UNCT Disability Scorecard and Action Plan and Youth Profile were prepared in 2021 and duly reported in UNINFO. UNCT reported meeting or exceeding 71 percent of the Disability Scorecard.

Other important initiatives included the establishment of the UN Migration Network in Albania to facilitate effective, timely and coordinated UN Albania actions supporting and contributing to migration governance in Albania in line with the relevant national strategies and laws within the migration governance area, where a common UN system approach would add value. UN Women and UNFPA joint contribution on gender equality and GBV prevention will be added to the repository of good practices of UN engagement in the UPR process (publication led by UNDP, OHCHR and DCO to be finalised in 2022). RCO organised with OHCHR a staff capacity

building activity for the People's Advocate of Albania, the National Institute of Statistics and the Ombudsman of Kosovo on 'Agenda 2030 and Human Rights', focused specifically on unpacking the SDG indicators. UN Albania supported and jointly organised the Annual Conference of the People's Advocate under the theme 'The Rights of Future Generations and Climate Change'.

Demonstrating that gender equality is a primary goal in UNCT's work throughout the year, and guided by the Gender Thematic Result Group, the team implemented the Systemwide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard Action Plan and duly prepared the 2021 SWAP annual report. In mainstreaming gender equality, UNCT reported meeting or exceeding 87 percent of the SWAP on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and engaged extensively to introduce a gender lens across programmatic interventions and sectoral areas, ensuring application of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) approach. Strong cross-programmatic synergies and integrated approaches proved effective in

Scorecards



ensuring impact and sustainability of efforts: two EVAW programmes were harmonised to scale up efforts and expand good practices, with LNOB and the EVAW JP to leverage local-level planning and budgeting for prioritisation of the EVAW interventions. Integration of gender equality and women's empowerment principles were also ensured in the new UNSDCF, including through a Gender Equality Brief, two Rapid Gender Assessments on the impact of Covid-19 in the lives and livelihoods of women and men and on VAW and a high-quality CCA. In addition, the UNSDCF features a standalone outcome dedicated to 'gender responsive governance'.

Considering business operations as a critical enabler for effective delivery of the UN's development programmes, the Operations Management Team (OMT) further enhanced the level of cooperation among the UN agencies in Albania, as well as the connection and cooperation with UN programming and the operational response. OMT achieved this through addressing the implications deriving from the programme and ensuring efficient and

effective programme delivery. The joint evaluation of procurement and HR processes, including for programme and operations staff, provide an excellent example of such synergy and cooperation.

In respect of the harmonised business practices and aiming at increased efficiency, joint procurement remains the largest OMT activity. The total expenses for services under Long-term Agreements (LTAs) reached USD 2.1 million in 2021. Due to the existence of LTAs and, consequently, a reduction in parallel processes and transaction costs, bulk discounts and better negotiation power, the total savings reported on the use of LTAs in 2021 are estimated to comprise USD 109,000. In 2021, OMT worked jointly on an intensive market screening exercise and, consequently, on the establishment of new LTAs for various services and goods. By the end of the year, the UN agencies in Albania had benefitted from 15 new LTAs, covering five areas of service: Internet, printing, design, video production and stationery. New LTA processes are ongoing for finalisation by Q1 and

Q2 of 2022. Additional LTAs and MoUs have been extended to ensure smooth operational work for effective programme delivery.

Pursuant to the General Assembly resolution on the repositioning of the UN, the online Common Premises Platform was one of the major steps in 2021 for OMT to achieve its objectives. The team successfully completed a stocktake assessment of the current situation of the UN House premises, while the Country Common Premises Plan (CCPP) was established for Albania on the online Common Premises Platform. With the aim of further improving the working environment and safety for all staff, the OMT, for the first time, organised a survey of UN House, organised into five sections: building, facility management, common areas, accessibility and staff well-being. The results will serve as a basis to materialise most adequate inputs and suggest potential improvements.

In terms of joint logistics services, OMT initiated discussions on the potential cost savings from joint carpooling. OMT staff ensured safety and security on the UN House premises and on other UN agency premises by systematically providing appropriate working conditions, updating the Guidance on Workplace Measures and the Travel Protocol for respective staff of all UN agencies. OMT has ensured guidance and assistance towards the new tax reform and modernisation of the fiscal system (e-Invoice), introduced in the country. Following consultation with the Tax Directorate, UN agency finance staff have been able to register and access the e-Albania platform and process payments of e-Invoices, exchanged through the Central Invoice Platform.<sup>27</sup>

The UNCT Communications Group continued to play a central role in driving all 'communicating together' efforts of 19 UN entities in Albania. Guided by the UN global communications priorities and the national sustainable development priorities set by the UNCT, the joint work aimed at communicating with impact to support the UN Covid-19 response, fight misinformation, make the voices of the most vulnerable, unrepresented and underrepresented heard while using all communication channels to advocate for human rights, ending inequality, and to stop violence, showcase the results of joint work to motivate further action and amplify the call for fast action to achieve the SDGs. Nine special joint UN Covid-response newsletters were published over the course of the year in addition to the regular 'Delivering for Development' newsletter, which also increased in frequency. An already revamped UNCT website ([albania.un.org](http://albania.un.org)) served as a news hub for cross-agency information including a data-driven UN INFO plugin. UNCT social media channels continued a steady organic growth of 20 percent in the number of followers across all platforms. With some temporary ease of Covid-driven limitations, the UN agencies went into a large-scale community outreach with [SDG-themed events across the country](#) during the traditional SDG Week in September, had a promotion of PoCSD 2017–2021 results and key priorities for the new Albania UNSDCF 2022–2026 [during the UN Day](#), raised public awareness on ending violence against women during [16 Days of Activism](#) and the week [around the International Women's Day](#) in March. The call for action on climate change was echoed through a major [pre-COP26 campaign in cooperation with the UK and Italian embassies](#) in Albania.

In January 2021, the [UN Albania Youth Advisory Group \(UNYAG\)](#) was established. Our new partners have assisted us in shaping youth interventions under the new Albania–United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022–2026.

## 2.5. Evaluations and lessons learned

Evaluation<sup>28</sup> of the Government of Albania–UN PoCSD 2017–2021 was conducted in 2020 and provided 20 findings, eight conclusions, six lessons learned, and twelve recommendations. To address the recommendations, UNCT Albania prepared a management response in September 2020 and identified 37 actions for implementation in 2020 and 2021. By the end of 2021, almost all actions had been accomplished or were progressing satisfactorily. Several adjustments, programmatic and otherwise, were made in 2021 through implementing the management response actions, including the following:

- ▶ UNCT supported effectively the national recovery response to both the November 2019 earthquake and the Covid-19 pandemic by adapting to the challenges, and making timely adjustment of interventions and resources, including the following: (i) several UN projects and programmes re-oriented their assistance; (ii) several UN agencies integrated gender equality advocacy and programmatic actions into their recovery support response; (iii) UN in Albania produced periodic newsletters on the support of UN agencies to recovery efforts, made available on the UN Albania website and shared with all stakeholders; (iv) UNCT reported quarterly in 2020 and 2021 on its contribution to the global SERP indicators through UNINFO; and (v) UNCT Albania SERP was operationalised through implementation of JWPs.
- ▶ UNCT enhanced joint resource mobilisation efforts and opportunities for collaboration. Ongoing and new joint programme resources (from the governments of Sweden, Switzerland and Romania, and the EU) channelled through the SDG Acceleration Fund continued to provide a useful platform for the consolidation of a sound programme strategy in the respective areas.

### Integrated social and health care services: A people-centred innovative model of service delivery

Life has been hard for Violeta and her family in their little village of Kabash, a two-hour drive from the nearest town of Puka. Her two daughters were both born with mental health issues, as well as congenital heart disease, requiring specialised medical care that was accessible only in Puka. Moreover, Violeta's husband suffers from asthma, making it difficult for him to provide for the family. The family barely made a living from the land and cultivating crops. Left with no alternative, Violeta's family moved to Puka to be closer to the health facilities so that her husband and their daughters could access the medical care services they desperately needed.



Under the Joint United Nations Programme 'Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery', funded by the UN Joint SDG Fund and implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and WHO, UNDP, in partnership with Puka Municipality and the CSO 'Youth Movement for Democracy', is piloting a model of integrated social care and health services. The services provided include home physiotherapy, speech therapy and psycho-social care. In parallel, the programme is building the capacities of health and psycho-social workers at the local level in how to administer integrated services and work in multidisciplinary teams. Thanks to the programme, more than 10,000 people across Albania have benefitted from the piloted integrated social and health care services. In fact, in the past this service did not exist in Puka, but now Violeta's family are now among the beneficiaries. A social and economic needs assessment was undertaken for each family member, including an assessment of their health and medical needs. The daughters were supported to attend school regularly and were provided with technological equipment to help improve their studies and encourage further learning. The family was also assisted in obtaining a disability living allowance and assistance from the basket of social care services.

27. Not all UN agencies have applied this approach.

28. Both the evaluation and its management response are published on the UN Albania website and shared widely with all partners in the country: <https://albania.un.org/en/89437-evaluation-report-government-albania-and-united-nations-programme-cooperation-sustainable>; <https://albania.un.org/en/99837-management-response-evaluation-government-albania-united-nations-programme-cooperation>

- UNCT strengthened its strategic partnership with the EU through implementation of the EU funding provided bilaterally to UN agencies in several outputs, pursuit of new EU funding opportunities, collaboration with the EU in various sectors, strategic processes and coordination fora.
- UNCT advanced joint planning, programming, monitoring and results-reporting practices thanks to the UNINFO system. It also undertook the following: (i) extended the information base UN RCO received from UN agencies and enabled the RCO to improve analysis of UNCT results, while the disaggregation of information allowed for a better understanding of UNCT work in the country, serving all UN agencies and partners; (ii) increased external transparency and awareness of UNCT work in Albania through the linkages of the UNINFO public dashboard with the revamped UNCT Albania website; (iii) pushed UNCT, through the UNINFO IMS module, to engage in important normative work such as development of the mandatory scorecards and profiles (human rights, gender, disability, youth, PSEA), aiding UNCT in understanding better the gaps, and for it to be better equipped to make informed programmatic decisions to empower vulnerable groups; and (iv) improved coordination efforts by equipping UNCT and RCO Albania with relevant and comparable information on UN agencies work in the country. Such information included geographical presence, implementation partners and financials (available and gaps) and was used to, among others, facilitate allocation of new funding to UN agencies, showcase UN support to remote areas of the country, identify best and worst performances, give recognition to areas of strength and encourage improvements in areas of weakness.
- Cohesive engagement of all UN agencies and partners was essential in co-developing and co-operationalising UNSDCF 2022–2026, including establishment of the relevant management arrangements

## Together! So that no one is left behind

Meet Azem Nuhu, the Director of Social Care Services in Maliq, Korca. He tells us how his municipality has developed and started to implement its Social Plan with the support of the Leave No One Behind programme, a joint effort of four United Nations agencies in Albania—UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women—with the support of the Swiss government.

Azem speaks with passion about the support the LNB programme has provided to ensure that services are offered well and which has helped create sustainability. “Our social plan not only guides us in our work, but also acts as a guarantee that our challenges can be solved sustainably,” he says.



An educator in a training session with a child with autism spectrum needs. (Photo, UN Albania.)

The challenge for Maliq Municipality of solving the problem of providing care for children with disabilities took a step in the right direction in 2020 when UNDP, through the LNB programme, rehabilitated and put into operation the facilities of the Community Centre for Children with Disabilities.

The centre is staffed by five specialists: a psychologist, social worker, teacher, speech therapist and physiotherapist. The staff received appropriate formal training, peer-to-peer and on-the-job, through the support of the LNB programme.

Other young people in Maliq have also benefitted from the support of the LNB programme, and the actions have improved the quality of teaching in the town and created better facilities for the entertainment of youth.

Overcoming poverty, providing food, education and health care, ending violence against women and reducing inequalities, along with many other challenges, are just part of the job for the dedicated social services team in the Municipality of Maliq.

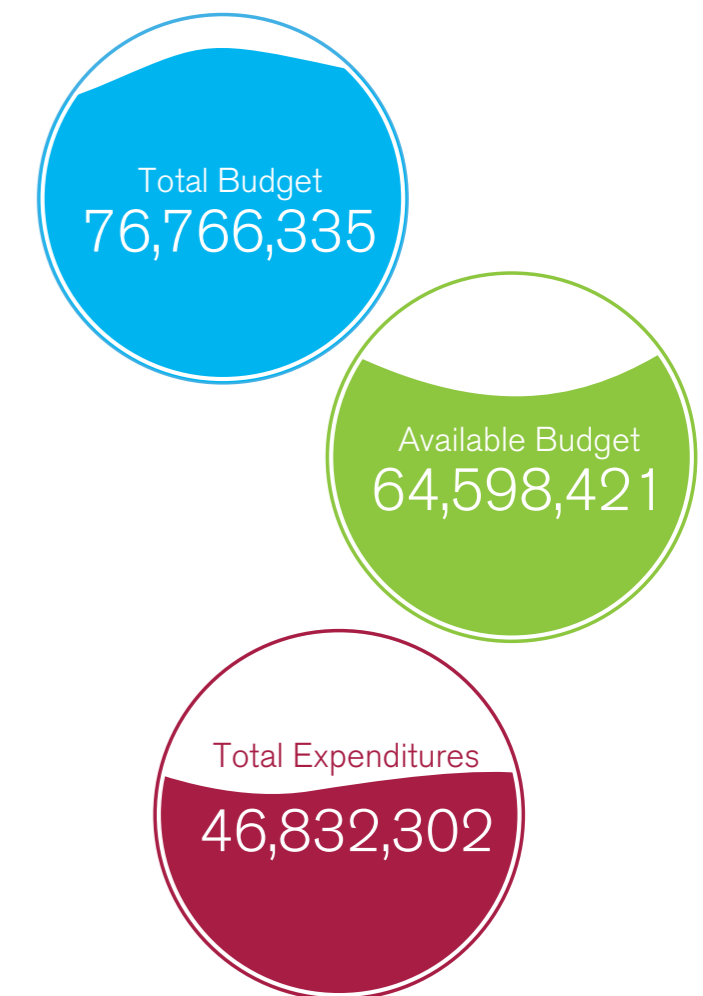
(i.e., the Joint Executive Committee, Result Groups and Thematic Groups) with participation of all relevant stakeholders to ensure accountability for implementation at both output and outcome levels. Synergies between UN agencies were actively sought over the course of the design of the next UNSDCF 2022–2026, alongside careful consideration of a clear division of labour between the different agencies, to avoid inherent competition over the resources available and scope of activities. As part of this process, three UN agencies—ITU, UNV, UNDRR—that were not signatories to the PoCSD 2017–2021, committed to sign the new UNSDCF and deliver across its results. However, IAEA will not participate in UNSDCF implementation. First draft JWPs for 2022–2023 were prepared in November and December, ready for endorsement and the start of implementation in January 2022.

- UNCT intensified its normative work as one of its comparative advantages to: (i) advance the human rights agenda by supporting improvements in the regulatory framework and the integration of human rights into national policies and strategies and accompanying the implementation of programmes and Treaty Bodies’ recommendations; (ii) generate stronger political engagement by Parliament and human rights institutions to strengthen public accountability mechanisms and increase outreach to vulnerable people; (iii) ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women is clearly addressed through a gender-specific outcome in the new UNSDCF 2022–2026, as well as integration of gender across all outcomes; and (iv) implement the recommendations of the UNCT SWAP GE Scorecard.
- UNCT ensured the relevance of the SDG framework in Albania by supporting preparation of the NSDI 2022–2030 with interim nationalised SDG indicators and targets.

## 2.6. Financial overview and resource mobilisation

The PoCSD for 2021 had an available budget of USD 64 million (Figure 1), with core resources of USD 5 million (8%) and mobilised resources of USD 59 million (92%). The large proportion of the non-core resources highlights the importance of local resource mobilisation. By year end, the programme had reached a delivery rate of 73 percent, with the balance carried over into 2022.

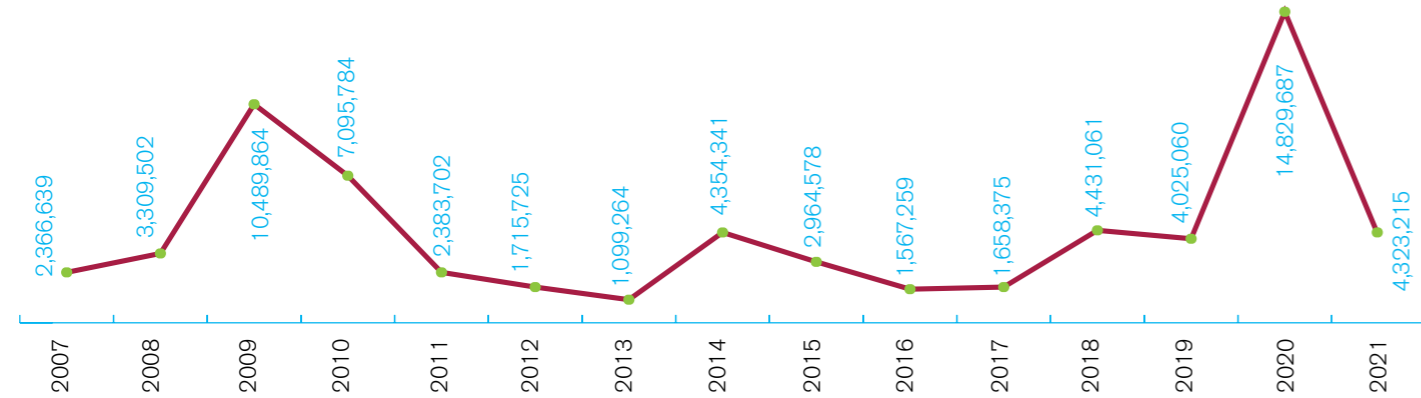
**Figure 1.** Budget and delivery (USD), January to December 2021



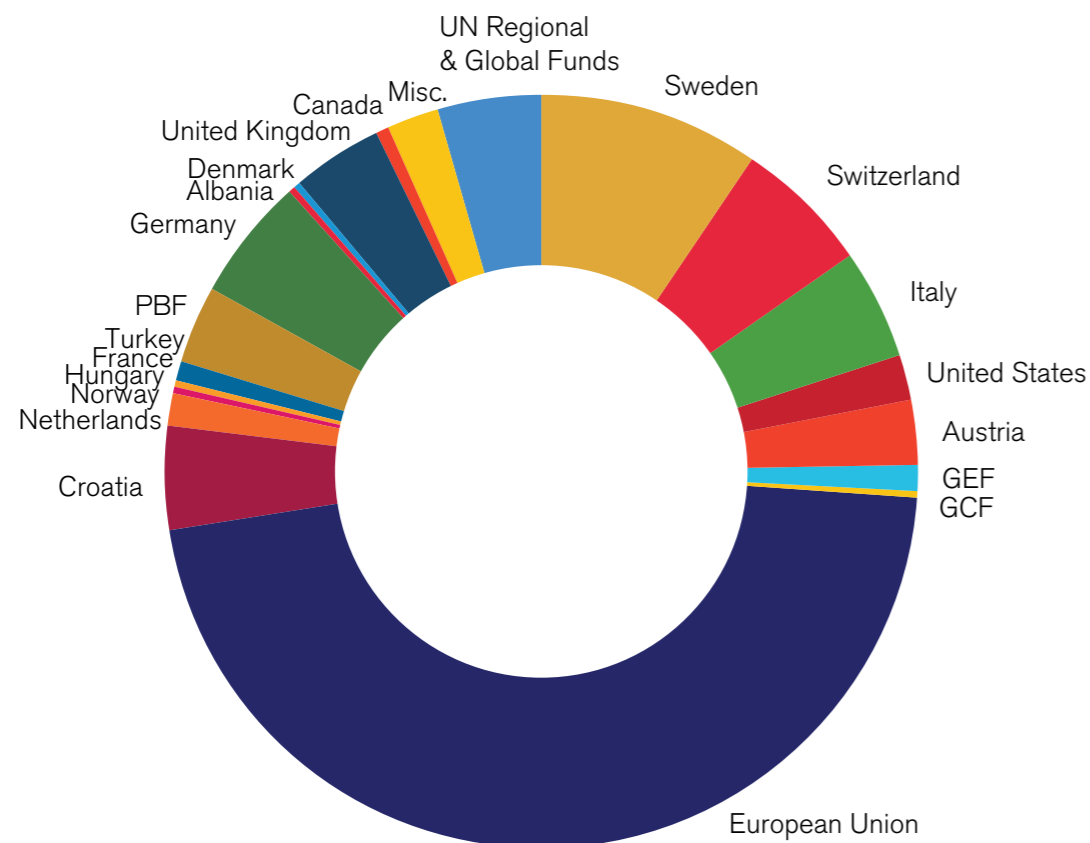
The non-core budget in 2021 consisted of the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund** contributions (**Figure 2**) as well as bilateral contributions mobilized through agree-

ments with individual UN agencies (**Figure 3**) at the country level and regionally and globally.<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 2.** SDG Acceleration Fund (USD), 2007–2021



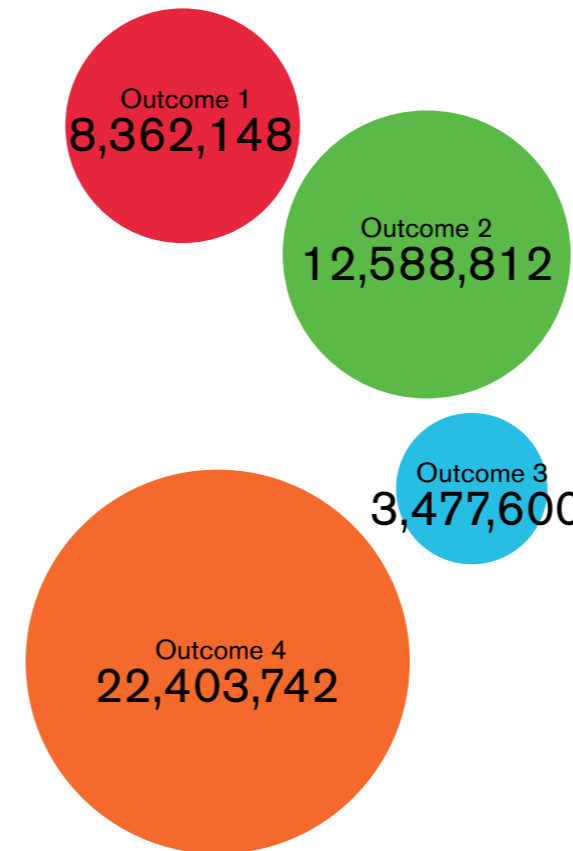
**Figure 3.** Partners' Contributions Delivery by Funding Source (USD), 2021



29. Partners contributions implemented in 2021 consisted of new resources raised in 2021 or earlier and carried over for implementation in 2021.

At the Outcome level (**Figure 4**), Outcome 4—Environment and Climate Change Outcome implemented the highest budget, earthquake reconstruction budget, followed by Outcome 2—Social Cohesion, Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law, and Outcome 3—Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture.

**Figure 4.** Outcome delivery (USD million), 2021

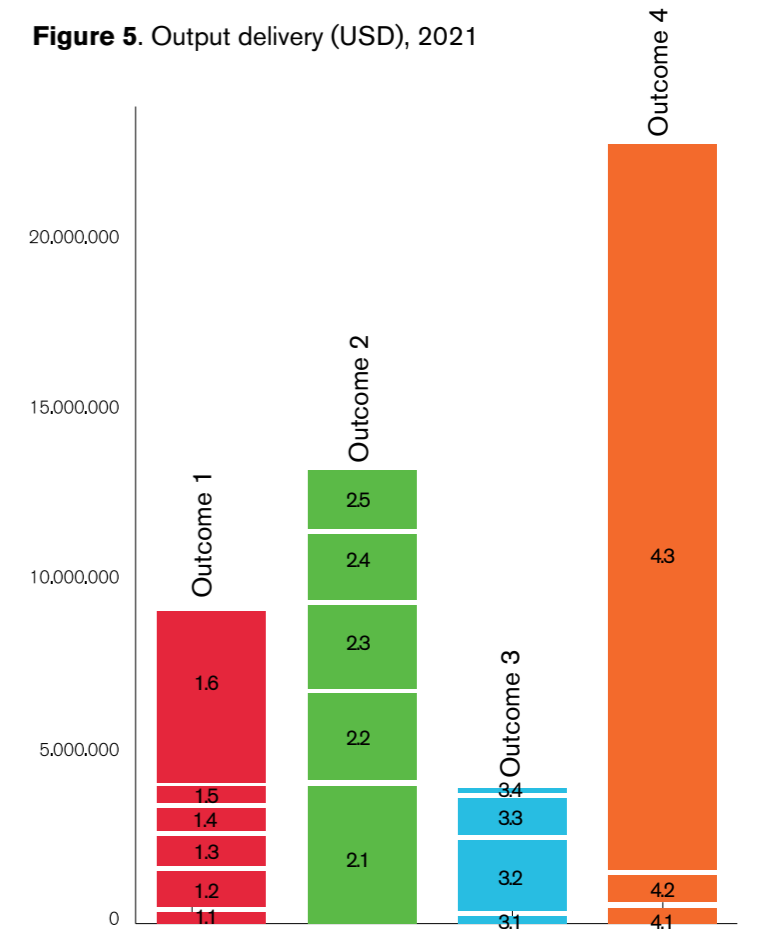


In 2021, the increased coordination and joint collaboration among UN agencies resulted in successful starting of the implementation of three new joint projects listed below as well as preparation of two new joint programmes to support migration and regional youth issues expected to start implementation in 2023.

- A UN Women–UNFPA project 2021–2023 focused on implementation of the gender equality *acquis*, financed by the EU.

At the output level (**Figure 5**), delivery was the highest in outputs 4.3 Earthquake Response, 1.6 Migration and Asylum, and 2.1 Health, in line with the swift and flexible UN response to the country needs to manage mixed movement flows and address recovery due to earthquake and Covid-19 pandemic.

**Figure 5.** Output delivery (USD), 2021



- A UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women project 2021–2025 focused to Leave No One Behind (Phase II), supporting social inclusion and protection needs and priorities of the country, financed by the government of Switzerland.

- A UNDP, ILO, FAO and UNIDO project 2021–2022 focused on Business Partnerships and Solutions for SDGs, financed by Sweden.

## CHAPTER 3

# UNCT key focus for next year

Looking back over the last year of implementation of the PoCSD 2017–2021, as we confronted many challenges—Covid19, earthquake response, Parliamentary elections, etc.—UNCT Albania ensured the maintenance of the drive towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030. Our accomplishments at the end of the PoCSD 2017–2021 programme cycle are the results of the priorities we set together with the government of Albania and the reforms we embarked upon, with a strengthened focus on inclusion and tackling of inequalities, to reach those left behind.

### Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda

UNCT will continue to support the government in meeting the country's international obligations under the UN human rights mechanisms, promote gender equality and advocate on the commitment to LNOB, and implement the action plans of Scorecards on Gender, Disability Inclusion and Youth, placing gender equality and human rights at the centre of its work. Reflecting upon our achievements of the past five years, and on how UNCT Albania prepared the new programme of cooperation, UNSDCF 2022–2026, which features sharpened priorities and improved UN positioning to accelerate Albania's achievement of the 2030 Agenda, next year, UNCT will implement the first year of the UNSDCF in close cooperation with government (central and local level) and partners. Focus will be placed on human capital development, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion, establishing innovative and integrated policy solutions to accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive economic development, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy, ensuring a more transparent, accountable and gender responsive governance, enabling people to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhancing rule of law and access to justice in line with Albania's human rights commitments, strengthening equality and non-discrimination, promoting women's empowerment and human rights, and reducing violence against women and children. The details of how the above will be achieved are included in the JWPs 2022–2023, prepared in November and December 2021, to be endorsed in January 2022 by the implementing line ministries and contributing UN agencies and reported to UN INFO. To this end, LNOB analysis and the human rights-based approaches will be integrated into all workstreams with a view to reaching first those furthest behind. Implementation progress for the year will be described in the Annual Progress Report and Annual Review, published on the UN Albania website, shared with all partners, and widely communicated on UN Albania social media channels.

### SDG implementation

Key priorities will include supporting government for finalisation of the new NSDI 2022–2030 with SDGs integrated into the document, preparing an SDG report 2019–2021 and deepening the localising SDGs and decentralisation process. MoFE will be supported for development of a National Investment Framework on SDGs, enabled with funding from the Joint SDG Fund. Work will continue with civil society, academia and Parliament to strengthen their engagement in SDGs and build capacities of INSTAT and line ministries on M&E to improve data availability and quality in the country. Precedence will be given to the national Census preparations. Nationwide awareness raising will continue, along with partnership building to deepen efforts, including through engagement with the private sector and the mobilisation of contributions to the SDG Acceleration Fund. Engagement with the private sector around SDGs will be further sought, jointly with development partners, namely the government of Sweden, as an opportunity to advance policy issues such as the transition towards a green economy, improved waste management, reduction of food waste and the emergence of a circular economy.

### Covid-19 and earthquake response

UNCT Albania will continue implementing recovery support actions, focusing on the most vulnerable groups and people who risk being left behind, while calling for greater support to mobilise financing, through partnerships, and other means of implementation.

### Business innovation

The Operations Management Team (OMT) will continue implementing initiatives to harmonise business practices and establish common services. The UNCT will update and expand its Business Operations Strategy to deliver on UNSDCF results. The OMT will explore new opportunities for high-impact common services as part of BOS 2.0 and secure expertise and resources to achieve greater cost-savings and efficiencies through economies of scale, collective bargaining with LTAs and enhanced M&E of common back-office services. The OMT will also engage UN agencies to consider a mutual recognition approach for local recruitment.

### Strategic financing and partnerships

Accompanying the new UNSDCF, a Resource Mobilisation Strategy and a Communication Strategy will be prepared in the first half 2022 to guide and enhance the efforts of UN in Albania in partnership building and resource mobilisation towards achieving sustainable results in the country over the next five years. The strategy will promote cost-sharing and stronger partnerships with the private sector, including individual donors and corporate partners. New sources of finance will be identified, including options for blended finance, and influencing the policy environment to facilitate greater resource flows for SDG-related country priorities. The SDG Acceleration Fund will continue to support integrated and coherent resource mobilisation and allocation for innovative and joint cooperation efforts focused on SDG achievement and EU accession.

The interconnected and complex nature of the UNSDCF priorities requires strengthened collaboration with IFIs, including multi-lateral and regional development banks. Enhanced collaboration will support the addressing of the multi-dimensional challenge of responding to macro-economic, social and environmental development needs in a more integrated and effective manner. To reflect this, IFIs are identified as key cooperation partners under each Strategic Priority of the Cooperation Framework 2022–2026.

### Sub-regional cooperation

Under the United Nations Western Balkans Action Plan,<sup>30</sup> the UN system will support the country and regional and sub-regional initiatives that promote dialogue, trust building and reconciliation. These are essential to the EU accession process, reflected in the Regional Cooperation Council and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. Under priorities 1 and 3 of UNSDCF 2022–2026, efforts will involve stronger engagement with civil society groups at the local level, especially those led by and serving women and young people. These will promote initiatives that advance trust-building dialogue and social cohesion. Under all outcomes, efforts to align policies and frameworks with international standards and strengthen implementation and monitoring will contribute to strengthening the rule of law and trust in government services.

Following up with the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, Albania government represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, has been actively engaged in regional and sub-regional dialogues to explore potential coalitions. Through the support of SFS-MED Platform (Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean), Albanian food systems dialogues at both national and local levels will be further implemented in 2022, and a pilot project to support sustainable food value chain development will be implemented in the selected area within 2023. Considering the positive experience of the UN PBF support for RYCO under the project 'Supporting the Western Balkans collective leadership on reconciliation: building momentum and sustainability for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, RYCO', a new project 'Strengthening the role of youth in promoting increased mutual understanding, constructive narrative, respect for diversity, and trust in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo'<sup>31</sup> will start implementation in 2022.

30. UN systemwide commitment to strengthening support for trust-building and dialogue in the region, as agreed by UN leadership in 2019.

31. All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

# Acronyms

ACA Albanian Customs Administration  
 ACCU Air Cargo Control Unit  
 ACIF Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance  
 ADISA Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania  
 ADA Austrian Development Agency  
 AFMIS Albanian Finance Management Information System  
 AFPRS Albanian Fire Protection and Rescue Service  
 AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome  
 AKEP Electronic and Postal Communication Authority  
 ALL Albanian Lek  
 AMA Audio-visual Media Authority  
 ASCAP Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar (Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education)  
 ASLG Agency for Support to Local Government  
 ASPA Albanian School of Public Administration  
 ASYCUDA Automated System for Customs Data  
 AVRR Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration  
 AU Administrative Unit  
 BMP Border and Migration Police  
 BSEC Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation  
 BUR Biennial Update Report  
 CBD Convention on Biological Diversity  
 CCA Common Country Analysis  
 CCP Container Control Programme  
 CCPP Country Common Premises Plan  
 CCCVE Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism  
 CCP Container Control Programme  
 CDI Culture Development Indicator  
 CEB Council of Europe Development Bank  
 CEC Central Elections Commission  
 CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
 CEFTA Central European Free Trade Agreement  
 COVAX Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access  
 CPD Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination  
 CPU Child Protection Unit  
 CRM Coordinated Referral Mechanism  
 CSDA Consolidation of Service Delivery in Albania  
 CSE Comprehensive Sexuality Education  
 CSO Civil Society Organisation  
 DCM Decision of the Council of Ministers  
 DCO Development Coordination Office of the United Nations  
 DfAFC Directorate for Asylum, Foreigners and Citizenship  
 DoFLA Directorate of Free Legal Aid  
 DRM Disaster Risk Management  
 DRR Disaster Risk Reduction  
 DV Domestic Violence  
 EASO European Asylum Support Office  
 EECA Eastern Europe and Central Asia  
 EQF European Qualifications Framework  
 ERR Economic Recovery and Resilience

ESD Empowerment Through Self Defence  
 EU European Union  
 EVAC Ending Violence against Children  
 EVAWIA Elimination of Violence Against Women in Albania  
 FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations  
 FLA Free Legal Aid  
 GB–DV Gender-Based and Domestic Violence  
 GBV Gender-Based Violence  
 GCF Green Climate Fund  
 GDP Gross Domestic Product  
 GDoP General Department of Police  
 GDFPRS General Directorate of Fire Protection and Rescue Service  
 GE Gender Equality  
 GEF Global Environment Fund  
 GEWE Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment  
 GoA Government of Albania  
 GRB Gender-Responsive Budgeting  
 GREVIO Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence  
 HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus  
 HPV Human Papillomavirus  
 HR Human Rights  
 HRDDP Human Rights Due Diligence Policy  
 IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency  
 ICCS International Classification of Crime Statistics  
 ICT Information and Communications Technology  
 IFI International Finance Institution  
 IHP International Hydrological Programme  
 ILO International Labour Organisation  
 ILS International Labour Standards  
 IMSPSD Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery  
 INFF Integrated National Financing Framework  
 INSTAT National Institute of Statistics  
 IOM International Organisation for Migration  
 IPA Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance  
 IPC Infection Prevention and Control  
 IPH Institute of Public Health  
 IPMG Integrated Policy Management Group  
 IRH Istanbul Regional Hub  
 ISO International Organization for Standardization  
 ITU International Telecommunication Union  
 JCPC Juvenile Criminality Prevention Centre  
 JP Joint Programme  
 JWP Joint Work Plan  
 LCDV Local Coordinators of Domestic Violence  
 LGBTQI Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer and Intersex  
 LGU Local Government Unit  
 LNB Leave No One Behind  
 LTA Long-term Agreement  
 M&E Monitoring and Evaluation  
 MAB Man and the Biosphere  
 MCH Maternal and Child Health  
 MHPSS Mental Health and Psycho-social Support

MIL Media and Information Literacy  
 MISP Minimum Initial Service Package  
 MoARD Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development  
 MoC Ministry of Culture  
 MoD Ministry of Defence  
 MoES Ministry of Education and Sports  
 MoFE Ministry of Finance and Economy  
 MoHSP Ministry of Health and Social Protection  
 MoJ Ministry of Justice  
 MoTE Ministry of Tourism and Environment  
 MoU Memorandum of Understanding  
 MP Member of Parliament  
 MTBP Medium-Term Budget Programme  
 NAECCS National Authority on Electronic Certification and Cybersecurity  
 NAES National Agency for Employment and Skills  
 NAPIRE National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians  
 NAVETQ National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification  
 NCD Non-Communicable Disease  
 NCHA National Chamber of Advocacy of Albania  
 NDC National Determined Contribution  
 NGO Non-Governmental Organisation  
 NHRIs national human rights institutions  
 NITAG National Immunization Technical Advisory Group  
 NSDI National Strategy for Development and Integration  
 NSGE National Strategy on Gender Equality  
 NSM National Strategy on Migration  
 OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
 OHCHR Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
 OMT Operations Management Team  
 ONAC Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator  
 OSCE Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
 OSS One-Stop Shop  
 OSSIS One-Stop Shop Information System  
 PA People's Advocate  
 PBF Peacebuilding Fund  
 PCU Port Control Unit  
 PDNA Post-Disaster Needs Assessment  
 PMO Prime Minister's Office  
 PoCSD Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development  
 PO Police Officer  
 PoE Point of Entry  
 PPE Personal Protective Equipment  
 PSEA Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse  
 PVoT Potential Victims of Trafficking  
 PwD Persons with Disability  
 QAAPE Quality Assurance Agency for Pre-University Education  
 QAI Quality Assurance Initiative  
 RC Resident Coordinator  
 RCA Reception Centre for Asylum  
 R&E Roma and Egyptian  
 REA Regional Economic Area  
 REGM Regional Expert Group Meetings  
 RES Renewable Energy Sources  
 REVALB Recording Violence in Albania  
 RH Reproductive Health  
 RSD Refugee Status Determination  
 RSH Reproductive and Sexual Health  
 RTSH Radio Televizioni Shqiptar  
 RYCO Regional Youth Cooperation Office  
 SACRP State Agency for Child Rights and Protection  
 SALW Small Arms and Light Weapons

SDG Sustainable Development Goal  
 SDP Statelessness Determination Procedure  
 SEECF South East European Cooperation Process  
 SHS Social Housing Strategy  
 SIDA Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency  
 SIIG Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group  
 SIPD Social Inclusion Policy Document  
 SIT Special Investigative Techniques  
 SLM Sustainable Land Management  
 SLSSI State Labour and Social Services Inspectorate  
 SOP Standard Operating Procedure  
 SRH Sexual and Reproductive Health  
 SRHR Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights  
 SSS State Social Service  
 STEC Strategic Trade and Export Control  
 STEM Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths  
 SWAP Systemwide Action Plan  
 TB Tuberculosis  
 TIA Tirana International Airport  
 TiG Trust in Government  
 TIP Trafficking in Persons  
 TLAS Tirana Legal Aid Society  
 ToT Training of Trainers  
 UASC Unaccompanied and Separated Children  
 UK United Kingdom  
 UN United Nations  
 UNCT United Nations Country Team  
 UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
 UNDP United Nations Development Programme  
 UNDRR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction  
 UNECE United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
 UNEP United Nations Environment Programme  
 UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation  
 UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
 UNFPA United Nations Population Fund  
 UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
 UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund  
 UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organisation  
 UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
 UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services  
 UNRC United Nations Resident Coordinator  
 UNSDCF United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework  
 UNTOC United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime  
 UNV United Nations Volunteers  
 UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women  
 UNYAG UN Albania Youth Advisory Group  
 UPR Universal Periodic Review  
 USAID US Agency for International Development  
 USAR Urban Search and Rescue  
 USD United States Dollar  
 USI Universal Salt Iodisation  
 VAT Value Added Tax  
 VAW Violence Against Women  
 VAWG Violence Against Women and Girls  
 VET Vocational and Education Training  
 VoT Victims of Trafficking  
 WBF Western Balkans Fund  
 WB6 Western Balkans Six (countries)  
 WCO World Customs Organisation  
 WH World Heritage  
 WHO World Health Organisation





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