



Republic of Albania
Prime Minister's Office



Government of Albania – United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016

MID-YEAR GENDER REPORT 2015


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I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), provided an additional grant of twenty million Swedish kronor (SEK 20,000,000) to the One UN Coherence Fund (CF) in Albania as defined in the Standard Administrative Arrangement addendum no. 1 between Sweden and the UN, signed on 3rd November 2014.

Allocations from the Sida contribution intend to support the implementation of gender outputs that are directly related to the new Swedish Results Strategy for Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014 – 2020. This is the second time that the Swedish Government supports the One UN Programme (2012-2016) in Albania, particularly in its efforts to promote gender equality and eradicate gender-based violence.

The first tranche of Sida funding to the CF for the year 2014 amounts to USD 1,724,426.20 (SEK 13 Million). The Gender Theme Group identified the gender outputs from the 2014 Joint Annual Work Plans (AWPs), which substantially fall under the outputs earmarked by Sida, as follows:

- ✚ Output 1.1.1: Strengthened capacities of public oversight bodies;
- ✚ Output 1.1.2: Civil society and media facilitate a public demand for human rights and gender equality;
- ✚ Output 1.2.5: Capacities for Gender Mainstreaming;
- ✚ Output 4.1.5: Combating Gender Based Violence;
- ✚ Output 4.4.1: Employment Policies.

Since Sida funding was allocated at the end of 2014, the amount of \$1.47 million¹ was included in the 2015 joint work plans. Following the revised Results Framework of the PoC, it will support the following equivalent outputs:

- ✚ **Output 1.3:** Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society.
- ✚ **Output 3.1:** Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions
- ✚ **Output 3.2:** Line ministries and public service delivery institutions are able to mainstream gender and conduct gender responsive planning and budgeting and evidence-based policy making at all levels
- ✚ **Output 4.3:** National and sub-national government units have the capacity to generate and strengthen investments, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for youth and women.

The UN has taken into consideration the national needs in the areas of preventing and combating gender-based violence, generating and strengthening investments, employment and livelihood opportunities for women, etc., while envisaging interventions and designing deliverables in the 2015 joint work plans that would respond to such needs. For this reason, various consultative meetings were held with the central and local authorities to validate the approach and the types of activities to be included in the 2015 joint work plans. Statistics, research findings and recommendations have also served as reference resources to anchor the level of intervention and design activities that will respond to the needs in the field.

The activities to be implemented by the UN in Albania are in line with the National Action Plan on Women Entrepreneurship 2014-2020. Experienced CSOs at the local level are also consulted and

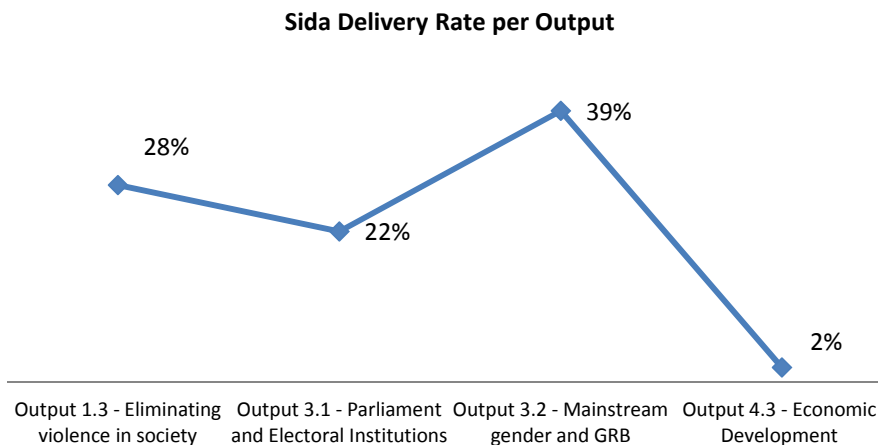
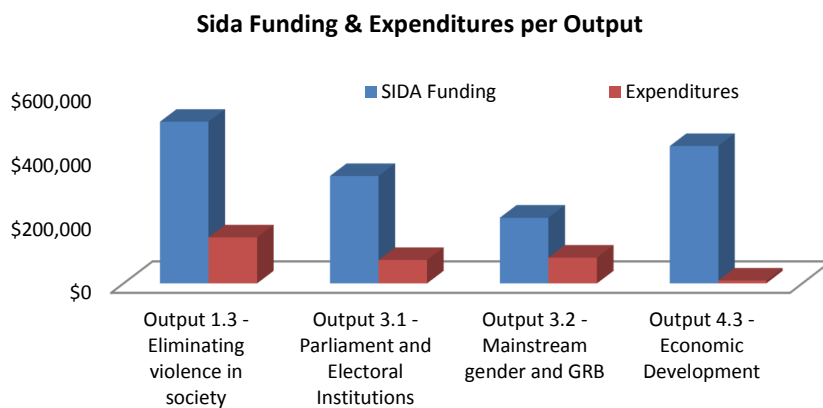
their expertise and input is reflected in the feasible approaches of specific initiatives undertaken at the local level that aim at women’s economic empowerment and beyond.

An open line of communication was sought with relevant actors and is planned to continue to ensure commitment to the realization of the planned activities. Following the local elections, the UN will commence the work with women in political parties and the newly elected council women.

The activities implemented by the UN in Albania under the outputs funded by Sida are fully in line with the global Gender Equality Action Plans of many individual UN agencies and therefore benefit from regional corporate expertise and knowledge products.

The average delivery rate of Sida funding for the period January – June 2015 is 23%. The graphs below present the allocation of funding and expenditures as well as delivery rate per each output of the PoC that received funding.

Gender Outputs	SIDA Funding	Expenditures	Delivery Rate
Output 1.3 - Eliminating violence in society	505,000	143,710	28%
Output 3.1 - Parliament and Electoral Institutions	335,000	72,959	22%
Output 3.2 - Mainstream gender and GRB	205,000	80,378	39%
Output 4.3 - Economic Development	429,000	9,043	2%
Total SIDA Allocations	1,474,000	306,090	23%



The narrative progress, implementation challenges, lessons learned and future direction for each of the four outputs is presented in Chapter II.

II. Progress, Challenges, Lessons Learned & Future Direction

Progress by Output

Output 1.3 - Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society

Following the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention, Albania's commitment and progress in its EU accession process as well as the standing CEDAW obligations, the analysis of the Albanian legislation from the gender equality perspective was updated, further enriched and re-proposed to the Parliament.

The UN is continuing its work on improving the Community Coordinated Response (CCR) and extending it to other Municipalities. Two more CCRs are further consolidated, respectively in Burrel and Permet. In addition, local authorities and other stakeholders in Kruja, Erseka, Saranda and Kavaja are already committed to establish the CCR mechanism, which embraces a multi-disciplinary response to cases of domestic violence and actively contributes to domestic violence prevention. A thorough analysis was conducted targeting various CCR mechanisms, aiming at comparing and evaluating their actual functioning on the ground. To this end, 11 local government units (LGUs) were visited and consulted in Tirana, Durrës, Korça, Fier, Shkodra, Lezha, Burrel, Permet, Erseka, Patos and the commune of Maminas.

The UN is supporting the staff of National Shelter for Domestic Violence Victims to build an effective collaboration with other relevant regional state and non-state service providers, strengthen the functioning of the referral system and improve staff services to domestic violence survivors. At present, 27 out of 61 municipalities are using a web-based data system, which generates details on domestic violence cases including statistical information about the total number and date issued of the Emergency Protection Orders /Protection Orders (EPO/PO) decisions for domestic violence survivors. In addition, the UN is focusing on marginalised groups of women; a survey on GBV, behaviour, SRH and HIV/AIDS in prison settings is already initiated. Advocacy work with women prisoners is ongoing and an onstage theatre performance has already taken place providing a good example of such initiatives. In addition, the Validation of the GBSS communication plan is already completed.

The UN is also focusing on men and boys to change societal attitudes towards domestic violence. The campaign activities targeted communities in Tirana, Kavaja, Kolonja, Pogradec and Dibra and were implemented in partnership with 11 civil society organisations. Over 600 thousand people benefited from these activities, based on media measurement rates for the programs, where over 20,147 young boys and girls were reached throughout the social and electronic media (49.7 % male and 50.3 % female). More than 2,000 participants benefited from the theatre performances. Over 100,000 people were reached through the Local TV in Pogradec and over 500 men and 600 women signed a public

agreement on committing to fight GBV. The HeForShe Campaign is extended until 2017 and is currently being implemented along with the 16 Days Campaign and the Orange Campaign.

Meetings and roundtables were carried out, with regard to the National Plan for Men and Boys, in order to approve and establish upcoming interventions. Over 400,000 people were reached through social and electronic media.

A multi-country study report, financed by the EU, analyzed the provision of domestic violence services in Albania and their compliance with the Istanbul Convention. The report was finalized and presented to an audience composed of a broad range of stakeholders and relevant institutional counterparts.

Output 3.1 - Parliament and electoral institutions. Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions

The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) has been offered support and expertise to increase the visibility and transparency of its work in the protection and promotion of human rights. The CPD published its 2014 annual report in Albanian and English language in a reader-friendly format. The report disaggregates data on gender and easily shows the impact of the CPD contribution in combating discrimination on grounds of gender in the legal review process.

A study on women's voice and role in local councils was conducted in 137 local councils with participation of 186 council women, from both urban and rural areas. The study analyses the barriers that women face in the local government decision making processes, which has its roots in the limited powers women have in the political parties.

A two-day BRIDGE module on Gender and Elections was provided to the Central Election Commission (CEC) staff and civil society working on gender issues and elections. After the first workshop, a four-day BRIDGE Election Dispute Resolution workshop took place for members of the CEC and Electoral College.

In a public hearing of the Legal Commission in the Parliament held in March, the CEC presented some of the recommendations prepared with UN support on gender-disaggregated data and gender quotas in second-level commissions. These recommendations were adopted, and for the first time, the CEC will provide sex-disaggregated data on voters, candidates and commissioners. In addition, the UN assisted the CEC with the establishment of a new online system for the registration of political parties and candidates.

The UN supported the Alliance of Women MPs through a two-day retreat to jointly identify areas of common objectives and activities based on their signed Declaration. As a result, the Alliance has undertaken two major initiatives on Electoral Code Reform (i) to improve gender quota especially for the local elections and (ii) to fight domestic violence, targeting main institutions such as Parliament, Presidency, High Court and Persecution, as well as to take actions to address this phenomenon. Likewise, the Parliament adopted the following proposals: (i) a requirement of a 50% gender quota in the local council elections with zipper mechanism and stronger sanction; (ii) the CEC will reject the political parties' candidate lists that do not implement this quota.

The UN in partnership with other international organizations worked extensively in four regions as per the new Territorial Administrative division to identify the needs and priorities of citizens, especially women and other minorities, through the Community Based Scorecards methodology. The UN contributed to enabling first time voters' participation in elections as gender advocates through debating tournament held in Shkodra, Tirana and Vlora. The 50 best students were selected to be trained by the Head of the Central Election Commission and staff and conducted a final debate on

“50% representation of women in local decision making”. For the June local elections, 180,000 were registered as first time voters.

Output 3.2 - Mainstreaming gender and gender responsive budgeting. Line ministries and public service delivery institutions are able to mainstream gender and conduct gender responsive planning and budgeting and evidence based-policy making at all levels

“Women and property rights”, an informative brochure, features a number of good and bad practices on women’s property access and entitlements. The brochure is the result of technical discussions held between specialists and lawyers of the Immoveable Property Registration Office and the Chamber of Notaries in a series of technical workshops organized in five major districts of Albania led by UN Women in partnership with the Center for Legal and Civic Initiatives.

During April to May, the UN was involved with the preparation of a thorough analysis of the Medium-Term Budgeting Programme (MTBP) 2016-2018 from a gender perspective. At the local level, the process started with the analysis of social services from a gender perspective. It followed with recommendations discussed in a series of two participatory budgeting meetings in each municipality with participation of roughly 45% women, 55% men, youth and elders as well as beneficiaries of social services. Seven municipalities made three to eight recommendations each to make social services at the local level more responsive to women. Burreli and Permet municipalities are supported in strengthening their capacities to mainstream gender through local protection structures and development strategy resulting in women’s economic empowerment and protection.

More than fifty gender experts, practitioners of gender responsive budgeting (GRB), Government, MPs and CSO representatives gathered in a two-day regional workshop in Tirana to exchange knowledge and experience on GRB - from Piloting to Results.

An internal policy on Sexual Harassment was adopted by the Albanian State Police (ASP) in January. In addition, support was provided to the ASP technical working group to exchange and learn from the Austrian Federal Police on the implementation of non-discrimination policies.

A research is being carried out pursuant to one concluding observation of the CEDAW Committee related to self-applicability or direct applicability of human rights treaties within the Albanian legal system, thereby enabling individuals to seek enforcement of their rights before national courts and tribunals. Consideration of the case-law of the Albanian Courts will be given to see if there are any court cases in which the Convention, or provisions thereof, are qualified as self-applicable and thus with direct effect. This in turn will break through new precedents in the Albanian jurisprudence that will contribute to the proper implementation of the CEDAW Convention.

Pursuing strategic litigation cases to protect the economic rights of children and parents in divorce cases is another initiative supported by the UN that aims to ensure equal benefits for men and women and strengthens the gender protection machinery in judicial procedures.

As part of the efforts to achieve gender equality in Albania, through gender mainstreaming into all the aspects of policy drafting and implementation, the government has expressed interest in developing the new National Strategy on Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence (NSGE-GBV-DV) (2016-2020), thus ensuring that gender considerations become part of the process of developing and finalizing the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015-2020. The UN is supporting the expert team composed of an international and two national experts for the assessment of the Albanian NSGE-GBV&DV 2011-2015 and drafting the new NSGE-GBV-DV 2016-2020.

Output 4.3 - National and sub-national government units have the capacity to generate and strengthen investments, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for youth and women

Concrete activities aiming to improve the economic situation of women in rural and semi-rural areas of the country have been carried out targeting self-employment opportunities for poor, marginalized and vulnerable women, particularly the ones that are de jure or de facto heads of households. More concretely, in the Korça region (including Erseka and Vithkuq), Hore Vranisht and Novosela in Vlora region, the programme has facilitated various interventions such as: (i) creation of local groups and identification of women willing to engage in entrepreneurship; (ii) development of a business plan, identification of equipment, raw materials, cooperation agreements among women, engagement of a designer that will help products have a better market image. As a result, 58 women were identified in four regions for the establishment of local entrepreneurship out of whom 29 women were trained on medical and forest fruits processing and a processing center for such products was established.

In Burrel region, the local initiatives have progressed with women's involvement in economic activities along with (i) valorization of local resources; and (ii) cooperation among local authorities in Burrel Municipality, community groups (women's economic group in this case) and the local businesses. The interventions have led to (i) increased awareness of the private businesses that operate in several regions of the country regarding the product offered by the relevant areas; (ii) increased income for women; and (iii) increased women's orientation towards private initiatives to self-employment.

The UN is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship (MEDTTE) to map and develop women's initiatives on community based tourism. The process should provide the Ministry with thorough information on existing initiatives and at least 3 business plans for women's groups. Due to transitioning competences related to tourism from MoUDT to MEDTTE, the process has been slow and the methodology of intervention is being revised with the new team from MEDTTE to ensure that the interventions go in line with the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Entrepreneurship (WE) 2014-2020. The UN is working closely with MEDTTE to initiate the implementation of the NAP for Women Entrepreneurship 2014-2020. The Inter-ministerial Advisory Group on WE has provided as a key recommendation to carry out technical assistance work with the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) in order to provide dedicated services for women entrepreneurs.

In collaboration with MoARCP, the UN will initiate a national study on Albanian rural women and economic diversification in rural areas. This is the first study that covers holistically rural women issues. The collaboration with MoARCP is at the initial phase to create two Women's Cluster Models in two pilot communes of Elbasan Region.

Challenges Faced

The country went through the local elections recently and this might have implications at the central and local level as it might influence staff turnover and/or require "re-explanation" of UN priorities and directions of work for the year 2015 in some selected ministries and beyond. For example, the changes in the leadership of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and in some of the key staff need to be accompanied with renewed efforts to validate the priorities and establish new timelines for the completion of some joint activities. At the same time, specific actions will be undertaken to introduce the programme deliverables to new local leaders and ensure their commitment for the successful accomplishment of local interventions.

To overcome this potential risk, an open line of communication will be sought with the new Minister of Social Welfare and Youth and heads of municipalities where interventions will take place in order to involve them from the very start and ensure their commitment to the realization of the deliverables of the related Outputs.

Furthermore, the local elections have created a “stand by” situation that has affected decisions important to the planning and the timely realization of some deliverables. In some cases, it was deemed necessary to extend deadlines of applications for the open vacancies for specific services as outlined in the individual contract terms of references due to scarcity of candidates that fulfilled the criteria set for the particular vacant positions. This in turn has slowed down the process of the implementation of the activities foreseen under the given deliverable.

Lessons Learned

- ✚ The planning of the deliverables should have better reflected the actualities of the pre-electoral period to avoid some of the incurred delays and bottlenecks in the work with local and central authorities.
- ✚ The HeForShe campaign started as an organic bottom-up campaign but, now that it is fully implemented and proceeding at the right pace, has been shaped into a consolidated format: workshops, university lectures and social awareness raising activities.
- ✚ Involvement of all stakeholders, dealing with DV costing, enabled the discussion to focus on the importance of budgeting. The open air campaign activities were of high interest to citizens of both genders, who expressed their opinions and provided feedback.
- ✚ Election-related activities, especially the ones focusing on capacity building, need to start ahead of time in order not to affect the participation and the quality of interventions.
- ✚ The first half of 2015 served to pave the way towards initiating interventions that will benefit women’s entrepreneurship. It is crucial to create sustainable structures that have the ownership of GoA and that every policy and intervention is aligned with national priorities. An important lesson learned is the need to ensure involvement of local authorities at the earliest stage of the implementation of local initiatives that aim at women’s economic empowerment and building resilient lives for women and children free from violence.

Future Direction/Upcoming Activities

During the second half of 2015, the UN agencies’ work will focus on the following directions: (i) support the national partners in monitoring the implementation of laws, policies and strategies that prevent and combat violence against women and children; (ii) cooperate with government and civil society stakeholders for diversified, better quality and tailored services responding to the needs of domestic violence and trafficking victims; (iii) consolidate the multi-disciplinary response and referral mechanisms to contribute towards the implementation of the standards of the Istanbul Convention; and (iv) develop new partnerships and innovative ideas for increasing the awareness of the professionals, institutions and the public on the pervasive effects of gender-based violence and the role of men and boys as partners for bringing the desired change

The multi-country study report on the provision of sexual violence services will be published shortly. The use of the report will help the government, NGOs and relevant stakeholders in complying with the standards set by the CoE Istanbul Convention. It will be a useful tool in order to advocate for the standardization of the provision of sexual violence services.

The HeForShe and the UN Secretary-General’s UNiTE campaign against gender-based violence will be extended until 2017: along with the bottom-up approach, a more inclusive top-down approach will be tailored in order to include the private sector and the government in the awareness raising campaign. The National Plan for Men and Boys will be crosscutting some of the awareness raising campaigns of UN Women and partnering agencies, working to foster structured interventions against violence against women and in support of gender equality.

The UN will be following up on improving the monitoring and oversight role of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and increasing skills of partisans of women’s and human rights in

the parliament to advocate for gender equality, protection from GBV and improvement of the status of women.

A gender-sensitive post-election analysis will further help the Central Election Commission but also civil society organizations in identifying main challenges and issues to be addressed in the future. The UN will continue to support the technical as well as the organizational capacities of the Alliance of Women Parliamentarians to promote gender-sensitive legislation and to better monitor law implementation. Further support will be provided to increase the advocacy role of women in the Parliament and in local governance organs. Following the formalization of the new municipal councils, the UN will support the capacities of the elected women to perform in their new positions.

The future interventions will also contribute to further improve the oversight role and the capacities of the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination and the People's Advocate Institution to reach out and inform different partners, especially in the private sector and media.

UN efforts will also focus on (i) initiating a few strategic cases for children in court; (ii) organizing awareness campaigns for children and their parents, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination; and (iii) monitoring juvenile detention facilities or judicial decisions for signs of discrimination against children from vulnerable groups, in collaboration with the People's Advocate and the Commissioner.

The UN will follow up on legal and policy review in light of the government's strategic priorities and international commitments; strategical litigating for women's rights; stable local gender machinery and an administration with specific skills to integrate gender in local initiatives that lead to women's empowerment in local communities.

In particular for the Gender and Media activity, the following activities will be undertaken in 2015: (i) the launching/inception of a workshop; (ii) facilitating (and supporting) participation of international expert(s) to explain the work on Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM), but also update (during an activity implementation) on the outcomes of the 'Global Forum on Media and Gender - Towards a Global Alliance on Media and Gender' which took place in late 2013.

During 2015, the UN will finalize with MEDTTE a thorough Study on Women's representation at board and senior management levels of business companies in Albania. Being the first study in the country on this topic, the research will provide an initial baseline on the state of affairs and will provide concrete recommendations to legislators, regulators, policy makers, the private sector at large and academia.

The UN will work on self-employment opportunities particularly for poor, marginalized and vulnerable women and to increase the knowledge of women regarding their economic, property and family rights.

ⁱ Government of Sweden earmarked contribution for gender outputs is at the amount of US\$ 1,741,869.89. 1% Admin Agent fee is applied to the total contribution at the amount of US\$ 17,418.69 and US\$ 25 bank charges. The total programmable amount is US\$ 1,724,426.20". The amount allocated so far to the 2015 joint work plans is USD 1,474,000 out of the available USD 1,724,426.20, leaving a remaining balance to be allocated in the second half of 2015 using the 2015/2016 AWP.