



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

2022 – 2026



UNITED NATIONS
ALBANIA



Cover

The cover picture shows the carpet tile mosaic of Skanderbeg Square; it consists of 129,600 tiles of natural stone sourced from locations where Albanians live. The square is a public space at the core of Albania's capital Tirana and a symbol for the whole country. A major redesign was completed in 2018 to remove cars and create a multi-use public open space edged with densely planted 'urban forest'. The square rises at its centre to symbolize a democratic future by bringing people level with the surrounding communist architecture. / ©Gent Shkullaku - Getty Images



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June 2021

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DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

The Government of Albania and the United Nations (UN) are committed to working together to achieve country priorities, expressed by:

- » The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI), with nationalized goals and targets for selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets;
- » Future accession to the European Union, as expressed in the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022 and based upon the European Commission Opinion and Analytical Report;
- » The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023.
- » The human rights commitments of Albania and other agreed international and regional development goals and treaty obligations.

The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, herewith referred to as the Cooperation Framework, builds on the successes of our past cooperation and it represents a joint commitment to work in close partnership for results as defined in this document that will help all people in Albania to a more prosperous and sustainable economy and a more fair and liveable society.

In signing hereafter, the cooperating partners endorse this Cooperation Framework and underscore their joint commitments toward the achievement of its results.

Government of Albania



Mr. Erion Braçe
Deputy Prime Minister

United Nations Country Team



Ms. Fiona McCluney
Resident Coordinator

SIGNATURES

In witness thereof, the undersigned¹, being duly authorized, have signed this Government of Albania and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2022-2026 on <day, month> 2021 in Tirana, underscoring their joint commitment to its priorities and cooperation results.

Mr. Raimund Jehle
FAO Representative in Albania
(FAO)

Ms. Eve-Külli KALA
Director, Division for Europe,
Department of Technical
Cooperation
(IAEA)

Mr. Markus Pilgrim
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Mr. Roberto de Bernardi
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1. UN system agencies in alphabetical order

Mr. Jacek Cukrowski
Chief, Regional Coordination
Division for Europe
and Central Asia
(UNIDO)

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin
Deputy Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe
(UNECE)

Mr. Bruno Pozzi
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for Europe
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**Ms. Ana Luiza
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Director of Regional Bureau for
Science and Culture in Europe
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Mr. Moin Karim
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Ms. Rimma Sabayeva
Regional Manager
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Mr. Michele Ribotta
Representative
(UN WOMEN)

Mr. Gerald Rockenschaub
Representative and
Head of Country Office
(WHO)

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

CPD	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
DDGG	Department for Development and Good Governance
GoA	Government of Albania
INSTAT	National Institute of Statistics
IPMG	Integrated Planning and Management Groups
UCCIAL	Union of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Albania
ADISA	Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania
ASCAP	Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education
IPH	Institute of Public Health
KKT	National Territorial Council
SSS	State Social Services
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
CCCVE	Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism
CCP	Container Control Programme
CEC	Central Elections Commission
NAPA	National Agency for Protected Areas
NAVETQ	National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NES	National Employment Service
NLC	National Labour Council
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MoTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment
MoIE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
MoESY	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MoI	Ministry of Interior
Moj	Ministry of Justice
MoSR	Minister of State for Reconstruction
MoSD	Minister of State for Diaspora
MoSEP	Minister of State for Entrepreneurship Protection
MoSPR	Minister of State for Parliament Relations

UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AGENCIES

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IOM	International Organization for Migration
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

OTHER

ALMM	Active labour market measures
CCA	UN system Common Country Analysis
Cooperation Framework	Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
CO₂	Carbon dioxide (Greenhouse gas)
CSOs	Civil society organization
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECD/ECE	Early childhood development/ education
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GhG	Greenhouse Gases
HDI	Human Development Index
JEC	Joint Executive Committee for the Cooperation Framework
JWP	Joint work plan (<i>for outcomes in Cooperation Framework</i>)
M&E	Monitoring & evaluation
IHR	International Health Regulations
IFI	International Financial Institution(s)
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MTEF	Medium-term expenditure framework
NCD	Non-communicable disease
OG	Cooperation Framework Outcome Results Groups
RBM	Results Based Management
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs/SMAEs	Small and medium enterprises/ agro-enterprises
SOE	State-owned enterprise
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UPR	Universal periodic review
VR	Voluntary review of progress toward the SDGs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework between the Government of Albania (GoA) and the United Nations (UN) system is anchored by country priorities¹: accession to the European Union (EU), the 2030 agenda and Albania's nationalized SDG targets, with a focus on the quality of health and education, good governance and rule of law, public service provision, and effective response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are three strategic priorities for cooperation and four expected outcomes. Cooperation Framework strategic priorities and outcomes are informed by two important lenses. The first is the **primacy of EU accession** as the main vision for the country. Consultations affirm that the priorities, cooperation results and strategies will support Albania to meet key benchmarks for accession and address major gaps in legal frameworks, policies and implementation. The second is **vulnerability and exclusion**. The focus of Government effort and investment for EU accession *may* have unintended consequences for the domestic social agenda: health care, education and social welfare policy and programmes, including employment and social care. Strategic priorities and results have been chosen to: *reduce the risk* that these become *lower* public policy priorities, address

1. (1) The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI), with nationalized SDG goals and targets; (2) The National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022; (3) The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023; and (4) The human rights commitments of Albania and other agreed international and regional development goals and treaty obligations

Cooperation Framework Strategic Priorities



STRATEGIC PRIORITY A.

Human capital development and social inclusion.

Outcome A

By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY B.

Sustainable, resilient and green economic growth and resource management.

Outcome B

By 2026 innovative and integrated policy solutions accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive economic development, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY C.

Effective, people-centred governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality.

Outcome C1

By 2026, governance is more transparent and accountable, enabling people to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhanced rule of law and access to justice in line with Albania's human rights commitments.

Outcome C2

By 2026, gender responsive governance strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women's empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children.



GENDER
EQUALITY



key drivers of vulnerability and exclusion², and to take advantage of the documented multiplier effects of increased spending on health and social services.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the priorities and outcomes represent a nexus of inter-connected and transformational changes. These aim for a more inclusive society and socio-economic conditions that will accelerate **convergence with the EU** in terms of incomes and quality of life, especially for people at risk of exclusion³. An overarching theme of cooperation is **resilience**: This encompasses more effective, transparent governance and rule of law, increased and more equitable investment in people's health and well-being, decent employment, and the foundations of a shift toward green economy, low emission development, and sustainable use of natural resources. The **sustainability** of the cooperation results will be addressed through capacity development and enhanced cross-sector collaboration. This includes more regular and substantive engagement between Cooperation Framework outcome results groups and the Integrated Planning and Management Groups (IPMG)⁴ as essential mechanisms for inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination.

Mechanisms to deliver Cooperation Framework results include:

- A **Joint Executive Committee (JEC)** co-chaired by the Government and UN Resident Coordinator that provides strategic guidance and direction for overall implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

- **Outcome Groups (OG)** comprising programme and technical staff will work to ensure effective, coordinated implementation, monitoring, and reporting about the achievement Cooperation Framework outcomes.
- **Joint Work Plans (JWP)** for each outcome showing detailed outputs, indicators, baselines, targets, means of verification, and assumptions and risks, including a common budget framework.
- **Annual reviews** to enable the partners to adapt Cooperation Framework results and strategy and make course corrections that reflect changes in socio-economic conditions, and new, emerging priorities.
- An **annual One UN Country results report** describing actual outputs delivered against those in the JWP and *progress towards* the CF outcomes and to country priorities and related SDG targets.

The Government and UN system will develop a financing strategy to address any funding gaps for Cooperation Framework outcomes and wider SDG achievement. 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 Government and the UN system have **mutual accountability** for the achievement of planned Cooperation Framework results. The Cooperation

2. (1) Unemployment, contributing to driving out-migration; (2) Fiscal choices have led to chronic under-investment in people with negative effects on health, education, and social protection outcomes, especially for groups at risk of exclusion; (3) Weaknesses in governance and rule of law that permit corruption and elite capture and enable discrimination (women and girls and Roma, in particular, are affected); (4) Uneven institutional quality and implementation gaps that have contributed to disparities in access to and quality of services; (5) Degradation of natural resources, disasters, and pandemics reduce resilience and threaten livelihoods and competitiveness. COVID-19 and related response measures, if poorly targeted and delivered, risk exacerbating poverty and vulnerability.

3. Some groups of women, children from low-income and single parent households, Roma and Egyptian populations, persons with disabilities including children, isolated rural communities, people aged over 60 years, LGBTQI persons, and Refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and migrants. Amongst women: Older women, women in rural areas, women heads of households, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, women in detention, women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, and refugee and asylum-seeking women

4. IPMG Secretariats were established by GoA to strengthen implementation of sector programmes, accompanied by EU direct budget support. The IPMGs ensure cross-sector coordination and communication within government departments as well as with other development partners.

Framework joins the support of the UN system into a more coherent and effective whole. Based upon the **comparative advantages** of the UN system, it provides a platform for coordinated policy advice and advocacy and stronger delivery of results. Other development actors are critical for the success of this Cooperation Framework. Given its comprehensive focus on people at risk of exclusion, Cooperation Framework results

will be achieved in broad partnership with civil society and community groups.

The transformational changes from cooperation are expected to contribute toward sustainable economic growth and the creation of decent jobs, more effective and accountable public institutions and service delivery, and stronger social inclusion and resilience.



CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 PURPOSE OF THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

This Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework between the Government of Albania (GoA) and the United Nations (UN) system describes three strategic priorities and four cooperation outcomes and how they will contribute to country strategic priorities:

- The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI)⁵ with nationalized goals and targets for selected SDGs and targets⁶;
- Future accession to the European Union, as expressed in the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022⁷ and based upon the European Commission Opinion and Analytical Report⁸;
- The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023⁹.
- The human rights commitments of Albania and other agreed international and regional development goals and treaty obligations¹⁰.

The Government of Albania and the UN system have *mutual accountability* for the achievement of planned cooperation results. Based upon the *comparative advantages* of the UN system, it provides a platform for coordinated policy advice and advocacy and stronger delivery of results. These are expected to contribute toward Albania's efforts to accede to the European Union with sustainable economic growth and the creation of decent jobs, more effective governance and service delivery, and stronger social inclusion and resilience.

Other development actors are critical for the success of this Cooperation Framework. Given

its comprehensive focus on **people at risk of exclusion**, it will ensure they are not left behind. Cooperation Framework results will be achieved in broader partnership with civil society groups, NGOs, community groups, the human rights institutions, academia, media, the private sector, and international partners. This will increase participation of these stakeholders and groups in decision-making, leading to more informed and sustainable policies, and more effective and accountable public institutions.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK¹¹

The Cooperation Framework contains five parts. Following this introduction:

- Part 2 describes the context for sustainable development and challenges that will influence the achievement of country priorities including for EU accession and the SDGs,
- Part 3 describes the Cooperation Framework priorities and outcomes and how these will contribute to country priorities,
- Part 4 contains the implementation plan, describing how Cooperation Framework partners will work together to achieve the outcomes, including mechanisms and processes for steering, review, and adjustment,
- Part 5 outlines the arrangements for monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- The results framework is provided in Annex A. The MEL plan is in Annex B. A summary of major SDG-related gaps and challenges is in Annex C. Annex D summarises major links between CF outcomes and the human rights commitments of Albania. Annex E offers the standard legal annex for cooperation.

5. Republic of Albania, National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II), 2015-2020.

6. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>, <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

7. Republic of Albania, National Plan for European Integration 2020–2022, Decision of Council of Ministers No 151, 19.02.2020.

8. (1) European Commission (EC), Commission Staff Working Document Albania 2020 Report, 6.10.2020; (2) European Commission, Commission Implementing Decision of 17.2.2020 adopting an Annual Action Programme for Albania, 2020, Brussels, 17.2.2020.

9. Republic of Albania, Economic Reform Programme, 2021-2023. Council of Ministers, 31 January 2021.

10. In line with accepted recommendations of the Albania Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms. Ratified Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) by Albania at InforRMEA

11. This Cooperation Framework is based upon: UNSDG, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, [Internal guidance](#), June 2019.

CHAPTER 2. PROGRESS TOWARD THE 2030 AGENDA



2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Albania is an upper middle-income country of about 2.9 million people with high human development¹². The country is a member of NATO and on a path toward accession with the European Union (EU). Over the past decade Albania's economy grew by over 2% per year, led by the services sector, especially tourism, agriculture, industry and construction. Poverty is high at over 33%, with a third of the population 'at-risk' of poverty¹³.

The economy is stable but performs below potential with low productivity, high unemployment, high inactivity and few incentives for digital technology adoption and innovation¹⁴. Growth, driven by consumption and remittances, is too low to converge with EU living standards, achieve the SDGs. Expansion of the tax base and reducing the informal economy are major challenges. This is due to weak state institutions, uneven rule of law and a deficient legal framework for business, corruption, and political instability.

There has been progress to refocus health services at the primary level, introduce digital health services, and improve transparency and accountability. However, some aspects of health

system performance lag behind the EU with low levels of health financing¹⁵, under-funding of primary health care (PHC), high out-of-pocket payments by households, limited coverage of services, fragmented health information systems and out-migration of skilled health providers¹⁶. The country is ageing quickly with low birth rates and high out-migration contributing to negative population growth¹⁷. These are having multiple major effects upon the economy, social care, and people's trust in the future. Out-migration and mismatch between education and market needs create labour force challenges that threaten the sustainability of retirement and of disability pensions and the health insurance system.

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to reduce real GDP by 7.5% in 2020 with a projected return to growth of 6% in 2021¹⁸. Emergency fiscal responses will increase the deficit to 5.4 of GDP in 2020, pushing government debt to around 76% of GDP¹⁹. The Government, through the Health Insurance Fund, has moved swiftly to address health risks and ensure access to services²⁰. Broader fiscal responses, amounting to an estimated, additional 1.2% of GDP, include extra spending on health equipment and support for front-line health workers, a doubling of unemployment benefits and social assistance payments, and income and wage supports for

12. UNDP, 2020, Human Development Report 2019, Albania. In 2019, Albania ranked 69 of 189 countries and territories, with a [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) of 0.791, putting the country in the high category. When discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.705, a loss of 11% due to inequality in the HDI variables, similar to the average for countries in Europe and Central Asia. The gender inequality index (GII) value was 0.234 in 2018, ranking it 51 out of 162 countries. This reflects impressive gains in life expectancy, education, and parliamentary representation. Lagging indicators are labour force participation and maternal mortality.

13. UN, Common Country Analysis (CCA), 2020 (draft) 1.5; UNICEF Albania, Background papers on deprivations facing children, 2020; World Bank, [Poverty headcount ratio at \\$5.50 a day](#) (2017, 2011 PPP), October 2020; World Bank, Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) 2018, 17-18.

14. UN, CCA, *ibid.* 1.4.

15. CCA, *ibid.*, 27-28. In 2019, public spending on health was 2.9% of GDP, than in the EU.

16. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 72. Infant and child mortality have declined but progress has stagnated and neonatal deaths in total infant mortality remain high. Other concerns are deaths and injuries due to road traffic accidents, data on adolescent births access to modern contraception, access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis, and cervical screening and other aspects of gynecological health—particularly in rural and remote areas). Health Information Systems (HIS) remains fragmented due to lack of capacity and staff training.

17. Since 1990 there has been negative population growth, for example -0.91% per year from 2001 to 2011. Migration has become the most important determinant of population size rather than fertility or mortality. Migration also amplifies population ageing and persons over 65 account for 15% of the population, expected to increase to 21% by 2030, CCA, *ibid.*, 5, 9, 26.

18. International Monetary Fund, [World Economic Outlook, October 2020](#), Statistical Appendix Part A, 145.

19. World Bank, [The Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19](#), Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No.17, Spring 2020.

20. Major public health system directives include: (1) Participation in the GAVI alliance supported COVAX initiative for access COVID-19 vaccines, (2) restrictions on movements of patients within the health care system and electronic registration of in-person health appointments, (3) special measures to prevent transmission and reduce or reimburse drug treatment costs, especially for elderly and vulnerable groups, (4) facilitation of telemedicine and on-line communication for consultations between patients and healthcare staff.

SMEs²¹. The effects of the pandemic risk pushing many Albanian families, especially those with dependent children and older persons, back into poverty²².

Albania is party to the nine core international human rights treaties²³. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the main Council of Europe human rights instruments are ratified²⁴. The most recent [UPR process](#) for Albania was completed in 2019 (3rd cycle), with the country accepting 186 of 197 recommendations²⁵. However, full and consistent implementation of the existing legislation is insufficient which prevents the transformation needed to ensure enjoyment of human rights by all people. Gender discrimination, a gender divide in the labour market and occupational segregation, and gender-based violence remain critical concerns.

Albania's vision of sustainable development is for EU accession, sustainable economic growth and more inclusive prosperity. European integration is a main driver of reform in the country and a shared political and public priority²⁶. Accession negotiations are conditional upon reform of the electoral code, judicial and public administration reform, and greater

efforts to combat corruption and organized crime. *In this spirit*, the third National Strategy for Development and Integration (2021-2026) is under preparation with interim nationalized SDG indicators and targets²⁷. The UN system is supporting a COVID-19 socio-economic recovery plan (SERP)²⁸ in support of Government response and recovery efforts.

The global sustainable development report offers a comparable index for monitoring SDG achievement. For 2020, the index score of 70.8 suggests that Albania is over two-thirds of the way toward the achievement of the highest ranking country, with a rank of 68 out of 166 countries²⁹. Progress monitoring is impeded by critical data gaps for both the SDGs and EU accession agenda and concerning excluded groups³⁰.

While global indices offer broad measures of human well-being, they are insufficient to understand vulnerability and social exclusion. Major gaps continue to exist in health, education, social care and protection systems. The VNR report notes that *'inclusion is especially unsatisfactory for the poor, Roma and Egyptians, and persons with disabilities, posing significant challenges for achievement of the*

21. IMF, [Fiscal Monitor Database](#) of Country Fiscal Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Jan 2021. Albania 12, 22.

22. World Bank, Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020: [Reversals of Fortune](#). October 2020. For the Europe and Central Asian Regions, COVID-19 is projected to increase the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty (<\$1.90 per day, PPP) from a pre-COVID forecast of 4.8% to between 5.3 and 5.5%.

23. OHCHR, [Status of ratifications, Albania, October 2020](#). Albania has yet to ratify the OP-CRPD and OP-ICESCR

24. Including: The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and its protocols, and conventions on the prevention of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, on the action against trafficking in human beings, on the preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

25. CCA, *ibid.* 32.

26. An overwhelming majority of Albanians (>90%) are pro-EU. EU visa liberalization – granted in 2010 – is perhaps the most significant event felt by the everyday Albanian since the fall of communism. CCA, *ibid.*, 5.

27. (1) Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers, [Voluntary National Review](#) on Sustainable Development Goals, June 2018. 140 SDG targets (83%) were linked to specific pillars of the NSDI II; (2) INSTAT & UNICEF (2020) [Children, adolescents, youth-focused wellbeing indicators](#) Report. The GoA has identified 41 mid-term SDG indicators, out of 82 available, with mid-term targets

28. UN, UN Albania COVID-19 Socio-economic Recovery & Response Plan, July 2020.

29. Sachs, J. et al., The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19, Sustainable Development Report 2020, Cambridge. [Albania Country Profile](#), 2020. In terms of trends, twelve goals are indicated as on track or improving moderately. Two SDGs are identified as having major challenges: 2. Zero hunger; and 8. Decent work and economic growth. The UN Women [Gender Equality Brief for Albania](#) 2020 indicates how gender and other forms of discrimination intersect and affect women's status and human rights, undermining ongoing efforts towards sustainable development.

30. Albania produces regular data for 83 out of the 244 global indicators in the SDG monitoring framework (34%). Data for a further 56 indicators (23%) is partially available. The most critical SDGs, for which there are no indicators with targets established are Goals 10, 12, 13 and 16. SDGs with a low share of indicators with mid-term targets to the total number of indicators per SDG (10-15 percent) are Goals 1, 11, 14, 17. UN, Gap analysis–SDG global indicators in Albania, Working paper, 2020.



SDGs³¹. 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 (regions)³². Albania is a transit country for economic migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, the majority from Iraq and Syria. This flow of mixed migrants increased 10 times between 2017 and 2019 and this trend is expected to continue³³. Effective migration governance and border management is an important requirement for EU accession³⁴. A summary of major gaps and challenges, based on the SDGs is provided in Annex C.

2.2 VULNERABILITY AND EXCLUSION

Persons at greatest risk of exclusion and being left behind include: Some groups of women³⁵, children from low-income and single parent households, Roma and Egyptian populations, persons with disabilities including children, isolated rural communities, people aged over 60 years, LGBTQI persons, and refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and migrants.

There are five drivers of vulnerability and exclusion, amplified by the effects of the pandemic³⁶:

31. Government of Albania, VNR, *ibid.*, 21.

32. World Bank, SCD, *ibid.*, 19-20.

33. In 2019, arrivals of refugees and migrants in Albania increased by 85% from 2018, totaling 10,557; Asylum requests increased by 52%, totaling 6,677. Over a two-year period (2017-2019), annual flows increased ten-fold. The flow is transitory as nearly all new arrivals leave the country within days. Albania has a comprehensive policy on Migration Governance and legislation better aligned with the EU acquis. CCA, *ibid.*, 48.

34. CCA, *ibid.*, 47-50. including management of irregular out-migration, high flows of asylum seekers, unaccompanied migrant children, reintegration of returnees

35. Amongst women: Older women, women in rural areas, women heads of households, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, women in detention, women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, and refugee and asylum-seeking women

36. World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020: Reversals of Fortune*. October 2020. For the Europe and Central Asian Regions, COVID-19 is projected to increase the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty (<\$1.90 per day, PPP) from a pre-COVID forecast of 4.8% to between 5.3 and 5.5%.

- **Unemployment**, low wages and slow wage growth are major determinants of vulnerability. For example, three out of four unemployed young people are classified as long-term unemployed, with higher risks of skills erosion and permanent labour market exclusion, which can contribute to wider social exclusion. Limited economic opportunities are **driving out-migration**, and in turn worsening Albania's skills shortage.
- Fiscal choices have led to **chronic under-investment** in people with negative effects on health, education, and social protection outcomes. Public spending on health both as a share of GDP and as a share of total public spending is too low and creates dependence of the health system on out-of-pocket payments. Poor health status, low educational achievement, disability and poorly functioning health and social protection systems are major determinants of vulnerability and poverty³⁷, especially for groups at risk of exclusion. Increased investment is needed to drive and sustain more equitable growth. Regressive policies (e.g. VAT and excise taxes) have counteracted the poverty-reducing benefits of social spending, especially for the poorest.
- **Weaknesses in governance and rule of law**: Weak accountability systems play a central role in the country's political economy especially corruption, elite capture, and a culture of impunity that persists in key sectors (e.g., the judiciary). These also distort the design and implementation of policies and programmes that are associated with EU accession³⁸. Weak accountability enables direct and indirect discrimination against some groups of people, contributing to their systematic exclusion from services and opportunity. Women and girls, in particular are affected by limiting or discriminatory gender norms, stereotypes, and institutional biases.
- **Uneven institutional quality and implementation gaps**: While rich in policies, frameworks and action plans, the country lags in implementation, monitoring and learning, particularly at municipal level, where it is possible to reach groups of people at risk of exclusion more effectively, in collaboration with civil society. The public financial management (PFM) system is under-utilized fully and does not help to allocate and monitor expenditure for EU accession or SDG-related priorities. This systemic lack of tools and mechanisms for implementation demonstrate a significant 'know-do' gap at both central and local levels. These have worsened rural-urban disparities in access to and quality of basic social services and connectivity, driving both urban and out-migration. The consolidation of 12 Prefectures (regions) 61 Municipalities in 2015 helped to address fragmentation and accelerate fiscal decentralization, but planning capacities are limited and a culture of decision-making based on data and evidence has yet to emerge³⁹.
- **Degradation of natural resources, disasters, and pandemics** reduce resilience and threaten livelihoods and competitiveness. Climate change and a lack of coordination in water management are aggravating disaster risks, and could threaten Albania's development prospects. COVID-19 and related response measures, if poorly targeted and delivered, risk exacerbating poverty and vulnerability.

37. World Bank, SCooperation Framework, *ibid.*, 54. Of all poor, 70% live in households where the head has lower secondary education or less.

38. UN, MAPS-Albania, 47.

39. (1) UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 22. (2) EC, Commission Staff Working Document Albania 2020 Report, 6.10.2020. 14-17. The EC has highlighted major capacity gaps within policy-making institutions to develop and use strategic plans and monitoring frameworks with performance indicators and the systemic focus of managerial accountability on processes rather than results.

2.3 OPPORTUNITIES

Accelerated economic growth and shared prosperity will depend upon measures to raise productivity and competitiveness and to redistribute wealth through quality, inclusive services and effective social protection. Sustainable, innovative and more outward-looking growth can provide equal opportunities and create jobs, while addressing climate and environmental resilience. Greater accountability for human rights and the rule of law are essential to end discrimination and to ensure that drivers of vulnerability are addressed in policies and plans to promote economic growth and employment.

A Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support (MAPS) mission⁴⁰ to Albania identified three main accelerators for achievement of the SDGs:

1. Governance and the rule of law

Chapters 23 and 24 of the EU *acquis* provide the fundamental framework for advancing and monitoring progress in governance, human rights, and rule of law. Opportunities for progress include: Better coordination of anti-corruption initiatives, improved access to justice, particularly for vulnerable groups, stronger policy and regulatory frameworks for civil society engagement, enhanced performance of oversight bodies for human rights⁴¹. At municipal level, greater capacity to raise revenues and deliver services, with a stronger focus on public sector performance standards and public financial management, is critical.

2. Inclusive, green economy

Aligned with the [European Green Deal](#)⁴², Albania must transform the management of its energy, transport, agriculture, and ecosystem services and mitigate disaster risks. Increased, more sustainable economic growth, job creation, and increased fiscal revenues will depend on greater efficiency in water use. Integrated water resources management and disaster risk reduction (DRR) can help to balance hydropower needs with those of agriculture, tourism, flood protection, and fisheries, especially if precipitation levels decline and climate-related disasters increase, as projected. In agriculture structural barriers impede growth, especially for rural women⁴³. Modernization requires integration into regional regional value chains in areas of competitive advantage (*e.g., fruit, olives viniculture*).

3. Investment in social and human capital

Albania's human resources continue to be used sub-optimally, as is apparent in unemployment and labour force participation rates, especially for groups at risk of exclusion, and outmigration. Increased and more efficient spending in health and education, combined with targeted activation services would increase access to decent work. More effective social protection spending will better protect vulnerable groups.

40. UN, [MAPS-Albania](#), *ibid.* Conducted by the UN, in collaboration with GoA, the EU and the World Bank, April 2018.

41. Including: The Ombudsman, the People's Advocate, the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination, and the State Audit Institution.

42. This aims for EU countries to produce net zero CO₂-equivalent emissions and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

43. UN, [MAPS-Albania](#), *ibid.*, 58-64. Barriers: Fragmented land tenure, low levels of mechanisation and technology adoption, poor phytosanitary and veterinary controls, and inadequate transport infrastructure and digital connectivity. Each of these must focus significant investment for rural women who are excluded from owning farmland, decision-making and extension services.

CHAPTER 3. COOPERATION FOR COUNTRY PRIORITIES



3.1 FROM COUNTRY ANALYSIS TO PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION

The cooperation framework is based upon the anchored by country priorities: accession to the European Union (EU), the 2030 agenda and Albania's nationalized SDG targets, with a focus on quality of education, good governance and rule of law, public service provision, and effective response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Cooperation Framework strategic priorities and outcomes were informed by the Common Country Analysis (CCA)⁴⁴ and validated through reflection and consultations with country partners. Preparation began in July 2020 with UN system review to identify **major trends** in Albania for EU accession and achievement of the SDGs and critical **working assumptions** for cooperation until 2030. Development challenges identified in the CCA were reviewed and prioritized. Clusters of **top priorities** were identified to ensure that cooperation would apply a **cross-sector** and **multi-stakeholder approach** and to identify synergies and development solutions. These were sharpened by review with country partners about the **comparative advantages** of the UN system, including mandates, capacities, partnerships, and positioning for results. The priorities, outcomes, and strategies were reviewed and validated during consultations involving over 230 partners from civil society, the private sector, international organizations, and the Government. A Youth Advisory Board collected opinions and insights from a survey of over 400 young people. These elements form the *theory of change* for cooperation including expected outcomes and outputs, implementation strategies, major assumptions and risks, and

indicators of success.

Why these choices were made: Cooperation Framework strategic priorities and outcomes are informed by **two important lenses**. The first is the **primacy of EU accession** as the main vision for the country. Consultations affirm that the priorities, cooperation results and strategies will support Albania to meet key benchmarks for accession and address major gaps in legal frameworks, policies and implementation. The second is **vulnerability and exclusion**. The focus of Government effort and investment for EU accession *may* have unintended consequences for the domestic social agenda and core elements of public policy that are mainly national in scope: health care, education and social welfare policy and programmes, including employment and social care. Cooperation priorities and results have been chosen to reduce the risk that these become *lower* public policy priorities and to take advantage of the documented multiplier effects of increased spending on health and social services⁴⁵. These will help to address key drivers of vulnerability and exclusion: fiscal choices that have led to chronic under-investment in people, accountability gaps that prevent stronger action to reduce discrimination and exclusion from social services, and uneven public sector performance, especially at local levels.

The strategic priorities and outcomes for cooperation address the most pressing challenges for achievement of the SDGs, to respond to the drivers of vulnerability and exclusion and major gaps (see Annex C). Based upon progress reviews, the evolving programme context, the priorities of the GoA and other domestic and international partners, successive cooperation frameworks will aim to address the balance of major challenges.

44. UN, CCA, *ibid*. See a summary of major gaps and challenges, based on the SDGs in Annex C.

45. UN, MAPS-Albania, 67-69, 74. Citing Dyakova et. al., [Investment for Health and Well-being](#), WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2017. In EU Member States, increased government spending on health has been found to be associated with positive economic growth as well as having a fiscal multiplier effect, including in times of recession, with a two- to four-fold return on spending.

There are **three strategic priorities for cooperation and four expected outcomes**. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the priorities and outcomes represent a nexus of inter-connected sectoral

and thematic changes and call for wider partnerships to make tangible, measurable contributions toward Albania priorities and the SDGs.

Cooperation Framework Strategic Priorities



STRATEGIC PRIORITY A.
Human capital development and social inclusion.

Outcome A

By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY B.
Sustainable, resilient and green economic growth and resource management.

Outcome B

By 2026 innovative and integrated policy solutions accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive economic development, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY C.
Effective, people-centred governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality.

Outcome C1

By 2026, governance is more transparent and accountable, enabling people to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhanced rule of law and access to justice in line with Albania's human rights commitments.

Outcome C2

By 2026, gender responsive governance strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women's empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children.

3.2 THEORY OF CHANGE

To contribute to country priorities and SDG targets, cooperation aims to achieve a set of inter-connected and transformational changes that will strengthen Albania's institutions and reduce inequalities across multiple dimensions: gender, age, ethnic group, income group, and geography. These are expected to contribute to **a more inclusive society and socio-economic conditions that will accelerate convergence with the EU in terms of incomes and quality of life for all people and especially for those at risk of exclusion**. An overarching theme of cooperation is **resilience**: This encompasses more effective, transparent governance and rule of law, increased and more equitable investment in people's health and education, decent employment, and the foundations of a shift toward green economy, low emission development, and sustainable use of natural resources. There are **five main conditions** for this change:

First, the chronic under-investment in people, including in education, health, social protection and housing, limits the scope for more inclusive and equitable growth. Social care and protection systems offer insufficient protection from poverty shocks⁴⁶, may perpetuate inequalities, and do not fully reflect the integrated dimensions of poverty and deprivation: education, health care, social care, and housing. There has been progress to refocus health services at the primary level,

introduce digital health services, and improve transparency and accountability. However, some aspects of health system performance lag behind the EU with low levels of health financing⁴⁷, under-funding of primary health care (PHC), high out-of-pocket payments by households, limited coverage of health services, fragmented health information systems and out-migration of skilled health providers⁴⁸. Renewed efforts are needed to strengthen the quality of the education system, improve learning outcomes and expand ongoing digital education initiatives⁴⁹. Establishing a foundation for learning in the early years (pre-primary) is essential for success⁵⁰ and curriculum and teaching methods must provide young people with the knowledge and skills for success in a dynamic EU-oriented labour market, including critical thinking, analytical skills, and problem solving. **Cooperation will emphasise investment in people with a two-fold approach to strengthen the quality and coverage of essential health and social services and to offer policy options for more effective and efficient health and social sector spending**⁵¹. While increased, more effective investment in people depends upon economic diversification and increasing fiscal space, there is a virtuous loop: A healthy, fit population can better support the shift to a more diversified, knowledge-based economy with increased productivity. More effective health and social services and spending will also better protect excluded groups, including at-risk women and children, persons with disabilities, Roma

46. World Bank, [The Distributional impact of Albania's fiscal system](#), 2018. The benefits of social protection spending (e.g., pensions, Ndihma Ekonomike social assistance) are outweighed by the regressive impact of direct and indirect taxes, especially the value-added (VAT) and excise taxes

47. CCA, *ibid.*, 27-28. In 2019, public spending on health was 2.9% of GDP, than in the EU.

48. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 72. Infant and child mortality have declined but progress has stagnated and neonatal deaths in total infant mortality remain high. Other concerns are deaths and injuries due to road traffic accidents, data on adolescent births access to modern contraception, access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis, and cervical screening and other aspects of gynecological health—particularly in rural and remote areas). Health Information Systems (HIS) remains fragmented due to lack of capacity and staff training.

49. CCA, *ibid.*, 48. In 2018, students scored lower than OECD averages for reading, mathematics and science in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

50. CCA, *ibid.*, 49.

51. Increases in public spending and reductions in out-of-pocket payments may not guarantee increased financial protection. Health and social services policies must also increase the coverage (people and services) with a focus on vulnerable groups. In addition, the [use of line-item budgets as financing instrument are rigid and generate inefficiencies owing to the lack of incentives and provider payment methods](#).

and Egyptian⁵², and isolated rural communities. Investing in and ensuring access to quality health and social services can help to counteract vulnerability, polarization, and reduce pressures for outmigration.

Second, the economy has structural weaknesses that impede economic diversification, limit growth, and impede the fiscal space required to adequately invest in people's well-being.

Major structural weaknesses include: (a) a shortage skills suited to market demands, (b) weaknesses in trade and transport connectivity, (c) limited value-chain integration with the EU; (d) widespread informality, estimated to account for up to 50% of GDP⁵³, and (e) gaps in business and investment policies that discourage growth of small and medium enterprises and their access to finance and new productivity-enhancing technologies⁵⁴. Job shortages are driving more people, especially young and educated ones, to seek better opportunities and living conditions abroad. Outmigration and 'brain-drain' constitute a major loss of productivity and source of innovation and it jeopardizes the country's economic future. Women, young people, Roma and Egyptian people are more likely to be out of the labour force, unemployed, or in precarious and low-skilled employment. Most importantly the current model of growth is disconnected from the sustainable management of Albania's ecosystem resources⁵⁵.

More sustained and inclusive prosperity *will depend upon policy solutions for accelerated economic development that is risk-informed and that offer market and regulatory incentives to spur green economy development.* Economic policies and regulations, designed and implemented with public and private stakeholders, are needed to promote investment in targeted sectors including agriculture, fisheries, ICT and tourism in order

to reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and protect biodiversity. **Employment and skills** are essential to progress toward more sustainable consumption and production with a focus on MSME growth, increased productivity and competitiveness, and employment activation measures for women, young people and excluded groups. Labour market challenges call for digital skills programmes with a focus on women and the long-term unemployed. Special attention will be given to support employment of persons with disabilities, including employer incentives and quotas for larger firms and organizations. Combined with targeted activation services these have the potential to increase formal employment and productivity. In agriculture a coherent country-wide strategy is needed to invest in and enhance small-holder productivity, with particular focus on women. This will support them to identify market niches, and provide market incentives for the growth of small and medium-sized agro-enterprises (SMAEs) and export growth. UN system efforts will complement macro-fiscal reforms at national level led by the EU and World Bank.

Third, the degradation of water, air, forests, and agricultural land including impacts from climate change and biodiversity loss are putting sustainable economic growth and more equitable health and well-being at risk. Climate change is a critical threat and floods and heat waves are projected to become more frequent and extreme. Efforts are needed to *decouple* economic development from environmental degradation. Policy and implementation gaps impede the sustainable management of Albania vast natural wealth. Many strategies are gender-blind and hinder access to and management of assets such as land, forestry and pastures, technology and extension services. These problems stem from

52. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 74.

53. Informal employment accounts for 32% of total, non-agricultural employment in 2019. ILOSTAT October 2020. Albania's [informal economy](#) is estimated to account for up to 50% of GDP. EBRD, Albania Diagnostic, 2019.

54. UN, CCA, *ibid.* 1.3.

55. World Bank, SCD, *ibid.*, 21-23; UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 65.



Koman Lake, Albania - Sustainable management of the country's natural resources will depend upon policy and regulatory change

an incomplete legal and policy framework, yet to be aligned with the EU acquis, the slow pace of implementation of existing strategies and policies and a 'silo-ing' of environmental policy from other economic sectors. This situation carries the risk of slowing approximation with the EU acquis and undermining the ecosystems upon which future prosperity depends.

Sustainable management of the country's natural resources will depend upon policy and regulatory change and capacity development for climate change adaptation and mitigation, more efficient use of ecosystem resources, especially water, and effective disaster risk management and increased community readiness to respond to disasters and emergencies. Working across sectors, cooperation will strengthen policy frameworks and local capacities, including municipalities and civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage more fully in climate change adaptation and mitigation, efficient management of ecosystem resources, especially water, and DRR. These will contribute to a decrease in greenhouse gas

emissions and an increase in coping capacities and rural livelihoods, boosting a green and resilient economic recovery from the pandemic. UN system efforts will be synchronised with and complement implementation of EU legislation on water resource management, sewerage and waste, industrial pollution and hazardous chemicals and the use of environmental and strategic impacts assessments and energy sector reforms guided by the World Bank.

Instrumental to all the changes above, there is a critical need to improve overall government performance and the rule of law and to strengthen actions for equality and non-discrimination, promote women's empowerment and human rights, and reduce all forms of violence against women and children.

Fourth, governance is characterized by weak accountability systems that distort the design and implementation of policies and programmes to accelerate progress toward EU accession⁵⁶. The public finance management (PFM) system is under-utilized fully and does not

56. UN, MAPS-Albania, 47.

help to allocate and monitor expenditure for EU accession or SDG-related priorities and lacks tools and mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and learning. Policy-making processes are still overly centralized and civil society is marginal to policy-making and enhanced service delivery. Weak accountability enables direct and indirect *discrimination* against some groups, contributing to their systematic exclusion from services and opportunity. Women and girls, especially from excluded groups, face significant gaps and barriers to access some basic services and economic opportunity⁵⁷.

Democratic governance and the realization of human rights and gender equality depend upon stronger performance by governing institutions, especially at municipal level, and increased citizen and community participation to determine the policies and spending priorities that affect them. Cooperation will help to strengthen accountability systems and capacities, including in public administration, including public financial management and procurement, the judiciary and law enforcement bodies, and human rights institutions. Stronger accountability will deter direct and indirect *discrimination* and promote greater inclusion in public services. Concrete changes will include enhanced strategic planning and increased regulatory and oversight capacities at central level, capacity development at municipal level for effective and inclusive analysis, decision-making, budgeting and execution, and support at all levels to implement accepted recommendations from human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms.

More robust mechanisms for **civic participation** are essential for greater increase transparency and accountability. ‘Open-government’

mechanisms will be created and strengthened to maximize participation and cooperation between government and civil society, support dialogue, promote inclusion and build higher levels of trust in society and strengthen diaspora engagement. These create incentives for more effective and evidence-based decision-making and spending by governments, including for COVID-19 response and recovery plans. They also enable people, especially excluded groups to voice their concerns, claim their rights in legal processes and to seek remedies for violations. Enhanced civic participation is an essential component of more transparent and accountable governance and greater social cohesion. It will support the Government in its efforts to meet EU accession benchmarks for the ‘fundamentals first’ political criteria and within chapters 23 (Justice and fundamental rights) and 24 (Justice, freedom and security).

Fifth, while there have been positive changes to reduce domestic violence and strengthen women’s employment opportunities and political participation, **gender-based discrimination and social exclusion is still a reality for too many girls and women**⁵⁸. **Violence against women and children** is pervasive, exacerbated by patriarchal values and some traditional attitudes. This can be seen in key indicators including employment and labour force participation, the gender wage gap⁵⁹, access to and control of resources including land, and rates of violence against women and children. Globally, the health and economic costs of such discrimination and violence are well documented; they represent a significant loss to Albania’s economic growth prospects as it emerges from the pandemic⁶⁰. Cooperation will seek to change stereotypes and address the root causes of discrimination and marginalization of women and girls. Barriers include: rigid and traditional gender

57. UN, CCA, *ibid.* 1.1;1.5; UN, MAPS-Albania, 22, 63-64.

58. UN, CCA, *ibid.* 1.3 including UNCT Analysis of the Beijing +25 National Review Process; UN, MAPS-Albania, 23, 50.

59. World Bank, SCD, *ibid.*, 50. A gender wage gaps in favour of men of about 15%.

60. UN Women, [The economic costs of violence against women](#), 2016. Research shows that women exposed to violence are more often employed in casual and part-time work and earn about 60% less than women who are not. The cost of violence against women is estimated at around 2 per cent of global GDP, attributed to direct costs (health system, counselling, welfare, justice and police services) and indirect costs (lost wages, productivity and potential). See also: UN Women, [New survey reveals violence against women occurs widely in Albania](#), 2019.

roles in both private and public life, inequalities in health care and education with women providing most home-based care, and obstacles to women's participation in elections and to serve as political representatives⁶¹. The pandemic has amplified a range of underlying factors that continue to limit women's participation in the labour force and society: the lack of affordable day care, job insecurity, and pay gaps. Transformational changes are needed to: a) address gaps in legislative and institutional frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and for child rights; b) strengthen engagement with organizations at local level serving women and children to ensure they are at the forefront of identifying problems and innovative solutions; and c) Securing greater traction to implement of recommendations of UN human rights bodies and mechanisms, including institutional capacities for gender and child-rights responsive analysis and programming.

Cooperation principles and strategies:

Cooperation is guided by the following principles: (a) Inclusion and equity to 'leave no one behind, (b) Human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE), (c) Sustainability and resilience, and (d) Accountability, including the availability and use of quality data. Major strategies are:

- **EU accession:** The accession process offers opportunities for the GoA and UN system to emphasise linkages between the acquis and the SDGs and implementation of recommendations emanating from human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms. In addition, the UN system will strengthen its focus on municipal capacities for policy and programme design and implementation,

where the *lion's share* of future work will occur to offer effective government and the delivery, and monitoring of high quality and equitable services, in areas such as health, education and social protection

- **Integrated, multi-sector advocacy, policy support and service provision.** The interconnected, complex nature of the Cooperation Framework priorities and outcomes requires: 1). Cross-sector and participatory policy approaches, led by GoA Integrated Planning and Management Groups (IPMG)⁶², including for implementation and monitoring, and 2). Enhanced coordination between GoA ministries and municipalities. These mechanisms must keep the most vulnerable in focus.
- **Multi-stakeholder engagement and civic participation⁶³:** The GoA and UN system will promote improved mechanisms and processes to convene and engage more regularly with civil society organizations and the private sector to forge stronger partnerships for Cooperation Framework implementation and monitoring. This will create more inclusive spaces for dialogue and consensus-building around shared priorities, especially for vulnerable groups. Consultations with civil society partners illustrate their readiness to play a more pronounced role in cooperation as partners in a more strategic relationship⁶⁴. This is needed especially at local level to strengthen planning, monitoring, service delivery, and greater efforts to reach groups at risk of exclusion with quality, inclusive basic services. The UN system will continue to engage with international development partners, including the EU, OSCE, international foundations, bilateral donors, and

61. CCA, *ibid.*, 15. Including gender stereotypes, negative perceptions, and legal obstacles, contributing to lack of fairness in the electoral process
 62. IPMG Secretariats were established by Government to strengthen implementation of **sector programmes**, accompanied by EU direct budget support. The IPMGs ensure cross-sector coordination and communication within government and with other development partners.
 63. Including: Parliaments, the private sector, international financial institutions, civil society organisations, media, universities, and independent research and policy institutions.
 64. This responds to recommendation 7 from the evaluation of the PoCSD (current cooperation framework).

IFIs to sustain joint dialogue and advocacy to further the sustainable development agenda and evidence-based solutions for country challenges.

- **Forging stronger partnerships with IFIs.**

The interconnected and complex nature of the Cooperation Framework priorities requires strengthened collaboration with IFIs, including multilateral and regional development banks, to leverage their expertise to advance the EU integration process and implementation of the SDGs. Enhanced collaboration will support addressing the multidimensional challenge of responding to macroeconomic, 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.

- **Private sector engagement:** Consultations highlight the potential for stronger, more systematic engagement with the private sector to support achievement of EU accession priorities and the SDGs. The UN system will help to orient the private sector about **'shared value opportunities'** related to the SDGs, the NSDI and ERP⁶⁵. Increasing demand for 'green' products and services, linked with European Green Deal and Cooperation Framework outcome B present opportunities for increased private sector partnership. In addition, the UN can help the private sector to engage with the national planning and state budget machinery through structured engagement with Parliamentary committees and it can strengthen existing forums for Government-Private sector collaboration: (a) Social and Economic Council for PS investment; and (b) National labour council.

- **Fiscal space analysis and policy options** for government to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of spending and cope with future shocks without compromising debt sustainability. The UN system will offer advice and options to Government on fiscal space and ways to increase investment and coverage of essential health, education and social protection services. Recent UN system research suggests that priorities for policy advocacy and programming are to: a) expand social security coverage of informal sector workers and b) reduce tax evasion and illicit financial flows⁶⁶. Future advocacy and policy support must be done in coordination with international partners, especially the EU and World Bank.
- **Risk-informed programming** based on objective risk and threat assessments and impartial advocacy and policy dialogue, effective, cross-sectoral approaches, especially at municipal level, the use of data and evidence to inform decisions, and ongoing review and updating of the contingency plans respond to disasters and emergencies. Across the Cooperation Framework, but especially under priorities A and B, the UN system will support a **prevention agenda** and to support the Government and other partners to anticipate, prepare for and respond to disasters.
- **Young people's participation:** Engagement with young people (ages 12 to 29) is a cross-cutting strategy for cooperation, relevant to all Cooperation Framework outcomes. Cooperation efforts aim to create new opportunities for young people, especially girls, women and from excluded groups, to engage more fully in society. The needs and aspirations of young people must also inform the quality and acceptability of basic

65. For example: A joint Government-UN-Private sector forum to promote shared-value investment opportunities in key sectors including renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and agribusiness, and to drive interest and FDI for the SDGs. Regular dialogue, using existing forums, could help to increase awareness and generate prospective investment deals and PPPs in targeted sectors and to facilitate exports of goods and services.

66. ILO, Working paper on fiscal space analysis in Albania, Unpublished, 2021. Research suggests that efforts to re-allocate public expenditure will generate less fiscal space than work to expand social security coverage of informal sector workers and reduce tax evasion and illicit financial flows.



Engagement with young people is a cross-cutting strategy for cooperation, relevant to all Cooperation Framework outcomes

services: health, education, social protection and employment and skills training. Based upon a survey of over 400 young people, a Youth Advisory Board⁶⁷ confirmed Cooperation Framework priorities to strengthen human rights and civic participation, address climate change, and improve the quality of public health and education linked with skills training, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship. They also offer practical and inspiring ideas to expand 'partnership-driven platforms' such as **Young Voices Count**⁶⁸ in areas such as health care and employment and training. The UN system will strengthen policy and programming with young people and explore new mechanisms to engage with them as volunteers and as constituents in policy discussions at local and national level.

- **Gender mainstreaming:** Across all outcomes, the partners will work to identify how gender

inequalities are manifested for different socio-economic groups, develop capacities to implement gender equality norms and standards, and change gender stereotypes⁶⁹. A key focus is to address gaps in the legislative and institutional framework and ensure more effective implementation of recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms and bodies, including for stronger institutional capacities for gender analysis and gender-responsive programming.

- **Technology, innovation, and digital transformation:** To drive sustainable, more inclusive growth cooperation will harness emerging digital technologies, promote meaningful connectivity, and anticipate future ICT infrastructure needs and applications across the priorities and outcome. For example: strategic and regulatory advice about ICT infrastructure and inclusive access to ICT

67. Youth Advisory Group, Presentation of Survey Findings, 21 January 2020. The Youth Advisory Group was established by the UNCT in 2020 to: (1) Promote the vision, mission and values of UN and achievement of Agenda 2030 and SDGs in Albania; and (2) Advise the UN system about how cooperation can better respond to the challenges of young people and increase their engagement. UN Albania, Youth Advisory Group - Terms of Reference.

68. [Young voices Albania](#) January, 2021.

69. The UN Women [Gender Equality Brief for Albania](#) 2020 indicates how gender and other forms of discrimination intersect and affect women's status and human rights, undermining ongoing efforts towards sustainable development.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Albania: A vibrant democracy on the path to integration with the European Union, with a competitive, stable and sustainable economy, with guarantees of fundamental human rights and liberties (NSDI III, NPEI, ERP, 2030 Agenda and SDGs, Albania's human rights commitments)

A more inclusive and cohesive society and socio-economic conditions to accelerate convergence with the EU in terms of incomes and quality life, especially for people at risk of exclusion.

Investment in people

➤ Increase, more equitable investment in people, especially people at risk of exclusion, by removing barriers to quality social services and creating opportunities for greater fairness and inclusion

- Strengthen quality, coverage of essential social services
- Policy options for more effective, efficient social sector spending

Sustainable, resilient economic growth and resource management

➤ Policy solutions to address structural weaknesses in the economy for more inclusive and resilient economic development

➤ Concerted policy and regulatory change and capacity development for climate change adaptation and mitigation, more efficient use of ecosystem resources, especially water, and effective disaster risk management

People centred governance, rule of law, and human rights

➤ More transparent and accountable government and rule of law, in line with international commitments

- Increased public administration capacity, especially at municipal level
- Greater access to justice for people at risk of exclusion
- Stronger citizen engagement for more effective and evidence-based decision-making and spending by government

➤ Address gaps in legislative and institutional frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and for child rights, increase traction to implement human rights recommendations and reduce violence against women and children.

Strategies for resilience

- **EU accession** linking the acquis and achievement SDGs
- **Integrated advocacy, policy support and service provision**
- **Gender mainstreaming** to understand how gender inequalities affect different socio-economic groups, implement gender equality norms and standards and change stereotypes
- **Multi-stakeholders engagement and civil participation** for dialogue and consensus-building
- **Private sector partnership** around shared value opportunities for further SDGs
- **Fiscal space analysis and policy options** to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of spending
- **Risk-informed programming** to anticipate and cope with future shocks
- **Young people's participation**, especially girls, women and from excluded groups
- **Technology, innovation, and digital transformation** to anticipate future skills needs and harness new technologies
- **Evidence-based decision-making** based upon disaggregated data and evidence and culture of measurement, monitoring evaluation, and learning

rights bodies and mechanisms, and 2) The LNOB agenda and the collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data.

- There is political and policy commitment to green growth and sustainable consumption and production, in line with the [European Green Deal](#)⁷⁵
- There is increasing investment in digital infrastructure, especially for remote and underserved area, as a precondition for digital economy and more effective e-government.
- **Disparities** affecting excluded groups will remain and may worsen even as EU accession negotiations proceed, due to the effects of the 2019 earthquake and COVID-19 pandemic; Effective response will depend upon the availability of reliable disaggregated data and political will to strengthen social protection, health and education policy and programmes.
- **Population ageing, internal and out-migration patterns will continue:** Cooperation should reduce major 'push' factors: government transparency and responsiveness, un-even rule of law, corruption and organized crime, quality and access to public services, and education, training, and employment prospects for young people to close the skills-gaps and offer them a greater stake in Albania's future.
- **Mixed migration** flows will continue and that durable solutions must involve joint action by partners, particularly at municipal level, and that there is opportunity to position Albania as a destination rather than transit country
- The decentralization process will accelerate and territorial and administrative reforms will shift policy implementation, revenue generating powers, and economic growth prospects from Tirana to the regions. This will enable **Municipalities to emerge as major**

agents of change and the UN system should prioritize action at local level (closer to people) to complement and support acquis related reforms at central level.

- The Government will scale-up disaster risk reduction efforts and increase investments for agriculture and rural development, focused on smallholders and especially women farmers.

Risks to cooperation and sustained progress toward achievement of the SDGs are:

- Successive waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by new variants and resistance to restrictions⁷⁶, that create severe ongoing strain on health systems and reallocation of resources from other sectors;
- A lack of consensus on electoral reform and deepening political and social polarization, impeding dialogue and worsening the trust of citizens in Government;
- Unfavorable global economic and trade trends that along with the COVID-19 pandemic could negatively affect the balance of trade and current account, increasing poverty and limiting fiscal space for spending on social services;
- High risks from natural hazards and potential emergencies and weakened institutional and local preparedness capacities to respond;
- Increase in flows of refugees and migrants due to geopolitical developments;
- Increased outmigration, creating talent and labour force gaps, combined an ageing population will have major, negative impacts on economic development and the sustainability of health, social protection, and education systems; and
- Potential changes in the process, criteria, and requirements for EU accession.

75. This aims for EU countries to produce net zero CO₂-equivalent emissions and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

76. VOA News, [WHO Europe Chief Says Region in Midst of COVID-19 'Pandemic Paradox'](#), Jan 28 2021.

3.3 COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES AND PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A. Human capital development and social inclusion

Outcome A. By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion

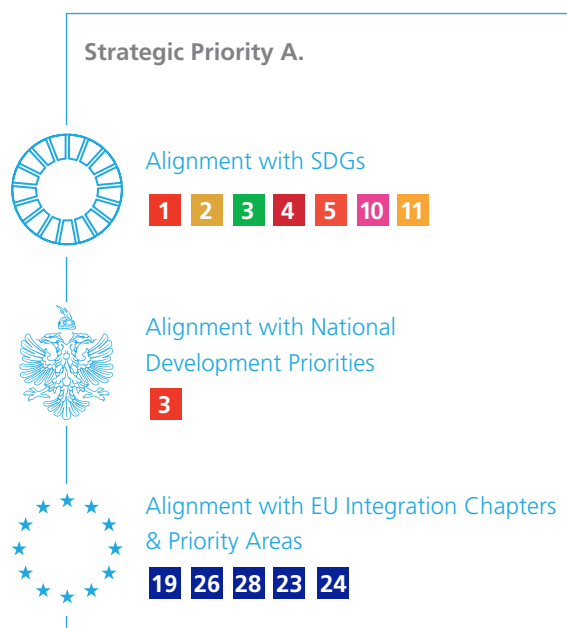
Theory of change

The theory of change for this outcome is that improved well-being and quality of life for all people in Albania *depends upon* increased more equitable investment in essential social services, including education and life skills, health care, social protection and care, and housing.

Investment embodies a two-fold approach to: a) *strengthen* the quality and coverage of essential social services, reaching out to people in the socio-economic and geographic margins, and b) *offer* policy options to maximise available fiscal space for more effective and efficient social sector spending. This will decrease pressures for out-migration and the effects of ‘brain-drain’, increase resilience and enable people, especially young people and excluded groups, including LGBTQI persons, to succeed in a modern, EU-oriented economy and labour market.

Cooperation will support five important *conditions* for success. These correspond to expected outputs:

- **Social protection systems and mechanisms are strengthened to increase the coverage, quality, and monitoring of cash benefits and social support services for vulnerable groups.**
In line with the with National Strategy for



Social Protection and other social inclusion policies and frameworks⁷⁷, government capacities at central and local levels will be strengthened to identify and assess the needs of vulnerable groups and to design or adapt strategies, plans and budgets and monitoring frameworks and mechanisms to be inclusive, gender-responsive, and evidence-based. This includes efforts to: (a) Expand benefits and social assistance for all persons with disabilities, (b) reduce the numbers of children in institutional care and to strengthen foster care and community support services. In housing, the UN system

77. Outcome A is expected to contribute to: The National Youth Action Plan 2015-2020, the National Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania 2016-2020, the National Strategy against trafficking in persons or the National Agenda for Children's Rights 2017-2020.

will work with Government, the EU and civil society to strengthen implementation of policies and frameworks for affordable social housing and to address risks emanating from the proliferation of informal settlements⁷⁸.

- The topics of housing affordability and informal settlements need to be addressed as part of the national housing policy in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and Economic and the Housing Agency and also taking into account other international frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework.
- **Education institutions have new capacities to improve learning outcomes and to ensure greater inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially Roma and Egyptian learners and people with disabilities⁷⁹.** Programme efforts from pre-primary to tertiary levels will offer improved policy, strategies, digital knowledge, infrastructure, tools and budgets to improve literacy and learning outcomes. Enhanced curriculum and teaching methods will promote critical thinking, analytical skills, family and life skill-based initiatives, and problem solving as a means to promote active, informed citizenship. Cooperation will enhance the quality and affordability of day cares and kindergartens, ensuring a strong foundation for learning in the early years (pre-primary level). Comprehensive legislation and strategy will be developed and implemented for for inclusive education. Expanded investment in ICT and digital learning resources will offer young people the knowledge and skills for success in a dynamic EU-oriented labour market.

- **The health care system has increased capacities to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) targets by providing quality accessible people-centred services at an affordable cost⁸⁰.** The UN system will advocate for increased spending on health⁸¹, strengthen the health system to address population-specific needs and barriers to greater equity in services, increase emphasis on the prevention and treatment of non-communicable and communicable diseases, strengthen primary health care and health information systems, including availability of disaggregated data in electronic systems, improve regulatory capacity, and provide authoritative guidance and standards on quality, safety and efficacy of health products, essential medicines and diagnostics. In order to reduce health inequities, especially regional differences and for vulnerable groups, programme efforts will strengthen health system governance and performance for improved transparency, accountability and responsiveness and reduce high out-of-pocket costs. Cooperation will also increase disability-specific services and strengthen the quality and accessibility of mental health services for elderly, young people and excluded groups. The UN system will also strengthen the capacities of the health system to challenge gender stereotypes and change the norms and practices that directly harm women's health, enhance women's access to health care and making health systems more accountable to women.
- **Health and social protection systems can offer increased capacities to prepare for and respond to emergencies and**

78. Government of Albania Social Housing strategy (2016-2025) and Law on Social Housing (No. 22/2018). The NGO [Planners for housing](#) report that informal settlements in the Durres and Tirana Regions cover over 8,000 ha and support an estimated half million inhabitants. These settlements are characterised by uncertain and vulnerable tenure, overcrowding, and limited access to municipal services (water, sewerage, fire and emergency response).

79. CCA, *ibid.*, 48. In 2018, students scored lower than OECD averages for reading, mathematics and science in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

80. Health services include: Reproductive and maternal health, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition and immunization services.

81. Both as a share of GDP and as a share of total public spending with protective coverage policy



.....Ongoing response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic placed the health system under tremendous strain.

pandemics and to promote increased community resilience. Ongoing response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is placing health systems and services under tremendous strain. To counter the threat of recurring epidemic waves, emerging high threat pathogens, and natural disasters, cooperation will support the health system to maintain a full range of services needed to identify risks, prevent, diagnose, isolate and treat outbreaks, while sustaining quality and inclusive health services and leveraging relevant national and international capacities. Cooperation will also support emergency preparedness and operational readiness to increase health system resilience to future pandemics in accordance with the International Health Regulations (IHR)⁸².

- **Communities and civil society organizations have greater capacities to engage more fully in policy-making and service delivery** and to participate in programme monitoring. Cooperation will

promote meaningful consultation with civil society and develop mechanisms to ensure that education, health, and social protection system improvements, including digital transformation, are informed by social dialogue. This will enhance the quality of services and improve access for excluded groups.

Cooperation partners include: Parliament; The Ministries of Health and Social Protection, Education, Sports and Youth, Interior and Infrastructure and Energy; National Institutes for Statistics (INSTAT) and Public Health (IPH); The Health Insurance Fund; The Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA), The Electronic and Postal Communication Authority (AKEP), The National Agency for Information Society; Local Governments; Local Child Protection Units; Civil Society Organizations including professional associations, academia, and national and local media; The European Union Commission, International bilateral donors and the IFIs.

82. UN, UN Albania COVID-19 Socio-economic Recovery & Response Plan, July 2020. Pillar 1. Health First



..... Communities and civil society organizations have greater capacities to engage more fully in policy-making and service delivery

Linkages: (a) Increased, more effective investment in the quality and coverage of essential social services will depend upon efforts under outcome B to support an effective economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, increased economic activity, reduced levels of informality and greater fiscal space; (b) Results under outcome A will also create a circular relationship wherein a healthy, fit population can engage more fully in a diversifying, knowledge-based economy with increased productivity and resilience; (c) Efforts to strengthen governance of the education, health and social protection systems under outcome A will depend upon legislative and regulatory reforms to strengthen public administration under outcome C1 and efforts to implement existing country-wide frameworks and strategies related to gender-

based violence and violence against children under outcome C2. The UN system will enlarge tri-partite partnerships with civil society and Government to create more inclusive spaces for policy dialogue and consensus-building, particularly to support *implementation of the EU strategy for responsible local government*⁸³. The UN system will help to lever the substantial strengths and comparative advantages of CSOs, especially for service delivery and support for vulnerable groups.

UN system support and configuration:

To achieve the outcome, the UN system will contribute the following policy and technical expertise and capacities: (a) Quality of education including knowledge and skills for life and work comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)⁸⁴, (b) Health system

83. (1) EC, Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, [Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes](#), Brussels, 15.5.2013 COM(2013) 280 final. (2) Prof. Dr. Hubert HEINELT, [The role of cities in the institutional framework of the European Union](#), European Parliament, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2017

84. Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is an [evidence](#) and curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It equips children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

strengthening with a focus on people-centred, quality health services including PHC, to achieve UHC targets, emergency support to respond to future pandemics, and increasing health system financing; (c) Inclusive social policies to increase social protection coverage for marginalised and vulnerable groups and strengthen the quality and performance of social and child protection systems; (d) Policy options to increase fiscal space for essential social services, measures to strengthen accountability frameworks between central and local governments and improve local strategic planning and public administration capacities; (e) Strategic and inclusive ICT infrastructure development and digital accessibility, including digital skills assessment and strategy; (f) Working with partners to generate disaggregated data and evidence for effective service targeting, coverage, and monitoring; (g) Robust networks and partnerships with international and national stakeholders⁸⁵.

UN system agencies supporting the outcome are: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women, WHO.

New capacities and resources required to support the achievement of planned results include (a) economic expertise to identify and offer high level advice and options to government on fiscal space and ways to increase investment and coverage of essential health, education and social protection services, and (b) capacity and mechanisms to engage with civil society organizations at local level to lever their strengths and comparative advantages for service delivery and support for vulnerable groups⁸⁶.

Major **assumptions** are that:

- Government policy commitment to the EU accession process and major social sector policies, strategies and spending commitments will be allocated, per budget commitments, and sustained after the 2021 elections.
- In line with the fundamentals first political criteria for EU accession and Acquis chapters 23 and 24⁸⁷, there is increasing political and policy recognition of the need to address discrimination, exclusion and vulnerability in social sector policies and programmes and to collect timely and reliable disaggregated data to understand those at risk of being left behind.

85. Including: Social service Ministries the MoI, State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, State Social Services, Local Municipalities, Judiciary, Police and Prosecutor's Offices

86. UN Albania, UNCT Configuration: Joint Concept Paper, February 2021-DRAFT.

87. Acquis chapters: 23. Justice and fundamental rights, and 24. Justice, freedom and security

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B.
Sustainable, resilient and green economic growth and resource management

Outcome B. By 2026 innovative and integrated policy solutions accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive economic development, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy

Theory of change

The theory of change for this outcome is that economic development will be made more resilient, inclusive and sustainable by the design and implementation evidence-based policy solutions and programmes that target structural weaknesses in the economy and that support efforts to *decouple* economic development from environmental degradation.

Inclusive economic growth and greater shared prosperity requires: strong vocational education and training to reduce the skills mismatch, effective employment activation, effective health services, economic diversification to generate decent, formal sector jobs and promote a green economy transition, and innovation with a focus on digital economy, R&D and entrepreneurship. Strengthened implementation of these policy solutions and programmes are expected to increase access to quality employment, reduce informality, and raise the labour force participation of women, young people and vulnerable groups. These are expected to contribute to more inclusive growth, effective pandemic recovery, and stronger economic competitiveness⁸⁸.

Efforts to connect economic growth to the sustainable management of Albania’s ecosystem resources *will depend upon* effective



implementation of integrated policies and regulations for climate change adaptation and mitigation, improved management of natural resources, notably water, biodiversity protection, and effective disaster risk preparedness and management, taking into account cross-border dependencies. UN system efforts will increasingly focus at the municipal level. The outcome will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen the natural resource base for sustainable and more inclusive green growth and a circular economy, boosting a resilient recovery from the pandemic.

88. UN MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 63.



..... Employment and skills policy and services will be strengthened to address the skills mismatch and increase labour force

Cooperation will support six important *conditions* for success:

- **Employment and skills policy and services** will be strengthened to address the skills mismatch and increase labour force participation and decent work, especially for young people, vulnerable groups and the long term unemployed, and address the burden of unpaid care work, especially for women. Cooperation will develop capacities of the National Agency for Employment and Skills to implement the VET law, support the design and implementation of Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) and a skills anticipation system, and strengthen mechanisms for effective social dialogue between government and social and health partners⁸⁹ to address informality, enhance job quality and security, reduce work place violence and harassment, and strengthen labour dispute resolution. Labour market challenges call for digital skills programmes with a focus on women and the long-term

unemployed and special measures for with disabilities, including employer incentives and quotas. Combined with targeted activation services, these will increase formal employment and productivity.

- **Sustainable and resilient economic growth and green economy transition:** Policy measures and programmes will be designed, piloted, and tracked to promote sustainable and resilient economic growth and women’s economic empowerment. Cooperation will focus on sectors where Albania can develop competitive advantage in the EU marketplace: ICT, sustainable tourism, agriculture and fisheries. Capacities will be strengthened implement fiscal measures that promote innovation and R&D, especially for [sustainable consumption and production](#), trade facilitation and transport connectivity, and green business practices. In ICT, technical norms and international standards will be shared and implemented to develop expertise in circular economy, e-waste and smart cities.

⁸⁹. Including trade unions and employers organisations.

- With a focus on the **natural resource foundations for sustainable development** and ‘building back better’, strengthened policies and measures will be designed, in collaboration with municipalities and CSOs for environmental management, renewable energy and energy efficiency, waste and wastewater management, and sustainable infrastructure. These will also help to address the social and environmental determinants of health. Efforts will focus on targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and changes in taxation and regulation to reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and protect biodiversity. These will: (a) advance the legal and policy framework for EU accession, (b) help to mainstream climate and environmental policy into other economic sectors, and (c) address the ‘gender-blindness’ of existing laws and strategies that hinder women’s access to and management of assets such as land, forestry and pastures, technology and extension services.
- In **agriculture** a coherent country-wide strategy and action plan is needed to enhance small-holder productivity, address structural barriers to the growth of small and medium-sized agro-enterprises (SMAEs), and participate in regional value chains in areas of competitive advantage (*e.g., fruit, olives, viticulture*)⁹⁰. Institutions at central and local will have increased capacities to promote equal participation of women and vulnerable groups in land ownership and increased access to agricultural and rural development programmes and extension services. Policy and technical assistance to the **fisheries and aquaculture** sectors, using best environmental practices, will support stronger legal frameworks, infrastructure and services, and access to markets and finance, enabling greater resilience, sustainability and competitiveness.
- The economy and fiscal policy offers too few incentives for digital technology adoption, research and development, and innovation⁹¹. Policies and programme measures will be developed and implemented to foster an **innovation environment focused on digital technologies and services**. These will offer SMEs to develop new production lines with higher complexity and greater value-added. Measures will ensure greater access to digital skills programmes and technologies for women, young people and vulnerable groups.
- **Administrative mechanisms and capacities will be strengthened to implement the 2019 national strategy on climate change, helping to mainstream climate adaptation and mitigation measures** into policies and regulations for integrated water resources and waste management, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land and forest management. Climate change is a critical threat and floods and heat waves are projected to become more frequent and extreme. Effective adaptation and mitigation requires ‘horizontal’, cross-sector policy design and functional, country-wide coordination and implementation. Cooperation will develop new mechanisms and opportunities for women and young people to take part and become leaders in decision-making.

90. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 58-64. Barriers: Fragmented land tenure, low levels of mechanisation and technology adoption, poor phytosanitary and veterinary controls, and inadequate transport infrastructure and digital connectivity. Each of these must focus significant investment for rural women who are excluded from owning farmland, decision-making and extension services.

91. UN, CCA, *ibid.* 1.4.



The capacities of municipalities will be strengthened to design and implement green and smart action plans for resilient cities.

- National and municipal capacities will be strengthened to prepare for and respond to disasters with quality, gender-responsive DRR strategies and costed plans.** Albania is highly exposed to disaster risks⁹² and vulnerabilities are compounded by high levels of poverty, infrastructure deficits, rapid urbanisation and depletion of natural resources. These affect a range of issues including out-migration, tourism, health services and Albania's economic competitiveness. Cooperation will help to build a national platform and strategy for disaster risk reduction (DRR), in line with the Sendai Framework⁹³ and IHR, reduce institutional fragmentation, and increase resilience in communities, schools, and cultural sites with strengthened coordination and capacities to mitigate, manage and recover from shocks⁹⁴.

- Sustainable cities:** The capacities of municipalities will be strengthened to design and implement green and smart action plans for healthy, climate resilient cities and towns. This will increase access to public spaces that are safe, healthy, inclusive and accessible, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

Cooperation partners include: Parliament; The Ministries of Finance and Economy, Agriculture and Rural Development, Health and Social Protection, Environment and Tourism, and Infrastructure and Energy; The National Institute for Statistics (INSTAT); The National Environmental Protection Agency and Environmental Inspectorate; Courts and prosecutors' offices; The National Agency for Information Society; Local Governments; CSOs including employers' and workers' organizations,

92. CCA, *ibid.*, 23. Nearly 90% of GDP and 86% of total territory has high disaster exposure. According to INFORM Risk Index, Albania's coping capacity index value of 4.2/10 is second highest in the Western Balkans.

93. The global [Sendai Framework](#) for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)

94. CCA, *ibid.*, 30. For example: the 2019 civil emergencies law establishes a new National Agency for Civil Protection but it has limited funding and capacity. Albania is not yet participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and is not yet linked to the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS).



..... Policies and programme measures will be developed and implemented to foster an innovation environment

trade unions, business associations, chambers of commerce, academia, networks on sustainability; The private sector, including banks; The European Union Commission, International bilateral donors and the IFIs.

Linkages: (a) There is a critical, *internal linkage* for the outcome wherein policy support, fiscal incentives and models for economic diversification and growth, especially in industry and agriculture, must integrate low carbon, green economy principles. Another key internal linkage These will *decouple* economic development from environmental degradation and support country efforts to reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency and security, and protect biodiversity. (b) Relevant reform and implementation of employments and skills policies and activation programmes will depend upon efforts under outcome A to strengthen the quality of the education system, ensuring women and young people have the education and skills that businesses require to compete locally and regionally. (c) The

sustainability of efforts to address structural weaknesses in the economy will also depend upon governance reform under outcome C1, and stronger accountability systems and capacities, including in public administration, public financial management and procurement, the judiciary and law enforcement bodies. (d) The economy will not recover from COVID-19 nor reach convergence with the EU without providing a greater role for women, increasing their labour force participation, reducing gender wage gaps, and addressing discrimination, violence and harassment in the work place⁹⁵. These are addressed under outcome C2.

UN system support and configuration:

To achieve the outcome, the UN system will contribute the following policy and technical expertise and capacities: (a) Skills development (VET) and employment activation, with a focus on women and excluded groups and social dialogue between employment policy stakeholders; (b) Entrepreneurship to grow SMEs, especially in ICT, agriculture and tourism,

95. In line with advocacy to the GoA by the UN system, civil society, and international partners to ratify [ILO convention C190](#).

and increase competitiveness in EU markets; (c) Integrated policy frameworks, programmes, and community action for green economy, renewable energy, enhanced water and resource management in trans-boundary settings, climate change adaptation and mitigation; (d) Increasing small holder agricultural productivity and market access with a focus on women farmers; (e) Inclusive and sustainable industrial development to *decouple* natural resource degradation from economic growth and promote 'cleantech' innovation and investment⁹⁶; (f) Biodiversity conservation and promotion of eco-tourism; (f) Decision-making support for investments in sustainable, energy-efficient infrastructure; (f) Policies, strategies and regulations to foster digital ecosystems and transformation (e-agriculture and e-health); (g) Innovative digital platforms to enhance public participation in decision making; and (h) National and local frameworks for disaster risk management and coordination for disaster and post-disaster response.

UN system agencies supporting the outcome are: FAO, ILO, ITU, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UN Women, WHO. In order to support Albania efforts to decouple economic policy from environmental degradation, new capacities and resources include: integrated climate policy expertise, statistics, market information systems and prices, biodiversity protection, genetic resources and food quality and safety standards, expertise as well as capacity to support implementation at municipal level.

The UN system will secure additional expertise and capacities to orient the private sector about opportunities for engagement and 'shared value opportunities' related to the SDGs, the next NSDI and updated ERP⁹⁷.

Major **assumptions** are that:

- There is political and popular recognition of the need to address informality and better integrate women, young people and vulnerable groups into the formal labour market.
- The government will scale-up proven job creation and employment activation measures for vulnerable groups and the long-term unemployed.
- There is increasing investment in digital infrastructure, especially for remote and underserved area, as a precondition for digital economy and more effective e-government.
- There is political and policy commitment for economic diversification and green growth, in line with the [European Green Deal](#)⁹⁸.
- There is sustained government commitment to the EU accession process and making progress on chapters 15 and 27 and implementation of the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan.
- There is increased recognition among the private sector representatives and consumers on the importance of moving to circular economy and managing natural resources more sustainably.

96. Clean technology ('cleantech' or 'greentech') is an umbrella term encompassing any process, product, or service that reduces negative environmental impacts through energy efficiency, sustainable use of resources, or environmental protection. It is closely associated with industries such as solar, wind, water purification, and biofuels. [Cleantech](#), Dec 2021.

97. UN Albania, UNCT Configuration: Joint Concept Paper, February 2021-DRAFT.

98. This aims for EU countries to produce net zero CO2-equivalent emissions and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C.
Effective, people-centred governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality

Outcome C1. By 2026, governance is more transparent and accountable, enabling people and especially vulnerable groups, to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhanced rule of law and access to justice in line with Albania's human rights commitments

Instrumental to the outcomes above, there is a critical need to improve overall government performance and the rule of law and to strengthen actions for equality and non-discrimination and to reduce violence against women and children.

Theory of change

The theory of change for this outcome is that democratic governance and the realization of human rights and gender equality *depends upon* stronger performance by governing institutions, especially at municipal level, and increased citizen and community participation to determine the policies and spending priorities that affect them. Cooperation will help to strengthen accountability systems, including in public administration, the judiciary and law enforcement bodies, and human rights institutions. These will deter direct and indirect *discrimination* against women and vulnerable groups and promote greater inclusion in public services. Concrete changes will include stronger strategic planning, increased regulatory and oversight capacities at central level, capacity development at municipal level for effective and inclusive analysis, integrity planning, decision-making, budgeting and execution. At all levels, the UN system will support Government and civil society partners to implement accepted recommendations from human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms. More robust mechanisms for civic participation are essential for greater increase transparency and accountability and to enable people, and especially vulnerable groups to voice their



concerns, claim their rights in legal processes and to seek remedies for violations. The outcome is expected to support the Government to meet early EU accession benchmarks for the 'fundamentals first' political criteria and within chapters 23 (Justice and fundamental rights) and 24 (Justice, freedom and security).

Cooperation will support six *conditions* for success:

- **Access to justice:** Law enforcement and justice institutions will have improved capacities, structures, tools, and evidence to address gaps in legislation and strengthen justice system performance in line with international and national standards. Cooperation will develop new capacities to address gender-sensitive rule of law, juvenile and child friendly justice, gender-based sex selection and child marriage, international labour standards, and



Government institutions will have stronger capacities and 'open-government' mechanisms to deliver and monitor quality services

enhanced legal frameworks and procedures on statelessness, access to birth registration and support to people without legal identity.

- **Participation and voice:** Mechanisms will be created and strengthened to support dialogue, promote inclusion and build higher levels of trust in society. Rights holders, especially from vulnerable groups, will have greater access to information and services, including free legal aid, providing opportunities to voice their concerns and to claim their rights in formal legal fora and processes and to seek remedies for violations.
- **Data and evidence:** There are critical data gaps for both the SDGs and EU accession agenda related to poverty, inequality, sustainable consumption and production climate change, and for accountable, inclusive institutions⁹⁹. Cooperation will

increase the capacities of INSTAT and other ministries and partners to increase the availability of quality disaggregated data. This will contribute to policy and programme responses that are evidence-based and responsive, particularly for women and vulnerable groups.

- **Public sector accountability and quality services:** Government institutions at national and municipal level will have stronger capacities and 'open-government' mechanisms to deliver and monitor quality services and improve the social determinants of health, fight corruption, and maximize participation and cooperation between government and civil society. Successful economic diversification, skilling and job creation depends upon the transparency and predictability of support measures for businesses and employees in the informal economy sector to shift to

99. Albania produces regular data for 83 out of the 244 global indicators in the SDG monitoring framework (34%). Data for a further 56 indicators (23%) is partially available. The most critical SDGs, for which there are [no indicators with targets established are Goals 10, 12, 13 and 16](#). [SDGs with a low share of indicators with mid-term targets to the total number of indicators per SDG \(10-15 percent\) are Goals 1, 11, 14, 17](#). UN, [Gap analysis – SDG global indicators in Albania, Working paper, 2020](#).

the formal one. Cooperation will develop capacities of national and municipal governments to promote consultation and participation, implement and monitor new strategies and laws for public financial management (PFM), and to strengthen sustainable public procurement systems. Cooperation will promote adoption of digital technologies and e-government¹⁰⁰ platforms to improve access to public services, raise service standards, and enhance quality monitoring. Special efforts will be needed to ensure that excluded groups have ready access to digital services and platforms. Law enforcement capacities will be enhanced to improve the management of SALW and border security. Strengthened legislative frameworks, policies and strategies to address **organized crime** will enable Government institutions, especially Financial Intelligence Units (FIU), to counter illicit financial flows and money laundering, recover assets, and strengthen engagement with the Implementation Review Mechanism of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)¹⁰¹.

- **Accountability and oversight for human rights:** The Parliament, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and CSOs will have strengthened capacities and mechanisms to assess strengthen the implementation of legislation, policies and strategies for human rights and gender equality, including remedies for violations. Actions will be guided by accepted recommendations from the UPR and other human rights treaty body reports and mechanisms.
- **Migration and asylum:** Durable solutions for ongoing mixed migration flows require joint

action by partners, particularly at municipal level. Migration management bodies will have increased capacities to strengthen policies and legislation for effective migration and asylum governance, enhance the management of mixed movements of refugees and migrants, and offer effective protection, social inclusion and local integration support. Cooperation will also strengthen diaspora engagement focused on professionals and entrepreneurs and promote opportunities to position Albania as a destination rather than transit country.

Cooperation partners include: Parliament; The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO); The Ministries of Justice, Interior, Health and Social Protection, Europe and Foreign Affairs, Infrastructure and Energy, and the Minister of State for Diaspora; INSTAT; National Human Rights Institutions; The National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security Council of Ministers; Local Governments; Other government bodies including: 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 Right and Protection; Civil Society Organizations including Women’s Alliances, Youth Networks, the Refugee Organization, the Albania Media Council, ASLG, ASPA, the Chamber of Notaries; Electoral bodies, the alliance of women MPs, and political parties; The European Union Commission, International bilateral donors and the IFIs.

Linkages: (a) Outcome C1 is instrumental for the achievement of other outcomes. Stronger public accountability and oversight mechanisms and processes will strengthen decision-making,

100. Electronic or e-government services increase public access to quality services and help to make governments more inclusive, accountable, and transparent. They also stimulate inflows of FDI. IMF Working Paper, [The Role of E-Government in Promoting Foreign Direct Investment Inflows](#), Ali J. Al-Sadiq, January 2021.

101. This includes: Increased capacities of FIUs and other government authorities to gather intelligence and statistics, conduct investigations, enhance international cooperation with other government authorities, and to trace trace, seize and confiscate the proceeds and instrumentalities of crime for reinvestment in public goods and services.

policy formulation and resource allocation for social services (*outcome A*) and for green, resilient economic growth (*outcome B*). (b) Support to implement and monitor accepted recommendations from human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms will help to embed international standards for rule of law and non-discrimination, access to justice, and gender equality into institutional decision-making and performance. This will contribute to the implementation of all outcomes and tangible changes for persons at risk of exclusion. (c) The focus on stronger mechanisms for civic participation and more effective partnership with CSOs at local level will help to support dialogue, promote inclusion and build higher levels of trust in society. These will enable people, especially excluded groups to voice their concerns, claim their rights in legal processes and to seek remedies for violations and to build confidence in decision-making processes.

UN system support and configuration:

To achieve the outcome, the UN system will contribute policy and technical expertise and capacities in the following areas: (a) Promote and protect the realization of Albania’s human rights and gender equality commitments; (b) Design and support implementation of territorial and administrative reforms; (c) Public administration reform and effectiveness of municipalities to deliver quality services; (d) Transparency and accountability of public procurement processes, with efficiency gains in public spending; (e) Strategic and inclusive ICT infrastructure development and digital accessibility to improve access to public services, deploy e-services, enhance quality monitoring, and strengthen cybersecurity capacities of the National Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT); (f) Increase access to justice, especially for excluded

groups, and build trust in the judiciary; (g) Enhance management of SALW, border security, and reduce trafficking in persons; (h) Develop capacities of women and youth organizations to contribute to governance and national dialogue; (i) Prevent and respond to illicit trafficking in drugs and persons, corruption, organized crime and terrorism; (j) Effective migration policy, governance and management, including rapid response to mixed migration emergencies.

UN system agencies supporting the outcome are: ILO, IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women, WHO. To support the achievement of planned results new capacities and resources will be secured to (a) develop a strategic partnership with civil society organizations, especially at local level and (b) develop new mechanisms to engage with young people and youth serving organizations as volunteers and as constituents in policy discussions at local and national level¹⁰².

Major **assumptions** are that:

- There is increasing government and public support for justice system reform and more effective and transparent public administration, in line with EU accession requirements,
- Political polarization will not abate significantly and may increase in the lead-up to elections in 2021, having impacts on governance reform and social cohesion,
- Following elections in 2021, the Government will sustain its commitments to approved, budgeted national strategies and ratified and legally binding international treaties and instruments.

102. UN Albania, UNCT Configuration: Joint Concept Paper, February 2021-DRAFT.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C.
Effective, people-centred governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality

Outcome C2 . By 2026, gender responsive governance strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women's empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children

Theory of change

The theory of change for this outcome is that enabling women and children to live lives free from **discrimination and violence and to participate equally in decision-making** depends upon a whole of government approach to embed gender analysis and child rights considerations into institutional decision-making and implementation. The gaps between legislation and policy frameworks and the eradication of violence and discrimination against women and children are considerable, compounded by a lack of data about multiple vulnerabilities and corresponding measures across sectors.

The Government and UN system will work to transform and deepen the normative framework for women's human rights and strengthen implementation of laws and policies to address gaps in access, affordability and availability of basic services. These are essential to activate a stronger role for women in the economy and in civic affairs. Transformational changes are needed to: (a) Identify and address gaps in legislative and institutional frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and for child rights; (b) Strengthen the collection and use of gender-sensitive and sex disaggregated statistics; (c) Promote integrated approaches to policy and service delivery that capture how gender inequalities and deprivations for children are manifested for different groups and in different geographic areas; (c) Strengthen participation of women's and children's organizations at national and local levels; and (d) Strengthen institutional mechanisms for greater traction to implement of recommendations of UN human rights bodies and mechanisms.

Cooperation will support six *conditions* for success:

- **Ending violence:** Government institutions at central and local levels, services providers and CSOs will have increased capacities to prevent and respond to all forms of violence and exploitation against women and children, with focus on vulnerable groups. This includes efforts to address discrimination, violence and harassment in the work place and create conditions for women to participate safely in the labour market.
- **Addressing gender stereotypes and harmful norms and practices:** Influential leaders, communities, families, men and boys, women and girls will have improved knowledge and capacities to address harmful norms, stereotypes, and behaviors that drive gender discrimination, VAW, VAC, and child marriage. This includes efforts to address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities.
- **Planning and budgeting that is gender and child-responsive:** Government institutions at central and local levels have increased capacities to plan, budget, monitor, track expenditures, and leverage resources for GEWE and child rights in targeted sectors.
- **Gender equality mechanisms:** National Gender Machinery and public administration at central and local level have increased capacities support and monitor implementation of international and national commitments and EU priorities for gender equality.

- **Leadership and participation:** Women and girls and gender equality advocates will have increased capacities and opportunities to lead, participate, and influence decision making processes at national and local level.

Cooperation partners include: Parliament; The Prime Minister's Office (PMO); The Ministries of Finance and Economy, Justice, Interior, Health and Social Protection; Infrastructure and Energy; INSTAT; National Human Rights Institutions; The National Agency for Information Society; The National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security Council of Ministers; Local Governments and Local Child Protection Units; Other government bodies including: The State Agency for Child Right and Protection; Civil Society Organizations including Women's Alliances, Youth Networks; The alliance of women MPs; The European Union Commission, International bilateral donors and the IFIs.

Linkages: (a) Like C1, outcome C2 is instrumental for the achievement of other outcomes. Addressing gaps in legislative and institutional frameworks for gender equality and child rights and building capacities for gender analysis and gender and child rights responsive policy and programming is essential for the achievement of outcomes A and B and to respond effectively to groups at risk of exclusion. (b) Outcome C2 will convene a wide range of stakeholder to offer legal, policy and programme solutions to address significant inequalities including employment and access to economic resources, family planning, unpaid work, family care, property ownership, pay gaps, entrepreneurship opportunities, and traditional and patriarchal values. (c) Participation mechanisms will engage women and young people, especially those from poor households and rural areas and from Roma and Egyptian communities, in decision-making and communication with local governments. (d) Increased capacities of national and local public administration and the National Gender

Machinery will ensure implementation of international and national commitments and EU priorities for gender equality and child rights.

UN system support and configuration: To achieve the outcome, the UN system will contribute policy and technical expertise and capacities in the following areas: (a) Integrate international normative frameworks and standards on GEWE (including the EU GE *acquis*) and child rights into national policies and legislation; (b) Build institutional capacities and mechanisms to respond to gender based and domestic violence and violence against children at both central and local levels; (c) Strengthen public oversight bodies *to ensure accountability* of law enforcement agencies (e.g. Parliamentary Sub-Commission on GE and GBV, National Gender Equality Council, Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and People's Advocate); (d) Build institutional capacities for gender responsive planning and budgeting (GRB) and financing, including Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) and use of gender-sensitive and sex disaggregated statistics in national and sector plans programmes; (e) Foster capacity and digital skills to create equal opportunities for girls and women in the STEM sector.

UN system agencies supporting the outcome are: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO. New capacities and resources required to support the achievement of planned results include are the same as for outcome C1.

Major **assumptions** are that:

- There is increasing popular and political recognition of the need to address discrimination, exclusion and vulnerability in social sector policies and programmes
- There is Government acceptance of recommendations from human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms and the findings of the GoA review report for Beijing 25 create an enabling policy and fiscal environment.

CHAPTER 4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Implementation of the Cooperation Framework is based on the principle of partnership with country partners: the Government, civil society groups and academia, the private sector, international financial institutions, UN member states and bilateral donors. The partners will employ cost-effective and coherent mechanisms to plan, finance, deliver, monitor and report on Cooperation Framework results and their expected contribution to national priorities, based upon the detailed cooperation framework (Annex A).

Given the complex and cross-sectoral nature of the expected Cooperation Framework results and implementation strategies, partnerships will be strengthened and expanded with the Government, especially at municipal level, civil society, private sector, academia, community groups, and international partners. This is expected to increase capacities and resources available to achieve Cooperation Framework outcomes and to make a tangible contribution to national priorities.

The UN system will enlarge tri-partite partnerships with civil society and Government to create more inclusive spaces for policy dialogue and consensus-building, and to support *implementation of the* EU strategy for responsible local government. In particular, mechanisms and processes will be strengthened to convene and engage more regularly with local civil society organizations and with those involving young people. These include the Inter-ministerial committee on the SDGs and the National Council of Civil Society. The UN system will also help the private sector to engage with the national planning and state budget machinery through structured engagement with Parliamentary committees and existing forums for Government-Private sector collaboration: (a) Social and Economic Council for PS investment; and (b) National labour council. The UN system can also serve as a *stronger bridge* between civil society and the private sector and Government to strengthen policy formulation and review and inform the

work of Parliamentary committees and Integrated Planning and Management Groups (IPMG).

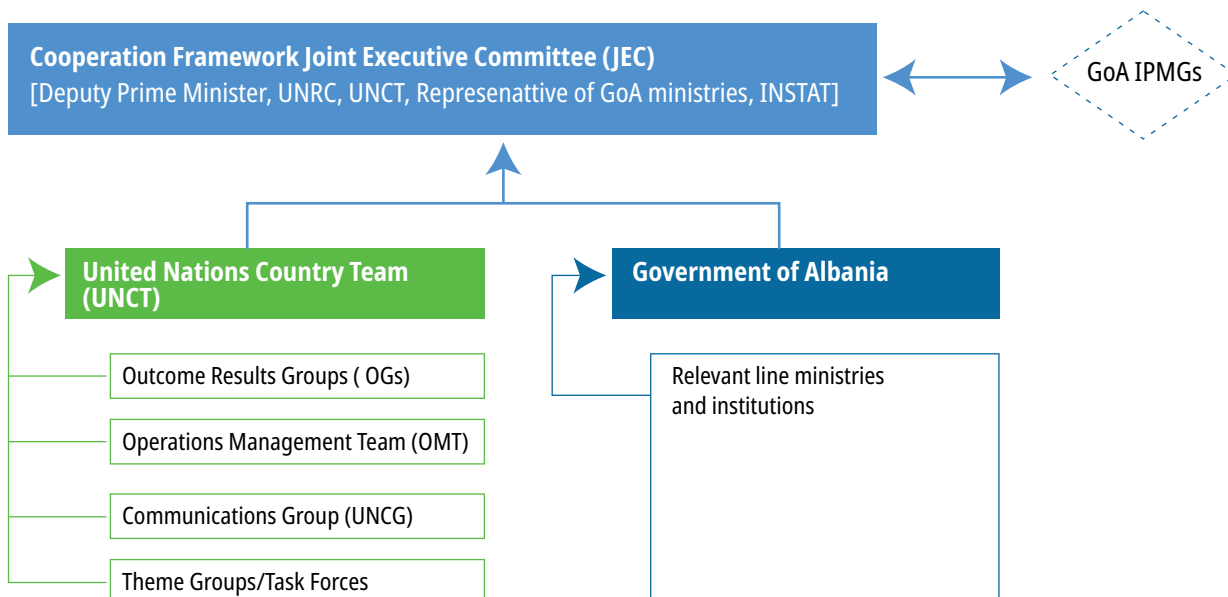
4.1 COOPERATION FRAMEWORK GOVERNANCE

The programme will be nationally executed under the overall co-ordination of the Deputy Prime Minister. Government coordinating authorities for specific UN system agency programmes are noted in Annex E. Government Ministries, NGOs, INGOs, volunteer groups and UN system agencies will implement programme activities. The Cooperation Framework will be made operational through the development of joint work plan(s) (JWP) and/or agency-specific work plans and project documents as necessary which describe the specific results to be achieved and will form an agreement between the UN system agencies and each implementing partner as necessary on the use of resources. To the extent possible the UN system agencies and partners will use the minimum documents necessary, namely the signed Cooperation Framework and signed joint or agency-specific work plans and project documents to implement programmatic initiatives. However, as necessary and appropriate, project documents can be prepared using, inter alia, the relevant text from the Cooperation Framework and joint or agency-specific work plans and/or project documents.

4.2 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The management structure and implementation arrangements enhance joint work and reduce duplication:

Joint Executive Committee - The Joint Executive Committee (JEC) provides strategic guidance and direction and reviews Cooperation Framework performance. It is co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations. The JEC is comprised of



representatives of partner ministries and the heads of UN system agencies. Representatives of other government bodies, and implementing partners may be invited by the co-chairs to attend JEC meetings on an ad-hoc basis. It meets at least twice per year and may be convened by the co-chairs as required. The work of the JEC will be supported by the UNRCO as Secretariat.

The responsibilities of the JEC are to:

- Provide strategic guidance and oversight during Cooperation Framework implementation,
- Assess overall progress against planned Cooperation Framework outcomes and their contribution to national plan priorities (NSDI) and nationalized SDG targets,
- Ensure ongoing alignment and coordination between Cooperation Framework results and national and sector programmes overseen by the IPMGs,
- Conduct a comprehensive annual review and review and endorse major changes to Cooperation Framework results and strategies,
- Advise and assist the outcome results groups (see below), as required,
- Explore and promote opportunities for cost-sharing and stronger partnerships with civil society and the private sector, domestic philanthropic actors, international donors,

and the IFIs, and

- Commission the Cooperation Framework evaluation.

Outcome groups

Outcome Results Groups (OG) serve as an operational coordination mechanism to deliver and monitor Cooperation Framework results. Using **joint work plans (JWP)**, they coordinate and monitor the implementation of development activities, the achievement of planned Cooperation Framework outputs, and the contribution to Cooperation Framework outcomes and national priorities and related SDGs and targets. The OGs advise the JEC and UNCT on opportunities and challenges in the evolving programme environment and they monitor risks. OGs will liaise, as needed, with *existing* country sector or thematic coordination bodies, including IPMGs.

Outcome Groups are co-led by the heads of UN system agencies. They act on behalf of the UNCT to ensure effective coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the JWP and achievement of expected results with a designated Minister from the Government of Albania. The co-leads are responsible for the overall performance of the OG and they are accountable to the UNCT and JEC for

the achievement of results in the JWP. OGs are inclusive of all UN system agencies contributing to the outcome, regardless of their physical location. A member of each OG will serve as a gender focal point, ensuring coordination and liaison with a gender theme group and bodies responsible for GEWE in government. OGs meets at least twice per year or as required.

The responsibilities of the OG are to:

- Prepare biennial **Joint Work Plans** (JWP) with programme partners for **each outcome** including outputs, detailed activities, and a common funding framework showing the contributions of UN system agencies,
- Monitor the achievement of Cooperation Framework outputs and their contribution toward Cooperation Framework outcomes and Albania priorities and related SDGs,
- Contribute to the preparation of the annual UN Country results report,
- Mainstream the cooperation principles (para 33) and undertake policy dialogue and joint analysis with country partners to identify implementation constraints and lessons, monitor assumptions and risks and identify programme opportunities,
- Identify opportunities for engagement and increased coherence with GoA and other partners and identify major capacity gaps for the achievement of Cooperation Framework results,
- Contribute to the development of common Cooperation Framework advocacy and communication products.

Joint Work Plans

Results Groups prepare biennial **Joint Work Plans** (JWP) with programme partners for **each outcome**. The JWPs reflect: planned cooperation outputs, all major UN system-supported activities, delivered jointly or by individual agencies, resources that are required and available as well

as funding gaps. JWPs are an important tool to maximise synergies and avoid duplication. Indicators for the JWP will be aligned, as necessary, with the UN supported response and recovery plan for the COVID-19 pandemic (SERP). During the annual review and reporting exercises, JWPs will be reviewed and adjusted to respond to new and emerging priorities.

Other groups include:

- (a) The **Gender Thematic Result Group** (GTRG) that works to mainstream Albania's gender equality commitments during Cooperation Framework implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It supports country engagement in intergovernmental processes, provides policy advice to the UNCT and works jointly with the UN Communication Group to design and implement public awareness campaigns.
- (b) A **United Nations Communication Group** (UNCG) that operates to increase awareness and visibility of Cooperation Framework results. It pools communication expertise and resources and enhances joint communication. It is chaired by a Head of Agency on a rotational basis, who reports directly to the UNCT on the group's planned activities and results.
- (c) The **INSTAT-UN Joint Data Group** (JDG) that works to identify and address major gaps in information and statistics for SDG-related indicators, identify capacity needs to produce disaggregated data, and strengthen the dissemination statistics for policy formulation and planning.
- (d) The **Resource Mobilization Group** (RMG) Commitment by all of the UN agencies operating in Albania to coordinate and cooperate to source and manage the resources needed to fulfill project commitments outlined in the Cooperation Framework.

In case of emergencies, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) will be activated to support Government efforts in terms of humanitarian response and will ensure synergies between

humanitarian and developmental processes in order to build resilience and mitigate future natural hazards or other emergencies.

4.3 RESOURCING THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

Planned Cooperation Framework results will be costed as a part of the Cooperation Framework funding framework and the JEC and UNCT will work to identify financing strategies and approaches to address funding gaps. All funding and financing strategies will promote a joint approach to reduce competition amongst UN system agencies for available resources. The JEC and UN will explore 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**¹⁰³ will continue to support integrated and coherent resource mobilization and allocation for innovative and joint cooperation efforts focused on SDG achievement and EU accession. The Co-Chairs of the JEC approve and allocate funds for multi-stakeholder and cross sector initiatives that have potential to *accelerate* SDG achievement. These are derived from the Cooperation Framework Joint Work Plans and they are aligned with national priorities, including guidance from the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs. The fund complements core budgets of UN system agencies. The fund has potential to be broadened to include other stakeholders and to support innovative partnership mechanisms with civil society, the private sector and foundations, in support cooperation results. The fund can also

be used to assess the feasibility and support preparation of major national strategic projects, aligned with the SDGs and EU accession requirements.

The Government will support efforts by the UN system to raise funds required to meet the needs of this Cooperation Framework. This includes: (a) Encouraging potential donor Governments to make available to the UN system agencies the funds needed to implement unfunded components of the programme; (b) Endorsing UN system efforts to raise funds for the programme from other sources, including the private sector both internationally and in Albania; and (c) Permitting contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations, which will be tax exempt for the Donor, to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

The UN system agencies will provide support to the development and implementation of activities within the Cooperation Framework, which may include technical support, cash assistance, supplies, commodities and equipment, procurement services, transport, funds for advocacy, research and studies, consultancies, programme development, monitoring and evaluation, training activities and staff support. Part of the UN system agencies' support may be provided to Non-Governmental [and Civil Society] organizations as agreed within the framework of the individual work plans (WPs) and project documents.

Additional support may include access to UN organization-managed global information systems, the network of the UN system agencies' country offices and specialized information systems, including rosters of consultants and providers of development services, and access to the support provided by the network of UN Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

103. The SDG Acceleration Fund was established in 2007. The fund is a preferred funding modality for Government and enables broad appeal to the international community. During the period 2007-2020, the fund engaged 14 international partners and secured over USD \$65 million for cooperation; Earthquake response and recovery efforts greatly increased interest in the fund as a cost-effective vehicle to target and deliver emergency assistance.

The UN system agencies shall appoint staff and consultants for programme development, programme support, technical assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

Subject to annual reviews and progress in the implementation of the programme, the UN system agencies' funds are distributed by calendar year and in accordance with the Cooperation Framework. These budgets will be reviewed and further detailed in the work plans and project documents. By mutual consent between the Government and the UN system agencies, funds not earmarked by donors to the UN system agencies for specific activities may be re-allocated to other programmatically equally worthwhile activities.

4.4 BUSINESS OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

The UN Operations Management Team (OMT) for the UN system provides support and advice to the UNCT and JEC about efforts to harmonize business operations and contribute to the delivery of Cooperation Framework results. The UN system will update and expand its Business Operations Strategy (BOS) to deliver on Cooperation Framework results.¹⁰⁴ The UN Operations Management Group (OMT) will explore new opportunities for *high impact* common services¹⁰⁵ 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 Long Term Agreements (LTAs), and enhanced monitoring and evaluation of common back office services. The OMT will also engage UN Agencies to consider a mutual recognition approach for local recruitment.

104. By the end of 2020, the UN system in Albania was using 15 Long term procurement agreements (LTA) covering eleven areas: banking, travel, logistic, events, security, communications, internet, translation/interpretation, printing, design, video production, medical services and common premises. These have led to estimated cost-savings of just under USD \$1 million.

105. [High Impact Common Services as part of BOS 2.0](#), UNDCO webinar, Jan 20, 2021. The OMT will also explore opportunities for gender responsive procurement, disability inclusion, and green energy services within the BOS

106. UN General Assembly, Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Resolution [A/RES/72/279](#) adopted on 31 May 2018.

The OMT is chaired by a head of a UN system agency or delegated senior agency official. Members are drawn from each UN system agency's senior operations officers.

OMT responsibilities are to:

- Implement common business solutions, such as common procurement systems for tendering and bidding, long term agreements (LTAs) for joint procurement, common ICT platforms, banking arrangements, office security and cleaning services,
- Monitor and report to the UNCT and JEC about progress to achieve higher quality, more effective, and cost-efficient business support services, and
- Communicate effectively about the aims and expected results of common business solutions to all UN staff and partners.

4.5 LINKS WITH UN SYSTEM AGENCY COUNTRY PROGRAMMING INSTRUMENTS

The Cooperation Framework is recognized as the most important instrument for planning and implementation of UN development activities at country level in support of country priorities, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and nationalized SDGs and targets¹⁰⁶. The Cooperation Framework guides the programme cycle and the contributions of UN system agencies for the achievement of results. With coordinated planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, the JEC and UNCT will ensure that agency-specific programming instruments are contributing to expected Cooperation Framework results, strategies and partnerships.

CHAPTER 5. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING



Monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and learning (MEL) functions for the Cooperation Framework are based upon the expected Cooperation Framework results and indicators in the results framework (Annex A). Indicators for the Cooperation Framework are *measurable and aligned* with the indicator framework for the SDGs¹⁰⁷ and with nationalised targets in the NSDI and other national plans, including the UN supported response and recovery plan for the COVID-19 pandemic (SERP). Monitoring and reporting will demonstrate the contribution of expected Cooperation Framework results to country priorities and particularly key benchmarks for EU accession. Performance information related to Cooperation Framework outcomes, outputs and indicators will be updated in UN INFO¹⁰⁸ that provides an overview of country progress.

Throughout the MEL process, ownership and leadership the JEC is essential to sustain the demand for Cooperation Framework performance information. This is needed to facilitate links between outcome results groups and the IPGM and other country monitoring mechanisms, and to ensure that cooperation partners use performance information or learning, managing, and adjusting strategy and resources for greater impact

The primary objectives of MEL for the Cooperation Framework are to support Cooperation Framework stakeholders to:

- Understand whether outputs are being achieved and the extent to which they are contributing to planned Cooperation Framework outcomes;
- Track the outcome indicators and gauge the plausible contribution of cooperation to measured changes;
- Monitor risks, identify constraints, lessons and good practices from ongoing implementation;

- Adapt results and strategies to respond to changes in socio-economic conditions and emerging priorities.

The **Common Country Analysis** will be updated on an annual basis to support the Cooperation Framework monitoring, review and reporting process. A data and analysis repository will be established to offer updated SDG related statistics. The INSTAT-UN data group will identify and address major gaps in information and statistics for SDG related indicators.

5.1 MONITORING JOINT WORK PLANS

The JEC and UNCT are responsible for monitoring progress toward Cooperation Framework results on the basis of regular monitoring and reporting by outcome results groups using joint work plans (JWP) and the MEL plan. Major monitoring activities include: joint monitoring missions, regular outcome progress reviews with partners, annual Cooperation Framework reviews with all stakeholders, and major studies and evaluations, complementing those of the Government and other partners.

The Cooperation Framework is a *living* framework. These arrangements enable cooperation partners to track progress against expected results, including programme expenditure and resource mobilization, monitor risks, identify lessons, and adapt results and strategies to respond to changes in socio-economic conditions and emerging priorities. In order to monitor and respond to risks, the UN system will support the updating of the contingency plans to respond to disasters and emergencies.

Progress reporting against Cooperation Framework indicators will use official data

107. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>; <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

108. **UN INFO** is an on-line planning, monitoring and reporting system to track how the UN system at the country level supports governments to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. It reflects the UN development system's effort to improve coherence, transparency and accountability.

provided by INSTAT and the statistical bodies of line ministries, as well as administrative and programme-related data from cooperation partners. The INSTAT-UN data group will work to identify and address major gaps in information and statistics for SDG-related indicators. UN system agencies will strengthen the capacities of INSTAT and other statistical bodies to produce disaggregated data, aligned with the SDGs¹⁰⁹, and to strengthen the dissemination and use of data and statistics for evidence-based policy formulation and planning.

5.2 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND COUNTRY RESULTS REPORTING

Annual performance reviews and the preparation of **one annual Cooperation Framework results report**¹¹⁰ enable cooperation partners to compare actual progress against expected results and communicate the *contribution* of cooperation results to Albania priorities. Reviews and reports will identify adjustments to cooperation results, strategy, and resources in order to respond to risks and the evolving programme context¹¹¹.

The JEC and UNCT are responsible to carry-out annual performance reviews and reporting. This is done on the basis of routine monitoring and reporting by outcome results groups against expected Cooperation Framework results and indicators and activities described in the JWP. This will integrate results reporting by all contributing UN system agencies. As far as possible Cooperation Framework performance review and reporting will contribute to the work of the IPMGs and other government thematic and sector reviews.

Annual performance reviews will involve all Cooperation Framework stakeholders. The intended audience for the one annual results report includes: the Government and people of Albania, and implementing partners from civil society, the private sector, international donors, and the governing bodies of UN system agencies.

5.3 EVALUATION PLAN

Evaluation of the Cooperation Framework toward the end of 2025 will be organized by the JEC and UNCT. It will be conducted by an independent external evaluation team and it will involve all Cooperation Framework partners and stakeholders. The findings and recommendations from evaluations of UN system agency programmes will feed into the Cooperation Framework evaluation.

The evaluation will be used to assess cooperation achievements and to support the formulation of the next Cooperation Framework. The evaluation will assess the relevance of the Cooperation Framework outcomes, the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation by UN system agencies and partners, and the sustainability of results and their contribution to Albania country priorities related SDG targets¹¹². In addition to these standard criteria, the evaluation will gauge *the extent to which* human rights and gender equality considerations were incorporated in the overall design and implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

109. For example, by: Sex, income, education level, and disability status.

110. The progress update will follow the UNSDG Standard Operational Format and Guidelines for Reporting Progress on the Cooperation Framework.

111. To respond to emerging or unforeseen needs in the policy and programme environment, changes to planned results and strategies, agreed during annual performance reviews, are reflected in the updated Cooperation Framework Results Framework (Annex A) and/or Joint Work Plans (JWP). UNSDG, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, [Internal guidance](#), June 2019. 10.

112. These criteria and considerations per: The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), 2016.

ANNEXES



ANNEX A.

Results Framework

Government of Albania and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, 2022-2026 Priorities and Outcomes for Cooperation

PRIORITY A. HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

Integrating quality, inclusive 21st C. education and learning readiness; Effective and inclusive health care and services and social protection within a strategic UN system approach focused on sustaining investment in people, especially those at risk of exclusion - as part of COVID-19 response and recovery and EU accession

Outcome A1. By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers¹¹³ and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion

PRIORITY B. SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Inclusive, resilient economic development and shared prosperity (including effective skills training, decent, formal sector jobs, entrepreneurship, support for green and blue economy transitions and increased production and incomes from agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, greater climate and disaster resilience and effective management of natural resources

Outcome B. By 2026 innovative and integrated policy solutions accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive economic development, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy

PRIORITY C. EFFECTIVE, PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Transparent and accountable institutions, delivering quality, inclusive services, enabling rule of law and increased access to justice, and implementing human rights commitments

Outcome C1. By 2026, governance is more transparent and accountable, enabling people (women and girls, men and boys, and persons at risk of exclusion), to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhanced rule of law and access to justice in line with Albania's human rights commitments

Outcome C2. By 2026, gender responsive governance strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women's empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children

113. Including: policy and legislative, institutional (capacities as well as norms and behaviours), geographic, and financial.

Notes and Definitions

Outcomes and outputs: The outcomes of GoA-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF) make a direct, tangible contribution to the achievement of Albania priorities for EU accession and the Sustainable Development Goals and nationalised targets.

Outcomes are high level changes for which there are collective accountabilities of the Government, UN system and CF implementing partners, including civil society organisations, community groups, the private sector, and international financial institutions. Outcomes are changes in institutional performance or the behaviours of people and their communities. They describe: (1) How people are acting differently to improve their lives and those of their families and communities or (2) How institutions are performing in new ways to support people in their efforts.

Outputs describe new skills and abilities, products or services. The outputs, together, make a contribution toward the expected outcome. The planned outputs from cooperation between will be developed as part of detailed **Joint Work Plans (JWP)** for each outcome.

Indicators, targets, and linkages: Indicators for the CF are *measurable*, aligned with the indicator framework for the SDGs¹¹⁴ and with nationalised targets in the NSDI and other national plans. This illustrates the contribution of CF results to country priorities and particularly key benchmarks for EU accession. Targets for CF outcomes are *preliminary* and *provisional* pending further alignment with policies and plans of the Government of Albania.

People at risk of exclusion: Some groups of women¹¹⁵, children from low-income and single parent households, Roma and Egyptian populations, persons with disabilities including children, isolated rural communities, people aged over 60 years, young key population, LGBTQI persons, and refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and migrants

114. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>; <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

115. Amongst women: Older women, women in rural areas, women heads of households, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, women in detention, women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, and refugee and asylum-seeking women

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Impact

National development priorities: NSDI II pillar 3. Investing in human capital and social cohesion

Reduce at-risk poverty level - General population: 23%; Children: 30%; Reduce at-risk of poverty level before social transfers: 39% (INSTAT, SILC 2018)
(Skills and education; Improving the quality of life and the environment for all; Strengthening the government's capability to deliver)

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023. 2.3.6 Education and skills; 2.3.8 Social protection and inclusion, including health care

National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approx. to EU acquis chapters: 19, 26, 28, 23-24

Other: The National Youth Action Plan 2015-2020, the National Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania 2016-2020, the National Strategy against trafficking in persons or the National Agenda for Children's Rights 2017-2020

Regional frameworks: European Green Deal¹¹⁶; Europe 2020 Strategy; European Pillar of Social Rights¹¹⁷; other.

SDGs and targets: 1. End poverty: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; 2. Hunger and malnutrition: 2.1, 2.2; 3. Good health and well-being: 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8; 4. Quality education: 4.1, 4.2, 4.7, 4.c; 5. Gender equality 5.1, 5.2, 5.6; 10. Reduced inequalities: 10.2, 10.3, 10.7; 11. Sustainable cities and communities: 11.1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

This priority Integrates quality, inclusive 21st C. education and learning readiness; Effective and inclusive health care and services and social protection *within a strategic UN system approach* to sustain investment in people – especially vulnerable groups¹¹⁸ - as part of COVID-19 response and recovery and EU accession

Outcome A.

By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion¹¹⁹

116. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal>

117. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en

118. For example: 'Albania's social care and protection systems insufficiently protect people against poverty shocks, and still struggle to help the poor find sustainably productive pathways. Investments in education, health care and social protection as a share of GDP are below EU averages' (CCA 6).

119. UN system contribution to 'investment' is two-fold: 1) strengthen the quality and coverage of essential social services and 2) to offer policy options for more effective and efficient social sector spending. Specific outputs and activities will address education and life skills, health care, social care and social protection, housing and livelihoods

Indicators	Baseline: 2019	Target:	Source:	Assumptions
a. Proportion of total government spending on essential services as a proportion of total government spending and GDP: i) Education; ii) Health; iii) Social protection; iv) Adequate housing	i. T: 11.4; GDP: 3.3 ii. T: 10.5; GDP: 3 iii. T: 32.5; GDP: 9.5 iv. T: 1.8; GDP: 0.05	i. T: greater than the baseline value ii. T: greater than the baseline value iii. T: greater than baseline value iv. equal to the baseline value	INSTAT; MoFE; GoA Housing Department	<p>The Government sustains its commitment to the EU accession process and major social sector policies and strategies following the 2021 elections</p> <p>The Government allocates budget resources to the social sectors as planned</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic fades in the first half of 2021 with a gradual normalization of economic and social activity</p> <p>There Government is committed to and adequately funds the collection of timely and reliable disaggregated data to understand those at risk of exclusion</p>
b. Gross early childhood education enrollment ratio in pre-primary education (children 3-6 years), disaggregated by sex ¹²⁰ (SDG4.2.2)	Baseline: 2019 T: 79.9 M: 81.9 F: 77.9	Target: Increase by 5pp	Source: INSTAT	
c. Average PISA score of 15-year old students, in reading, mathematics, and science, disaggregated by sex (proxy-SDG 4.1.1 ¹²¹)	Baseline: Reading T: 405; M: 387; F: 425 Mathematics T: 437; M: 435; F: 440 Science T: 417; M: 409; F: 425	Target: (PISA 2021 postponed 2022) Reading: 410 Math: 437 Science: 422	Source: PISA-Albania	
d. Coverage of essential health services (UHC; SDG3.8.1 ¹²²) - Proportion of children under 1 year that received measles vaccine (→SDG 3.2.1)	Baseline: 59% (2017) 94 (2019)	Target: 59% >95%	Source: WHO-GHO UHC report INSTAT; MoHSP	
e. Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income (SDG3.8.2)	Baseline: (2019) >10%: 17 >25%: 5	Target:	Source: WHO-GHO INSTAT; MoHSP	
f. Percentage of infants under 6 months exclusively fed with breast milk (→SDG 2.2.1, 2.2.2.)	Baseline: 37%	Target: >40%	Source: INSTAT; MoHSP (DHS/ MICS)	

120. Data will be available at municipal level following Census 2022.

121. SDG 4.1.1: Proportion of children/young people: (a) in Grade 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

122. SDG 3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services is defined as the average coverage of the 14 SDG 3.8.1 tracer interventions

g. Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women in the age group 15–19 years old	Baseline (2019) 14.2 births	Target: 11 births	Source: INSTAT
h. Country Preparedness index & Operational readiness index to respond to pandemics ¹²³ (→SDG 3.8.1; 3.d.1) (Level 1: <=30; Level 2: <=50%; Level 3: <=70%; Level 4: <=90%; Level 5: > 90%)	Baseline: Level 3 (62%) (2020)	Target:	Source: WHO-SPAR ¹²⁴
i. Number of i. households, ii. persons with disabilities (PWD), iii. refugees and persons granted temporary protection covered by social protection system (SDG 1.3.1)	Baseline: i. 66,269 ii. 72,711 iii. 2.3%	Target: 65,000 ii. 70,000 iii.15%	Source: MoHSP UNHCR
j. Socio-economic gaps between Roma and non-Roma, by sex (reflected in employment, registration, and access to services)	Baseline: Employment NR: 27%; R: 18%; RF:11% Possession of IDs NR: 97%; R: 90%; RF:91% Youth (18-24) NEET NR: 42%; R: 78%; RF:90% iv. Use of preventive health care NR: 68%; R: 44%; RF:49%	Target: Gap decreased by at least 2%	Source: Regional Roma Survey
k. Number of children in residential care at the end of the year, per 100,000 population aged 0-17, by sex	Baseline: T: 96.6 (2019) M: 98.4 2019 F: 94.6 2019	Target: 50	Source: State Social Services / INSTAT

123. This indicator measures the level of preparedness and operational readiness based on the implementation of IHR capacities.

124. WHO. The State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting tool (SPAR) tool consists of 24 indicators for the 13 IHR capacities needed to detect, assess, notify, report and respond to public health risk and acute events of domestic and international concern.

I. Number of visits on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health at Primary Health Care level.	Baseline: (2018) 1,000,285 annually (15% of total visits in PHC)	Target: 1,667,141 annually (25% of total visits)	Source: UN programme reports (UNFPA)
k. Number of children in residential care at the end of the year, per 100,000 population aged 0-17, by sex	Baseline: T: 96.6 (2019) M: 98.4 2019 F: 94.6 2019	Target: 50	Source: State Social Services / INSTAT
I. Number of visits on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health at Primary Health Care level.	Baseline: (2018) 1,000,285 annually (15% of total visits in PHC)	Target: 1,667,141 annually (25% of total visits)	Source: UN programme reports (UNFPA)

Outputs:

1. **Social protection:** Social protection systems and mechanisms are strengthened to increase the coverage, quality, and monitoring of cash benefits and social care services and affordable housing for vulnerable groups

2. **Education:** Education institutions have improved policy, digital knowledge, infrastructure, tools, and budgets to offer inclusive learning and 21st century skills¹²⁵ to boys and girls and especially vulnerable groups (all education levels and including in emergencies)

3. **Health care:** The health system has increased capacities to achieve SDG 3 and UHC targets, providing quality people-centred services¹²⁶ at an affordable cost, including during emergencies, and improving the social, economic and environmental determinants of health

4. **Shock responsive systems for effective disaster and pandemic preparedness and response:** Health and social protection systems have increased capacities to prepare for and respond to emergencies and pandemics and to promote increased community resilience

5. **Inclusive Community engagement:** Communities and CSOs enjoy greater capacities and working mechanisms to participate in planning, service delivery, and monitoring to enhance the quality of services and improve access for vulnerable groups

125. 21st century transversal skills (e.g. communication, team work and networking, critical thinking and problem solving, initiative and resilience) and deep skills in one or more trades e.g. ICT, boilermakers, millwrights, welders. EC, Skills for Industry Strategy 2030, 2019. See also; ILO, [Skill-up](#), dld Nov 2019; AES, [What are 21st century skills](#), dld 2020.

126. Health services include: Sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, newborn, child and adolescent health, non-communicable diseases and mental health, infectious diseases, and nutrition and Immunization services. Services also address access for persons with disabilities (e-health and telemedicine) and capacities to treat drug use disorders in line with international standards). Additional support will support enhanced coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Impact

National development priorities: NSDI II pillar 2. Economic growth through enhanced competitiveness and innovation; **NSDI II, pillar 3:** Investing in Human Capital and Social Cohesion; **NSDI II pillar 4.** Growth through sustainable use of resources (*Creating dynamic drivers of growth that generate opportunities and revenue; Strengthening the government's capability to deliver; Managing regional integration, natural hazards and migration*)

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023: 2.3.1 Energy and transport market reform; 2.3.2 Agriculture, industry and services; 2.3.3 Business environment and reduction of informal economy; 2.3.4 R&D, innovation and the digital economy; 2.3.5 Economic Integration Reforms; 2.3.7 Employment and labour markets

National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approx. to EU acquis chapters: 2, 11, 12, 19, 20, 26, 23-24, 25, 27

Regional frameworks: Sofia summit (regional cooperation for economy and trade, the digital agenda, research and innovation, connectivity, security, fight against corruption, promoting reconciliation and youth); The clean energy transition declaration (Podgorica); The regional connectivity and roaming agreement (Belgrade); The Roma integration declaration; MoU: 5G for digital transformation in Western Balkans (WB) 2020; MoU: Interoperability and trust services in WB, 2020

SDGs and targets: 1 No poverty: 1.5, 1.b; 2. Food security & agriculture: 2.3, 2.4, 2.a; 3. Health and well-being (3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6); 4. Quality education: 4.3 (Affordable quality VET), 4.4 (Skills for employment); 5. Gender equality: 5.1, 5.a; 6. Clean water & sanitation: 6.1, 6.4; 7. Affordable clean energy: 7.1, 7.2, 7.b; 8. Decent work & economic growth: 8.3 (Decent jobs, entrepreneurship, innovation) 8.5 (Unemployment rates); 8.9 (Sustainable tourism); 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure: 9.1, 9.3 (SMEs/SMAEs), 9.4, 9.5 (R&D), 9.b; 10. Reduced inequalities: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3; 11. Sustainable cities, communities: 11.3, 11.6, 11.b; 12. Sustainable Consumption and Production: 12.2, 12.7; 13. Climate change: 13.2 (GHG emissions); 15. Life on land: 15.1, 15.4, 15.b

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B.

SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Inclusive, resilient economic development and shared prosperity (including effective skills training, decent, formal sector jobs, entrepreneurship, support for green and blue economy transitions and increased production and incomes from agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, greater climate and disaster resilience and effective management of natural resources)

Outcome B.

By 2026 innovative and integrated policy solutions accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive economic development, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy

Indicators	Baseline:	Target:	Source:	Assumptions
a. Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP per capita (SDG 9.2.1)	6.5% (2019)	9.6 (2024)	ASN (INSTAT)	<p>There is political and policy commitment to green growth and sustainable consumption and production, in line with the European Green Deal¹²⁷ and Green Agenda for the Western Balkan Countries</p> <p>There is sustained government commitment to the EU accession process and progress for chapters 15 and 27 and implementation of the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan</p> <p>There is increasing policy priority and government investment to develop a strong blue economy, focused on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture</p> <p>There is increased recognition among the private sector and consumers about the importance of moving to circular economy and managing natural resources more sustainably.</p>
b. Volume of production per labour unit by type of enterprise (farming, forestry, fishery, aquaculture) (SDG 2.3.1 ¹²⁸)	Baseline: \$655	Target: \$790	Source: FAO (land portal)	
c. Labour force participation rates, by sex, age (→SDG 8.5.2; 8.6.1) ¹²⁹	Baseline: T: 69.6 (2019) M: 77.6 F: 61.6 YP (15-24) ¹³⁰ T:37 M: 43; F: 30	Target: T: 69.7 M: 77.7 F: 61.6 YP (15-24) T: 38 M: 44; F: 31	Source: INSTAT	
d. Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, by sex (SDG 8.6.1)	Baseline: T: 26 M:26 F: 25	Target: T: 21.4 M: 21 F: 22	Source: INSTAT	
e. Proportion of youth and adults with at least one ICT skill, by sex and age group (SDG 4.4.1)	Baseline: Total: 41 (2019) M: 22; F: 19 YP (15-24): 57 M: 56; F: 58	Target: T: 45 (2022) TBD M: 24;F 21 YP (15-24): 60 M:59; F: 61	Source: INSTAT	
f. Proportion of informal employment in non- agricultural sectors by sex (SDG 8.3.1)	Baseline: T: 30 (2019) M: 36 (2019) F: 22 (2019)	Target: 27	Source: LFS 2019 (INSTAT)	

127. This aims for EU countries to produce net zero CO2-equivalent emissions and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

128. SDG [Indicator 2.3.1](#) provides the value of average productivity of small-scale food producers (agricultural output per labour day, PPP) (constant 2011 international \$)

129. Note. Labour force participation (a choice/behaviour) is instrumental to moves in the overall employment rate (SDG 16.6.1).

130. For young persons: [ILOSTAT, modeled ILO estimate](#), Jan 2021.

g. Availability of enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce GhG emissions and adapt to climate change (based on EE and RES targets) (Y/N) (SDG13.2.1)	Baseline: NDC (2015)	Target: Yes	Source: GoA reports UN programme reports	There is political and popular recognition of the need to address informality and better integrate women, young people and vulnerable groups into the formal labour market.
h. No. new or amended laws, policies, regulations approved for environmental protection and sustainable green and blue growth ¹³¹) incorporating gender equity considerations and sex disaggregated data	Baseline: 3 (2020)	Target: 9	Source: GoA reports, strategies and legal framework UN programme reports	The government will scale-up proven job creation and employment activation measures for vulnerable groups and the long-term unemployed.
i. Degree of integrated water resources management ¹³² (SDG 6.5.1)	Baseline: 47 (0-100) (2020)	Target: 52	Source: UN Water	There is increasing investment in digital infrastructure, especially for remote and underserved area, as a precondition for digital economy and more effective e-government.
j. Proportion of the country covered by protected areas and under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (SDG15.1.2, proxy)	Baseline: 18.5%	Target: 23%	Source: National Agency for Protected Areas, MoE ¹³³	
k. Availability of i. National disaster risk reduction strategy and updated national emergency plan, and ii. Proportion of municipalities with disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework and incorporating gender equity and child rights considerations and sex disaggregated data ¹³⁴ (Y/N) (SDG 11.b.1)	Baseline: i. N (2020) ii. 1 (2020)	Target: i. Yes ii. 5	Source: GoA reports UN programme reports	
l. No. cities implementing green and smart action plans providing access to safe, healthy, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (SDG 11.7)	Baseline: 4 (Tirana, Durres, Vlora, Korca)	Target: 30	Source: GoA reports UN programme reports	

131. In sectors: water resources management, biodiversity conservation, air pollution, waste management, land management, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture

132. Integrated water resources management is lynchpin of sustainable development policy. MAPS

133. All protected areas comprise: National park 46%; Nature Managed Reserve 29%; Land/maritime protected areas 5%; Resource Reserve/ Multiple Use Area 4%; Ramsar network of wetlands 3%; Strict Nature Reserve/Scientific Reserve 1%; Biosphere reserve 1%.

134. Minimum standards: UNISDR, [Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines](#) (section 5.6)

m. Research and development (R&D) index score (WEF) (Albania was 126 of 141 countries in 2019 report and index)	Baseline: 17.2/100 (2019)	Target: 35.00	Source: World Competitiveness Report, WEF	
Outputs:				
1. Employment and skills development: Government institutions have increased capacities to strengthen policies and services that address the skills mismatch and increase labour force participation and decent work, especially for young people, vulnerable groups and the long term unemployed				
2. Sustainable and resilient economic growth and green and blue economy transition: Economic policy measures and programmes are designed, piloted, and tracked to promote sustainable, climate resilient, green and blue economic growth and women's economic empowerment with focus on 'building back better'				
3. Innovation: Policies and programme measures are developed to promote digital economy, entrepreneurship and growth of competitive SMEs/ SMAEs, and increased spending on R&D				
4. Climate and ecosystem resources¹³⁵: Planning and coordination mechanisms strengthened for climate change adaptation and mitigation and enhanced environmental management, conservation and protection, ensuring integration of gender equality commitments				
5. DRR: Policies, capacities and mechanisms enhanced for effective disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response at all levels				
6. Sustainable cities: Capacities of urban municipalities increased to implement sustainable development policies and programmes				

135. Including: Integrated water resources management, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land and forest management

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Impact

National development priorities: NSDI fundamental principle - Good Governance, Democracy and Rule of Law; NSDI II pillar 3. Investing in human capital and social cohesion; NSDI II priority: Delivery of innovative, citizen-centered public services (Improving the quality of life and the environment for all; Strengthening governance and the government's capability to deliver)

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023: 2.3.5 Economic Integration Reforms; 2.3.6 Education and skills; 2.3.7 Employment and labour markets; 2.3.8 Social protection and inclusion, including health care

National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approx. to EU acquis Ch: 5, 10, 22, 23-24, 32

Regional frameworks: European Agenda on Migration; The Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI)¹³⁶; Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI)¹³⁷; Social Agenda 2020 Regional Working Group (SAWG); Multi-annual Action Plan on Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans (MAP REA); other.

SDGs and targets: 5. Gender equality: 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.a, 5.c; 10. Reduced inequalities: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.7; 16. Peace justice and strong institutions: 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10, 16.b; 17. Partnerships for the goals: 17.18, 17.19.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C.

EFFECTIVE, PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

This priority is focused on transparent and accountable institutions, delivering quality, inclusive services, enabling rule of law and increased access to justice¹³⁸, and implementing human rights commitments

Outcome C1.

By 2026, governance is more transparent and accountable, enabling people (women and girls, men and boys, and persons at risk of exclusion), to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhanced rule of law and access to justice in line with Albania's human rights commitments

136. marri-rc.org

137. www.rai-see.org

138. Access to justice is a basic principle of the rule of law.

Indicators	Baseline (2020):	Target (2026):	Source:	Assumptions
a. Proportion of population who believe institutional transparency and accountability are satisfactory, by sex, age, disability and population group (disaggregated by central/local level) (SDG 16.6.1 proxy)	Baseline (2020): Central: T: 35%, A: 35% Local: T: 37%, A: 37%	Target (2026): Central: T: 50%, A: 60% Local: T: 50%, A: 60%	Source: Trust in Governance annual survey (UNDP)	<p>With negotiations for EU accession, there is increasing government and public support for justice system reform and more effective and transparent public administration</p> <p>Political polarization will not abate significantly with potential impacts on governance reform and social cohesion</p> <p>Following elections in 2021, the Government will sustain its commitments to approved, budgeted national strategies and ratified and legally binding international treaties and instruments</p>
b. Proportion of population who believe there are sufficient opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes of public institutions (disaggregated by sex, age group, central/local level) (SDG 16.7.2, proxy)	Baseline (2020): Central: 28% Local: 39%	Target (2026): Central: 40% Local: 50%	Source: Trust in Governance annual survey (UNDP)	
c. Proportion of persons who paid a bribe to a public official or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months (disaggregated by sex, age group, central/local level) (SDG16.5.1)	Baseline (2020): Central: 32 Local: 32	Target (2026): Central: 10 Local: 15	Source: UNDP Trust in Governance annual survey	
d. Level of implementation of accepted recommendations from the UPR and human rights treaty bodies (Rating 4-point scale: 4. Fully implemented; 3. Partially; 2. Inadequately; 1. Not/Poorly implemented)	Baseline: Partially	Target: Fully	Source: NHRI reports UN reports	
e. No. human rights complaints registered, by sex (Note. Effectiveness of remedial action assessed by routine annual programming monitoring with NHRI ¹³⁹)	Baseline (2019): T: 1,384 M: 919; F: 338 M&F: 127	Target: 10% increase Reported improvement in remedial actions	Source: INSTAT; NHRI reports UN reports	
f. Rate of (pre-trial) detention for Children (per 100,000 population aged 14–17 disaggregated by sex) (→SDG 16.3.2)	Baseline (2019): T: 12.3 M: 24; F: 0	Target: 8	Source: INSTAT; General Department of Prisons Ministry of Justice	
g. Extent to which laws are consistent/aligned with international standards relating to migrants, refugees, stateless persons (→ SDG 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.4.1) (Rating 4-point scale: 4. Fully aligned; 3. Partially; 2. Inadequately; 1. Not/Poorly aligned)	Baseline: Migrants: Partial Refugees: Partial Stateless persons: Partial	Target: 100% approximation of Albanian migration legislation with the EU legal framework and International standards	Source: GoA reports IOM, UNHCR reports	

139. Ombudsman, People's Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination

h. Extent to which the measures of the Action Plan of the National Strategy on Migration 2019-2022 are implemented	Baseline: 20%	Target (2022): 100%	Source: GoA periodic reports one implementation of the NSM
i. Existence of an approved comprehensive migration policy (Y/N)	Baseline: No (2020)	Target: Yes	Source: DCM on the approval of the new policy
j. World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law index, Civil Justice Sub-factor: 7.2 CIVIL JUSTICE IS FREE OF DISCRIMINATION f	Baseline (2020): 0.51	Target: 0.56 (Reg/Global avg.)	Source: WJP Rule of Law index
k. Proportion of seized assets used for public social purposes ¹⁴⁰ (SDG16.4 proxy)	Baseline: 4 properties confiscated for social use (2020)	Target: +12% (2026)	Source: GoA reports

1. **Access to justice:** Law enforcement and justice institutions have improved capacities, structures, tools, and evidence to address gaps in legislation and strengthen justice system performance in line with international and national standards.

2. **Good governance, participation and voice:** Integrated multi-sector mechanisms will be created and strengthened to support dialogue and strengthen policy formulation, based on good governance principles (Cooperation efforts will promote inclusion and build higher levels of trust in society, and enable rights holders, especially from excluded groups, to have greater access to information and services (including FLA), enabling them to voice their concerns, claim their rights in legal processes and to seek remedies violations.)

3. **Data and evidence:** Cooperation Framework partners have increased capacities to generate quality disaggregated data to strengthen policies and programmes (quantitative and qualitative, results-based, gender sensitive, responsive to demographic changes and the situation of vulnerable groups)

4. **Public sector accountability and quality services:** Institutions at national and municipal level have enhanced capacities and 'open-government' mechanisms to deliver quality services, promote consultation and participation, carry-out integrity planning, fight corruption and organized crime, and strengthen participation of civil society and citizens, in line with good governance principles, the Open Government Partnership, and international standards

5. **Accountability and oversight for human rights:** The Parliament, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and CSOs have strengthened capacities and mechanisms to assess the implementation of human rights and gender equality legislation, policies and strategies and to promote and protect the realisation of Albania's human rights and gender equality commitments

6. **Migration and asylum:** The Government has increased capacities to i. Strengthen policies and legislation for effective migration and asylum governance, ii. Enhance the management of mixed movements of refugees and migrants including reception and identification of persons with special needs, iii Offer effective protection for unaccompanied, separated foreign children, minors and women, and iv. Strengthen mechanisms for diaspora engagement

140. Pursuant to article 37 of Law no. 10192 of 2009: [On the prevention and crackdown on organized crime, trafficking and corruption through preventive measures against property](#). Seized or confiscated assets are to be re-directed toward social services and projects (e.g. centers for rehabilitation of victims of organized crime, violence, trafficking)

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Impact

National development priorities: NSDI II: Cross NSDI - Delivery of innovative, citizen-centered public services; NSDI II pillar 3. Investing in human capital and social cohesion

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023: 2.3.5 Economic Integration Reforms; 2.3.6 Education and skills; 2.3.7 Employment and labour markets; 2.3.8 Social protection and inclusion, including health care

National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approx. to EU acquis Ch: 5, 10, 22, 23-24, 32

Regional frameworks: Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023; EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III); other.

SDGs and targets: 5. Gender equality: 5.1, 5.a; Gender Equality Index for Albania (EIGE Methodology); 10. Reduced inequalities: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.7; 16; Peace justice and strong institutions: 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10, 16.b; 17. Partnerships for the goals: 17.18, 17.19.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C.

EFFECTIVE, PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

This priority is focused on transparent and accountable institutions, delivering quality, inclusive services, enabling rule of law and increased access to justice¹⁴¹, and implementing human rights commitments

Outcome C2.

By 2026, gender responsive governance strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women's empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children

141. Access to justice is a basic principle of the rule of law. <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/access-to-justice-and-rule-of-law-institutions/access-to-justice/>

Indicators	Baseline:	Target:	Source:	Assumptions
a. Rate of children, victims of criminal offenses, per 100,000 child population (0-17 years), last 12 months.	T: 203.1 (2019) F: 106.9 M: 294.8	20% decrease	INSTAT / Ministry of Interior	<p>There is increasing popular and political recognition of the need to address discrimination, exclusion and vulnerability in social sector policies and programmes</p> <p>Government acceptance of recommendations from human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms and the findings of the GoA review report for Beijing 25 create an enabling policy and fiscal environment for continuing work in this area</p>
b. Proportion of children 1-14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month disaggregated by sex and age group (SDG 16.2.1)	Baseline: Total: 47.5 % 2-4 years: 43 5-9 years: 51 10-14 years: 46 Male: 49 Female: 45	Target: 30 pp decrease	Source: INSTAT (DHS/ MICS)	
c. Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to i) intimate partner domestic violence; ii) non-partner violence; iii) sexual harassment in the previous 12 months (SDG5.2.1; 5.2.2)	Baseline: 33.7 2.4 iii) 8.5	Target: 32 2 8	Source: INSTAT	
d. Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (SDG 5.3.1)	Baseline: 1.4 (under 15) 11.8 (under 18)	Target: 1 (under 15) 11 (under 18)	Source: INSTAT (DHS/ MICS)	
e. Availability of approved legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex (SDG5.1.1) (Yes/No)	Baseline: TBD 2022	Target: TBD 2022	Source: MoHSP NHRI reports UN reports	
f. Existence of systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) (SDG5.c.1)142	Baseline: Approaches requirement (2018)	Target: Meets requirement	Source: GoA reports UN reports143	
g. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments (SDG5.5.1) and national dialogue mechanisms	Baseline: 29.5% (2019)	Target: 40% (2026)	Source: INSTAT	

142. Methodology for measuring progress against indicator 5.c.1 <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-0c-01.pdf>

143. <https://data.unwomen.org/country/albania>

Outputs:

1 End violence against women and children: Government institutions at central and local levels and CSOs service providers have increased capacities to prevent and respond to all forms of violence and exploitation against women and children, with focus on vulnerable groups and multidisciplinary, specialized services for the rehabilitation of children suffering sexual abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, and mental health challenges

2 Addressing gender stereotypes and harmful norms and practices: Influential leaders, communities, families, men and boys, women and girls have improved knowledge and capacities to address harmful norms, stereotypes, and behaviors that drive gender discrimination, VAW, VAC, child marriage (Including intersection with other grounds of discrimination: age, ethnicity, dis/ability, migrant background, socioeconomic background).

3 Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting: Government institutions at central and local levels have increased capacities to plan, budget, monitor, track expenditures, and leverage resources for GEWE in targeted sectors.

4 Gender Equality Mechanisms: National Gender Machinery and public administration at central and local level have increased capacities support and monitor implementation of international and national commitments and EU priorities for gender equality (CEDAW, BPfA, Istanbul Convention, UNSCR1325, Agenda 2030 and SDG5).

5 Leadership and Participation: Women and girls and gender equality advocates have increased capacities and opportunities to lead, participate, and influence decision making processes at national and local level.

ANNEX B.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan

Provided separately, the consolidated and synchronized planned MEL initiatives (e.g. surveys, census, evaluations, reviews, and studies) of UN system agencies in order to strengthen coordination and improve cost-effectiveness.

ANNEX C.

Gaps and challenges to achieve the SDGs

This annex provides a summary of the major gaps and challenges for achievement of the SDGs. These informed the selection of strategic priorities and outcomes for cooperation. As such, not all SDGs are covered. For more comprehensive analysis of all SDGs, see: Albania, [Voluntary National Review](#) on Sustainable Development Goals, 2018 and UN System Common Country Analysis (CCA)¹⁴⁴.

SDG 1 Poverty: The country remains one of the poorest in Europe. Per-capita GDP is about one third the EU average and in 2017 more than 1 in 3 Albanians lived on less than US \$5.50 per day (PPP) – similar to 2008¹⁴⁵. In 2018 the ‘at-risk’ of poverty rate was 23%¹⁴⁶ and 27% among households with dependent children. Household consumption, fuelled by remittances, accounts for about 9% of GDP and expansion of the tax base and reduction of the informal economy are major policy challenges¹⁴⁷. One third of employment is informal¹⁴⁸ and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic many families struggled to meet their basic needs. There is great risk that many will become newly poor as lockdowns and mobility restrictions affect construction and manufacturing¹⁴⁹.

Social protection: Social care and protection systems offer insufficient protection from poverty shocks¹⁵⁰. Albania invests about 12% of GDP in social protection, significantly lower than most of its neighbours and EU member states¹⁵¹ and under-investment in social protection was a likely factor in simultaneously rising GDP and poverty headcounts between 2008 and 2012¹⁵². Current protection schemes do not reflect the integrated dimensions of poverty and deprivation: education, health care, and housing. Roma and Egyptian populations, persons with disabilities, isolated rural communities and especially rural women, and at-risk children are highly vulnerable. Social care or the publicly funded, non-financial components of social protection (*e.g. child protection; social inclusion*) have been devolved to municipalities and are provided mostly by CSOs that lack institutional and financial capacities¹⁵³.

SDG 2 Food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture: **Malnutrition** is a critical issue, especially for children and pregnant women; 11% of children aged 6 to 59 months are stunted and 1 in 4 anemic¹⁵⁴. The prevalence of obesity in both men and women has increased by nearly a third

144. UN, CCA, *ibid.* See a summary of major gaps and challenges, based on the SDGs in Annex B.

145. World Bank, Systematic Country Diagnostic, 2019. 19, 49.

146. INSTAT data in UNCT, Common Country Analysis (CCA), 2020 (draft) 25; UNICEF Albania, Background papers on deprivations facing children, 2020.

147. CCA, *ibid.*, 5.

148. ILOSTAT data in World Bank, *ibid.*, 29.

149. European Commission (EC), Commission Staff Working Document Albania 2020 Report (EC, **Albania Report**), 6.10.2020 SWD(2020), 88-89. Informal employment in the non-agricultural sector at 30% (LFS 2019). The highest percentage of informal employment was reported in trade activities (42%), manufacturing (17%) and construction (17%).

150. World Bank, [The Distributional impact of Albania's fiscal system](#), 2018. The benefits of social protection spending (*e.g.*, pensions, Ndihma Ekonomike social assistance) are outweighed by the regressive impact of direct and indirect taxes, especially the value-added (VAT) and excise taxes

151. United Nations, Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Albania (MAPS-Albania), 2018, 15-16. In 2015: Croatia 22%; Greece 26%; Serbia 23%, based on ILO, World Social Protection Report, 2017-2019.

152. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 14.

153. (1) World Bank, [The Distributional impact of Albania's fiscal system](#), 2018; (2) UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 66-68. This is because: a. a relatively small share of GDP is captured and redistributed via government budgets; b. Corruption and informality have interfered with more effective targeting and delivery of social protection benefits; c. Informal coping mechanisms such as subsistence agriculture and remittances may be more important for vulnerable households than formal social protection; d. On-going governance reforms and decentralisation have placed social policy, targeting and delivery mechanisms in a state of flux.

154. UNICEF Albania, Background papers on deprivations facing children, 2020; European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document Albania 2019 Report, Brussels, 29.5.2019, 93.

in recent years¹⁵⁵. **Agriculture** contributes 19% of GDP and employs about one-third workers, but it faces declining importance in terms of government spending¹⁵⁶. Most farms are family owned and the average size is 1.3 hectares compared to an EU average of 14 ha. Women head only 6.5% of all farms and are often excluded from decision-making¹⁵⁷. Small scale farms receive a small share of overall government investment in agriculture. The agrifood sector is characterized by a lack of market institutions, inefficient distribution channels, and struggles to meet national and international quality and food safety standards¹⁵⁸.

SDG 3 Good health and well-being: Aspects of health system performance lag significantly behind the EU¹⁵⁹. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and road injuries are the leading causes of premature mortality. The neonatal mortality rate at 6.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018 accounting for 70% of all infant deaths¹⁶⁰. In 2019, public spending on health as a share of GDP was 2.9%, less than in the EU¹⁶¹, with under-funding of primary health care (PHC), high out-of-pocket payments by households, fragmented health information systems and out-migration of skilled health providers. Barriers to accessing quality health services are apparent in the high out-of-pocket costs, estimated at more than half of household health expenditures. Major priorities include: (a) Ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age and improving coverage and quality of essential health care services for mothers and newborns; (b) Ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services, in line with EU human and reproductive rights policies¹⁶²; and (c) Halving deaths from road traffic accidents and improving quality and access to mental health services¹⁶³. Ensuring access to quality health services is especially important for persons with disabilities, Roma, and other marginalized communities¹⁶⁴. The COVID-19 pandemic aggravates spotlights this situation, with the risk of an overloaded health system. The primary health care strategy calls to increase the health budget from approximately 10 to 25% of government spending and this is essential to respond effectively to this and future pandemics¹⁶⁵.

SDG 4 Quality education: Despite major education reforms¹⁶⁶, there are significant disparities in access to quality education, especially between rural and urban areas and between ethnic Albanian, Roma and Balkan Egyptian populations¹⁶⁷. Current spending on public education is about 3.1% of GDP compared to an average of 5% in OECD countries. While access for excluded groups of children, especially children with disabilities and Roma, has increased, they still face barriers and discrimination to school attendance and learning¹⁶⁸. Children with disabilities face continuing barriers such as

155. CCA, *ibid.*, 27.

156. FAO, 2020. Albania's [Agriculture orientation index](#) value of 0.14 in 2018 suggests significantly weaker orientation of government policy and spending on agriculture relative to its contribution to GDP. Comparators: Croatia 1.59; Greece 0.17; Romania 0.64; and Serbia 0.28.

157. FAO, *Smallholders and family farms in Albania. Country study report, 2020*, 38.

158. CCA, *ibid.*, 20 based on Eurostat and INSTAT data.

159. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 72. For example: infant and child mortality, deaths and injuries due to road traffic accidents, data on adolescent births access to modern contraception, access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis, and cervical screening and other aspects of gynecological health-particularly in rural and remote areas)

160. CCA, *ibid.*, 9.

161. CCA, *ibid.*, 27-28.

162. See, for example, [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#), European Parliament (Brussels, 2016).

163. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 72.

164. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 74.

165. CCA, *ibid.*, 28.

166. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 19. Including: curriculum development, ICT in education, special curricula for pre-school education, teacher training for children with disabilities, and a single legal framework for all providers of TVET.

167. The EU's April 2018 annual report on EU accession notes that "the enrolment of Roma and Egyptians in pre-school education increased by 5%, in elementary schools by 25%, in middle school and high school by 27%, and in pre-university education by 22 %. However, their enrolment rates remain very low overall."

168. UNDP, World Bank and EC, 2017. *Regional Roma Survey, Albania*. Access of Roma in education increased from 44 percent (2011) to 66 percent (2017). But most Roma ages 18 to 21 have not finished a basic level of education

inaccessible infrastructure and a lack of differentiation in curriculum and teaching methods. Many schools and learning institutions lack basic infrastructure and services, especially ICT.

Renewed efforts are needed to strengthen the quality of the education system and improve learning outcomes which are not commensurate with investment¹⁶⁹. Establishing a foundation for learning in the early years (pre-primary level) is essential for success¹⁷⁰. Education and training systems need to focus on providing young graduates with the knowledge and skills for success in a dynamic EU-oriented labour market. This will require a greater emphasis curriculum and teaching methods that promote critical thinking, analytical skills, and problem solving, and implementation of comprehensive legislation and strategy for inclusive education. Expanded investment in the physical infrastructure must be paired with capacity development for teachers and school administrators, especially to employ ICT and digital learning resources.

SDG 5 Gender equality¹⁷¹: Despite significant progress in the area of legislation and commitments to gender equality gender-based social exclusion is still a reality for most girls and women. This can be seen in key indicators including employment and labour force participation, the gender wage gap¹⁷², access to and control of resources including land, violence against women and girls, and access to justice. Barriers include: rigid and traditional gender roles in both private and public life, inequalities in health care and education, and obstacles to women's participation in elections and to serve as political representatives¹⁷³. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is pervasive, exacerbated by traditional perceptions of gender roles and patriarchal values: In 2019, one in three women ages 18 to 74 have experienced one or more of five forms of violence recently, while one in two have experienced it in their lifetime¹⁷⁴. Several groups have been identified as especially vulnerable: Older women, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, women in detention, and secluded women and asylum-seeking women. The gap between legislation and eradication of gender-based violence and discrimination remains considerable and these problems are compounded by a lack of data on women with multiple vulnerabilities and corresponding measures across sectors.

SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth: Unemployment, largely long term and structural was 11% in 2019, with youth unemployment at 21%¹⁷⁵. The labour force participation rate was 70% in 2019 (62% for women) and a quarter of young people are not in education, employment or training¹⁷⁶. There is a skills mismatch and inclusion of vulnerable people in the labour market¹⁷⁷ is a challenge with more than half of the poor population is inactive, unemployed or not in education (NEET)¹⁷⁸. Unemployment and underemployment is particularly high in rural areas and among the Roma and

169. CCA, *ibid.*, 48. In 2018, students scored lower than OECD averages for reading, mathematics and science in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

170. CCA, *ibid.*, 49.

171. This summary informed by the UN Women [Gender Equality Brief for Albania](#) 2020. It indicates how gender and other forms of discrimination intersect and affect women's status and human rights, undermining ongoing efforts towards sustainable development.

172. World Bank, SCD, *ibid.*, 50. A gender wage gaps in favour of men of about 15%.

173. CCA, *ibid.*, 15. Including gender stereotypes, negative perceptions, and legal obstacles, contributing to lack of fairness in the electoral process and fewer electoral resources.

174. INSTAT, UNDP and UN Women, VAWG Survey, 2019. Forms of violence: intimate partner violence, dating violence, non-partner violence, sexual harassment, or stalking.

175. CCA, *ibid.*, 5. Persons unemployed for more than 1 year represents 66% of all unemployment.

176. [ILOSTAT](#), October 2020.

177. CCA, *ibid.*, 18.

178. INSTAT, 2018. Labour Force Survey (LFS). Unemployment benefit is received by fewer than ten percent of those who are looking for a job.

Egyptian communities¹⁷⁹. The pandemic has increased economic insecurity with risks that more children could be forced into exploitative and hazardous jobs¹⁸⁰. Raising the labour force participation of women, especially young women, and the quality of their employment is central to more inclusive growth, pandemic recovery, and stronger economic competitiveness¹⁸¹. The domestic-oriented growth model is insufficient to close the gap with EU living standards and achieve the SDGs¹⁸². There are few incentives for high technology adoption and little diversification in industry and exports beyond food, garments and minerals. Tourism is a growth engine, accounting for about 27% of GDP in 2019, but has suffered from the pandemic. In 2017, nearly all businesses were small and medium enterprises (SMEs), but they lack an innovation environment focused on smart skills and digital technologies will enable new production lines with higher complexity and greater value-added. Digital infrastructure is a precondition for development of the digital economy and innovation in industry, e-Government, e-Health, provision of interoperable services and of cross-border services.

SDG 10 Reduced inequalities: Rapid economic growth has not narrowed gaps in economic and social inequality. Unequal treatment of excluded groups is driven by stereotypes, intolerance, and racism. These are also reflected low political will to implement and enforce legal and policy frameworks to combat discrimination¹⁸³. A lack of progress toward greater cohesion, gender equality and non-discrimination will result in increasing deprivations (e.g health, education, housing, training, employment) and increased out-migration¹⁸⁴.

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities: Albania is highly exposed to disaster risks¹⁸⁵: Average annual disaster losses have been assessed at 2.5% of GDP¹⁸⁶. Vulnerabilities are compounded by high levels of poverty, infrastructure deficits, rapid urbanisation and depletion of natural resources. Greater resilience is impeded by weak or fragmented institutional capacities and the absence of a national platform and strategy for disaster risk reduction (DRR), in line with the Sendai Framework¹⁸⁷. Recent disasters, including the 2019 earthquake, highlight the need for increased resilience at community level and strengthened coordination and capacities to mitigate, manage and recover from shocks¹⁸⁸. The focus on replacing assets rather than determining root causes for failure and building back better affect a range of issues including out-migration, tourism, and Albania's economic competitiveness.

SDG 13 Climate action: In 2019, as part of its commitment to the Paris Agreement and emissions reduction targets (NDC), Albania was the first country in the region to adopt a national climate change strategy and action plan¹⁸⁹. The current NDC does not include adaptation measures needed to integrate environmental and climate considerations into the national regulatory framework with measures tailored to the situation of

179. For example: 22% of marginalised Roma of age 18-24 years are in employment, education or training compared to 58 percent of non-Roma. Only 18% of Roma of age 15-64 years are employed, compared to 27% of non-Roma. CCA, *ibid.*, 61.

180. CCA, *ibid.*, 49.

181. UN MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 63.

182. World Bank, SCD, *ibid.*, 11.

183. CCA, *ibid.*, 71.

184. CCA, *ibid.*, 25, 82.

185. CCA, *ibid.*, 23. Nearly 90% of GDP and 86% of total territory has high disaster exposure. According to INFORM Risk Index, Albania's coping capacity index value of 4.2/10 is second highest in the Western Balkans.

186. UN. MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 58. See, for example, [Albania's Civil Protection System and Its Related Regional Cooperation](#), Institute for Democracy and Mediation (Tirana), pp. 1, 3.

187. The global [Sendai Framework](#) for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)

188. CCA, *ibid.*, 30. For example: the 2019 civil emergencies law establishes a new National Agency for Civil Protection but it has limited funding and capacity. Albania is not yet participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and is not yet linked to the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS).

189. CCA, *ibid.*, 29. A draft law 'On Climate Change' partly transposing provisions of the EU Emissions Trading Directive, is yet to be adopted.

excluded groups. For example: (a) Energy subsidies are unsustainable, skew pricing, discourage investments in energy efficiency, and crowd-out private investment and dependence of hydropower contributes to vulnerability; (b) Projected declines in precipitation underscore the need for climate-resilient adaptation for agricultural and water-management challenges¹⁹⁰; (c) There is great potential for wind, solar, and biomass power generation¹⁹¹, greatly increasing the country's resilience to climate change¹⁹².

SDG 15 Environmental sustainability: Water and air pollution, land degradation, biodiversity loss and waste management are major environmental challenges. Rapid urbanisation and increasing demand for natural resources has led to increasing depletion and degradation. Across the Western Balkans urban residents lose an estimated 1.3 years of life due to air pollution, caused by the burning of lignite coal¹⁹³. The importance of hydropower¹⁹⁴ and irrigated agriculture puts water at the heart of the country's energy and rural development challenges. Over-exploitation of surface and groundwater has reduced water quality and availability and projected declines in precipitation underscore the need for climate-resilient adaptation. Waste and wastewater management is inadequate with municipal waste being disposed in 78 non-compliant municipal landfills. Despite the approval of important strategies that address the environment and climate change adaptation, there are significant gaps to comply with EU legislation and standards¹⁹⁵. Most strategies are gender-blind and hinder access to and management of assets such as land, forestry and pastures, technology and extension services¹⁹⁶.

SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions: Governance reforms are a priority of both government and people, including judicial reform, efforts to reduce corruption and organised crime, and better protect human rights. There is a stronger institutional framework for anti-corruption, but it is hampered by duplication, jurisdictional tensions, and information gaps. Effective coordination and management of existing anti-corruption structures and resources is critical¹⁹⁷. The judiciary consistently receives the lowest public trust ratings and it is unable to defend the rights or welfare of excluded groups¹⁹⁸. For example, children face a range of types of violence and exploitation at home, at school, and in the community with 1 in 4 adolescents reporting physical abuse once or twice in their lifetime, internet bullying and sexual abuse is a significant issue, and in 2018 children represented 71% of the victims of human trafficking¹⁹⁹. Implementation of accepted recommendations from the UPR and other human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms will provide better access to justice, discourage corruption, promote foreign and domestic investment, and allow Albania to compete more successfully in the global economy. However, implementation of these measures remains inconsistent and under-funded²⁰⁰.

190. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 57.

191. CCA, *ibid.*, 230, 28. Estimated solar power potential assessed at 1,500–1,700 kWh/m² per annum; Biomass from agricultural waste, assessed at approximately 2,300 GWh/year; UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 77-78.

192. CCA, *ibid.*, 23, 28.

193. CCA, *ibid.*, 76.

194. Government of Albania (GoA), [National Action Plan for Renewable Energy Resources in Albania](#) 2015-2020. Currently, 35% of hydropower potential is used. Environmental trade-offs underline the need for urgent efforts to increase the share of renewable energy sources.

195. The [EU acquis](#) contains provisions addressing climate change, water and air quality, waste management, nature protection, industrial pollution, chemicals, noise and civil protection

196. CCA, *ibid.*, 29-30.

197. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 50-51.

198. UN, MAPS-Albania, *ibid.*, 50. The [Access to Justice Assessment](#) in Albania mentions that almost half of the population has had legal problems in the last five years, and that most of these have gone unresolved due to a lack of legal awareness in society and the underperformance of judicial institutions.

199. UNICEF Albania, Background papers on deprivations facing children, 2020.

200. European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document Albania 2019 Report, Brussels, 29.5.2019, 7-11. Executive and legislative bodies do not pay sufficient attention to these oversight bodies and their recommendations, while the Parliament is yet to strengthen its public oversight role or hold the executive accountable for implementation gaps

SDG 17 Partnership for the goals: ODA inflows are small relative to foreign direct investment (FDI) and remittances and government budget revenues. EU financing under the instrument for pre-accession (IPA) is the largest component of ODA at about \$100 million annually or 1% of GDP (MAPS 78). International financial inflows, particularly remittances, have fuelled consumption-based economic growth, but investment overall is insufficient to put Albania on the path to sustainable development. Increased financial flows to achieve the SDGs in Albania are unlikely to come from ODA. This will depend upon governance reforms to improve rule of law, reduce corruption, strengthen delivery of services and the country's investment climate²⁰¹. Alternative financing instruments may have potential to leverage greater financing for the SDGs, as well as supporting implementation of the national recovery efforts from the 2019 earthquake and COVID-19 pandemic²⁰².

For all challenges there are two cross-cutting concerns: (a) Effective policy and programme responses will depend upon the quality and availability of disaggregated **statistics** to implement and monitor evidence-based policies and plans and nationalized SDG goals and targets to which they will contribute. There are critical data gaps for both the SDGs and EU accession agenda²⁰³; (b) Gender-based discrimination and exclusion is driven by entrenched patriarchal attitudes and deeply rooted stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of men and women within the family and society.

201. UN, MAPS-Albania, 6, 20.

202. CCA, *ibid.*, 80-1. For example: Impact investing (Social or Development Impact Bonds, Blue Bonds, Green Bonds), equity-based crowdfunding, forecast-based financial mechanisms, microfinance, or debt-for-nature swaps

203. Albania produces regular data for 83 out of the 244 global indicators in the SDG monitoring framework (34%). Data for a further 56 indicators (23%) is partially available. The most critical SDGs, for which there are no indicators with targets established are **Goals 10, 12, 13 and 16**. SDGs with a low share of indicators with mid-term targets to the total number of indicators per SDG (10-15 percent) are **Goals 1, 11, 14, 17**. UN, Gap analysis – SDG global indicators in Albania, Working paper, 2020.

ANNEX D.

Cooperation Framework outcomes and human rights commitments of Albania

The following table summarises major linkages between Cooperation Framework outcomes and the human rights commitments of Albania. This summary is based upon a detailed analysis of recommendations from Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW). This list is *not exhaustive*. Rather the intent is to demonstrate the strong correlation between planned Cooperation Framework outcomes and critical human rights recommendations accepted by the Government.

Recommendation	Human Rights Mechanism
OUTCOME A.	
95.87 Adopt a national strategy to tackle extreme poverty (Cyprus)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.88 Continue to strengthen social policies to combat poverty and social inequality by consolidating national programmes to promote employment and access to education, food, health care and social assistance for national minorities and other vulnerable groups of the population (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.98 Adopt policies that ensure the right to health of the population without any discrimination (Uruguay)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.17 Take concrete and effective action to eliminate discrimination faced by Roma, Egyptian and other minorities, and ensure access to services, education and employment (Australia)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.109 Strive to facilitate access to compulsory and full-time education for all girls and boys, including members of minority groups, those with disabilities and those living in rural and remote areas, including, inter alia, through the improvement of school infrastructure, teacher training and the provision of human, technical and financial resources (Serbia)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.193 Ensure effective implementation of national legislation to address structural problems in providing social care services and access to quality education and employment to persons with disabilities (India)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.48 Take legal and administrative measures to prevent and punish hate speech and hate crimes against migrants and the Roma community and to guarantee the rights of migrants to health, education, housing and other basic services (Mexico)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
19. The Committee remains concerned that Roma and Egyptians continue to face difficulties in the areas of employment, education, health, housing and access to services. The Committee takes note of the information provided in the State party report on the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016–2020, which identifies six priority sectors: civil registration and access to justice; education and promotion of intercultural dialogue; employment, vocational education and training; health care; housing and urban integration; and social protection (CERD/C/ALB/9-12, para. 85). While also noting the significant efforts to collect data on socio-economic indicators, the Committee remains concerned that a strategy for objective evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the National Action Plan and other special measures seems to be lacking (art. 5).	CERD/C/ALB/CO/9-12 (CERD 2019)
OUTCOME B.	
95.28 Strengthen its national disaster preparedness plans to ensure that appropriate national and local measures are in place to adapt to changing climate conditions and to reduce risks from future disasters (Fiji)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)

Recommendation	Human Rights Mechanism
95.29 Take into account the vulnerabilities and needs of women, children, youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons and other marginalized groups in developing policies on climate change and disaster risk management (Fiji)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.30 Continue to build institutional capacity, data and knowledge to integrate environmental and climate considerations more fully into the national regulatory framework and develop new capacities and systems for implementation and compliance monitoring across major sectors (Fiji)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.86 Continue to promote economic and social development, further raise people's living standard and lay a solid foundation for its people to enjoy all human rights (China)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.31 Incorporate policies to meet relevant Sustainable Development Goals when drafting new national strategies (Myanmar)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
21. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information on the involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction and management strategies, as well as the lack of accessible information for persons with disabilities on how to react in situations of risk, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.	CRPD/C/ALB/CO/1 (CRPD 2019)
44. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Amend its legislation by adopting effective safeguards to ensure that impairment cannot be used to avoid employing persons with disabilities, in line with the human rights model of disability enshrined in the Convention; (b) Further promote employment in the open labour market, in both the public and private sectors, with a particular emphasis on women, in close consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, including women's organizations; (c) Collect statistical data on the employment rate and situation of persons with disabilities disaggregated by sex, age, type of employment and salary and on the impact of Law No. 15/2019.	CRPD/C/ALB/CO/1 (CRPD 2019)
43. The Committee notes with concern that the State party's legislation still allows for persons with disabilities to be declared lacking in capacity to work. The Committee is concerned about the fact that persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, are particularly affected by unemployment. The Committee is also concerned that there are no comprehensive and comparable data on the situation of persons with disabilities employed in the public sector and on the impact of Law No. 15/2019.	CRPD/C/ALB/CO/1 (CRPD 2019)
OUTCOME C1.	
95.53 Strengthen efforts to proactively fight corruption in public administration, inter alia, by improving the efficiency and transparency of public service delivery, training civil servants, establishing more transparent recruitment procedures and strengthening the administration's capacity to undertake merit-based recruitment (Austria)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.51 Take further steps to combat corruption in the judiciary, law enforcement institutions and all branches of government (Australia)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.55 Enhance the efforts aimed at combating corruption and fully implement the recommendations on transparency of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (Lithuania)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.42 Appropriate sufficient funds to support the Ministry of Interior's vetting system under the law on vetting of the State Police, the Republican Guard and the Police Internal Affairs Service (United States of America)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.76 Strengthen the capacities of first line officers, including border and immigration police and those working in centres for irregular migrants and asylum centres, so as to improve the situation of victims of trafficking and their access to justice (Honduras)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)

Recommendation	Human Rights Mechanism
16. The Committee recommends that the State party finalize the adoption of the National Strategy on Migration Governance for 2019–2022 and its action plan, and ensure that it adheres to the Convention and provides for a comprehensive gender-responsive and human rights-based migration policy and strategy. The Committee also recommends that the State party take effective measures, with clear time frames, indicators, monitoring and evaluation benchmarks, to implement the national strategy and its action plan, and provide sufficient human, technical and financial resources for its implementation. The Committee further requests that the State party include in its next periodic report updated information, supported by statistics, on the concrete measures taken to implement the strategy and its action plan, the results obtained and the difficulties encountered.	CMW/C/ALB/CO/2 (CMW 2019)
30. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that migrant workers and members of their families, including those in an irregular situation, have, in law and in practice, opportunities equal to those of nationals of the State party to file complaints and to obtain effective redress in courts in cases where their rights under the Convention have been violated. The Committee also recommends that the State party take additional measures to inform migrant workers and members of their families, including those in an irregular situation, about judicial remedies and reparations available to them in cases of violation of their rights under the Convention. It further recommends that the State party provide legal assistance to them to facilitate their access to justice in cases of violation of their rights under the Convention, and provide statistics and examples of such cases in its next periodic report.	CMW/C/ALB/CO/2 (CMW 2019)
10. The Committee recommends that the State party take appropriate measures, including through training, to ensure that judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law enforcement officials have sufficient knowledge of the provisions of the Convention to enable them to evoke or apply the provisions in relevant cases. It requests the State party to include in its next periodic report specific examples of the application of the Convention by domestic courts.	CERD/C/ALB/CO/9-12 (CERD 2019)
OUTCOME C2.	
95.130 Put into effect a follow-up plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, specifically on the prevention of domestic violence, rehabilitation of victims and engagement with perpetrators, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Netherlands)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.147 Better protect victims of domestic violence, in particular women and children (Germany)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.123 Continue the fight against inequalities between men and women, in particular by allocating the necessary resources to combat violence against women (Canada)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.142 Provide ongoing training for police, judges, health professionals, victim support services and other professional institutions dealing with victims of gender-based and domestic violence (Republic of Moldova)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.124 Continue efforts to change the prevalent gender stereotypes, combat domestic violence and further promote the participation of women in political and public life (Czech Republic)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.166 Continue to implement policies to systematically and effectively combat violence against children (Chile)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
95.18 Fight discrimination against persons belonging to minorities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and accelerate the adoption of legislation for the application of the laws on persons belonging to minorities, persons with disabilities and free legal aid (France)	A/HRC/42/4 (UPR 2019)
16. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech, the Committee recommends that the State party:	CERD/C/ALB/CO/9-12 (CERD 2019)
(a) Take appropriate measures to strongly condemn and distance itself from racist hate speech and discriminatory statements in public discourse, including by political figures at the State and local levels;	
(b) Effectively investigate, prosecute and punish, as appropriate, acts of hate speech, including those committed by public figures, in particular politicians, especially during election campaigns.	

ANNEX E.

Legal annex

Whereas the Government of Albania (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Government’) has entered into the following relationships:

Agency	Agreement
FAO	The Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the Establishment of an FAO Representation in the Republic of Albania signed on 1 December 2014
IAEA	The Revised Supplementary Agreement Concerning the Provision of Technical Assistance by the International Atomic Energy Agency to the Government of Albania signed on 12 November 1983
ILO	A Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the Government of Albania and ILO on 6 February 2013
IOM	Agreement between Albania and the International Organization for Migration in Relation to Juridical Status, Privileges and the Immunity of this Organization in Albania on 2 October 1992.
UNDP	‘Standard Basic Assistance Agreement’ signed between the Government and UNDP on 17 June 1991.
UNEP	Mutatis mutandis the SBAA between the Government of Albania and UNDP applies
UNFPA	Mutatis mutandis the SBAA between the Government of Albania and UNDP applies
UNHCR	UNHCR Branch Office Agreement (BOA) with the Government of Albania signed on 22 June 1994
UNICEF	A Basic Cooperation Agreement (BCA) concluded between the Government of Albania and UNICEF 23 July 1993
UNIDO	Standard Basic Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and UNIDO, signed and entered into force on 8 November 1991
UNODC	Mutatis mutandis the SBAA between the Government of Albania and UNDP applies
UNOPS	Mutatis mutandis the SBAA between the Government of Albania and UNDP applies
UNV	Mutatis mutandis the SBAA between the Government of Albania and UNDP applies
UN WOMEN	The Basic Agreement concluded between the Government and the United Nations Development Programme on 17 June 1991 (the “Basic Agreement”) mutatis mutandis applies to the activities and personnel of UN WOMEN. Assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of UN Women’s governing structures.
WHO	Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) between the Ministry of Health of Albania and the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization for the period 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2021 signed on November 12 th 2020.

For all UN system agencies including ITU, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNDRR assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of the competent UN system agency’s governing structures

The **COOPERATION FRAMEWORK** will, in respect of each of the United Nations system agencies signing, be read, interpreted, and implemented in accordance with and in a manner that is consistent with the basic agreement between such United Nations system agency and the Government of Albania.

The Government will honour its commitments in accordance with the provisions of the cooperation and assistance agreements outlined in paragraph on the Basis of the Relationship.

Without prejudice to these agreements, the Government shall apply the respective provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (the "General Convention") or the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (the "Specialized Agencies Convention") to the Agencies' property, funds, and assets and to their officials and experts on mission.

The Government shall also accord to the Agencies and their officials and to other persons performing services on behalf of the Agencies, the privileges, immunities and facilities as set out in the cooperation and assistance agreements between the Agencies and the Government. In addition, it is understood that all United Nations Volunteers shall be assimilated to officials of the Agencies, entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to such officials under the General Convention or the Specialized Agencies Convention. The Government will be responsible for dealing with any claims, which may be brought by third parties against any of the Agencies and their officials, experts on mission or other persons performing services on their behalf and shall hold them harmless in respect of any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is mutually agreed by Government and a particular Agency that such claims and liabilities arise from gross negligence or misconduct of that Agency, or its officials, advisors or persons performing services.

Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Government shall insure or indemnify the Agencies from civil liability under the law of the country in respect of vehicles provided by the Agencies but under the control of or use by the Government.

Nothing in this Agreement shall imply a waiver by the UN or any of its Agencies or Organizations of any privileges or immunities enjoyed by them or their acceptance of the jurisdiction of the courts of any country over disputes arising of this Agreement".

Nothing in or relating to this document will be deemed a waiver, expressed or implied, of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, including WFP, whether under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13th February 1946, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 21st November 1947, as applicable, and no provisions of this document or any Institutional Contract or any Undertaking will be interpreted or applied in a manner, or to an extent, inconsistent with such privileges and immunities.

HARMONIZED APPROACH TO CASH TRANSFERS

Cash assistance for travel, stipends, honoraria and other costs shall be set at rates commensurate with those applied in the country, but not higher than those applicable to the United Nations system (as stated in the ICSC circulars).

UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women use a harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT). All cash transfers to an Implementing Partner are based on the Work Plans agreed between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies. Cash assistance for travel, stipends, honoraria and other costs shall be set at rates commensurate with those applied in the country, but not higher than those applicable to the United Nations system (as stated in the ICSC circulars).

Cash transfers for activities detailed in the joint work plans can be made by the UN system agencies using the following modalities:

1. Cash transferred to the Government of Albania for forwarding to the Implementing Partner:
 - a. Prior to the start of activities (direct cash transfer), or
 - b. After activities have been completed (reimbursement).
2. Direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner.
3. Direct payments to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners.

Direct cash transfers shall be requested and released for programme implementation periods not exceeding three months. Reimbursements of previously authorized expenditures shall be requested and released quarterly or after the completion of activities. The UN system agencies shall not be obligated to reimburse expenditure made by the Implementing Partner over and above the authorized amounts. Following the completion of any activity, any balance of funds shall be refunded or programmed by mutual agreement between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies.

Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities shall depend on the findings of a review of the public financial management capacity in the case of a Government Implementing Partner, and of an assessment of the financial management capacity of the non-UN²⁰⁴ Implementing Partner. A qualified consultant, such as a public accounting firm, selected by the UN system agencies may conduct such an assessment, in which the Implementing Partner shall participate. The Implementing Partner may participate in the selection of the consultant.

Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may be revised in the course of programme implementation based on the findings of programme monitoring, expenditure monitoring and reporting, and audits.

In case of direct cash transfer or reimbursement, the UN system agencies shall notify the Implementing Partner of the amount approved by the UN system agencies and shall disburse funds to the Implementing Partner within 14 days.

204. For the purposes of these clauses, 'the UN' includes the IFIs.

In case of direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner; or to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners, the UN system agencies shall proceed with the payment within 14 days.

The UN system agencies shall not have any direct liability under the contractual arrangements concluded between the Implementing Partner and a third-party vendor.

Where the UN system agencies provide cash to the same Implementing Partner, programme monitoring, financial monitoring and auditing will be undertaken jointly or coordinated with those UN system agencies.

A standard Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) report, reflecting the activity lines of joint work plans will be used by Implementing Partners (IPs) to request the release of funds, or to secure the agreement that the UN organization will reimburse or directly pay for planned expenditure. IPs will use the FACE to report on the utilization of cash received. The Implementing Partner shall identify the designated official(s) authorized to provide the account details, request and certify the use of cash. The FACE will be certified by the designated official(s) of the IP.

Cash transferred to Implementing Partners should be spent for the purpose of activities and within the timeframe as agreed in the WPs only.

Cash received by the Government and national NGO IPs shall be used in accordance with established national regulations, policies and procedures consistent with international standards, in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the WPs, and ensuring that reports on the utilization of all received cash are submitted to the relevant UN organization within six months after receipt of the funds, unless prescribed differently by agency requirements. Where any of the national regulations, policies and procedures is not consistent with international standards, the UN system agency financial and other related rules and system agency regulations, policies and procedures will apply.

In the case of IPs that are international NGOs, CSOs, and IGOs, cash received shall be used in accordance with international standards in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the WPs, and ensuring that reports on the full utilization of all received cash are submitted to the UN organization within six months after receipt of the funds, unless prescribed differently by agency requirements.

To facilitate scheduled and special audits each IP receiving cash from a UN system agency will provide the UN system agency or its representative with timely access to:

- All financial records which establish the transactional record of the cash transfers provided by a UN system agency, together with relevant documentation
- All relevant documentation and personnel associated with the functioning of the Implementing Partners' internal control structure through which the cash transfers have passed.

The findings of each audit will be reported to the IP and UN system agency. Each IP will furthermore:

- Receive and review the audit report issued by the auditors,
- Provide a timely statement of the acceptance or rejection of any audit recommendation to the UN organization that provided cash, and to the SAI, before submitting it to the UN system agency,
- Undertake timely actions to address the accepted audit recommendations,
- Report on the actions taken to implement accepted recommendations, to the UN system agencies and to the SAI, on a quarterly basis or as locally agreed.

The audits will be commissioned by the UN system agencies and undertaken by third party audit services.

Implementing Partners agree to cooperate with the UN system agencies for monitoring all activities supported by **cash transfers** and will facilitate access to relevant financial records and personnel responsible for the administration of cash provided by the UN system agencies.

To that effect, Implementing Partners agree to the following:

1. Periodic on-site reviews and spot checks of their financial records by the UN system agencies or their representatives, as appropriate, and as described in specific clauses of their engagement documents/ contracts with the UN system agencies,
2. Programmatic monitoring of activities following the UN system agencies' standards and guidance for site visits and field monitoring,
3. Special or scheduled audits. Each UN organization, in collaboration with other UN system agencies (where so desired and in consultation with the respective coordinating Ministry) will establish an annual audit plan, giving priority to audits of Implementing Partners with large amounts of cash assistance provided by the UN system agencies, and those whose financial management capacity needs strengthening.



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