“Leave No One Behind” Joint Programme (LNB2) - Phase 2

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“Leave No One Behind” Phase 2 Joint Programme (LNB2)

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Executive Summary

Albania has made important steps towards establishing a democratic state, functioning market economy, maintaining a stable economic growth, and achieving human development. However, poverty in Albania is still high: in 2018, the percentage of the population 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion' was 49.0%. Notably, the incidence of poverty or exclusion continues to disproportionately affect specific segments of society, particularly the Roma and Egyptian communities and persons with disabilities, as well as vulnerable women, households with children, older persons, people with intermittent employment, and those living in rural areas and from excluded groups. Frequently the factors of poverty or exclusion are multidimensional. Over the most recent period, Albania has experienced two major external shocks within a short period of time: on 26 November 2019, the country was hit by a very strong earthquake that caused damage to people and the economy, and since March 2020 also challenged by the global health pandemic, which has significantly impacted on economic activity and social life in the country. The impact of the shocks has exacerbated poverty, inequality and vulnerability experienced by families and their children, as well as it has increased and differentiated the notion of vulnerability.

Over the recent years the Government has adopted a range of significant strategies and national action plans in regard to delivering social protection reform and boosting social inclusion, and it has built the legal framework of the social protection and social inclusion system with the vision of providing integrated social services at local level capable to ensure the inclusion of all vulnerable groups and persons in Albania. Roll-out of the social protection and social care reform process commenced starting in 2016/17, with roll-out of the full set of reform measures foreseen to be achieved by 2023/24.

The proposed programme (01/06/2021-31/05/2025) is the second phase of the planned eight years total for programme duration. The focus of the programme second phase is on the consolidation of the reform roll-out and strengthening of the results from the first phase (01/06/2017-31/05/2021). As with the first phase, the budget for this programme is a total amount of CHF 8.0 million. The programme goal is that: "Vulnerable persons and groups have improved access to gender responsive public services that support their social rights, social inclusion and well-being, and are empowered to have a voice in public policy decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold decision-makers accountable for policy implementation". In order to achieve this, the programme pursues three objectives: to empower beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion (Outcome 1); to capacitate municipalities/ regions and service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion (Outcome 2); by capacitating state authorities in the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion and to further operationalize/ develop social inclusion funding mechanisms, including scaling up of the Social Fund (Outcome 3).

The programme's target groups who will directly and indirectly benefit from improved access to social services, are: (1) marginalized and vulnerable families and persons, of all genders and of all ages, and (2) persons with disabilities, and Roma and Egyptians. The improvement of their social inclusion will be supported by interventions at macro level (central authorities), at meso level (municipalities and civil society organisations) and at micro level, actively involving the target groups into the programme's implementation. While the programme will cover all of Albania, by empowering vulnerable people and by promoting systemic reform of social service and inclusion provision countrywide, the programme adopts geographic foci to ensure that 30 (of a total of 61) municipalities are suitably capacitated to provide a system of integrated social services to cover the needs of the vulnerable population. The programme will primarily use instruments for capacity building and organizational development. Programme implementation is the responsibility of four UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and UNFPA), who will cooperate with state actors from central and local level, with civil society organisations and directly with target groups. Sustainability of the programme investments and effects and scaling up of successful practices will be a constant concern of the programme. A fully detailed exit/ sustainability strategy will be developed in the first year of the second phase that will set out the process for planning and executing transfer of the results and their sustained operation by beneficiary institutional partners.

Strategic steering of the programme is assured by the Steering Committee in which participate notably the co-chairs (Ministry of Health and Social Protection, SDC, UN Country Resident), and representatives of the implementing UN organizations and civil society. One of the tasks of the Steering Committee, but also of all other actors participating in the programme's implementation, will be the monitoring and assessment of risks, their prevention and the programme's adequate reaction to them. The programme monitoring and evaluation system will provide evidence for steering, quality assurance, learning and accountability. Semi-annual programme progress reports will be presented to the Steering Committee.

1 Context

11 Political, economic, social, environmental context

Albania is an upper middle-income country of about 2.9 million people with high human development[1], in transition towards building a market economy underpinned by the rule of law and democratic institutions. Albania is rated "Partly Free" in Freedom House's annual study of political rights and civil liberties worldwide[2]. Albania is party to the nine core international human rights treaties[3], and has also ratified the main Council of Europe human rights instruments[4]. However, full and consistent implementation of the legislation is insufficient which prevents the transformation needed to ensure enjoyment of human rights by all people, and gender discrimination, a gender divide in the labour market, and gender-based violence remain critical concerns[5]. The most recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Albania (3rd cycle, 2019) highlighted that the social protection system still faces challenges and obstacles; out of the 197 recommendations released, 34 related specifically to social cohesion and protection, 37 related to child protection, and 14 recommendations related to health care services.

Albania has embraced and affirmed that it is fully committed to implementing the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" in the context of its national development[6] and as part of its intended pathway toward accession with/ becoming a member of the European Union (EU)[7].

[1] 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.

[2] Freedom House, 2021, Albania: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report | Freedom House: Albania has a record of competitive elections, though political parties are highly polarized and often organized around leading personalities. Religious freedom and freedom of assembly are generally respected. Corruption and organized crime remain serious problems despite recent government efforts to address them, and the intermingling of powerful business, political, and media interests inhibits the development of truly independent news outlets.

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

[4] 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.

[5] Government of Albania and the United Nations, Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026, Final Draft, February 2021.

[6] Government of Albania, 2018, Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals, June 2018.

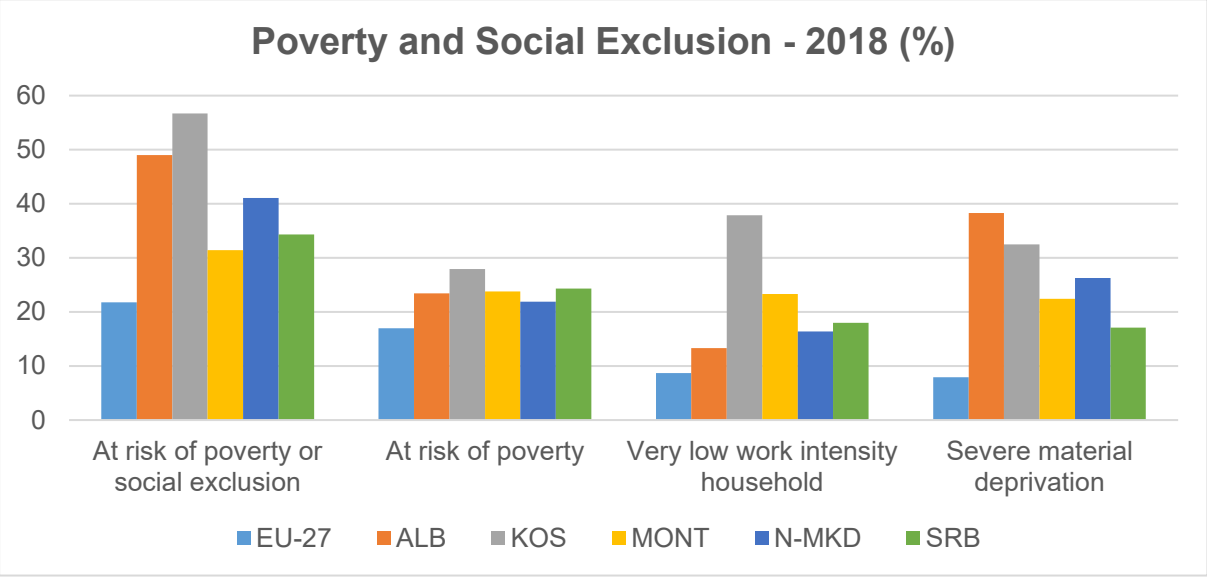
[7] Albania submitted its formal application for EU membership in 2009; in June 2014, Albania was awarded "candidate status" by the EU; in March 2020, the EU decided to open accession negotiations with Albania; in July 2020 the draft EU-negotiating framework regarding Albania was presented to the EU Member States (consultation). -The EU's 2020 Communication on EU enlargement policy, October 2020, summarizes Albania's compliance with the EU's key criteria for accession, including that: (1) As regards the political criteria, the political environment continued to be marked by intense polarisation. Albania is moderately prepared in the reform of its public administration. Albania's judicial system has some level of preparation / is moderately prepared. Albania has some level of preparation in the fight against corruption. Albania has some level of preparation in the fight against organised crime. On fundamental rights, Albania complies with international human rights instruments and has developed its legal framework in line with European standards. The overall implementation remains, however, to be strengthened. (2) As regards the economic criteria, Albania has made some progress and is moderately prepared in developing a functioning market economy. Albania has made some progress and has some level of preparation in terms of capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. (3) As regards the ability to assume the obligations of membership, Albania has continued to align its legislation to EU requirements in a number of areas, and the country is moderately prepared in areas such as financial control, education and culture and statistics, or has some level of preparation, including in the areas of public procurement, social policy and employment. Albania will need to continue its efforts as regards the preparations for adopting and implementing the EU *acquis*. The administrative capacity and professional standards of bodies charged with the implementation of the EU *acquis* need to be strengthened and the independence of regulatory bodies safeguarded.

After a period of rapid economic growth and a rise in income levels in the period up to 2008[8], Albania's trend-rate of economic growth over the past decade has averaged 2.5% per year. Albania's labour market and employment situation has improved since the sluggish economic period of 2012-2014: labour force participation increased from 61.5% in 2014 to 69.6% in 2019 (while the gap between participation rates of men and women partially narrowed, it still remains stark at an average of 18%)[9]; the unemployment rate decreased from its peak of close to 18% in 2014 to 12% in 2019 (while the youth unemployment rate decreased from 32.5% to 21.5% over the period)[10], but long-term unemployment, at approximately 9% of the labour force, remains a challenge to be addressed through more flexible and tailored policy interventions.

In 2020, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was the equivalent of 4,900 USD (current prices)[11]. While income distribution in Albania, as measured by the GINI coefficient, has partially improved since 2014, income disparity still remains significantly higher than in the previous decade (2000s)[12]. Many people in Albania remain vulnerable to social exclusion and are unable to fully participate in society, having limited access to resources, rights and services available to the majority population, and remaining trapped in the poverty cycle. Both national statistics and World Bank data show increases in the income poverty rate since 2008. In 2018, the percentage of persons 'at risk of poverty' in Albania was 23.4%, while the 'severe material deprivation' rate was 38.3%, and the 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion' rate was 49.0%.[13]

Living standards in Albania remain well below EU averages and socio-economic convergence has been slow. While the 'at risk of poverty' rate in Albania is comparable with that of its developing neighbours, the 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion' rate is higher than average.

Figure: Poverty and Social Exclusion rates in the EU and in the Western Balkan region



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC data; for Albania, EU-SILC data from INSTAT

[8] Albania's rate of economic growth averaged 6% per year, 2001-2008, and the rate of 'absolute consumption poverty' (based on the national criteria relevant at that time), dropped from 25.4% in 2002 to 12.5% in 2008.
[9] Even when women fully participate in the labour market inequalities in wages exist (the pay gap standing at approximately 10%). Albanian women do, on average, eight times more unpaid care and domestic work than men, negatively affecting their career and economic security as well as their access to benefit from social protection.
[10] European Commission, 2020 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, Albania 2020 Report, October 2020.
[11] International Monetary Fund, 2020, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2020 (imf.org).
-GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity), in international dollars (current prices), was valued at $13,650 in 2020.
[12] World Bank (Gini index (World Bank estimate) - Albania | Data) estimates indicate that the Gini index has positively decreased, from a value of 34.6 in 2014 to a value of 33.2 in 2017, but is still above a value of 30 in 2008.
[13] INSTAT, 2019, EU-SILC Income and Living Conditions in Albania 2017-2018, press release 16 December 2019.

Furthermore, "Albania has a weighty heritage of marginalized and vulnerable persons in dire need of support but who continue to receive no, or often inadequate, services"[14]. Notably, the incidence of poverty and exclusion continues to disproportionately affect specific segments of society, particularly the Roma and Egyptian (R&E) communities and persons with disabilities (PWDs), as well as women, households with children, older persons, people with intermittent employment, and people in rural areas and from excluded groups most affected by poverty.

Inclusion of vulnerable people in the labour market is a challenge; more than half of the poor population is inactive, unemployed, nor in education, and people living in remote areas are often completely excluded. Generally, women remain out of the labour force mostly because they are busy with unpaid work at home (21.4%) or are attending school (22.0%). On the other hand, only 1.0% of men declare housework as the reason behind their inactivity, while 30.4% are students or pupils. An important aspect related to women and their participation in the labour market is the possibility for the combination of productive labour with reproductive life. The absence of such opportunity may force a good share of women to withdraw entirely from the labour force. Also, educational participation by gender in the education cycles indicates the existence of gender differences at various education levels.

Over the most recent period, Albania has experienced two major external shocks within a short period of time: on 26 November 2019, the country was hit by a very strong earthquake that caused damage to people and the economy[15], and since March 2020 the country has also been challenged by the global health pandemic outbreak, which has significantly impacted on economic activity and social life in the country due to the restrictive measures taken to contain the spread of the virus. The government's interventions to mitigate and alleviate the effects of both these disasters were aimed at providing adequate response to the recovery efforts post-earthquake, as well as to minimize the effects of the pandemic to manageable levels[16]. Regarding fiscal measures, in 2020 the government adopted two support packages to support individuals, businesses and public services affected by the pandemic, with a combined value of ALL 45 billion (2.8% of GDP), mainly via: (a) additional funding for the health sector; (b) support of small businesses/ self-employed; (c) support reallocated toward humanitarian relief for the most vulnerable[17]; (d) a sovereign guarantee fund for companies to access loans.

In 2020, while nominal gross domestic product (GDP) per capita declined compared with 2018-2019, GDP per capita in 2020 (4,900 USD) does still exceed the value in 2017 (4,540 USD)[18]. While the labour-market situation also reflects the economic contraction in 2020, the government package of COVID-19-related support measures has assisted to limit the impact: the rate of unemployment increased in 2020, but peaked at 12.5% in the second quarter of 2020. In line with the medium-term growth projections, the government forecasts that employment is expected to grow by an average of 1.4% per year over the period 2021-2023, and for unemployment to continue a gradual reduction, reaching at 9.4% in 2023.[19]

[14] Government of Albania, 2018, Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals, June 2018.
[15] The earthquake of a magnitude of 6.4 Richter caused extensive damage in 11 municipalities, including the two most populous, urbanized and developed municipalities (Tirana and Durres). A total of 51 people were killed in the quake, with about 3,000 injured. Damages were estimated at more than 1 billion EUR, ranging from the housing sector to public infrastructure (education, health) and the loss in productivity (tourism, agriculture, employment).
[16] Government of Albania, 2021, Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, January 2021.
[17] Ministry of Health and Social Protection, September 2020, National Social Protection Strategy Progress Report: In recognition of the central role played by social protection to mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of the pandemic, the government doubled the amount of the cash benefit assistance per recipient under the main poverty alleviation support scheme and also expanded the pool of the eligible persons. Following the declaration of state of emergency, an inter-ministerial committee chaired by Ministry of Defense was established to organize and deliver food and other support items for about 600,000 individuals identified by local governments as vulnerable.
[18] International Monetary Fund, 2020, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2020 (imf.org).
[19] Government of Albania, 2021, Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, January 2021.

In terms of the incidence of poverty or severe material deprivation, the impact of the double shocks, even after the government packages of support measures, is more pronounced, and poverty rates are expected to significantly increase in 2020.[20] The government recognizes that the pandemic is exacerbating poverty, inequality and vulnerability experienced by families and their children, as well as it has increased and differentiated the notion of vulnerability. The government acknowledges that social protection schemes are among the most effective interventions in the fight against poverty and vulnerability, but that the effectiveness of programmes in the targeting of vulnerable groups and the poorest needs to improve further[21].

In April 2020, UNWOMEN conducted a gender rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the main challenges faced by women and men, and how the changing situation is affecting the socio-economic situation and livelihood of women and men[22]. The data shows that women have been hard hit by a loss of income from livelihood resources. Both employed and self-employed women have faced economic destitution, with more women now working from home and with less paid hours. In high numbers, women have developed psychological and mental health issues as a result of the uncertainty created by the pandemic. One in every two women reported challenges in accessing medical supplies and one in every five reported difficulty in accessing health services. The pandemic has shown to a fuller extent the burden of care that falls on women. The pandemic situation is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which in turn amplify the negative impact of this crisis. Negative impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty. In May 2020, World Vision also conducted an impact assessment of the COVID-19 outbreak on wellbeing of children and families in Albania[23]. It concluded that the effects of COVID-19 in the economy were visible in families, starting from their possibility to fulfil the basic need within the family to the changes in their employment status. The basic needs of the family were not fully met during the restrictive measures weeks. About 76% of survey participants did not fully meet the basic need for food, disinfectants and facemasks, cleaning detergents, hygiene sets and internet access costs. The first effects of the pandemic were visible in the families' life. Two months of quarantine brought a decrease in the sources of income for families, an increase in unemployment and daily casual work and a decrease in the remittances. These unexpected effects are heavier on families that support their living with non-sustainable income. Around 68% of survey participants looking at their future employment prospects during COVID-19 expressed concern about unemployment, which subsequently had impact in their families. In addition to the effects in the economic aspect, the quarantine had an effect in the family life. Even though parents were spending more time at home, the results showed that the healthy parenting practices are frequently used only in half of the families in this study during the quarantine. Presence of violence has been reported by the survey participants, with 48.6% of them reporting the presence of verbal abuse and 19.9% reporting presence of physical abuse.

While the number of COVID-19 cases in Albania began to stabilize by late-2020, the situation has deteriorated again as of January 2021. As of 31 January, Albania was ranked 15th in the world for incidence of the virus with 971 active cases per 100,000 inhabitants; a total of 1,380 people have died from the virus, representing 46 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.[24]

UNICEF and UNDP are currently supporting the government via conducting an assessment to document the adequacy of existing social protection and social inclusion measures to support families and children cope with the on-going financial burden/ challenges arising during the

[20] World Bank, 2020, Albania Overview (worldbank.org), October 2020.
[21] Government of Albania, 2021, Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, January 2021.
[22] https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/7/covid-19-is-taking-a-higher-toll-on-women-shows-un-women-albania-rapid-assessment
[23] World Vision, 2020, Impact assessment of the COVID-19 outbreak on wellbeing of children and families in Albania, May 2020. The sampling frame was composed of 1,199 households from 15 municipalities in Albania.
[24] OECD, 2021, COVID-19 health situation in Albania – December 2020/January 2021.

health pandemic. The assessment results and recommendations will benefit the design of longer term approaches and actions in the area of social protection and social inclusion.

12 Social Protection and Inclusion context

Social protection is the set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty, deprivation or exclusion. Social protection systems provide contributory or non-contributory forms of income support that reduce and prevent poverty; ensures access to basic social services to all, especially for groups that are traditionally vulnerable or excluded; stimulates productive inclusion through the development of capabilities, skills, rights and opportunities for the poor and excluded; builds resilience and protects people against the risks of livelihood shocks throughout their lifecycle; and helps remove structural barriers, including barriers within the household, that prevent people from achieving well-being. Social protection systems can include various schemes and programmes, including universal schemes, social assistance, social insurance, and labour market and employment programmes/ measures.

Social Inclusion is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society.

For vulnerable groups of persons, social inclusion and social support services means an integrated and organized system of benefits and/or facilities that are provided at the local level via social cash schemes and social care support services in coordination, as appropriate, with other support actions in the areas of health, education, employment, vocational training, and housing.

121 Social Protection and Inclusion – Marginalized or vulnerable groups/ persons

In 2018, approximately 670,000 people in Albania (23.4% of the population) were 'at risk of poverty' (i.e. living below the poverty line[25]). Of these people, approximately 330,000 were at risk of 'abject' poverty[26] (11.5% of the population). Beyond those people already 'at risk of poverty', a further 200,000 people (7.0% of the population) are living on incomes marginally above/ relatively close to the poverty line[27]. Overall, approximately 1.1 million people in Albania (38.3% of the population) were living in 'severe material deprivation'. With regard to the EU's "Europe 2020" headline indicator for poverty and social exclusion, approximately 1.4 million people in Albania (49.0% of the population) were 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion'.[28]

With regard to economic poverty, as shown in the Table below, the incidence of being 'at risk of poverty' (living below the poverty line) is highest among the following categories of persons: the unemployed, the economically inactive, children, and households with dependent children. It is also higher for women (23.8%) than for men (23.0%).[29] The incidence of 'at risk of poverty' is lowest among the following categories of persons: older persons, employed persons, and households without dependent children. While no major variance exists any longer in the incidence of economic poverty due to the urban/rural divide, significant regional disparities do exist, with lower levels of relative economic wealth found in the northern regions of Albania.[30] While not reflected, in terms of available disaggregated data on 'at risk of poverty', it is evident that the highest concentrations of economic poverty are experienced by the R&E, and PWDs.

[25] At-risk-of-poverty threshold is defined as 60% of the median equivalised disposable income for all households.
[26] Abject poverty threshold is defined as 40% of the median equivalised disposable income for all households.
[27] Defined as living on 60-70% of the median equivalised disposable income for all households.
[28] INSTAT, 2019, EU-SILC Income and Living Conditions in Albania 2017-2018, press release 16 December 2019.
[29] UNCT Albania, CCA 2020, Albania has the same gender difference/trend of poverty rate as the global level.
[30] GDP per capita by Statistical Regions (2018) is lowest in Kukës, Lezhë, and Shkodër, as well as in Elbasan.

Table: Main indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Albania, 2017-2019

Albania	Unit	2017	2018	2019[31]
Population	Million	2.877	2.870	2.862
'At risk of poverty' *(i.e. incomes under 60% of median equivalised disposable income – also defined as the relative poverty line)*	%	23.7	23.4	
	Million	0.682	0.672	
'At risk of severe poverty' *(incomes under 50% of median equivalised disposable income)*	%	17.5	17.3	
	Million	0.503	0.497	
'At risk of abject poverty' *(incomes under 40% of median equivalised disposable income)*	%	11.8	11.5	
	Million	0.339	0.330	
'Just about managing' *(incomes between 60-70% of median equivalised disposable income)*	%	6.7	7.0	
	Million	0.192	0.201	
Living in 'low work intensity' households	%	14.4	13.3	
	Million	0.414	0.382	
Living in 'severe material deprivation'	%	41.1	38.3	
	Million	1.182	1.099	
'At risk of poverty or social exclusion' (AROPE)	%	51.8	49.0	
	Million	1.490	1.406	
'At risk of poverty' – Gender	Female	23.9	23.8	
	Male	23.5	23.0	
'At risk of poverty' – Age	0-17	29.6	29.6	
	18-64	23.7	23.2	
	65+	13.4	14.0	
'At risk of poverty' – Employment status	Employed	17.9	16.5	
	Not employed	25.3	25.7	
	Unemployed	38.3	37.1	
	Retired	13.4	14.2	
	Inactive	25.6	27.9	
'At risk of poverty' – Household family structure	With dependent child	26.9	27.0	
	Without dependent child	15.9	15.2	

Source: INSTAT, EU-SILC data, and INSTAT statistics by theme (population)

While economic poverty is clearly a significant component contributing to potential marginalization or vulnerability, it is only one of the potential factors of poverty or exclusion.

[31] Publication by INSTAT of the results of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions in Albania (data for year 2019) has been delayed (due to the situation created by COVID-19, as well as INSTAT is still waiting for data validation from EUROSTAT). Data for year 2020 is, indicatively, due to be published by INSTAT on 26/11/2021.

The OECD-DAC framework of multidimensional poverty defines five interrelated aspects of human capabilities so as to assess poverty[32]: Economic; Human; Political; Socio-cultural; and Protective. UNDP outlines five key factors that should be assessed to understand who is being left behind[33]: Discrimination; Geography; Governance; Socio-economic status; and Shocks and fragility. Addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty is key for sustainable development, as to focus purely on the income-poor might overlook some of the most excluded populations.

In the context of Albania, the following categories of persons are specifically highlighted as at risk to marginalization or vulnerability (*see Annex E for specific information on the potential factors of multidimensional poverty or exclusion that the categories of persons may face*): Marginalized/ vulnerable women (and girls); Children, adolescents; Youth; Older persons; Persons with disabilities (PWDs); Roma and Egyptian communities (R&E); LGBTIQ persons; and 'Other' groups of persons at potential risk of vulnerability or marginalization. Commonly, individuals face intersectional aspects of stigma or discrimination, marginalization or exclusion.

However, gaps in terms of the availability of administrative disaggregated statistics/ data linked to poverty and exclusion continue to make it difficult to identify the needs of key groups, or the extent to which people are subject to multiple, intersectional aspects of vulnerability. One of the main challenges is the lack of data on women with intersectional vulnerabilities. Evidence shows that women from marginalized groups face additional forms of discrimination and violence, which intersects with their specific situation and societal attitudes towards them. Little is known, however, on the concrete ways in which women from marginalized groups in Albania are affected by discrimination/ violence as data is not collected and disaggregated regularly.

Civil Society Organizations supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons

The importance of a robust civil society sector in the pursuit of public policy goals and societal benefits is widely recognized, with civil society organizations (CSOs) and local citizen groups: (1) Contributing to good governance: e.g. via awareness raising/ communication to stimulate community mobilization, advocacy and engagement in the framing of public policies and implementation measures, and the monitoring of policy issues and performance; (2) Improving development outcomes: e.g. via empowering marginalized people to exercise their rights and entitlements, active defence of the rule of law and the protection of rights, demonstrating innovative approaches for public service delivery for local communities and/or social groups.

While reasonable progress has been made in the recent years to build the capacities of lead CSOs supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons, as well as in the establishment of local dialogue forums for participatory decision-making processes, it remains important to strengthen CSOs and local dialogue forums going forward. Organizations and groups suffer, to varying degrees, from fragmentation and the lack of networks to ensure better coordination of their activities, to share knowledge, and build local-regional-national advocacy. Further efforts are needed to develop CSO institutional and professional advocacy capacities (including awareness raising, community outreach, network building, and 'watchdog' function), and CSO and citizen's capacity to participate actively in the planning and budgeting and in the monitoring of the implementation of local and national social inclusion policies and strategies. In addition, many CSOs are directly involved in the delivery of client support services, which need further support to enhance their organizational, operational and professional capacities.

[32] OECD, 2001, DAC Guidelines on Poverty Reduction. The five interrelated aspects of the multidimensional poverty framework are: Economic (income, consumption, assets); Human (health, education, nutrition, shelter); Political (human rights, voice, participation, political freedom); Socio-cultural (valued membership of society, social status, dignity); and Protective (capacity to withstand economic shocks, natural disasters, conflicts).
[33] UNDP, 2018, "What does it mean to leave no one behind?" discussion paper and framework for implementation.

122 Social Protection and Inclusion – Financing and Expenditure

Albania's social protection system has gradually evolved since the 1990s, based on the three, standard, complementary modalities for overall provision of social protection: (1) Contributory social insurance and health insurance schemes[34]; (2) Tax-funded social assistance schemes[35] and social care services[36]; (3) Labour market policies and active labour market programmes[37].

The development of Albania's systems for providing populations at risk of poverty or social exclusion with access to social protection, employment and skills and inclusive education has faced several challenges, the main ones being low levels of coverage, weak mechanisms for inclusivity and weak allocative and technical efficiency. Over the recent years the Government of Albania has adopted a range of significant strategies and action plans in regard to further priorities for social protection reform and for the promotion of social inclusion, and has built the legal framework of the social protection system with the vision of providing integrated social services capable to ensure the inclusion of all vulnerable groups and persons in Albania. But, the inadequate implementation of social policies for the inclusion of vulnerable groups, and the relatively small shares of GDP devoted to social protection and services remain problematic.

Poverty alleviation, social inclusion, and the provision of women and men, children and families in difficult situations to overcome poverty, vulnerability and exclusion are key priorities of the government's Social Protection Strategy 2019-2023. The strategy aims at improving the physical, social and economic well-being of individuals, children and families, especially those in social or economically disadvantaged conditions, by promoting the development of their capacities and skills and by addressing their needs in the context of rehabilitation and social services, taking into account equal opportunities and the principles of gender equality and social justice. The Strategy aims at reforming social protection policies through transformation of the main poverty alleviation social assistance scheme (Economic Aid) into an active scheme enabling social re-integration; transformation of the system of disability evaluation and the establishment of an integrated system of social care services to complement cash benefits; intervention and ensuring re-integration of institutionalized children in families and community, while placing particular care for social and biological orphans; and ensuring the expansion of integrated community based social and community welfare services to meet local needs. One of the priorities is to ensure the necessary funding for groups at stake through the operation of a Social Fund. The strategy also elaborates the need to establish linkages and better integration between active employment policies and social inclusion and protection policies. Roll-out of the social protection and social care reform process commenced starting in 2016/17, with roll-out of the full set of reform measures foreseen to be achieved by 2023/24.

While social protection spending in Albania more than doubled between 2005 and 2016, over the recent years expenditure has stabilized at approximately 9.4% of Albania's GDP. This is significantly lower than the EU average for expenditure on social protection, at 28% in 2016.[38]

[34] The insurance schemes are the key mechanisms for the provision of social protection coverage/ benefits in Albania linked to eight of the nine branches of social security – as defined by ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), which was ratified by Albania in 2006 – i.e. old-age, death/ survivors, sickness, maternity, disability, employment-injury and occupational-diseases, unemployment, and health care. Linked to the ninth ILO branch of social security (child/family benefit), Albania has no social insurance benefit, but supplementary social assistance compensation/ payment is provided, via the state budget, to eligible households.

[35] Tax-funded assistance schemes include: (1) Economic Assistance; (2) Disability Allowance; (3) Social Pension (introduced in 2015); (4) Baby Bonus (a one-time payment, introduced in 2019); (5) Utility fee waivers.

[36] Law (no. 121/2016) on Social Care Services, article 3: "An integrated and organised system of benefits and facilities, that are provided by the practitioners of the respective fields of public or non-public subjects, in order to ensure well-being, independence and social inclusion of individuals and families in need of social care".

[37] Including labour market measures (activation strategies, on-the job training, a work subsidy scheme) targeting: women; Roma and Egyptians; the disabled; orphans; youth; and those transitioning out from social assistance.

[38] Eurostat, Expenditure on social protection 2006-2016: The EU average of 28.0% in 2016 varies from 34.3% of GDP in France, to 14.6% of GDP in Romania; 15-16% of GDP in the Baltic States; 17.3% of GDP in Bulgaria.

In addition to the general government expenditure classified by function of government as social protection, the other key areas of government spending in the field of social policy and human capital development are those in the area of health[39] (approx. 3.0% of GDP), education (approx. 3.2% of GDP), and housing and community amenities (approx. 2.2% of GDP)[40].

Table: Functional Expenditures (COFOG) – General Government, as a percent of GDP

Functional Expenditures	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total government expenditure	**29.64**	**28.90**	**29.23**	**28.76**	**29.10**
-Social protection	**9.14**	**9.46**	**9.29**	**9.24**	**9.47**
-Health	**2.74**	**2.84**	**2.92**	**3.00**	**3.05**
Outpatient services	*1.24*	*1.35*	*1.47*	*1.51*	*1.54*
Hospital services	*1.32*	*1.30*	*1.27*	*1.29*	*1.34*
Public health services	*0.18*	*0.19*	*0.18*	*0.19*	*0.17*
-Education	**3.09**	**3.13**	**3.09**	**3.15**	**3.32**
Pre-primary & primary education	*1.80*	*1.77*	*1.75*	*1.80*	*1.85*
Secondary education	*0.61*	*0.67*	*0.66*	*0.68*	*0.72*
Tertiary education	*0.66*	*0.66*	*0.65*	*0.64*	*0.71*
-Housing & community amenities	**1.93**	**1.72**	**2.27**	**2.34**	**2.18**

Source: International Monetary Fund, IMF Data, Functional Expenditures (COFOG), Albania country data

Financing of social protection expenditure in Albania is provided via two main sources[41]: social contributions, and general government contributions; the share of each source as a percentage of total financing fluctuates annually, but broadly each source contributes 47-53% of the total social protection financing. Approximately 65-70% of the general government contributions are expended as contribution/transfer to the Social Insurance Fund, the remaining share of financing covers the non-contributory assistance programmes, such as poverty and disability cash benefits, as well as labour-market related programmes, and social care services.

Social protection spending in Albania is dominated by social insurance outlays, which now account on average for over 80% of total spending in all years. Social insurance outlays are predominantly provided as old-age pensions (over 80% of total social insurance outlays); the remaining social insurance outlays are spread across other special pensions/ government compensation programmes, plus outlays provided as work-related illness benefits, temporary disability pensions, survivor pensions, maternity benefits, and unemployment benefits.

Social assistance outlays account for approximately 15-17% of total social protection spending. The payments are primarily provided via the Disability Allowance (now approx. 65% of social assistance outlays), Economic Assistance (the main, means-tested, poverty relief social assistance scheme), as well as via support provided for social care services.

Labour market measures and programmes account for up to 2% of social protection spending.

[39] Which includes social health protection and the financing provided via the contributory health insurance scheme.
[40] International Monetary Fund, Functional Expenditures (COFOG) - IMF Data – IMF data for 2020 not yet available.
[41] European Social Policy Network (ESPN), 2019, Thematic Report on financing social protection (Albania).

123 Social Protection and Inclusion – Effective coverage of the population

In regard of SDG indicator 1.3.1[42], the effective coverage[43] of the social protection systems and measures in Albania, there is limited contemporary data[44]. Recent research analysis suggests that the social protection system provides coverage to almost half of the population[45]. This implies that almost half of the population is not effectively covered by the social protection system, i.e. not accessing benefits under any of the available schemes or making any (or not making sufficient) contributions so as to access social insurance schemes/ benefits.

On the basis of available data[46], the extent of coverage provided under the main, specific social protection and inclusion support measures in Albania, over the recent years, included:

- In 2019, pensions under the social insurance scheme (old-age; invalid; or survivor) were provided to approximately 650,000 people (approx. 330,000 women), approximately 530,000 people in urban areas and approx. 121,000 in rural areas; the trend shows a clear increase in the number of urban pensions and decrease in the number of rural pensioners.
- Economic Assistance cash benefit was provided to approximately 61,000 households, mainly households with between 3-5 family members; the trend shows a clear decrease in the number of households supported, from approximately 80,000 between 2015 and 2017. The number of households supported via the scheme has increased in year 2020, as a result of the government package of economic/fiscal support packages, reaching a peak in the second quarter of 2020 of 63,670 beneficiary households, since then declining.
- In 2020, approximately 74,000 disabled people received work-related disabilities benefit payments under the contributory social insurance scheme, while the number of PWDs supported under the Disability Allowance scheme was approximately 73,000 people, of which approx. 20,000 PWDs received the personal assistant support/ benefit package.
- In 2018, the number of beneficiaries of the social care service centres was approximately 11,000 people. "Individuals in need"[47] constituted the main group of service recipients with 27%, followed by "Children" with 19%, "Elderly" with 17%, "Individuals with disabilities" with 16%, and "Women in need" with 13%. At the county level, the largest number of social service recipients is in the region of Tirana (24% of the total number of beneficiaries), followed by Fier (12%), Durrës, Elbasan, and Shkodra (each with 11%), Korçë (10%), Vlora (6%), Berat, and Lezhë (each 5%), Dibër, and Gjirokastër (each 2%), and Kukës (1%). "Children" are the main beneficiaries of social services in Shkodra, Durrës and Tirana; the "Elderly" dominate as beneficiary categories in Kukës, Dibër and Gjirokastër, while "Individuals in need" are the main beneficiaries of services in Fier, Korçë, Elbasan,

[42] Proportion of the population covered by social protection floors/systems (i.e. either receiving benefits under an available scheme or actively contributing to a social security scheme), by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, mothers with new-borns, work-injury victims, the poor/ vulnerable.
[43] Effective coverage is the proportion of the specific sub-category of the population that is covered, calculated on a scale from 0% to 100% of the total population estimated for that sub-category (e.g. the proportion of unemployed receiving benefits is the ratio of recipients of unemployment benefits to the number of unemployed persons).
[44] For SDG indicator 1.3.1, Albania's "SDG Dashboard Tracker" provides information for nine sub-categories of the population (the most recent available data per sub-category, and the intermediate target and the 2030 target to be achieved in regard to effective coverage). However, the most recent available data per sub-category is mainly from year 2012. For example: (1) Proportion of population above retirement age receiving a pension was 77.0%; (2) Proportion of the population covered by social insurance programmes was 36.3%; (3) Proportion of the poorest quintile population covered by social insurance programmes was 38.2%; (4) Proportion of the population covered by social assistance programmes was 19.1%; (5) Proportion of the poorest quintile population covered by social assistance programmes was 27.7%; (6) Proportion of unemployed receiving unemployment benefits was 6.9%.
[45] European Social Policy Network (ESPN), 2019, Thematic Report on financing social protection (Albania).
[46] INSTAT Social protection data, State Social Service SHSSH | Raporte (sherbimisocial.gov.al) data, and State Social Service/ LNB, 2019, Report Assessing the Need for Social Services in the 12 Regions of Albania.
[47] "Individuals in need" refers to individuals in critical need of support, mainly economic/ material needs and in some cases social care needs, as well as individuals addicted to alcohol or drugs.

Lezhë and Berat. "Individuals with disabilities" are beneficiaries of social services in every region of the country, but they are not the main beneficiary group in any of the regions.

- At the municipal level: 21 municipalities (34% of the total of 61) did not provide any services; 7 municipalities (9%) provide services for all the main group of service recipients; 38 municipalities (62%) did not provide services for older persons, 43 municipalities (71%) did not provide services for children, 37 municipalities (61%) did not provide services for PWDs, and 39 municipalities (64%) did not provide services to individuals in need.
- In 2019, the Social Fund was operationalized by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) to contribute to financial spending for the extension/ expansion of local social care service delivery in Albania based on municipal social plans. Based on the 2019 request/call for submission of applications, 14 municipalities were funded by the Social Fund in 2020 to establish 14 new services, with a fund amounting to ALL 61,412,587, and 12 specialized services in 6 regions amounting to ALL 62 million were funded in 2019.
- In regard to social health protection, approx. 600,000 people without health insurance can benefit from the scheme of reimbursed medicines and free primary health care services, and at a minimal rate for specialized health care services (through the referral system).[48]
- In 2019, the number of beneficiaries, from marginalized/ vulnerable groups of persons, of social housing support programmes included approximately 425 families benefiting from investments in the improvement of housing conditions, and approx. 800 families benefiting from rent or interest rate subsidy. In 2020, approximately 650 families benefited from housing investments, and approx. 15,000 families benefited from housing subsidies, the latter increase a result of the government package of post-earthquake support in 2020 for rent subsidy. With regard to the housing rent subsidy programme, in 2019-2020, the main categories of beneficiaries were PWDs (27%), people receiving Economic Assistance cash benefit (19%), R&E family (16%), single-parent family (10%), homeless (6%).[49]
- In academic year 2019-2020, approximately 180,000 pre-university children/ students from marginalized/ vulnerable groups benefited from targeted inclusive education support measures (scholarships, supplies for COVID-19, access to online learning devices, capacity building and improvement of school practices, other individualized support to learning as dropout prevention, catch up classes). The main categories of beneficiaries were: children with disability, Roma children, children in remote rural areas, refuges and migrants and children from families supported under Economic Assistance.
- A new package of employment promotion programmes were introduced during 2020 (subsidized employment, on-the-job training, internships, labour market reintegration of recently laid-off workers, and formalization measures for informal workers), via which 580 entities and 2,822 unemployed jobseekers participated. The measures were launched in September 2020 and 1,651 unemployed jobseekers are employed through the actions.[50] In year 2018, of the almost 33,000 total employment placements intermediated by the Employment Offices, the main categories of beneficiaries were Youth (41%), persons formally receiving Economic Assistance cash benefit (12%), and the R&E (4%).[51]
- In addition, in March 2020 the Council of Ministers (Decision No. 236) approved a new programme to ensure home delivery assistance during the pandemic to persons in need (PWDs, older persons, recipients of Economic Assistance) of food, medical products and other services. During 2020, approximately 600,000 people benefited from the scheme.

[48] Government of Albania, 2021, Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, January 2021.
[49] Mid-Term Evaluation report for the Social Housing Strategy (draft of December 2020), prepared under LNB by an independent team of consultants (MetroPOLIS, Shpk. and Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development).
[50] Government of Albania, 2021, Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, January 2021.
[51] Government of Albania, 2020, 11th National Report on the implementation of the European Social Charter.

124 Social Protection and Inclusion – Government reform priorities in the sector

[Information on relevant international/ national policy frameworks is provided in section 14]

Poverty alleviation, social inclusion, and the provision of conditions for individuals, children and families in difficult situations to overcome poverty, vulnerability and exclusion are key priorities of the government's Social Protection Strategy 2019-2023. The strategy aims at improving the physical, social and economic well-being of individuals, children and families, especially those in social or economically disadvantaged conditions, by promoting the development of their capacities and skills and by addressing their needs in the context of rehabilitation and social services, taking into account equal opportunities and the principles of social justice. Social protection and inclusion is also highlighted in the government's Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023 as a key policy area supported by structural reform measures over the period. The government has also demonstrated, via its packages of fiscal measures to support vulnerable persons adopted in 2020, the important role of social protection measures to alleviate poverty.

The Strategy combines policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty by decreasing the exposure of families and people to risks and increasing their capacity to protect themselves against the risks and limited incomes, as well as to support the process of returning people to the labour market, as appropriate, in order to improve their living conditions/ well-being. The strategy sets the government vision for an integrated social protection system, and it provides the ground for further reforms to: (1) establish an integrated system of social care services at decentralized level; (2) improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the poverty targeted Economic Aid benefit scheme; (3) improve the situation of persons with disability. The strategy clearly articulates the need to better harmonize the different instruments of social protection, recognizing that cash benefits alone cannot address the complex needs of vulnerable people.

Furthermore, expanding the provision of social care services requires the ability of central and local government to engage in contracting and outsourcing of services based on partnerships between municipalities, Non-Governmental Organizations and the private sector. The goal is particularly important with regard to services designed to address complex needs and improve economic and social opportunities for the social inclusion of disadvantaged communities.

In addition to persons or families lacking minimum subsistence means (i.e. living below the poverty line) because of personal and social conditions, the main categories of groups of persons defined by the government as at risk of potential marginalization or vulnerability includes: families and children; PWDs; R&E communities; children and young adults in conflict with the law; victims of violence, victims of trafficking; adults who have drug/ alcohol addiction; pregnant girls or single parent of a child up to one year old; older people; LGBTIQ people.

Linked to the on-going social protection reform process[52], key priorities are summarized as:

- Social care services: the Law on Social Care Services, adopted in November 2016, provides the foundations for fully shaping of a new community based system of integrated social services, allowing Albania to make an essential step ahead towards a modern social protection system. The Law brings clear provisions detailing the roles and accountabilities of key duty-bearers, at central, regional, and municipal levels, relating to social care services provision, its planning, financing, implementation, monitoring, and quality control. Roll-out of the reform process commenced starting in 2017, following the establishment

[52] Reform of the poverty alleviation cash benefit aid scheme (Economic Assistance) and of the Disability Allowance and assessment scheme is being undertaken by the government with the support of the World Bank. The reform process is guided by the goal to enhance the efficiency (notably the operational and administrative management/ costs) and the targeting of the benefits (more adequately supporting those most in-need of assistance/ support).

of the newly formed local government units (LGUs) at municipal level during 2016.[53] Roll-out of the full set of reform measures is foreseen to be achieved by 2023. The goal is that "By 2023, every man, woman, boy and girl will have equal opportunities to benefit from a functioning and integrated system of social care services based on the principles of decentralization, deinstitutionalization and diversification of social care services". The key priorities/ needs over the medium-term period relate to effective roll-out and consolidation of the fully reformed system across the country: (1) Establishment of an integrated system of social care services at the national/country level; (2) Development of an integrated information system at the local, regional and central level to identify, refer people to the needs for social care services; (3) Establishment and strengthening of the monitoring and inspection system regarding the quality of social services at local, regional and central level; (4) Professionalization of the workforce and social service providers by establishing a qualification system; (5) Raising public awareness and education for the prevention of social issues and addressing social services through communication campaigns.

- Economic Aid: after piloting the reformed cash assistance scheme, national roll-out of the reformed scheme has now been achieved. The goal is that "By 2023, extreme poverty can be reduced by increasing the targeting of extremely poor individuals, children and families, and their social integration, growing by 10% the number of beneficiaries included in the employment schemes, converting it from a passive to an active scheme". The key priorities/ needs over the medium-term period relate to consolidation of the system: (1) Enhancing the efficiency and transparency of the scheme; (2) Consolidation of the scheme by well-managing the National Electronic Register and scoring system; (3) Raising capacities of central, regional and local structures in areas including administration, monitoring and evaluation; (4) Transformation of the programme into an integration scheme by providing employment opportunities (an aid scheme Exit Programme).
- Disability: after piloting of the reformed model, roll-out of the reformed disability scheme is now progressively being implemented across the country; it will be extended nationwide by 2024. The goal is "Improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities through bio-psycho-social assessment, based on international standards of disability classification, combining the payment benefits scheme with integrated services to achieve their social and economic integration". The key priorities/ needs over the medium-term period relate to: (1) Reforming the disability assessment system to perform the bio-psycho-social assessment; (2) Establishment and strengthening of referral, evaluation and monitoring capacities and inter-institutional coordination of disability assessment system reform; (3) Evaluation of the Reformed Disability Scheme; (4) Raising awareness of the public, stakeholders and actors involved in the reform through communication and information campaigns; (5) Improvement of the legal framework regarding disability bio-psycho-social assessment and review of benefits by combining benefits in cash with integrated services.

For vulnerable groups of persons, social care services means an integrated and organized system of benefits and/or facilities that are provided at the local level via social care support services in coordination, as appropriate, with other support actions in the areas of health, education, employment, vocational training, and housing. In regard to these other policy areas,

[53] In addition to the Law on Social Care Services, the accountabilities and roles of the LGUs in relation to social care services in their territories are clearly articulated/ integrated in the National Inter-sectoral Decentralization Strategy (2015-2020) and the Law on Local Self-Government, both adopted in 2015. More broadly, in the context of Albania's territorial reform process and fiscal and administrative decentralisation, essential public services that perform critical roles in reducing poverty and social exclusion and in improving human capital have been delegated, deconcentrated and devolved to regional bodies (employment and inclusive education), and to local governments (social care services). Success of the territorial reform process requires clear funding mechanisms and effective management systems for the coordinated delivery of integrated services between the different tiers of government.

key government reform priorities with direct relevance to marginalized/ vulnerable groups of persons, specifically defined in the recent Economic Reform Programme[54], include:

- Increasing access to healthcare and public health insurance coverage while reducing the share of out-of-pocket payments on total health expenditure.
- Increasing the number of children, especially from vulnerable families, attending preschool education and the inclusion of the preparatory class in compulsory education.
- Providing free textbooks for students attending basic education, as well as free textbooks for students from social strata in need in upper secondary education.
- Providing financial scholarships or food quotas for students with special needs, children at risk of school dropout, and pre-university education students from social strata in need.
- Designing specific programs for the education of disadvantaged groups. By 2022, every R&E child will be enrolled in school, 100% of them will complete compulsory education and 70% more Roma and Egyptian girls and boys will complete all levels of education.
- Increasing the number of psycho-social service employees in the education system.
- 6000 unemployed jobseekers will benefit from employment promotion schemes for 2021.

Key state/ public institutions addressing issues of social protection and inclusion

In terms of the government/ public service oriented institutions in Albania that are responsible for the development of the social protection and inclusion policy framework, its financing, and/or the operational framework for social service provision, the main partners include:

- Central government: Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP); Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE); Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MESY); State Social Service (SSS); State Inspectorate for Social Services (SILSS); Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education (ASCAP). In addition, the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT).[55]
- Regional and municipal government: 12 regions (regional authority and deconcentrated offices of state bodies for social, health, education, employment, and housing policies); 61 LGUs responsible for local socio-economic development and social services provision.
- Public service institutions: Order of Psychologists; Order of Social Workers; Universities (Faculty of Social Science, Education); Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA).
- Community based social service providers: in 2018 there were approximately 275 social service providers operating in Albania (54% state/public centres; 46% non-public); 74% of the offered services were in day centres, 26% in residential centres; 27% of the offered services were for children, 25% for PWDs; 18% for older persons; 30% people in need.[56]

While reasonable progress has been made in the recent years to build the capacities of leading state institutions to develop the policy and regulatory framework and instruments for social protection and inclusion, the operational capacities of the institutions to implement, monitor and evaluate policies, strategies, and instruments, and to ensure effective coordination and integration between services supporting vulnerable groups of persons, and between the different tiers of government, remains in need of further strengthening. Further capacity building and organizational development will be vital as the social protection reforms are now

[54] Government of Albania, 2021, Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, January 2021.
[55] MHSP: responsibility for developing policies and strategies, as well as laws, regulations and measures in the areas of healthcare, social and child protection; and with responsibility for coordinating/ overseeing agencies (subordinate institutions, government Councils, and other government Ministries) dealing with social inclusion. MFE: including responsibility for budget planning and management, employment and skills promotion, and social housing. MESY: including responsibility for inclusive education, and youth policy. SSS: responsibility for the administration and monitoring of social protection benefits and social care services. SILSS: with responsibility for social services quality inspection and enforcement. ASCAP: with responsibility for the development of the pre-university teacher training and qualifications system and standards, and the quality assurance control oversight of education and training providers. INSTAT: coordinator of the national statistical system, responsible for producing official statistics.
[56] State Social Service/ LNB, 2019, Report Assessing the Need for Social Services in the 12 Regions of Albania.

moving from the roll-out phase to the substantive consolidation phase over the next few years. At central government level, priorities include the implementation of and further development of policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks (including sub-legal acts and service standards), and funding mechanisms. A further key priority is to strengthen capacities for the monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies implementation (the analysis of results and progress, so as to provide evidence-based input for policy and strategic decision-making purposes).

Capacity building of government at the local and regional levels to manage social protection, social care and the social inclusion policy agenda remains the key priority for the government (and for the LGUs)[57]. In addition to improving the organizational and operational capacities of the LGUs to administer social policy and social care services (e.g. the capacity of local Needs Assessment and Referral Units, the development of integrated social care and health services, employment, housing and inclusive education measures at the local level), a key priority is to develop capacity to monitor social policy implementation and the evolution of needs. For LGUs, a further key priority relates to how the further development of social services can be financed. In line with the Law on Social Care Services, a Social Fund mechanism has been established[58] and since 2019 operationalized by the MHSP, in order to support improve the standards and administering capacities of existing services of social care, to create new services and to develop social policies. Based on the request for submission of applications launched in 2019, the initial disbursement of funds was executed in 2019/2020, from which benefited 14 LGUs and 12 specialized services in 6 regions with a total fund amounting to 150 million ALL[59]. The second call for proposal was launched by MHSP on 20 October 2020, with 41 LGUs submitting applications. As of February 2021, these were in the final stages of assessment by MHSP. The ministry has identified certain weaknesses in regard to compliance of the applications or quality of the local Social Care Plan, in terms of the requirements of the Law and/or the Social Fund. MHSP has also identified the need to validate social policy guidelines and establish gender markers in proposals to the Social Fund, but also engendering of social care plans in general. In addition to consolidating municipal capacities for the development of financing applications and the budgeting of social services, including capacity to access external financing sources, there is a need to build capacities linked to the operation of public procurement/ contracting.[60]

With regard to the provision of social care services, by public or non-public service providers, key priorities relate to the need for further capacity building and organizational development support, in order to increase the quality and the range of services they can offer, as well as to expand the extent of service capacity in terms of the number of beneficiaries supported. This includes capacity building needs linked to social care service administration and quality management standards, and in regard to social care service delivery, case management, therapies, protocols, models and standards, as well as service provision outreach activities.

With regard to the professionalization of the workforce and of social service providers by developing the continuous education and qualification/ accreditation systems (for the different groups of professional occupation, e.g. Social Workers, Psychologists, Teaching Assistants), the system has been established in regard to pre-university education, and health workers, but is only recently established in regard to social care workers[61]. In this area the short- and

[57] As of late-2020, 48 LGUs had an approved multi-annual local Social Care Plan, while for 11 LGUs the process of preparation/ final approval by the local Council was still on-going; for 2 LGUs no data was available. (LNB data).
[58] Decision of the Council of Ministers (no. 111/2018) on the establishment and functioning of the Social Fund. Decision of the Council of Ministers (no. 150/2019) on the adoption of the fund calculation methodology for the financing of social care services. In addition to central government budgetary allocation (MHSP budget line), the Social Fund at the local level includes potential extra-budgetary funding by local or foreign organisations, income from own sources/ assets of the municipality, plus income from application of fees for various social care services.
[59] Government of Albania, 2021, Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, January 2021.
[60] Albania's Law on Public Procurement was revised in July 2020, in part to clarify procurement of social services.
[61] Decision of the Council of Ministers (no. 624/2020) on social care service professionals certification requirements.

medium-term priorities/ needs relate to building the capacity of the Order of Psychologists, and of the Order of Social Workers (foreseen to be formally established by mid-2021), to develop their professional qualification and certification/ accreditation standards and systems. In addition, universities will need support to enhance the occupational and professional training course offer (Bachelor, Master, or specialized courses accredited for continuous education).

Finally, as in all public policy and reform contexts, especially as the process moves from the roll-out phase to the scaling up and consolidation phase, a key priority over the next years relates to the further strengthening of knowledge management, learning and sharing capacity, as well as public funding mechanisms. This is relevant to the range of different groups of actors, but most notably so in regard to the capacities of LGUs to share knowledge and experience, with regional and national partners. There is also clear potential to further strengthen linkages between LGUs and academia in terms of policy development/ analysis and in orienting the focus of local research projects.

13 The drivers and constrainers of change

At least in theory, all parties involved are drivers of change, and so are the regulatory framework and the policies and strategies for the coming years, in which poverty reduction and social inclusion is a streamlined concern. The proposed programme intends to empower the vulnerable groups and the civil society organizations advocating their interests to become, together with the competent Albanian state structures at central and local level, and service providers (public and non-public), the drivers of change for social protection and inclusion. It is the Albanian actors who, in the long run, are to guarantee social inclusion and protection.

Albania's international commitments/ ambitions linked to delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with Albania's intention to make progress in the EU accession process, are also to be considered as drivers of change regarding social inclusion. The Government of Albania is supported by the UN to reinforce social development outcomes, guided by a rights-based and inclusive approach, fully aligned to country strategic priorities.[62] Other donors/ financiers supporting Albania in the area include the World Bank, the EU, GIZ, Swedish Cooperation, Italian Cooperation, Austrian Cooperation, USAID, and, last not least, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). SDC is one of the longer-term players supporting social inclusion, democratization, decentralization and local governance in Albania, actively engaged in the areas for more than a decade, with a focus on benefiting vulnerable groups.

A key factor in driving change will be the extent to which the demand-side and the supply-side for the provision of integrated social services for vulnerable groups are effectively matched.

On the demand-side, it remains essential to inform people of their rights and entitlements and to empower them to access and/or lobby for suitable, community based services provision. While focused on empowering vulnerable groups, it is also vital to strengthen wider societal ownership in demand of improved and extended community based social services provision, as part of the strengthening of Albania's social protection safety-net and inclusion systems.[63] The impact of the 26 November 2019 earthquake and subsequently of the on-going global health pandemic have clearly broadened the understanding of risks to vulnerability and

[62] Under the current Government of Albania-UN Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021 (Outcome 2 focuses on Social Cohesion: health, education, social protection, child protection, and gender-based violence), and foreseen in the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (Outcome A focuses on Human Capital Development and Social Inclusion: social protection, education, health care, shock responsive systems for disaster preparedness and response, and inclusive community engagement).

[63] Social protection systems, policies, and programmes help individuals and societies manage risk and volatility and protect them from poverty and destitution (through instruments that improve resilience, equity, and opportunity). While the main beneficiaries are vulnerable persons, they should provide universal coverage to all those in need.

poverty, and of the need to build greater resilience. The provision of tailored fiscal support measures adopted in 2020 to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the challenges has also demonstrated the capacity of government to act to alleviate risks to vulnerability and poverty. The key constraints linked to promoting the demand-side for improved service provision are related to a broad level of distrust/ apathy of the people concerning the transparency and effectiveness of government/ governance in Albania, as well as the prevalence of patriarchal and 'traditional' societal assumptions regarding stereotyped gender roles and the 'management' of the family/ domestic sphere, which limit women's agency and empowerment.

On the supply-side, while the legal framework for social protection and social inclusion as well as local governance and decentralization are in place and efforts at central, regional, and municipal level are being made to absorb and implement the social protection and inclusion policy agenda (its planning, financing, implementation, monitoring, and quality control), this implementation is slow and notably fragmented at the local level in terms of service provision. The key duty-bearers relating to social care and inclusion services provision are committed to delivering systemic reform and thereby socio-economic outcomes benefiting individuals and families at risk of poverty or exclusion. However, certain constraints exist that may limit the capacity of the supply-side to effectively match demand. Chief among these is the issue of financing capacity, followed by technical/ operational/ human capacities for the provision of integrated social services for vulnerable groups/ people in need; the latter (technical/ operational capacities) constrained by the former (financing capacities). The government acknowledges that social protection and inclusion measures are among the most effective interventions in the fight against poverty and vulnerability. It also recognizes that the effectiveness of programmes in the targeting of vulnerable groups and the poorest needs to improve further. Nevertheless, almost half of the population in Albania is not yet effectively covered by the social protection system. This is a reflection of the still relatively low levels in Albania for formal labour force participation and employment (against which social insurance contributions and access to social insurance benefits are accrued), but also of the still relatively low levels in Albania for general government expenditure on social protection and inclusion, as well as of the capacity of LGUs to prepare applications for funding (Social Fund or donors), or to manage/allocate local revenues so as to increase own resources to fund social services.

14 Link to international/national policies/relevant legal and policy framework

Over the recent years the Government of Albania has adopted a range of significant strategies and action plans in regard to the further priorities for poverty alleviation, social protection reform and the promotion of social inclusion in Albania (a number of these strategies are presently being updated for the post-2020 period). Social inclusion is a crosscutting theme in a number of policy documents, targeting social protection, health, housing, education, skills and employability, children, youth, ageing (older persons), gender, PWDs, R&E, and LGBTIQ, etc. The main national policies and strategies, plus key relevant laws are briefly sketched below.

Table: Social protection and inclusion policy, strategic and legal framework – overview

Policy/ strategy	Brief summary (key points of reference)
Government of Albania	
National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2014-20	Out of six established priorities, the fourth focuses on ensuring social cohesion and employment (focusing on employment and skills; social inclusion and social protection; health; education (pre-university, university and vocational education), culture, etc.).
National Plan for European Integration 2020-22	Notably in regard to the focus of EU *Acquis* Chapters: (19) Social policy and employment; (23) Judiciary and fundamental rights; (26) Education and culture; and (28) Consumer and health protection.

Policy/ strategy	Brief summary (key points of reference)
Economic Reform Programme 2021-23	Includes reform measures in the areas of: Social protection and inclusion (measure 17), including health care (measure 18); Education and skills (13-15); Employment and labour markets (16).
Crosscutting Strategy for Decentralization and Local Governance 2015-20	Presents a comprehensive approach to decentralization and strengthening of local government in accordance with the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, as well as those of the European Administrative Space for local government, aiming at providing political, administrative and fiscal decentralization.
Law no. 115/2014 "On the territorial and administrative division of local government units in Albania" Law no. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government"	
Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP)	
Social Protection Strategy 2019-23	Poverty alleviation, social inclusion, and the provision of conditions for individuals, children and families in difficult situations to overcome poverty, vulnerability and exclusion are key priorities. The strategy sets the government vision for an integrated social protection system, via further reforms to: (1) establish an integrated system of social care services at decentralized level; (2) improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the poverty targeted Economic Aid benefit; (3) improve the situation of persons with disability. The strategy articulates the need to better harmonize the different instruments of social protection, recognizing that cash benefits alone cannot address the complex needs of vulnerable people.
Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-20	Addresses key social inclusion policy areas grouped under six domains: (1) poverty reduction and social protection; (2) employment and skills; (3) education and training; (4) health; (5) basic needs/ deprivation; (6) social participation and human rights.
Strategy and National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender Equality 2016-20	Foresees interventions towards economic empowerment of women and men; ensuring actual participation and engagement in political and public decision-making processes; reducing gender-based violence and domestic violence; and strengthening the coordination and monitoring role of the national mechanism of gender equality.
NAP for Roma and Egyptians 2016-20	Foresees interventions towards facilitating opportunities for the equal use of civil registration services and justice; improve eligibility to full access and inclusion in qualitative education; provide equal opportunities for formal employment; ensure accessible, affordable and equitable healthcare; improve housing conditions; and increase access to social protection programmes for the R&E.
NAP on Persons with Disabilities 2016-20	Foresees interventions towards improving accessibility of public information and services; facilitate inclusive education; introduce disability assessment based on the bio-psycho-social model; and expand community-based social services, rehabilitation services and employment promotion measures.
NAP for LGBT People 2016-20	Foresees interventions towards improving the legal and institutional framework and awareness on the rights of LGBTIQ people; to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the LGBTIQ community; to improve access to services (employment, education, health, housing, social, and sports services) for LGBTIQ people.
National Agenda for Children's Rights 2017-20	Aims to promote, respect and protection of children's rights via good governance; eliminate all forms of violence against children; the provision of child and adolescent friendly systems and services.
NAP on Ageing 2020-24	Foresees interventions towards protection and social inclusion of the elderly; development of suitable and integrated community based social and health services for the elderly; promoting health and welfare for the elderly, and awareness of society about ageing.
Strategic Document and Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health 2017-21	Foresees interventions in the areas of family planning; the health of mothers, children, adolescents; gender equality; combatting gender-based violence; sexually transmitted infections; infertility.

Policy/ strategy	Brief summary (key points of reference)
Law no. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services" Law no. 163/2014 "On the Order of Social Workers Law no. 40/2016 "On the Order of Psychologists Law no. 65/2016 "On Social Enterprises" Law no. 9669/2006 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations" Law no. 9970/2008 "On Gender Equality in Society" Law no. 10221/2010 "On Protection from Discrimination" Law no. 93/2014 "On Inclusion and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities" Law no. 18/2017 "On the Rights and Protection of the Child"	
Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MESY)	
Strategy on Pre-University Education 2014-20	Aims at supporting and promoting quality and inclusive education for all; professional development of teachers and administrators; decentralization and community support to promote child well-being; expansion of social work/ psychological services in schools.
NAP on Youth 2015-20	Foresees interventions towards youth promotion and participation in decision making; youth employment promotion; health, sport, environment; education; social protection; culture & volunteerism.
Law no. 69/2012 "On Pre-university Education System" Law no. 75/2019 "For Youth"	
Ministry of Finance and Economics (MFE)	
Social Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2016-25	Aims at providing low and middle income households who cannot afford a house in the open market, and in particular, vulnerable households suffering from housing exclusion, with available, accessible, affordable and quality housing solutions.
Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-20	Aims at integrating economic, education, vocational and entrepreneurship policies together through an action plan that boosts employment and social inclusion, matching employment and vocational education and training with labour market demands.
Law no. 22/2018 "On Social Housing" Law no. 15/2019 "On Employment Promotion" Law no. 146/2015 "On Unemployed Jobseekers" Law no. XXX/2008 "On Management of the Budgetary System" (Organic Budget Law) and Law no. 68/2017 "On Local Finances" – making gender responsive budgeting (GRB) mandatory	
International and European policy frameworks ratified by or to which Albania aligns	
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	In the context of the Agenda 2030, social protection and inclusion measures ensure that no one is left behind and also contribute directly or indirectly to the goals: SDGs 1-5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities/ communities), and SDG 16 (peaceful/ inclusive societies).
EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation (October 2020)	Sets seven objectives at the EU level for the period up to 2030. Three of these objectives are horizontal in the areas of equality, inclusion and participation. The other four are sectoral objectives in the areas of education, employment, housing and health.
EU Gender Action Plan for gender equality and women's empowerment (Nov. 2020)	Sets objectives for EU external actions: e.g. Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence; Promoting sexual/ reproductive health and rights; Strengthen economic/social rights, empowering girls and women; Advancing equal participation and leadership.
UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its relevant General Recommendations Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)	
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	
UN Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process	

2 Results and Lessons Learned

21 Results

The LNB programme is financed by the SDC, and is implemented by the UN in Albania through the modalities of the Delivering as One (DaO) mechanism. Under the Government of Albania-UN Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017-21, the LNB programme is undertaken as part of the theme Social Protection and Social Inclusion. The LNB programme is jointly implemented by four UN partner agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNWOMEN), with UNDP the lead UN agency for the overall implementation and coordination of the programme. During Phase 1 of the LNB programme – from 01 June 2017 to 31 May 2021 – the SDC funds the programme at the amount of CHF 8.0 million. Overall financial delivery (disbursed and committed) of the programme till December 2020 was 89.4%.

The goal of the programme is that "Vulnerable persons and groups have improved access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and hold them accountable". In order to achieve this goal the programme focuses on promoting three interlinked outcomes[64]: (1) Empowered vulnerable people; (2) Enabled municipalities and social service providers; (3) Strengthened national institutions.

The programme's interventions are all designed to support the implementation of Albanian policies and strategies relevant for the social inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups of people of all genders. Reflective of the increased levels of vulnerability to social exclusion of PWDs and the R&E communities, the programme provides specific focuses to supporting these persons as its target group.

LNB was subject to an independent mid-term review (MTR) in first-quarter 2020, which rated highly satisfactory its relevance to the country's needs, and the progress towards achievement of Outcomes 2 and 3 satisfactory, and progress towards the achievement of Outcome 1 highly satisfactory. Furthermore, the MTR concluded that overall, the progress to date to ensure the sustainability of the results and benefits after the end of the programme is satisfactory. The alignment of LNB with national/local policies and needs is a major factor contributing to the sustainability of results. The holistic approach of the LNB programme, addressing macro, meso and micro level, also contributes to sustainability. In addition, valuable technical support/ advice has been provided to government partners linked to its development of funding mechanisms for social inclusion, the results of which are integral to building national/local financing capacity to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme results. Major factors that influence the non-achievement of sustainability of the programme results are: (1) financial sustainability; (2) the capacity of governmental partners to ensure social inclusion and social care policy planning, monitoring and evaluation; (3) staff turnover and the failure to internalize capacity building programmes. Finally, the MTR considers that it is important for the programme to develop a clear results achievement strategy linked to the sharing of good practice and to identify how the results may be scaled up by the partners in the future.[65]

Summary of the LNB programme results overall

Overall, the LNB programme (Phase 1) has directly supported approximately 24,000 vulnerable groups of people of all genders reached via access to services, and information/

[64] Outcome 1: The vulnerable population are empowered to request and receive adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion, and to hold them accountable. Outcome 2: Municipalities are enabled to effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services/ promote social inclusion. Outcome 3: National institutions are strengthened to implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, capacities and empowered target groups.
[65] Evaluation Report (August 2020) of the Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, prepared for the UN Albania by an independent team of consultants.

awareness raising and participatory policy forums, and also directly supported approximately 4,100 professional staff of municipal partners (LGUs and service providers in different social services – social care, education, health), and approx. 1,000 staff of central government. Indirectly, the programme results have reached approximately 100,000 vulnerable people (via CSO outreach efforts, and 63,630 people supported during COVID-19), while approx. 91,300 people are identified in the LGU Social Care Plans (of the 36 LGUs supported by LNB) as persons at potential risk of vulnerability.

Summary of the LNB programme results achieved on outcome level/ key outputs

Outcome 1 – Community level (citizens empowerment)

- Vulnerable groups equipped with knowledge and information on: (1) their social rights and entitlement, including their right to quality integrated Sexually Reproductive Health (SRH) services; (2) the importance of children's education and procedures for vulnerable children's enrolment in the education system; (3) preventive measures on COVID-19 as well as online support and remote counselling to pupils, parents, teachers and families to manage COVID-19 restriction and safety measures.
- Vulnerable groups are empowered on their rights and entitlements to social services and are mobilized for a meaningful participation in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms supported by the programme (Local Social Dialogue Groups, Forums of Persons with Disabilities, Youth Voice Network, field reporters and Y-Peer Network) to advocate for their rights at central and local level, which are accounted in local social care plans and the public agenda of the government. Over 7,000 R&E, PWDs, women and youth are engaged in forums and debates with local authorities on issues of their concern such as access to social care services, employment, health and inclusive education.
- PWDs supported with inclusive services models: (1) independent living service model for adults with intellectual disabilities; (2) 9 models of community centres in 9 municipalities were created and are staffed with trained professionals to offer services to children with disabilities, vulnerable children and youth, women victims of gender based violence and families in emergencies; (3) 40 assistant teachers trained on inclusive education methodology for vulnerable children especially those with disabilities; (4) printed information materials on COVID-19, video messages and counselling services in sign language; (5) 12 national and local organizations of persons with disabilities strengthened their organizational, strategic planning and advocacy capacities by implementing small-scale projects.
- "Swiss model" of integrated social services provision (through an inclusive package of social services) implemented in 3 selected LGUs supporting approximately 300 R&E families (1600 individuals) has demonstrated the potential for scaling up in other LGUs.
- Capacities of R&E health mediators in 12 LGUs strengthened to support service delivery and in monitoring implementation of the National Action Plan for the Roma and Egyptians.
- Early Warning System for school drop-out mainstreamed at national level through setting up the school monitoring/inspection platform and 51 teachers' professional networks.

Outcome 2 – Municipal level (LGUs and service providers)

- LGUs are being capacitated to fulfil their obligations (as foreseen in the Law on Social Care Services and the process of territorial reforms in Albania), linked to the provision and management of social care policy and services at the local level. This has included support that benefits all of the 61 LGUs in Albania (e.g. methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, plus tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation), as well as specific support provided in selected LGUs (so far 25 LGUs in total) to pilot test different mechanisms at the local and/or

regional level, so as to learn practical lessons prior to facilitating the wider roll-out and scaling up of the range of initiatives to be undertaken by the partners over the next years.

- 36 LGUs (59% of the total of 61 LGUs) supported by LNB to develop their municipal Social Care Plans, of which 28 of them are approved by the Municipal Councils.
- 25 LGUs prepared budget briefs on social care services which helped in identifying local resources and to link their Social Care Plan with the mid-term budget framework.
- Participatory Gender Budgeting Network established in 15 LGUs.
- 613 social services staff in 57 LGUs and 11 regional SSS offices trained on use of MIS.
- LNB commissioned reviews: (1) of local budget spending on social care services (2018 and 2020); (2) of local social care services and user satisfaction survey (2018 and 2020); (3) Report Assessing the Need for Social Services in the 12 Regions of Albania (2019).
- Multiple resource and knowledge materials and mechanisms (tools, guidelines, training materials) for social workers are developed: e.g. Standard Operations Procedures Manual (SOP-M) for social workers, Guideline for Municipalities – For Planning and Administration of Social Services, Manual for Integrated Social Services, Online Platform on Social Protection and Social Services in Albania available at www.sociale.al providing updated information to professionals and students on social protection and social services policies.
- Training on "Building Social Service Workforce Competencies" developed in cooperation with universities and integrated into the curriculum of the bachelor's degree of social work. About 600 students currently study to graduate in social work using the revised curriculum.
- Capacities of social care service providers enhanced through trainings and study tours: 59 professionals in 11 community centres in 11 municipalities trained on advanced methods to work with children with disabilities, 30 representatives from 8 municipalities trained in implementation of the integrated social services model through study visits in Switzerland.
- On-line network of professionals of community centres for children with disabilities (operating in 8 municipalities) have been utilized to enable peer exchange and provision of online specialized social services during COVID-19.
- 61 professional networks of assistant teachers for students with disabilities established/ reorganized at national level in partnership with ASCAP and a training package specific on students with disabilities developed and accredited by MESY.
- 25 good practices in social care models, delivery and financing mechanisms divulgated.

<u>Outcome 3 – System level (national government)</u>

- Work is ongoing to review existing national policies and to update strategies and national action plans post-2020, including for alignment with EU accession agenda and the SDGs (e.g. Pre-university Education, Social Housing, Gender, Children, PWDs, R&E, LGBTIQ, Ageing, as well as revision of the Policy Document on Monitoring Social Inclusion).
- With regard to the legal and regulatory framework, clear progress is evident in terms of the preparation and approval of by-laws, notably linked to social enterprises, social housing, social care service standards, inclusion of and accessibility for PWDs. In addition, the Protocol on the Functioning of Public and Non-Public, Non-Residential Centres, Providing Services for PWDs, during/after COVID-19 was adopted. But further effort is needed to complete the adoption of secondary regulation.
- LNB has provided support linked to the establishment of state funding mechanisms for the promotion of social inclusion and social care focused on vulnerable groups and persons (e.g. the Social Fund, the Social Enterprise Fund, Inclusive Education measures to support vulnerable children and prevent school drop-out, and Social Housing fund).
- Some progress is evident linked to the establishment of appropriate mechanisms and tools, including data-sharing protocols, necessary for data collection and analysis for the

purposes of monitoring and evaluation the implementation of social inclusion policies and strategies (e.g. linked to Children, Adolescents and Youth Wellbeing Indicators, and SILC). However, the functional operation of monitoring systems/ tools is still to be fully operationalized by the partners (both in terms of central and local government partners).

22 Lessons Learned

The most important lessons learned from the current LNB programme in terms of the delivery and the achievement of the intended social inclusion results, and in terms of cooperating with national and local partners, including civil society, to be taken into consideration when planning and implementing the proposed programme (Phase 2) include the following.

- The institutional capacities of the different range of partners to implement social protection and inclusion policy is widely variable, but overall an area of significant weakness.
  - Capacity building and organizational development support remains essential. It needs to be effectively tied to clearly-defined institutional/ strategic policy objectives of the partners, and a defined process for take up/ institutional sustainability of the support. Capacity building should come in various forms which should be coherent, integrated and complimentary: training, mentoring, coaching and supervising. The training-of-trainers is a key necessity in building the capacity of the authorities to scale up training.
  - Stronger advocacy to ensure consideration by government partners of their specific limitations and of the sector's overall staffing, technical, and financial capacity limitations. Where relevant, use leverage to promote medium-term capacity targets.
  - Stronger focus on utilizing partners successfully capacitated to implement aspects of social protection and inclusion policy, as knowledge learning resource centres.
- Institutional policy collaboration (horizontal and vertical integration) remains weak. This is evident in terms of collaboration across policy sectors and between tiers of government.
  - At central government level, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of MHSP (notably in the context of the revision of the Policy Document on Monitoring Social Inclusion) to effectively coordinate the social inclusion policies of its key partners, as a holistic set of actions, and as basis to promote greater integration of policy delivery and outcomes.
  - At local government level, it is necessary to strengthen the operational capacities of local partners to collaborate on social inclusion with their other local, regional partners. This relates to information coordination/ exchange and the co-sharing of facilities/ services, as well as in the piloting and scaling up of policy and operational initiatives.
  - Stronger focus on policy consultation (dialogue and exchange) mechanisms between central and local tiers of government, as equal partners in delivering social inclusion.
- There remain weaknesses in regard to the operation of the social protection and inclusion policy Management Information Systems (MIS), and in managing the timely processing of other core statistical and operational data in the area of social inclusion (context and policy implementation levels), which hampers the provision of a timely evidence-based analysis.
  - At central government level, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of ministries to undertake progress monitoring and periodic reporting and assessment of their policies. At MHSP, it is also necessary to ensure the full functionality and operation of the three pillars of its Social Protection MIS, as an integrated system to administer social support.
  - It is also necessary to support ministries in further collaboration with INSTAT in order to develop national capacities for data collection/ processing, in line with their needs.
  - At local government level, it is necessary to strengthen LGU capacities to administer the Social Protection MIS, and their capacities to report on other social inclusion policy action plans of the central government, but to ensure the capacity to administer data in an efficient manner, and data be effectively utilized for their subsequent policy-making.

- Civil society partners (CSOs and local citizen dialogue groups/ mechanisms) continue to be essential partners for the delivery and the achievement of the LNB programme goals.
  - Further efforts are needed to develop CSO institutional and professional advocacy capacities, and CSO and citizen's capacity to participate actively in the planning and budgeting and in the monitoring of the implementation of local and national policies.
  - Organizations and groups suffer, to varying degrees, from fragmentation and the lack of networks to ensure better coordination of their activities, to share knowledge, and build local-regional-national advocacy. Network capacity building should be a priority.
  - CSOs need to be strengthened at service delivery capacity, so that they be out-sourced by LGUs to carry out some services on behalf of social care, protection and inclusion.
- It is important to develop a clear results achievement strategy linked to the sharing of good practice and to identify how the results may be scaled up by the partners in the future.
  - Knowledge management, learning and sharing between partners is essential. This is primarily relevant to peer exchange between local and regional partners (government/ administration, social service providers, civil society partners), but also nationally.
  - Under LNB, 25 good practices in social care models, delivery and financing mechanisms are identified by the end of 2020 (which can now be progressively scaled up, at a faster pace going forward, into 2021 and beyond, by interested LGUs).
  - LNB should support strengthen good practice and peer exchange learning, and strongly reiterate its capacity to support the scaling up of good practice regionally or nationally.
  - There is clear scope to strengthen policy/ knowledge learning cooperation between local governments and regional universities specialized in social policy/ social work.
- During the recent period, the LNB programme has demonstrated its capacity to flexibly adapt its delivery operations to changing, external events and resultant policy impacts (the aftermath of the earthquake in November 2019, and global health pandemic during 2020).
  - LNB succeeded to adjust its modus operandi, by being flexible in rapidly shifting from physical/ face to face activities to a reality of physical distancing, remote online working.
  - LNB maintained its focus sharp on supporting the most vulnerable, as planned and needed by beneficiaries, in close coordination with local government and its partners, and via support to national government to develop new protocols on service delivery.

3 Objectives

31 Objectives and Intervention Logic

The Intervention Logic (objectives and expected results) for LNB (Phase 2) is shown below.

Impact

Development Goal/ End of Programme Vision: The programme contributes to achievement of "SDCF 2022-2026" Outcome A, *"By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion".*

Programme Goal: Vulnerable persons and groups have improved access to public services that support their social rights, social inclusion and well-being, and are empowered to have a voice in public policy decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold decision-makers accountable for policy implementation.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate gender responsive social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision-makers and service providers accountable for policy delivery.

Outcome 2: Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community based social services to boost social inclusion that are gender responsive and rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.

Outcome3: National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund gender responsive social services through improved policy monitoring/ evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards, empowered citizens, and sustainable financing mechanisms.

Outputs

Output 1.1: Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and selected municipalities informed/ aware of their rights and entitlements in regard to accessing social care and support services, and are empowered to exercise their rights and entitlements and/or supported in their access to social services.
Output 1.2: (LNB key target groups) R&E and PWDs are supported to access social services.

Output 2.1: Municipality, regional and local social service providers (public and non-public) are strengthened in their capacity for planning, providing and monitoring the scaling up/ extension of social services, and the delivery of integrated social inclusion measures.
Output 2.2: Knowledge management/ learning mechanisms ensure that lessons learned/ 'good practice' models and tools linked to service delivery is shared between LGUs/ and service providers and 'good practice' is effectively scaled up.

Output 3.1: Ministries/ Agencies are supported in their further development of and in their implementation of policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks, operational tools, funding mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation (and reporting) systems to guide evidence-based policy/ strategic decision-making.
Output 3.2: Further development of the educational/ continuing education, training-provision and qualifications system, to ensure workforce professionalization is supported.

Types of Activities

Output 1.1:
- Their rights and the services they are entitled to are communicated to marginalised/ vulnerable persons and groups.
- Support to existing, specialised CSOs' institutional and professional capacities.

Output 1.2: *(Key Target Groups)*
- Models of inclusive services are implemented at local level.
- Support to selected municipalities for modellingof social service delivery.
- Grant-funded projects are implemented for new innovative services at local level.
- Local mechanisms are strengthened and scaled up in selected municipalities (and deconcentrated offices) for vulnerable and marginalised persons' and groups' empowerment via engagement in the operational delivery and out-reach of local and national social services.

Output 2.1:
- Structures and mechanisms of social service provision supported in organisational and operational development.
- Staff of municipal social service providers capacitated.

Output 2.2:
- Mechanisms are established and operational for knowledge learning/ sharing among municipalities in regard to the management of or the provision of social services in Albania, and good practices identified through research made available to all 61 municipalities in appropriate form.
- Periodic presentations are provided for knowledge learning by municipalities in regard to emerging academic research and analysis in the field of social work/ social services, and in regard to the development of the national policy framework.

Output 3.1:
- MHSP, MESY, MFE, and SSS supported in the development of and in implementing their social inclusion legal, policy, regulatory frameworks.
- MHSP supported in the further development of the Social Fund to promote/ expand/ scale up social care services targeted to vulnerable groups.
- MHSP, MESY, MFE, SSS, and INSTAT supported in the development of and in implementing social inclusion policy and strategy monitoring mechanisms, so as to provide evidence-based input for policy and strategic decision-making purposes.
- MHSP, in cooperation with SSS and SILSS, supported in the development of and in implementing social service quality inspection and monitoring systems, standards, regulation, tools.

Output 3.2:
- Professional Orders, Universities, and ASCAP supported in the development of the continuing education/ qualification system, training curricula and standards, and training capacity.
- National management capacities are built for social inclusion policies.

The programme's goal – system change for the improvement of social services provision and outcomes in Albania and the participation of persons in need in public decision-making – supports the vision of an overall inclusive society, that protects the vulnerable population from the risks of social or economic poverty or exclusion, on the basis of need, across the life-cycle. This, in turn, is in line with the SDGs[66], and with Albania's aspiration for EU accession.

Roll-out of the social protection and social care reform process commenced starting in 2016/17, with roll-out of the full set of reform measures foreseen to be achieved by 2023/24. The focus of the LNB (Phase 2) interventions is on the consolidation of the reform roll-out (full implementation of the Law on Social Care Services) and strengthening results from Phase 1.

By 2025, the new instruments being deployed will have become firmly anchored into Albania's social protection system and be at a stage of rapid replication nationwide. The direct investment of this programme will make sure that 30 selected municipalities have successfully established a system of social integrated services to cover the needs of the vulnerable population. The programme will help increase municipal level ownership over the provision of community based integrated social protection services, establish a practice of budgeting – centrally and locally – of gender responsive social protection and inclusion measures, develop and disseminate nationally solid standards of social care services, create a critical mass of social protection practitioners, and most importantly improve communities' access to integrated social services. Such demonstration – in 30 (out of 61) municipalities – will also empower beneficiaries as advocates to demand increased resource focus for social services.

Since service delivery is realized mostly at local level, the programme's intervention focuses on the local level. Two of the three outcomes reflect this thrust – by empowering the beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion (outcome 1), and by capacitating municipalities/ regions and service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion (outcome 2). The third outcome reflects the programme's concern with anchoring its interventions at system level; it is to contribute to the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion, the capacity of ministries and partners to monitor and evaluate policies, and to further develop/ operationalize their range of social inclusion funding mechanisms, including scaling up of the Social Fund – the key financing mechanism for social care service expansion.

Outcome 1: Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate gender responsive social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing their social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision-makers and service providers accountable for policy delivery.

[66] The 2030 Agenda SDG goals and targets that LNB primarily contributes toward include the following:
Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere: 1.2 Reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty; 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, and achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture: 2.1 End hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round; 2.2 End all forms of malnutrition, including… stunting and wasting in children… the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all: 4.2 Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls: 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights….
Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable: 11.1 Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels: 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

The empowerment of marginalized or vulnerable people[67], especially persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, and vulnerable women and men of all ages, boys and girls for their capacity to request social inclusion and to access social services is a precondition for improving their social situation and their livelihoods. The achievement of the outcome therefore depends on the supported persons' and groups' preparedness to demand adequate social protection and social inclusion services, and to equally access these, as needed, in line with their rights and entitlements. Awareness raising and communication actions on social rights, social protection and inclusion, notably targeted to vulnerable groups and via out-reach also hard to reach people, but more broadly also targeted to the wider local population, remain fundamental instruments in the empowerment of marginalized people. This empowerment will be supported by contributing to the further improvement of a constructive dialogue and culture of participatory decision-making between municipal structures and target groups of persons and CSOs in the planning and budgeting and in the monitoring of the implementation of local and national social inclusion policies. As citizen groups and CSOs suffer, to varying degrees, from discrimination, fragmentation and a lack of networks to ensure better coordination of their activities, to share knowledge, and build local-regional-national advocacy, network capacity building for citizen groups and for CSOs should be a priority. In addition, the capacity of service providers and target group beneficiaries to interact and cooperate effectively and efficiently in service delivery, based on a culture of mutual dialogue and decision-making, will be supported via promoting innovative service delivery mechanisms, and via modelling of social service delivery, to be realized in selected municipalities.

Outcome 2: Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community based social services to boost social inclusion that are gender responsive and rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.

As the principal actors in the planning, management, and delivery of social services at local level, it is important that municipality and regional public and non-public service providers be supported in their improvement of the management of social services at local level. As the main gateway to social services at the local level, the LGUs are the lead partners to be supported in the development of their human resources and of organizations, including their processes, for the management of social services and the integration of services locally so as to promote social inclusion[68]. With regard to the extension/ expansion of local social services provision, LGUs need to be further capacitated in regard to the operationalization of the Social Fund and public procurement/ contracting of social services, and in addressing public health concerns. Social service providers, public and non-public, are also key partners to be assisted in their capacity development to administer and deliver quality services and standards of community based social services and support to their clients, and in their capacity to extend service provision coverage. Elements/ mechanisms of good governance such as public transparency and accountability, participatory decision-making will serve to bring municipalities and service providers closer to citizens, including vulnerable groups, and render effective services and responses/ solutions. LNB will respond to requests to strengthen partners' capacities to provide local level response to address vulnerabilities arising due to emergencies (COVID). Reflective of the diverse number of LGUs and of social service providers, the programme's support itself needs to be targeted, rather than thinly-broadly

[67] The following categories of persons are highlighted as at risk to marginalization or vulnerability: Marginalized/ vulnerable women (and girls); Children, adolescents; Youth; Older persons; Persons with disabilities (PWDs); Roma and Egyptian communities (R&E); LGBTIQ persons; and 'Other' groups (e.g. homeless, IDUs, MSM, sex workers). Commonly, individuals face intersectional aspects of stigma or discrimination, marginalization or exclusion.

[68] Via an integrated and organized system of benefits and/or facilities provided via social cash schemes and social care support services in coordination, as appropriate, with other support actions in the areas of health, education, employment, vocational training, and housing.

spread, to support concrete needs and test innovative approaches. Therefore it is vital to promote and embed a system for the regular sharing of good practice models and approaches between municipality partners linked to social services and inclusion, and to support partners that seek to scale up such good practice models at the local or regional, or national level.

Outcome 3: National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund gender responsive social services through improved policy monitoring and evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards, empowered citizens and sustainable financing mechanisms.

Further capacity building and organizational development will be vital at the central/ system level, as the social protection reforms and social inclusion policy measures are now moving from the roll-out phase to the substantive consolidation phase over the next few years. At central government level, priorities include the implementation of and further development of policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks (including sub-legal acts and service standards), and funding mechanisms for decentralized social services delivery. A series of government social inclusion strategies and policy documents are being updated for the post-2020 period, for which it is also a key priority to strengthen mechanisms and capacities for the monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies implementation (the generation of robust data/ statistics, the analysis of results and progress), so as to provide evidence-based input for policy and strategic decision-making purposes, and to provide accountability on policy implementation and funds allocation. Support to INSTAT to ensure the timely production of official statistics on social inclusion, and to meet the further needs of line ministries for administrative data, will also be provided. A significant priority at the system level is also to strengthen the operation of the recently introduced government social protection and inclusion funding instruments, based on the experience/ lessons learned after the initial years of operation. Issues of transparency and equity of the mechanisms will be addressed (e.g. the methodology and criteria for award/ distribution of funds), alongside addressing how scaling up of mechanisms can be operationalized (including the Social Fund mechanism, the key financing mechanism for social care service expansion). Lessons learned as to European/ international practice regarding funding models of cost-sharing (between tiers of government, and between government and social/ health insurance partners) for social services, health services and social inclusion measures will also be provided. As a core component of the social protection reforms, a further key priority is to support the on-going process to strengthen the capacities of partners (most notably at SSS, SILSS; and via Outcome 2 of LGUs) for the monitoring/ oversight of social care services and providers (and in operationalizing the national/local MIS for social care services), and for the inspection and the enforcement of quality standards. In addition, a key factor that will determine the longer-term quality of social services in Albania relates to the process to promote the professionalization of the workforce and of social service providers by developing the continuous education and workforce qualification/ accreditation systems. This will be achieved in partnership with academia (relevant university departments) and the relevant regulated professional Orders in Albania, to develop the present professional qualification standards, occupational and professional training course offer, and qualification accreditation and certification systems. As requested, LNB will also provide support to ministries to design longer term approaches in the area of social protection and social inclusion in their response to the on-going global health pandemic.

The Logical Framework in Annex A of the present document provides a comprehensive presentation of the planned programme's hierarchy of objectives, the indicators of achievement, the types of activities foreseen, and the key risks and assumptions over the project life-cycle.

32 Cross-cutting issues

In addition to the hierarchy of objectives, two cross-cutting themes will orient the programme: governance and gender equality, they will do so as an articulation of human rights principles and they will be topics recurrently addressed in the policy dialogue in the Steering Committee and in the cooperation with all other partners of the programme:

The improvement of governance is at the centre of the proposed programme, since the development of social service provision and social inclusion are focal dimensions of Albania's governance system. The programme will be faced with governance issues at all level of the state and of civil society: slow implementation of policies and strategies, limited availability of funding for social services and social inclusion, limited capacities of actors whose tasks include the planning and the provision of social services, resistance against innovation, etc. The proposed programme will react to these challenges and promote good governance by establishing and leading policy dialogue and cooperation mechanisms with central, local authorities, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders ensuring that the voice of the most vulnerable men and women is heard, by introducing concept of responsive service delivery and of social inclusion, reflecting good governance principles, and by strengthening the capacity of service providers at individual and at institutional levels. The governance of the programme's implementation itself will be a means for promoting ideas and practices of good governance. These can be implemented in introducing transparent institutional procedures, in the management of the grant fund for innovative programmes, when involving and consulting target groups and civil society organizations into the programme's implementation to better respond to their needs, when supporting the improvement of the interface and the cooperation between authorities and civil society organizations and target groups and involving the latter in monitoring of services provision.

The promotion of gender equality will be a regular dimension of the programme's implementation. All of the interventions will be gender responsive, promoting social inclusion also from a gender perspective and considering intersectionality. More than half of the target groups are women, since among the vulnerable and marginalized groups women make up for the largest part and facing multiple discrimination in access to social services and care; when supporting the authorities at national and local levels and civil society organizations who will participate in the steering and the implementation of the programme, women and their specific perspectives and needs will receive special attention. In addition, the programme's specific geographic foci (close cooperation with selected municipalities, for instance for realizing innovative projects) will make gender equality a selection criteria. The programme's progress and achievements will be assessed, at least partly, based on sex-disaggregated data and gender responsive indicators. The programme will cooperate closely with the Department of the Development Programmes of Health and Social Protection at MHSP and specialists of Gender Equality and Domestic Violence at municipality level as well as with women's alliances of municipal councils where they are set up to mainstream gender in social services planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

33 Impact Hypotheses / Theory of Change

The programme's intention (development goal) is to bring about system change in the field of social protection and social inclusion in Albania via the provision of quality integrated social services (social protection, social care, health, education, employment, vocational training, and housing), with a particular emphasis on social services reaching vulnerable persons and disadvantaged groups, which progressively ensures the realization of their basic human rights, legal entitlements, well-being, dignity and livelihoods for all persons and thus social inclusion.

The programme's intervention is closely correlated to national reforms, development goals/ strategies of the Government of Albania regarding social protection and inclusion, and the wider framework for human capital and social development. The national policy framework is defined in a range of significant strategies and action plans in regard to the priorities for poverty alleviation, social protection reform and the promotion of social inclusion. Social inclusion is a crosscutting theme in a number of policy documents (*see section 14 above*). The government's reform priorities in the area of social protection and social care are outlined in *section 124*. The focus of the LNB (Phase 2) interventions is on the consolidation of the reform roll-out (full implementation of the Law on Social Care Services) and strengthening results from Phase 1.

While real progress has been made to develop a policy framework for social protection and social inclusion, and to guide its reform, including the development of a regulatory framework and financing mechanisms, and real progress also made to decentralize social protection and social care management to the municipal level, the reform process is still in the roll-out phase. The main central government financing mechanisms to support local social care and social inclusion measures were operationalized in 2019 (e.g. Social Fund, Social Enterprise Fund, inclusive education measures), and are thus only functional for two-years. Full roll-out and consolidation of the social protection and care reforms is foreseen by 2024. The efforts of the key duty-bearers, at central, regional, and municipal levels, to deliver on the roll-out of the social protection and inclusion reforms show that the authorities are well aware that the current system is not fit for providing social services in sufficient quality and quantity and that social protection and social inclusion require systemic improvement, especially regarding the implementation of the policies, strategies, regulatory and financing framework. This awareness, and obviously the needs of the target groups, is the programme's main entry point.

In order to achieve the programme's development goal the intervention approach combines measures to reinforce both the demand-side and the supply-side in respect to the current and future provision of suitable social protection and social inclusion actions. The programme intervenes on three inter-related levels: at the system level (national government), at the service provision/ delivery level (local government, public and non-public service providers), and at the community level (citizen empowerment). The three programme Outcomes and the six different Outputs are cross-communicating, i.e. designed to ensure internal coherence and to maximize synergy between the measures so as to add value and contribute to the achievement of the Outcomes, the programme goal and vision. In summary, empowered citizens (Outcome 1) will advocate for improved provision and access to local quality social services, as their right and entitlement, requiring an adequate response by state/ public authorities and social service providers at the local level (Outcome 2), and by the state authorities at the central level (Outcome 3). Equally, authorities and social service providers at the local level will interact with their local community to orient the local planning, further development and delivery of services, as well as to prioritize local needs within the available budgetary framework, alongside with advocacy from local/ regional authorities, to the authorities at the central level, to ensure operationalization and suitable scaling up of social inclusion financing mechanisms, and the adoption of additional social service delivery models, quality standards/ protocols. Equally, the state authorities at the central level will interact with local authorities and with service providers, as well as with empowered citizens and their representative groups, in order to respond to their needs, in line with government policy goals, strategic plans, the regulatory framework and the overall government budgetary framework.

While recognizing that progress needs to be achieved in parallel at each level, the programme's impact hypotheses places emphasis on promoting community level citizen empowerment as the key driver of reform and development. It is clear that the current system is not fit for providing social services in sufficient quality and quantity, or in a suitably integrated approach so as to address complex multiple needs of the most vulnerable. Therefore, as the

final beneficiaries of the services (either as a final-user already or, as are all Albanian citizens, a potential future user of social services), an informed population, informed of and aware of their rights and entitlements, and able to vocalize their needs and societal expectations, via participatory decision-making consultation processes, is a key necessity to driving change and to building broad-based ownership of the policy goals. An empowered and engaged citizenry, articulating its needs, is central to building bottom-up demand-driven reform impetus, and also in building demand for increased funding allocation in Albania in the field of social protection and inclusion. An engaged citizenry feeds into the local and national policy framework, as one of the key influences on government (local and national) policy formulation and planning, and in holding decision-makers and duty-bearers accountable for public policy delivery.

In this respect, CSOs are also crucial partners for the programme. They are important in their role as representatives of the target beneficiaries, advocating their interests and promoting their awareness of their rights, as well as in their role as providers of social services. They are interlocutors of authorities at central and at local level for policy dialogue on social services. It is imperative to further build CSO capacities to represent/ advocate for and to provide social services support to their target groups, and to ensure better coordination between CSOs of their activities at municipal and regional level, to share knowledge, and to build local-regional-national advocacy networks. In addition, further strengthening of the participatory decision-making consultation mechanisms for cooperation between stakeholders (state organizations as well as civil society and target groups of persons) for monitoring the implementation of policies at local and at central level, remains a priority. Improved mechanisms for cooperation and monitoring are to result in increased accountability of state actors whose decision-taking is to become more transparent and whose information practice towards the public at large is to be based on evidence, including from monitoring data in the domain of social inclusion. The empowerment of target groups is an additional means to implement a right-based approach, and to make social inclusion an unquestioned part of the country's political economy.

In parallel, it is imperative to further build the capacities of partners at the system level (national government) and at the service provision/ delivery level (local government, public and non-public service providers), in order to ensure that the supply-side can effectively match existing and future demand for local social services, social protection and inclusion measures; be this bottom-up demand, or top-down demand driven by political prioritization of investment in human capital and social inclusion. By supporting the implementation, and further development of national policies, strategies, and measures that seek to mainstream the efforts for promoting social inclusion, an implementation that is of national interest, but that is slow and certainly incomplete, it can be assumed that the programme can achieve the foreseen impact and the planned results. The strengthening of relevant actors' capacities for evidence-based policy-making, to promote the efficient and effective targeting of financial mechanisms and the availability of budgetary means, and the implementation of a rights-based approach are the programme's main means for contributing to the improvement of service provision in the field of social protection and social inclusion. The strengthening of actors will concern conceptual as well as operational aspects, and it will concern state actors at central and at local level, as well as civil society service providers. The improvement of the system is to reflect the fact that the services provided are a right the Albanian population is entitled to, it is to produce improved and appropriate social services for the target groups, i.e. vulnerable and marginalized persons and groups in general, and PWDs, R&E specifically, thus enhancing their social inclusion.

The programme assumes that the improvement of social services is in the public policy interest and in line with public demand, specifically of marginalized and vulnerable groups of people but more broadly of wider societal expectations. The programme assumes that duty-bearers, beyond public policy interest, are also driven by their legal obligations, roles and functions in respect to social care planning, financing, implementation, monitoring, and quality control.

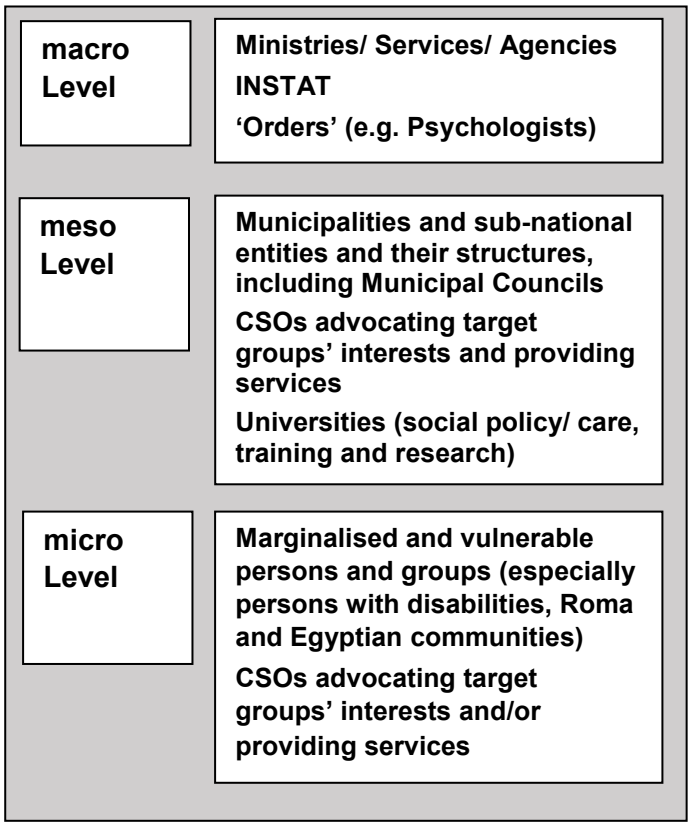
The programme assumes that the improvement of the social services supports social inclusion. Social services alone obviously cannot guarantee social inclusion – the achievement of the latter depends on much larger efforts, efforts not only to be undertaken by state actors, but also by society. Participation in society and improved abilities and opportunities for all for doing so require a common understanding of society, of the reasons why it is in the interest of society at large not to leave any one behind. And they require opportunities for direct interaction between groups of society, regardless of age, wealth, or sex, etc.; they also require possibilities to identify with institutions (a form of government, for instance). But the provision of adequate social services to those who need them is a basic requirement to promote social inclusion.

The absence of adequate social services limits the access to the economic, social, and civic opportunities of segments of the population they need for participating fully in society, to be recognized and feel as equal members of society. Without a system of social protection and services granting a decent livelihood, amongst other in the form of financial support, without access to education and to decent housing conditions, marginalized and vulnerable groups see themselves radically excluded from participating in society. Access to social support, food, housing, health, education and legal support are basic prerequisites for social inclusion.

In order to achieve the programme's objectives and to bring about change, continuous policy dialogue is required, especially with the central government representatives, but also with the authorities at local level. The dialogue is to create awareness about the programme and its support provided to the social protection and inclusion reforms, and, in more general terms, the necessity and the interest of all to promote social inclusion and the ways to go about it. Continued advocacy is an important policy dialogue tool in favour of increasing funding for the social protection system and to coordinate efforts to pool and maximize available resources, as well as to provide evidence of the relevance and benefits of the suggested initiatives.

34 Levels of Intervention

Regarding the state structures, the programme's interventions target both local and central levels, and is therefore active at macro and at meso level. With this combination, concrete improvement of service delivery at local level can be combined with support to central authorities. MHSP is the key partner for the programme, the Ministry being of highest importance for defining strategies and policies relevant for the programme's target groups, and for the financing of social care services that are delivered at local level, as well as for the coordination of other central authorities supporting social inclusion in Albania. Other partners include MESY (inclusive education policy) and MFE (social housing policy), as well as INSTAT (providing data for assessing the improvement of social inclusion and the implementation of policies). In addition, state structures include relevant Services/ Agencies of ministry partners (e.g. SSS).



At meso level, in addition to supporting the municipalities and sub-national entities as policy actors/managers, support will also address their role, as well as that of CSOs, as social service providers, via increasing the capacities of persons and of organizational development. CSOs will be crucial partners, at meso and micro level, in their role as providers of services and in that of representatives of the programme's beneficiaries, advocating their interests. They are interlocutors of authorities at central and at local level for a policy dialogue on social services.

At meso level, support will also be targeted to universities that provide professional and occupational training in relation to social care and social inclusion policy objectives. This will be coordinated with support at the macro level to the state authorities and professional Orders linked to the development of professional qualification standards, and the certification systems.

35 Target Groups

The programme will support the inclusion of two types of target groups: (1) marginalized and vulnerable families and persons, and (2) persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians. These target groups will be reached through municipalities' social services departments and civil society organizations providing social services and representing the interest of marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups. Obviously all three Outcomes of the programme will have effects on the targeted groups. The exclusion mechanisms affecting these groups' full participation in Albanian society are social (segregation, limited accessibility of public services and decision-making processes), educational (access to schooling), and economic (limited access to the labour market, difficulties to overcome poverty, afford health services).

All Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups[69]

In 2018, approximately 670,000 people in Albania (23.4% of the population) were 'at risk of poverty' (i.e. living below the poverty line[70]). Of these people, approximately 330,000 were at risk of 'abject' poverty[71] (11.5% of the population). Overall, approximately 1.1 million people in Albania (38.3% of the population) were living in 'severe material deprivation'.

Detailed information on the main categories of persons at risk of marginalization or vulnerability in Albania, including factors of multidimensional poverty they face, is provided in Annex E; while information on the key beneficiaries, and extent of coverage provided under the existing main social protection and inclusion support measures in Albania is provided in section 123.

The programme will support marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons via measures, primarily undertaken by CSOs but also by government structures, to raise their awareness of their rights and entitlements, how and where to access social services as needed and, as required, also to facilitate access for vulnerable people to the appropriate services. In addition, the programme will support marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons, and their representative groups, via measures to promote their engagement in local service delivery and their in advocacy in participatory public decision-making via local consultative processes.

Persons with disabilities, the Roma and Egyptian communities

In addition to the measures above to support all marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons, the programme will provide targeted support to benefit marginalized and vulnerable PWDs and R&E via measures, in selected municipalities, for the provision of integrated social

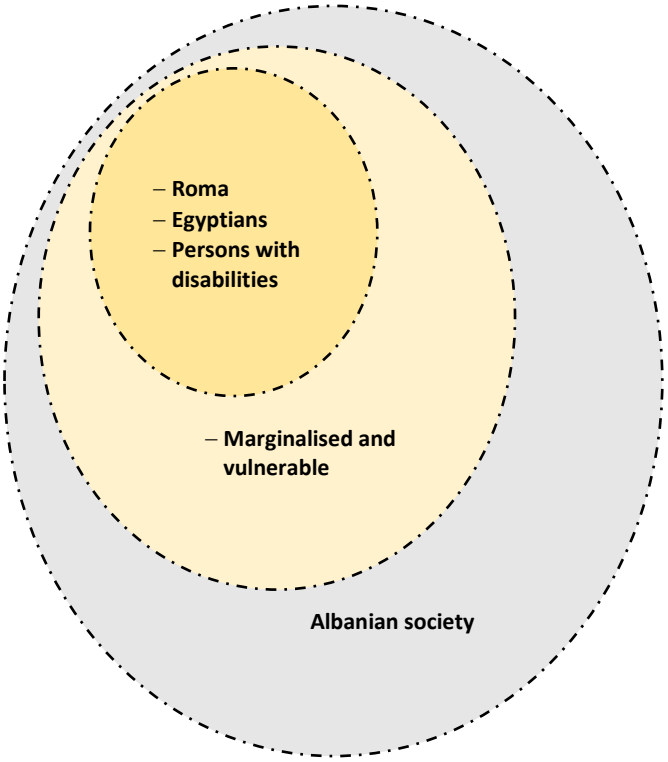
[69] The following categories of persons are highlighted as at risk to marginalization or vulnerability: Marginalized/ vulnerable women (and girls); Children, adolescents; Youth; Older persons; Persons with disabilities (PWDs); Roma and Egyptian communities (R&E); LGBTIQ persons; and 'Other' groups (e.g. homeless, IDUs, MSM, sex workers). Commonly, individuals face intersectional aspects of stigma or discrimination, marginalization or exclusion.
[70] At-risk-of-poverty threshold is defined as 60% of the median equivalised disposable income for all households.
[71] Abject poverty threshold is defined as 40% of the median equivalised disposable income for all households.

services and social protection in general, for promoting innovative service delivery mechanisms and out-reach services, and supporting the modelling of social service delivery.

The total number of persons with disabilities is not known. Statistics do not provide information on the exact number of children with disabilities. The part of adults with disabilities in Albania's total population, according to the 2011 census, amounts to 6.2%. In absolute figures, their number is therefore about 175,000.[72] Together with the children with disabilities, the total number of the target group can be estimated at over 200,000.

PWDs continue to face barriers in accessing services and realizing their rights, particularly with regard to accessibility, including information in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, electronic or audio formats or sign language, physical accessibility of governmental buildings, service centres, public spaces and services such as education, health, employment, and social housing, which hampers independent mobility and independent living. Half of children receiving Disability Allowance are not enrolled in school. PWDs also face barriers in participating in political and public life (including the right to elect and be elected, participation in cultural and sports events), equality, employment and VET, education, social care, health care, as well as institutional collaboration, coordination and monitoring and evaluation.

Persons with disabilities face barriers in entering the labour market due to their lower education levels and vocational qualifications, and due to employers' discriminatory attitudes. Women with disabilities are victims of the same forms of violence as women without disabilities, but they experience additional forms of violence related to their disability. However, women and girls with disabilities do not have access to legal aid for effective protection from violence and face severe obstacles in obtaining legal aid – primarily due to the fact that family members and legal custodians are the main perpetrators, and women with disabilities enter a long cycle of violence from which it is difficult to escape. Women and girls with disabilities face specific barriers to accessing healthcare linked to the multiple discriminations they face as well as physical and mental impediments, putting them in a heightened risk of vulnerability or violence.



A key element of the social protection reform process relates to the on-going reform of the disability assessment system in Albania, moving from a medical into the bio-psycho-social model of approaching disabilities. It is anticipated that certain persons presently administratively recognized as being PWDs will be assessed with low scores in terms of the functional extent of disability, whom will need to seek counselling regarding suitable employment opportunities, while for persons with severe disabilities the assessment should inform the design of a suitable package of care and support to be provided at the local level. However, for the latter, State Social Service data for 2019 indicates that 37 municipalities, or

[72] UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania Programme (2015): Profile of the Disabled Population in Albania. Céline Ferré with Emira Galanxhi and Olgeta Dhono.

61% of the total, did not provide services for PWDs. Moreover, social care services for adults with disabilities are missing in the country except for some pilot services supported by donors.

There are no complete, accurate and undisputed statistics regarding the number of the Roma and Egyptian population in Albania. The results of the Albanian census of 2011 include figures of 8,301 Roma and 3,368 Egyptians. Unofficial estimates of the number of R&E range from 80,000 to 150,000 (i.e. between 2.6 and 5.2 per cent of the total population).

While clear progress has been achieved by Albania to develop the policy framework and settings to improve the economic and social conditions of and social inclusion of the R&E, significant efforts are required to deliver real socio-economic change so as to overcome the present extent of disparities that exist in terms of the outcomes/ opportunities of the R&E and the rest of society. Many R&E still face deep poverty, discrimination and exclusion in many spheres of life. Unemployment is particularly high, and those who are employed occupy most often low paid positions. Informal employment continues to be very high among the R&E. UNDP, UNICEF and World Bank and other donors' research studies provide evidence that the R&E face direct and indirect barriers in accessing public services such as health, education, employment, social housing, and social protection, stemming from the eligibility criteria they cannot comply with, lack of information or understanding of administrative procedures, as well as stigma and frequent discriminatory attitude from the majority population. For R&E women and girls there is often also discrimination/ disempowerment arising as a result of persistent 'traditional' beliefs and perceptions of gender roles within the communities/ domestic sphere.

36 Geographic Focus

As with the programme's target group, its geographic focus is also multiple but concise:

- Outputs 1.1 and 2.2 target all 61 Albanian municipalities and are to benefit all marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons, as well as state administrative units and services and specialized CSOs providing services for marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons.
- Output 1.2 specifically targets PWDs and/or the R&E in selected municipalities, while output 2.1 targets the authorities and service providers in selected municipalities, to benefit all marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons, including PWDs and the R&E.
- Output 3.1 targets national authorities and output 3.2 professional public-oriented partners (e.g. Orders, universities), to benefit all marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons.

In relation to output 2.1, the LNB programme (Phase 1) has supported all 61 municipalities (e.g. via methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, plus tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation), as well as provided specific support to 36 LGUs to assist the development of the local Social Care Plan.

However, the bulk of LNB's support has been provided in 25 LGUs, via tailored technical support and capacity building measures, as well as to pilot test different mechanisms at the local and/or regional level, to learn practical lessons prior to wider roll-out and scaling up. The LNB programme (Phase 2) is well aware of the need to consolidate its existing partnerships, and to secure long-term sustainability and local ownership of the full results of the partnerships. Equally, LNB (Phase 2) is aware that certain, notably smaller and/or rural LGUs, are at risk of being left behind, as too complex to support or overseen within the wider process of reform. Therefore, while LNB (Phase 2) output 2.1 will be focused on the existing 25 LGUs, a limited number of other, left behind LGUs will also be supported in order to become active players.

Equally, LNB (Phase 2) will be implemented in the context of the sizeable EU external assistance investment in Albania in the field of social inclusion, under its IPA 2019 programme, that is now at the early phase of programme operation, procurement and contracting. The EU's

assistance for social inclusion measures at the local level, to be procured via a grant scheme mechanism, targets 19 municipalities (i.e. potential applications) in Albania for its support. While LNB (Phase 2) will continue to provide requested support to its existing close partner LGUs that have also now been prioritized by the EU, LNB (Phase 2) will not seek to extend its geographic focus to new partnerships with LGUs that are already prioritized now by the EU.

With regard to output 1.2, the targeted support to directly benefit marginalized and vulnerable PWDs and/or the R&E, the actions under LNB (Phase 1) were undertaken in 24 specific selected municipalities, the LGUs of which all were also supported under output 2.1. This is in line with the programme's financial resources, and it reflects the fact that especially the Roma population in majority is concentrated in a limited number of Albanian municipalities. LNB (Phase 2) will continue this approach: targeted support to directly benefit PWDs and/or R&E under output 1.2 is provided in tandem with LGU capacity building support under output 2.1.

4 Implementing Strategy

41 Intervention Approach and Instruments

Intervention Approach

The proposed programme's interventions are all designed to support the implementation of Albanian policies and strategies relevant for the social protection and inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups of persons, and especially of PWDs and R&E. The interventions are thus fully aligned on national efforts reacting to challenges identified by Albanian actors.

[Information on the relevant international/ national policy frameworks is provided in section 14]

Whereas LNB (Phase 1) was focused on supporting partners during the initial phase of roll-out of the social inclusion and social care reform measures, the focus of LNB (Phase 2) is on the consolidation of the reform roll-out, strengthening/building on the results achieved via Phase 1.

While this includes the consolidation of existing partnerships with the main Albanian actors in regard to social inclusion and social care (central, regional and local government, social service providers, CSOs and civil society groups), the programme will cooperate more closely with the relevant groups of regulated professional occupation (Order of Psychologists; Order of Social Workers), and with the Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education (ASCAP) and with universities providing professional and occupational training, and academic research, in relation to social and health care and social inclusion policy goals. Cooperation with media, young journalists and researchers linked to social policy will also be continued.

The programme provides support at the national, municipal and local level in five main areas: Social Policy (design/planning/monitoring/funding); Institutional Development and technical backstopping; Capacity Building of beneficiaries; Advocacy and Awareness raising; and Community Social Care Services. The main forms of support will consist of conceptual inputs and capacity building of individuals and organizations for improved management, service delivery, data collection, monitoring and appraisal of social inclusion policy and measures, etc.

MHSP, for instance, will significantly benefit from the programme's support to provide adequate framework conditions for service delivery, coordination with line ministries and local and regional authorities and cross sectoral cooperation. MHSP will also be the main partner for policy dialogue. This dialogue targets the full support to the further development of the system promoting social inclusion and it targets the full support to the programme's implementation.

Intervention Methodology

The programme will make use of the following methods for achieving its planned results:

- Intervention at local and at central level: By cooperating with actors at central and at local level, on both the demand-side and the supply-side of social services, the programme addresses the challenges Albania's social inclusion is faced with in a systemic approach.
- Supporting drivers of change: The most capable and effective drivers of change – at ministerial and LGU level as well as coming from civil society – will be identified and supported if required. At the same time, restrainers of change will be involved in the programme where possible and efficient, in order to minimize their restraining force, by showing them their interest in the improvement of social services and the role they can have therein.
- Strengthening participation of authorities, CSOs and target groups: The involvement of all types of stakeholders (authorities and civil society, service providers and beneficiaries)

will additionally allow for addressing social inclusion issues in view of overall systemic improvements. Planning and budgeting of social service provision, the provision of the services itself, monitoring, adaptation of strategies will be main topics of this cooperation. The issue of financing social services and inclusion measures will be specifically addressed under Outcome 3. Increasing funding from central government, and fine-tuning of the existing financial instruments for the development and delivery of social inclusion measures at municipal level (e.g. Social Fund operationalization to which different sources can contribute, including foreign ones, e.g. donors) to ensure the targeted, equitable and proportionate utilization of funds, as well as increasing the capacities of LGUs to develop local own resources, and operationalize the Social Fund are key issues to be addressed.

- Empowering marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups: Capacity building for CSOs and individual representatives of the programme's target groups is to result in increased possibilities of these to demand rights and services, and to participate in the planning and monitoring of services and of service delivery. Participatory approach on local service planning and budgeting shall lead to inclusive social service decision-making and equally responsive service delivery. Community-based social service delivery has the best chances to address the target groups' actual needs. The programme will ensure that cooperation with individuals from the target groups will be legitimized by their constituencies, and that repeated direct contacts with these constituencies will renew their representatives' legitimacy. It is crucial that individuals representing target groups do not monopolize contacts with the programme, thus preventing the emergence of suspicions by the target groups regarding the transparency and completeness of their communication, and their attempts to benefit individually from the cooperation with the programme, etc.
- Strengthening cooperation between Albanian actors: Ministries competent in social inclusion issues, including deconcentrated services, and local authorities, different units of LGUs, authorities and civil society are not always willing to cooperate in view of common goals. By facilitating the cooperation and communication between Albanian actors (ministries, municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, target groups), by introducing mechanisms for consultation and cooperation led by MHSP, including their formalization in Memorandums of Understanding, by inviting actors to define clear responsibilities within their structures, thus also enhancing ownership, especially at central government level, the programme will contribute to more effective and efficient delivery of social services.
- Policy dialogue and advocacy: UN organizations involved in the programme's implementation, supported by implementing organizations, empowered CSOs and target groups/ citizens, will lead policy dialogues with competent actors at central and at local state levels (especially with the MHSP, the key policy partner at central level). The dialogue is to be led in view of ensuring the achievement of the programme's objectives, and the development of the system and the mechanisms allowing for social inclusion. This includes the necessity to ensure funding for social inclusion mechanisms in the long run. Ministries, LGUs, deconcentrated and municipal services involved in the provision of social services and the promotion of social inclusion will be informed about the social and institutional realities on the ground, the needs of the target groups, the possibilities to further improve mechanisms for planning and delivering services. Target groups, CSOs and UN organizations understand their role in policy dialogue also as one of advocacy.
- Knowledge generation, learning, sharing and practice: The sharing of knowledge, good practice models and approaches between municipality partners linked to social services and inclusion, and to support partners that seek to scale up such good practice models at the local or regional, or national level, is vital as the social service reform process moves from the roll-out phase to the scaling up and consolidation phase. This is relevant to the range of different groups of actors, but most notably so in regard to the capacities of LGUs

to share knowledge and experience, with regional and national partners. As compared to LNB (Phase 1), during which the identification of good practices in social care models and financing was initially feasible (with 25 good practices divulgated by the end of 2020), greater stress will be provided under LNB (Phase 2) to support the progressive scaling up of good practices by interested LGUs across Albania. In addition, the strengthening of linkages between LGUs and academia to cooperate on social inclusion policy analysis and local research programmes will also contribute to more effective and efficient delivery of local social services.

- Do no harm: The programme will ensure that its intervention do not have effects contrary to the plan of promoting social inclusion. Especially in neighbourhoods where visible programmes financed by the grant fund are implemented, persons and groups of population who do not benefit from the programme, but whose social inclusions also needs external support, might feel disadvantaged. This is to be prevented by finding forms for programmes that involve direct neighbours and groups that do not belong to the core target group.
- Integration into the SDC and UN strategies: The proposed programme is fully in line with SDC's cooperation strategy 2018-2021 and the objective of its domain "Democratic Governance" that "people [notably vulnerable groups] benefit from inclusive, effective and democratic institutions". The proposed programme intervention is clearly anchored within the goals of Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24, linking to three of the four strategic objectives (economic development; human development; governance), as well as the raison d'être for Swiss international cooperation (poverty reduction and sustainable development). The proposed programme is fully in line with the Government of Albania-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Programme of 2017-2021 and of 2022-2026 (programme Outcome 2 and Outcome A, Output 1 respectively), addressing social cohesion, human capital development and social inclusion. Synergies with other SDC and UN programmes evolving in the same domain or in the same localities will be used whenever they can contribute to improved effectiveness and efficiency of interventions.
- Sustainable Development Goals: The programme will also support Albania's progress in view of achieving the SDGs, especially SDGs 1-5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies).

Intervention Instruments

The programme will make use mainly of the following instruments:

- Capacity building: Training for staff of partner organizations, especially of LGUs and of CSOs, including social workers and managers, in order to improve individual capacities for legal and policy implementation, gender responsive service delivery, lobbying and advocacy, service management, etc. will ultimately benefit recipients of social services. Training will be adapted to the needs of the trainees in view of improved performance, it will make use of different techniques, including traditional training courses, peer learning, and the training-of-trainers (who will then have a capacitating role themselves). The training-of-trainers is a key necessity in building the capacity of the state authorities to scaling up training provision and to ensuring institutional sustainability of the capacity building results (e.g. the need to support SSS to develop a tailored training-of-trainers curriculum to enable it deliver training for its regional offices). Trainings will be planned in

close partnership with MHSP, SSS[73], ASCAP, and the Albanian School of Public Administration. For the selection of persons included in capacity building, it is important to assess the willingness of persons to be trained, and their acceptance in their respective working context – to avoid investing in persons who do not enjoy full trust and have lost credibility among the beneficiaries of social services. Technical backstopping will support the development and transfer of new approaches and innovations. A gender balance of persons involved in capacity building is to ensure greater involvement of women representing CSOs not only as beneficiaries of social care services, but as representatives of their communities. A gender sensitive capacity building plan shall ensure and guarantee rendering of equitable services and policy implementation at local level.

- Organizational development: A variety of partners will benefit from activities for strengthening their institutional capacities:
  - Municipalities: Especially Directorates/ Units responsible for delivering social services, including non-public service providers, and cooperating with the programme's target groups will be supported in their capacities to provide gender responsive services. The programme will in particular seek to strengthen the capacities of municipal administrative units in both urban and rural areas. LGUs will obviously continue to rely to an important degree on central government, for the regulatory framework for social service provision, for programmatic guidance and financial support. Now that the Social Fund is becoming operational, and the Law on Public Procurement was also revised in 2020 (in part to clarify the procurement/ contracting of social services), a key priority for LGUs is to strengthen local financing and procurement capacity (methodologies, guidelines, budgeting tools), including in the further development of local financing streams/ mechanisms to support social inclusion. An additional key priority for LGUs is to strengthen their organizational management of social care and social inclusion service delivery and its administration, including in the areas of case management protocols, internal and cross-sectoral coordination, and regional coordination for services, and for the monitoring of service provider delivery.
  - The proposed programme will address the limited participation of organizations representing vulnerable groups, including PWDs and of R&Es, in the conduct of public affairs by supporting their organizations strengthen the constituency and become proactive and influential in policy and decision-making processes.
  - University faculties and social care practitioners, through their respective Orders of professionals are also beneficiaries of support for institutional development, although not central ones. It is assumed that with punctual support to these organizations, a contribution can be made to increase the quality of social care services. To do so, the support is to be well targeted, focusing mainly in the access to good practices.
  - Central government authorities and institutions including INSTAT will be supported in their planning, data collection/ monitoring and evaluation capacities in the field of social inclusion. The further development of operational and analytical capacities of central government partners to efficiently implement their responsibilities for data collection, monitoring and appraisal of social inclusion policies is essential for the purposes of accountability and also for timely decision-making to steer policy implementation. This is a horizontal issue, relevant to each of the central government partners and agencies (e.g. SSS). As regards the MHSP, special attention will be given to financial planning and the provision of resources for social services and social inclusion as well as the implementation of the ministry's range of Action Plans on social inclusion. Notably via the Social Fund allocation methodologies will be reviewed to ensure transparency,

[73] MHSP and SSS are members of the Continuous Education Board in charge of accreditation and certification of professionals of social care services.

accountability and equity. Technical assistance that will be provided through MHSP staff support and international backstopping expertise will be supplemented with demonstrative co-financing of the Social Fund. The co-financing modalities will be elaborated jointly with MHSP. The MFE will be supported for the financial planning and the provision of resources for social housing programmes for the implementation of the Action Plan on Social Housing. The MESY will be supported for the financial planning and the provision of resources for inclusive education measures targeted to vulnerable families/children, and for the implementation of the Action Plan on Youth.

- Funding of innovative projects by the operation of a grant fund: The grant fund will take into account SDC and UNDP experiences with such schemes in Albania and elsewhere, and it will allow for financing projects of approximately 15,000 CHF in selected municipalities. The overall financial means reserved for the fund amount to 300,000 CHF. The regulations of the fund were prepared under LNB (Phase 1), during which two Calls for Proposals were implemented and 17 local projects supported and now operational. The grant fund will be managed by the programme team, with two (maximally three) calls for proposals to be launched between 2021 and not later than 2024.

The application of these instruments will be supported by continuous policy dialogue with the MHSP especially, but with all other actors participating in the Steering Committee, and with Albanian partners, both at central and at local level, including civil society, in general.

The instruments applied by the programme will tackle social inclusion issues from different angles, thus allowing for quick improvements (mainly by the innovative projects), and for medium and long term effects (mainly through capacity building and organizational development, the latter also consisting of providing models for inclusive services). The instruments (and the approaches described above) fit together because they all support the programme's overall goal; they target the improvement of social services and of social inclusion. If they each address specific issues, they are still perfectly well combined, and they are coherent means to strengthen the system of social inclusion.

42 Partners and Cooperation

Partners and Cooperation

The programme will be implemented by a large number of actors; its success depends on the good quality of their cooperation and coordination. It will be the task of the Steering Committee (see below, chapter 5) and of single actors involved in the programme to guarantee cooperation and coordination.

UN Organizations

The programme will be carried out by the involved UN Organizations through their Delivering as One mechanism (see below, chapter 5), together with actors representing central and local state levels, and with civil society organization that provide social services and that defend and promote the interests of socially excluded persons and groups.

Albanian Ministries

The main governmental partner at central level is MHSP with the focal point being within the Department of the Development Programmes of Health and Social Protection, and its dependent institutions (SSS and its regional directorates and Inspectorate), which will be responsible for coordination with other line ministries (MESY, MFE, and others as relevant) and INSTAT, as well as with local government authorities at regional or municipal level.

Local Government Units

Local Governmental Units responsible for social service provision will be the key partners in implementing activities at local level and in coordinating activities with other local authorities. To ensure steady participation (regardless of staff changes and independently of election results), Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) will be signed with respective LGUs to define roles and responsibilities in implementation of programme activities. LGUs will be targeted beneficiaries for community-based delivery of social services, mainstreaming social inclusion and gender equality in local policies, and in developing and implementing innovative delivery of social services; they can also be direct beneficiary of the grant component for innovative social services and social inclusion. Their role as beneficiaries will additionally ensure the active involvement of municipalities in the programme's implementation. Active contributions of LGUs will consist of engaging in organizational development in view of efficient and effective service delivery, including accessing target groups, encouraging staff to participate in capacity building events, exchange with other LGUs, possibly planning and implementing service delivery jointly with other municipalities, etc. The LNB programme (Phase 2) is aware of the need to consolidate its existing partnerships (with the 25 LGUs supported via tailored technical and capacity building measures, as well as to pilot test delivery mechanisms at local and/or regional level), and to secure long-term sustainability and local ownership of the full results of the partnerships. Equally, LNB (Phase 2) is aware that certain, notably smaller and/or rural LGUs, are at risk of being left behind, as too complex to support or overseen within the wider process of reform. Therefore, while LNB (Phase 2) will be focused on LNB's existing 25 LGU partners, a limited number of other, left behind LGUs will also be supported in order to become active players.

Civil society organizations and target groups

CSOs at national and local level representing interests of different vulnerable and marginalized groups (e.g. R&E, PWDs, women, children, older persons, LGBTIQ, etc.) will be key partners at central and particularly local level. They will have a double role – they will advocate, lobby and network for promoting social inclusion and social services at local level, and they will develop and deliver innovative gender responsive social services at local level. Not all CSOs will do both, but the experiences of CSOs that deliver social services are certainly to be included in advocacy and lobbying activities – taking into account that service providing CSOs, due to dependency from public funding, might be limited in their faculty to request accountability from authorities, including regarding the quantity and quality of services provided. The CSOs, including women CSOs, will also be direct beneficiaries of the programme's grant component for innovative social services. The potentially multiple role of CSOs – advocacy and paid for service provision – might result in a conflict of interest for these organizations. Their capacity to speak up for the groups they represent or intend to work for may be reduced, and their accountability might suffer due to institutional interests not derived from their organizational purpose. The programme's management is very much aware of the issues deriving from CSOs' multiple role; it will address these issues explicitly in the Steering Committee and with CSO partners, and it will contribute to the clarification of roles wherever possible – by facilitating the interface between state authorities and CSOs, a productive dialogue, by presenting examples of CSOs that are paid service providers but that therefore have not lost their capacity to address crucial issues for the groups and persons they represent. Policy dialogue with authorities will be crucial in this respect: they have to learn that CSOs can have a double role, and that this situation can benefit the improvement of service provision. Their knowledge about the situation on the ground, their lobbying for the improvement of this situation is not to result in "punishments" of these organizations by not accepting them as service providers if they critically comment what remains to be improved. Rather, the

experiences and insights of CSOs are to be seen as a resource that enriches the further development of social service provision and the system of social inclusion in general.

Additional partners

Media and academia (Faculty of Social Work and of Education), the Orders of professionals, as well as other actors will be involved in the programme as respective needs emerge. Private sector partners will be involved where feasible (e.g. linked to promoting social enterprises).

Coordination

Beyond the coordination among partners involved in the implementation of the proposed programme, its actors are also to be aware that additional programmes are operated in similar fields. An overview of the UN's on-going programme interventions in the area of Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Albania is provided in Annex F, and an overview of key donor programme interventions in Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Albania in Annex G.

With ongoing Swiss and UN projects evolving in the same domain or in the same localities, links will be established to define and implement mechanisms for exchange of information and mutual learning, and synergies promoted whenever they can contribute to improved effectiveness and efficiency of interventions. Sharing of documents and regular meetings of project managers are to permit a constant flow of information. Where projects are active in the same municipalities and/or with the same partners at central government level, coordination will be especially close, and synergies will be actively sought for and used, amongst other by involving Municipal Councils and civil society in the planning and monitoring of interventions.

In addition, the proposed programme will also coordinate with other actors, among them include:

- EU: Recognizing Albania's intention to make progress in the EU accession process (which includes key EU *Acquis* chapters such as on social policy and employment, judiciary and fundamental rights, education, and health protection), and its role as key donor financing interventions in Albania in the areas of human capital development and social inclusion, close coordination and exchange of information with the EU will be pursued.
- The EU and Government of Albania is currently implementing the EU action for Social Inclusion[74] that aims at contributing to strengthening social inclusion by increasing coverage, inclusiveness and effectiveness of social care services, the provision of inclusive education and employment opportunities. The action supports populations at risk of poverty and social exclusion, including youth, men and women at risk, people with disabilities and minorities. The action supports the implementation of the National Strategy for Social Protection by improving the accessibility and quality of social care services at the local level through new funding, regulatory and quality assurance mechanisms; and by improving levels of child well-being in pre-university education in accordance with EU inclusive education standards and enhance inspection, pedagogic, social work and psychological interventions. It also supports the National Employment and Skill Strategy by promoting employment and employability through new service delivery models, the introduction of a new employment programme for young people not in employment, education or training, expanding coverage of welfare-to-work programmes, and strengthening vocational and educational training programmes in municipalities.

[74] Under the IPA 2019 Annual Action Programme for Albania. The action provides for EU funding contribution up to EUR 70.650 million, of which EUR 50.650 million is provided as Budget Support, EUR 18.0 million is provided for Complementary Assistance (Grant Scheme support up to EUR 9.3 million and Technical Assistance up to EUR 8.7 million), and EUR 2.0 million is provided for Indirect Management by Albania (Grant Scheme for Teacher Training in new Competence-Based Learning Curriculum and Improved Inclusive Education).

- World Bank: The WB Social Assistance Modernization Programme is still on-going (MHSP has expressed its desire to extend the programme implementation, until December 2022, due to programme delays arising as an impact of the health pandemic), linked to the implementation of the reform of the main social assistance schemes for poverty alleviation and for PWDs.

43 Sustainability, Scaling up and Exit Strategy

Sustainability

Sustainability is a constant concern of the proposed programme. It is pursued through a series of approaches and mechanisms that all tend to sustainably improve Albania's social service provision and social inclusion overall. The approaches and methods that will contribute to the durability of the programme's interventions include the following:

- Full alignment on national policies and strategies: By supporting a national system designed to promote social inclusion, amongst other by providing social services, the programme includes sustainability in all its activities.
- Investments in actors, processes and persons: The strengthening of institutions and organizations (for service provision, monitoring and adapting policies, for funding services, etc.), the introduction and improvement of mechanisms for cooperation between actors (at central and local level government as well as between these two levels, state and civil society, recipients and providers of social services), and the development of capacities of individuals (service providers, policy makers, beneficiaries of social services, etc.), together with strengthened monitoring capacities and willingness to innovate and adapt the policy framework can be expected to have effects beyond the programme's duration.
- The (non-financial) support for increasing funding of social services: By supporting Albanian efforts for sound funding of social services and social inclusion activities, the programme, with the means of policy dialogue and capacity building makes an important contribution to the targeted services' durability.
- The financial support for establishment of new models of social services delivery and introduction of innovative social services though the grant scheme will not only commit LGUs financially to continue to fund and maintain these services over time (during the programme life and afterwards), but also will serve as models of scaling up and diversifying these services and using them as examples to lobby and advocate for increased funding from central government, own revenues in municipal councils and donors.
- Building synergies with other donors supporting social inclusion is of paramount importance to maximize use of financial resources for lasting interventions and avoid duplication. The programme should also partner with the donors to lobby with the central government to allocate sufficient resources to the provision of social services, as well as to strengthen the capacities of LGUs to plan, budget and develop social care plans responsive to the needs of their communities from better management of their revenues.
- The promotion of community-based social services: By involving beneficiaries of social services and their organizations in the planning and budgeting of social services (in line with gender responsive and social responsive budgeting) and in their delivery and assessment, the provision of appropriate services can become a joint endeavour of all stakeholders, and a requested and appreciated provision of the Albanian state.
- The concern for sustainability is also reflected in the fact that no parallel systems will be introduced. No services will be provided by the programme itself. Only existing service providers will participate in the programme. Their strengthening is the programme's main

approach. The programme will enable existing state structures and CSOs to implement strategies and to provide services. The improvement of the interface between state and civil society actors is a major concern for the programme, since both types of actors participate in service delivery, and it is a task of respective Albanian actors themselves – a task that will be supported by the programme, e.g. by facilitating contacts between them, by proposing forms of cooperation and by supporting such cooperation in view of improved service delivery.

- In all its interventions, governance issues will be a major concern – it is articulated, amongst others, through the involvement of target groups in the monitoring of service provision, and in the transparent management of the grant fund. These efforts for improved governance are important means to prepare the sustainability of the programme's interventions as well as the sustainability of social services, since they contribute to sound and transparent institutional mechanisms. In addition, the promotion of gender equality will also be a regular dimension of the programme's implementation. All interventions will be gender sensitive, promoting social inclusion also from a gender perspective. The programme's results will be assessed, at least partly, based on sex-disaggregated data and gender related indicators. The programme will cooperate closely with specialists of Gender Equality and Domestic Violence at municipality level as well as with women's alliances of municipal councils where they are set up to mainstream gender in social services management.
- Mainstreaming gender considerations in programme implementation will contribute to the sustainability of results as it will take into consideration various vulnerabilities of women and intersectionality of discrimination.

Scaling up

Scaling up will be a major means for the programme to cover a large number of municipalities. The means for scaling up include the following:

- Divulgation of already identified good practices among all stakeholders in the provision of social services. This can be initiated with the programme's start, since many good practices are already identified. As for the means for scaling up, the persons and organizations are obviously to be targeted specifically with information that is relevant for them and which can contribute to their improved practice.
- Identification and divulgation of additional good practices during the programme's implementation is very important. This concerns all dimensions of the programme, including the programmes financed by the grant fund, which may be of interest for other municipalities, CSOs, etc., possibly for other donors.
- Policy dialogues with central and local authorities can increase their awareness about issues, possible solutions and means of action.

Exit Strategy

The end of programme vision reads as follows: An inclusive Albania leaves no one behind. The entire population, vulnerable and marginalized persons and groups of all genders and of all ages, including Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities are fully recognized members of Albanian society and enjoying the same rights and access to services as the rest of the population. Social protection and inclusion is promoted by specific support to those most in need. The end of programme vision also includes Albania's further progress in its way towards EU accession, and towards delivering on the SDGs. Improved social conditions clearly are an asset in the process.

As this is the second programme phase (2021-2025) of the foreseen eight-year LNB programme, a fully detailed exit strategy will be developed within the first year of the second

phase. This exit strategy, based also on the experiences made and the lessons learned during the programme's implementation already in the first phase, will include all the topics addressed by the programme.

The exit strategy is a 'live-document' that will set out the phased process for planning and executing the full transfer of the results of the cooperation and their sustained operation by the different beneficiary institutional partners. The exit strategy is to define the key stages, the steps and benchmarks, over the four-year period for implementation of the second programme phase, for processing the full and sustainable transfer of the results. It is not a plan for the immediate transfer of the results, but a plan to guide the process of phased transfer and full take up and institutionalization of the results before the end of the second LNB programme phase.

For each key partner organization, an exit and sustainability strategy will be prepared to support planning the full transfer of the results of the cooperation. Exit strategies will be developed via LNB in consultation with each of the relevant partners. The exit strategy will define the key deliverables and results, and establish timelines and benchmarks against which to assess progress towards the full and sustainable transfer of the results (e.g. capacity building training curricula/ materials for onward staff training/ learning, plus organizational development measures, procedures, manuals, methods, tools, etc.) and their sustained operation by the beneficiary partners (e.g. human, technical and financial resources).

In addition to an exit and sustainability strategy for each key partner organization, the LNB exit strategy will also set out the detailed macro level framework against which to assess whether the results are transferred and sustained at the country level. Building on the programme's proposed performance measurement framework (provided in the Logframe), notably for impact and country level development context, the macro level framework will need to address the following issues within the LNB exit strategy: (1) Financing of social services; (2) Capacities for service delivery at local level and for standards monitoring; (3) Capacities for monitoring and evaluating social inclusion and the implementation of social inclusion strategies; (4) Capacities of policy makers to gather information for adapting relevant policy frameworks.

5 Organisation, Management and Administration

51 Management and Organisation

Organizational structure and time frame

The proposed intervention is a Joint Programme (JP) that will be implemented through the modalities of the Delivering as One (DaO) mechanism, under the framework of the Government of Albania-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026[75], with the joint participation of four UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and UNFPA and in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies at central and local level. The implementation modality of the JP will be affiliated within the overall architecture of the DaO approach, ensuring that activities are coordinated with the strategic deliverables as presented biannually in support of the Government of Albania-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

The programme Logframe provides for the general framework and indicative deliverables that will be further fine-tuned and annualized in relevant annual work plans over the four-year time frame for the programme, planned to be operational from 01 June 2021 to 31 May 2025.

UNDP will be the leading UN agency for overall implementation and coordination of the JP. Each participating UN agency will implement activities and outputs as defined in the respective joint work plans agreed for the respective roles and responsibilities in line with their mandate and expertise. The JP will ensure a cohesive coordinated UN approach through internal coordination mechanism in targeting municipalities to ensure a critical mass of support and increase chances of success. It will ensure a strategic integration and cohesion with other UN agencies as well as with development partners working in Albania in the area of social inclusion and protection, and local governance. A coordination platform with UN agencies, SDC and EU funded projects targeting social inclusion will be established to coordinate intervention, avoid overlapping and maximize synergies and results. In this context, higher-level coordination will be facilitated by MHSP, the lead ministry for social protection and inclusion.

The programme's institutional structure is presented in Annex H; Annex I provides an additional view on the programme's structure, reflecting UN ways of presenting the governance structure.

Roles, tasks and responsibilities

UNDP will focus its work on building on the results of previous projects focusing on: (1) policy level by providing technical assistance at national level for cross-sector implementation of the policy framework on social inclusion; (2) strengthening the measuring and monitoring of social inclusion through the provision of technical assistance for the effective statistical governance of the sector-specific outcomes for social inclusion (including data collection and analysis); (3) technical assistance for social fund upscaling and implementation of a co-financing scheme; (4) promote and support implementation of the CRPD; (5) technical assistance for implementation of the social housing strategy at central and local level; (6) standards setting and monitoring of community social services; (7) institutional strengthening and capacity building of LGUs and CSOs on service delivery, planning and monitoring in the field of social inclusion; (8) innovative approaches and partnerships by LGUs to provide integrated social care services to R&E and PWDs; (9) civic engagement, advocacy and networking to promote

[75] Under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, the LNB programme is implemented in the context of Outcome 2 "Social Cohesion" under the theme of Social Protection and Social Inclusion. Under the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026, the LNB project is implemented in the context of Outcome A "Human Capital Development and Social Inclusion" under Output 1 (Social Protection).

social inclusion at local level; (10) capacity support and modelling of inclusive social services through implementation of tested comprehensive social services models; (11) strengthening capacity of CSOs representing Roma, Egyptians and most marginalized populations in community mobilization, advocacy and policy dialogue to enable targeted groups demand for their rights and social services, capitalizing on UNDP's expertise, results and experiences in Albania working with the R&E, PWDs and vulnerable groups.

Based on its comparative advantage, the NGO "Ndihmë për fëmijët" (NPF) will be engaged by UNDP as implementing partner under the NGO Implementation Modality. The NPF will enter into a Project Cooperation Agreement with UNDP upon completion of the capacity assessment including the CACHE (Capacity Assessment Checklist) and the CSO Risk Assessment Form. NPF will mainly engage in LGUs with sizeable local Roma communities, and LGUs with rural/ remoteness challenges: (1) implementing and providing the tested and proven models it has developed and operated for inclusive and integrated social services delivery (education, employment, health, vocational training) at local level which will be showcased to other LGUS through exchange visits, sharing of good practices and study tours, and consequently scaled up in more LGUs; (2) capacity building of municipal staff to assess, plan, budget and monitor inclusive services; and (3) awareness raising of Roma and other vulnerable communities on the competencies of municipalities and enhance their ability to interface with local government and advocate for their concerns.

UNICEF is committed to follow up on its contribution aiming to provide technical assistance to LGUs to implement Albania's legal framework on social care services and recommend sound technical solutions for a child sensitive integrated social protection system, in full alignment with its child-focused mandate: (1) capacity building of NARUs in needs assessment, planning and budgeting and monitoring of social care services by LGUs, enabling them to use proper case management and other tools to help most vulnerable families and children access integrated social protection services at local level; (2) development of tools capacities and guides for planning and monitoring quality standards of social care services, including work on MIS and mechanisms for sustainable financing including; (3) standardization and scaling up of training and orientation programmes for all social and child protection workers, and social care practitioners; (4) strengthening of mechanisms for early identification of children with disabilities, in need of special protection measures, at risk of or having dropped out of school – based on the introduced family outreach and "case management" techniques in health, education and social protection sectors; (5) further development of the financial mechanisms for supporting out of school children or other excluded groups; (6) improving the policy framework for the inclusive education as per CRPD Comment nr4 on Inclusive education starting from early ages and development of tools and instruments to ensure that R&E, and children with disability are included and receive quality education throughout their lifecycle; (7) MHSP, INSTAT and LGUs are supported in their further development of and in implementation, monitoring and reporting of the National Action Plan for Children 2021-26 and municipal Action Plans for Children; (8) Support INSTAT and relevant national agencies in generation of high-level official statistics to measure the progress and results of social inclusion policies/strategies, especially for the most vulnerable groups (including children with disability, R&E, those leaving in poor families). UNICEF commits to contribute to all joint efforts into advancing social protection and social inclusion policies and strategies in the country.

UNWOMEN will continue its support by: (1) assisting MHSP at policy level with the further development of the operational framework and an enabling environment supporting the development of social enterprises, and connectivity to local level social care plans, to foster social inclusion of vulnerable women categories by strengthening their capacities to access employment; (2) assisting MHSP with validating actual social policy guidelines by establishing gender markers and engendering relevant policies and strategies; (3) supporting LGUs, and

INSTAT, in strengthening capacities for data collection and the provision of disaggregated administrative statistics at local level; (4) supporting Academia (Social Work Faculty) in the development and piloting of Gender Module aiming at the establishment of Internships with a focus on social integration of vulnerable women and girls; (5) at the local level, supporting LGUs and social service providers to engender social care plans and pilot and fund innovative inclusive social services targeting vulnerable women and girls; (6) UN Women will continue its work in strengthening the participatory budgeting practices by strengthening CSOs and activists' capacities to support vulnerable women and girls to claim their rights for integrated social care services, increasing participation of vulnerable women and girls in the participatory budgeting practices and improving mechanisms for community dialogue by capitalizing also on the local community networks, through inclusive media, communication, capacity building workshops, volunteering and social mobilization events, targeting inclusion of citizenry, and particularly women and girls in decision making processes.

UNFPA, building on its comparative advantages in data, population dynamics and demographic resilience, reducing inequalities in health and education, will contribute towards: (1) building capacities at local level to address social determinants of health and reduce health inequities through "health in all" policies, social protection and universal health coverage approaches; (2) focusing on in-depth analysis of Census data to assess the nature and status of LNOB groups in Albania; (3) strengthening monitoring capacity of MHSP for improving implementation of policies related to social inclusion and supporting INSTAT to improve capacity of LGUs in interpreting and using demographic and socioeconomic data in local planning including financing of social services; (4) strengthening the services delivered by CSOs that focus on the most marginalized young key population (IDUs, MSM, sex workers) and vulnerable populations (including LGBTIQ, R&E, PWDs and older persons). UNFPA in its interventions will coordinate with the SDC funded health portfolio.

Steering mechanism

A Steering Committee (SC) will oversee and coordinate the operations of this intervention. Based on the programme's initial plan and budget as well as on monitoring data, the SC oversees the programme's implementation and takes all necessary strategic decisions. It will provide policy guidance and recommendation regarding the programme strategy and objectives, receive and comment semi-annual reports, approve annual plans of operation and reports, and participate in the possible realization of a mid-term and end of phase evaluation.

The SC will unite at least twice a year, and upon necessity. All SC members can request a meeting within a week if need be.

The SC will be composed of SDC representative, the UN Resident Coordinator , senior representatives of the participating UN agencies, senior representative of the MHSP, senior representatives from other selected ministries (MESY, MFE), selected LGUs representatives benefiting from the programme, and at least two representatives of civil society organizations. The SC will invite WB and EU representatives with the status of observers for building synergies of the interventions in the area of social inclusion. Every effort will be made to link the SC to both the Government-led coordination structures such as Integrated Policy Management Groups (IPMGs) and the UN DaO structures, such as Outcome Results Groups.

The SC will be co-chaired by SDC, MHSP and UN Resident Coordinator senior representatives. The Terms of Reference of the SC is provided in Annex J.

To ensure a coordinated approach in implementation of the programme a Technical Committee (TC) will be established, consisting technical experts of the participating agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and UNFPA). Its main mandate is to guide implementation of the programme, to coordinate the practical implementation of programme interventions by the

UN agencies and to ensure that results are delivered timely and efficiently. The TC will meet at least 4 times per year. The meeting of the TC will be called by the LNB Programme Coordinator, who will also be responsible for documenting the proceedings of the meetings. Progress updates will be provided by all UN agencies one week prior to the TC meeting.

52 Administration of Funds

The funds for the implementation of the programme will be allocated through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund structure. As the four of participating UN Organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and UNFPA) have agreed to utilize the ongoing Albania SDG Acceleration Fund structure where the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office acts as the Administrative Agent (AA), the funds assigned to these organizations under the Programme document will be channelled for the programme through Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. When making the final decision for allocation JEC would request the signed joint annual work-plans and request for funds.

The Administrative Agent will:

- Prepare and sign Standard Administrative Arrangement with the SDC.
- Charge standard administrative agent fee of one per cent (1%) of the total contributions made to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund for this joint programme, for its costs of performing the AA's functions.

The participating UN Organizations will:

- Assume full programmatic and financial responsibility and accountability for the funds transferred by the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund for this JP.
- Each UN Organization is entitled to deduct their indirect costs on contributions received according to their own regulations and rules, taking into account the size and complexity of the programme. Each UN Organization will deduct 7% overhead costs of the total allocation received for the agency.

6 Resources

61 Human Resources

The programme will be managed by an overall programme team of three dedicated staff, supported by a variety of activity-specific specialist team members of the participating UN agencies – for example, a Finance/Admin Assistant will provide the administrative, operational and financial support to the programme following UNDP rules and regulations. The composition of the management team may evolve along the programme's implementation.

As the leading agency for the JP, the UNDP Programme Specialist responsible for LNB will continue to play a core role in providing technical backstopping support to the LNB-team, and also in terms of ensuring regular oversight of the JP implementation and its management coordination. In addition, technical backstopping support to the LNB-team will be provided, as required, via the responsible programme coordinator(s) of each participating UN agency.

In addition to the core staff supporting overall programme implementation, UN agencies have significant in-house expertise that will be utilized for the implementation of the programme. UN agencies will use human resources to deliver and achieve specific components: for example, to support implementation of UNDP activities, a Disability Analyst will be engaged to offer technical expertise and support the facilitation, coordination and implementation of activities.

In addition, national technical experts and consultants of different specializations, especially targeting expertise in access to social rights and integrated social care services for Roma and Egyptians or PWDs, will be hired as per the programme needs to complement the programme team. It is also to be noted that besides the programme team, many other human resources outside the UN organizations implementing the programme will also importantly contribute to the programme. They represent public authorities, organized civil society and target groups.

At its start, the programme will be composed of the following staff that will coordinate the implementation, monitoring and reporting of all programme components:

- A National Programme Coordinator will be hired by UNDP as the leading agency in charge of the overall programme management, implementation, reporting and coordination with various stakeholders and UN agencies.
- A Monitoring and NGO Liaison Coordinator will be in charge of internal monitoring as well monitoring of NPF activities and grants.
- An Information and Communications Associate will be hired for support on public information and visibility of the programme.

The recruitment process for hiring the programme team staff considers the following requirements for programme staff:

- Relevant professional and/or academic background.
- A minimum of ten years of relevant experience in areas such as social inclusion, social work, social protection and capacity building (depending on role and function).
- Experience in programme and team management as well as in gender responsive monitoring and evaluation.
- Experience/familiarity with the challenges of social inclusion issues in Albania.
- Maturity and confidence in dealing with senior and high ranking members of national and international institutions, government and non-government.
- Integrity by modelling the UN's and SDC's values and ethical standards (cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability).

The National Programme Coordinator is in charge of everyday coordination of programme activities implemented by participating UN agencies and NPF.

62 Financial Resources

The overall budget for this programme is CHF 8.0 million, funded 100% by SDC, receivable in 2021-2025, which will be allocated through the SDG Acceleration Fund. The programme Logframe provides for the general framework and indicative deliverables that will be funded only by SDC contribution.

During the period of LNB (Phase 1), 2017-2021, an additional funding of 8.3 million USD has been mobilized by the participating UN agencies, through own resources and donor funding (EU, Sweden, etc.) to implement interventions contributing to Outcome 2 of the Government of Albania-UN Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021. Over the forthcoming period, an additional funding of 8.7 million USD has already been mobilized by the participating UN agencies, through own resources and donor funding (EU, Sweden, etc.) to implement interventions contributing to Outcome A of the Government of Albania-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026, while work is ongoing for additional fundraising from other donors. Partners both at central and at local level of the Albanian state involved in the programme's implementation will graciously provide experience, knowledge and know-how as well as working time of staff that is not remunerated.

The LNB Steering Committee will serve as the authority to provide strategic direction and oversight of the programme and provide advice to the Joint Executive Committee for fund allocation decision making. The Lead Agency is responsible for coordinating the programmatic aspects. Each Participating UN Organization has programmatic and financial responsibility on the use of funds allocated from the SDG Acceleration Fund.

63 Analysis of Cost Efficiency and Benefits

The programme proposal cannot provide a proper and costed analysis of costs and benefits of the proposed programme (social services and social inclusion measures in Western Europe, the Balkans and elsewhere are also not able to provide respective analyses including figures).

Although no financial information can be provided, it is noted that the role of social protection in development has gained clear recognition on global and national development policy and advocacy agendas in the recent decade, not only as a fundamental human right but as an effective way to tackle poverty and inequalities and in supporting vulnerable populations.

Social protection effectively contributes to long-term poverty reduction and to human development. Aiming at providing equal opportunities for all, it is a key instrument of inclusive growth and favours sustainable development. Having a positive impact on social and economic inequalities it promotes gender equality and helps building stable, cohesive and peaceful societies. Social protection increases people's resilience and agency and empowers them to make their own choices by building self-reliance, not dependency. Social protection is an economic investment. Without basic social protection that fosters health, adequate levels of nutrition and social stability, a country cannot unlock its full productive potential. Social protection influences individual decisions to migrate and facilitates the return of refugees into their countries of origin by stabilising social cohesion and strengthening economic growth. By targeting vulnerable groups, social protection addresses the structural causes of poverty, exclusion and inequality in line with the 2030 Agenda and its core principle of LNOB.

Furthermore, it is obvious that not supporting vulnerable and marginalized groups and not actively promoting social inclusion would entail much higher costs – for health services, for the unemployed, for the judicial apparatus – than those invested in preventing the further

impoverishment of persons and groups, in vulnerable and marginalized children's access to education, etc. Not providing social services and not promoting social inclusion would result in costs far above the sums currently invested in social services. But the risks of not promoting social inclusion are not exclusively financial, they not only concern increased costs for rehabilitating what was not prevented, for mending what was not supported in time, the risks are also political. If the divisions in Albanian society further develop, and if gaps in access to social, economic and political resources further widen, then social cohesion will be at risk.

7 Risk Analysis

The risks the programme may be faced with concern: (1) the programme's capacity to achieve its objectives and expected results, (2) the reputation of SDC, UN and other organizations implementing the programme that may be affected by the programme, and (3) fiduciary risks.

Risks to the delivery of the programme activities and outputs, and the achievement of the intended outcomes are constantly monitored by the implementing partners' observation in the field, and communicated within the LNB management and organization via the Technical Committee meetings, which are to ensure that risk analysis is undertaken as a fixed entry in the agenda. Risks to the delivery of the programme results are also constantly assessed by the Lead Agency/ and the LNB management team, based on reporting from the implementing partners and feedbacks from the target groups – as observers of the context and delivery implementation – and utilizing the programme performance framework to assess progress against programme targets. The results of the assessment of risks, and the preliminary identification of suitable mitigation measures, as necessary, is regularly communicated to the programme Steering Committee, to ensure that risk analysis and mitigation is always undertaken as a fixed entry in the agenda.

The programme intervention is based on a series of assumptions and risks – defined in the Logframe (Annex A) – as to main external factors that will significantly guide the achievement of the intended results. These are summarized below in terms of the overall programme risk context.

Table: LNB programme – Risk assessment/ analysis and planned mitigation strategy

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Risk related to the achievement of objectives and expected results: socio-political and economic aspects, policy, strategic and operational dimensions.			
The achievement of objectives may be faced with difficulties:	Medium	Medium	
Socio-political factors: - Limited political support for the prioritization of or focus on social inclusion policies and reforms and the provision of related funding - Government changes the policy reform priorities and strategic orientations linked to the social protection and inclusion agenda and the provision of local services - Authorities fail to build national or local societal ownership for social service reforms/ service extension	Medium Low Medium	High High Medium	- At the political level, the programme has little leverage to convince partners to contribute to the endeavour's success. Nevertheless, continued advocacy of the UN is an important instrument for policy dialogue, in favour of increasing funding for the social protection system and to coordinate efforts to pool and maximize available resources. - The programme will support key partners in their communication efforts to establish well informed populations, and to strengthen the engagement of stakeholders via participatory decision-making.
Economic factors: - Availability of sufficient long-term financial means and certainty to sustain the extent and the quality of existing services and their further development/ extension - Continued socio-economic impact/ uncertainty due to the global health pandemic; the availability of adequate funding for social	Medium Medium	Medium Medium	- At central level, the programme has little leverage to convince ministerial partners to contribute to the endeavour's success. Nevertheless, continued advocacy, sustained dialogue and support, especially to the MHSP, also in the programme's steering committee is an important instrument for policy dialogue,

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
protection measures to address the increased risk of vulnerability to poverty may be constrained due to the rising levels of public debt			should prevent such a risk. The programme will make a constant claim and provide evidence of the relevance and benefits of the suggested initiatives.
Policy factors: - Limited coordination or coherency between the different social inclusion policy initiatives undertaken (at national or at local level, or across government tiers) - Delays in the adoption of policy, strategies, secondary legislation/ regulation or service standards - Failure by authorities to effectively communicate the progress of policy reforms to local partners and to the target groups in society - Social support services and policy measures fail to improve the social inclusion and well-being of the target groups of vulnerable people	Medium Medium Medium Low	Medium Medium Medium High	- The programme will support key partners (notably MHSP as the central level social protection and inclusion policy coordinator, but also partners at regional/ local levels) in their development of policy, and of mechanisms for the integration of services, and their communication/ consultation with stakeholders and target groups. - The programme has little leverage to direct decision-making on the formal adoption of the measures. Continued advocacy, sustained dialogue and support is an important tool of policy dialogue.
Strategic factors: - Target groups are not receptive to engage with local social services - Partners lack interest to develop the quality of social services, and to extend the range of services offered (types of services and/or geographical coverage) - Cooperation of civil society with local or national authorities and service providers is ineffective or inefficient, and not taken into consideration by authorities' in the assessment of policy/plans/funds - Donor cooperation/ coordination in the area of social inclusion fails to build synergy or avoid duplication	Medium Low Medium Low	High High Medium Medium	- In order to interest target groups and organizations representing them and / or providing services for them, communication with them and with municipal opinion leaders is to start early, it is to be diligent, and it is to explain well the purpose and the approach of the programme. Whenever possible, successes already obtained in the field of social inclusion, are to be demonstrated. - Within the rather small donor community active in Albania, coordination must be ensured, including with the support of the competent authorities.
Operational factors: - The achievement of objectives may be faced with difficulties due to inefficient and ineffective cooperation with the target groups - Requesting services leads to client frustration or apathy, because service providers cannot satisfy expressed needs and/or access to the services is limited or distant	Medium	High	- In order to interest target groups and organizations representing them and / or providing services for them, communication with them and with municipal opinion leaders is to start early, it is to be diligent, and it is to explain well the purpose and the approach of the programme. Whenever possible, successes already obtained in the field of social inclusion, are to be demonstrated. - The programme has limited leverage to direct decision-making on the future extension of services. Continued advocacy, sustained dialogue and support is an important tool of policy dialogue. - Assessment of partner capacities (staff, technical) to utilize, absorb

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
- Partners lack the capacity (staff and technical) to effectively absorb external support/ to sustain results - Partners lack the capacity (staff and technical) to monitor/ evaluate policy or social inclusion outcomes - Frequent changes in service portfolio/ responsibilities of the key actors (staff rotation, staff turnover) - COVID-19 pandemic has introduced restriction measures in travel and meetings with the beneficiaries and stakeholders which may impact implementation of planned activities	Medium Medium Medium Medium High	High Medium Medium Medium Medium	and sustain programme results is undertaken prior to the provision of support. The programme's approach and what partners can expect and what they are to contribute is to be thoroughly communicated. Should there be doubts about a partner's willingness to actively support and contribute to the implementation of activities, the programme management may take the decision not to cooperate with the partner. - The risk of staff turnover or lack of qualified staff at central or local level for implementing policy or delivering specialized services cannot effectively be addressed by the programme. The support to organizational development and capacity building is a means to anchor innovation and capacity strengthening at institutional level. The commitment of partners will be constantly monitored, and partners are informed that the programme might be stopped if they do not provide their foreseen contribution. - Technology and on-line platforms will be used for organizing meetings, discussions, trainings and public events
Sustainability is at risk, if: - Authorities do not durably integrate innovations introduced by the programme into their operations (e.g. mechanisms for participation of target groups) - Projects realized in the framework of the grants fund are not provided with budgets for continued operations (maintenance, etc.) - Beneficiaries and their representative CSOs do not actively exercise their right to demand provision/ continuation of provision of adequate social services and hold governmental authorities accountable	Medium	High	- Sustainability is to be prepared – by supporting the durable integration of changes introduced by the programme into municipalities' provision of social services (e.g. through well preparing structures and staff for their task, support for organizational and capacity development to design, budget and implement social care plans and through information to beneficiaries to demand services), and by requesting viability plans from programmes financed by the grants fund (e.g. budgets for maintenance, including the source of their funding). The commitment of partners will be constantly monitored, and partners are informed that the programme might be stopped if they do not provide their foreseen contribution.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
			- Beneficiaries and their CSOs will be capacitated to demand their rights, monitor the quality of service provision and lobby for budget increase.
Scaling-up of successfully introduced innovations introduced may be at risk: - Local authorities cannot be convinced in the necessity and their interest to improve services - Potential beneficiaries do not see their interest in participating in innovating social services	Low	Medium	- Scaling-up is to be realized with the support of central authorities who can contribute to the preparedness of municipalities to replicate good practices identified and tested elsewhere. And scaling-up of programmes for specific target groups (Roma, Egyptians) and persons with disabilities) is to be facilitated by a careful selection of municipalities and the beneficiaries – those willing to introduce the innovation proposed by the programme. A means to support preparedness of these actors consist in the demonstration of successes already achieved in the field of social inclusion.
Reputational risks			
The promotion of services for specific target groups may affect the Albanian population's perception of the support provided, especially the perception by groups of the population who are not beneficiaries but who consider to be in need of support they do not receive	Medium	Medium	- The programme, especially when making visible interventions (e.g. by activities facilitated by the grant fund) is to communicate well – not only with the target groups and the service providers, but also with the neighbourhoods: persons and groups not directly targeted by the intervention are to informed, if possible and suitable also included in the programme, e.g. by making a community centre accessible not only to those mainly targeted.
Fiduciary risks			
Fraud and corruption, e.g. regarding the provision of services by mandated parties and the management of the grant scheme for realizing innovative projects.	Low	High	- Strict UN management of financial resources used internally and invested in all activities, including the fund for programmes, prevents financial mismanagement. - Annual audits further ensure the quality of the programme's financial management.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

81 Monitoring and Evaluation System

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are not activities for their own sake; rather, respective activities are integral parts of programme management. The purpose of the programme's M&E is fourfold. It consists of the following dimensions (that are closely linked one with the other):

- The provision of information for the programme's steering: Data are collected and processed in view of central dimensions of the programme's steering – both at strategic and at operational level.
- Quality assurance: Detail information of the programme and its context, on the programme's implementation, etc. is to be used for continuous monitoring.
- Learning: The programme uses the data collected and processed as well as the experiences made for its own learning, for the improvement of other actors' intervention, and for the development of capacities of its implementers and target groups. Effective and efficient learning from programme data and experiences requires that lessons learned be identified and communicated in appropriate forms.
- Accountability, including reporting: The processed monitoring data and their interpretation are continuously used.

The programme management will make use of structures, processes and tools that allow for collecting reliable data, for processing it into evidence and questions to be answered, and for utilizing this evidence and the questions in view of the four M&E purposes. Monitoring data will be collected and processed mainly by the UN organizations involved in the programme's implementation. But all other stakeholders will be involved in the programme's monitoring – as observers of context and implementation. This especially applies at the level of local service provision, but also CSOs involved in the monitoring of central government performance.

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the Government of Albania-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Programme/Framework (PoCSD). As an integral part of the Framework, the proposed joint programme, the monitoring and reporting processes will involve gathering of information to make timely informed judgment and assessment of progress including among others the identification of strengths and weaknesses of the programme.

82 Results-oriented Reporting System

Monitoring is a continuous task of programme management. It provides both quantitative and qualitative data, and it is based, whenever possible, on predefined indicators.

The programme M&E system, processes and key tools are defined in the LNB Internal Monitoring Plan. A specific person (monitoring coordinator) within the LNB programme team is dedicated to monitoring. Programme monitoring covers as key fields of observation: (1) the country context; (2) programme results; (3) programme efficiency; (4) programme processes; (5) cooperation with partners. The main instruments/ tools for programme monitoring and steering are: (1) the programme performance monitoring framework, derived from the programme's logical framework; (2) the programme's annual work plan, setting out the activities to be implemented per agency, the budget resources, and expected results; (3) the programme's budget; (4) on site field visits; (5) monitoring and analysis of risks; and (6) the Steering Committee review of the programme's progress and results, and to discuss and endorse the LNB Annual Programme Report and next annual work plan.

The monitoring results and the learnings from evaluations will inform the formal reporting on the programme's progress – to the Steering Committee and SDC. Semi-annual progress reports will be provided by the Programme Coordinator, with input from agencies, and shared with participating agencies and SDC to record progress towards the completion of outputs and outcomes as defined in the logical framework. The frequency of formal reporting at the output level is 6-monthly, outcome level annually, and impact level at the mid-term of the programme phase. In addition to the semi-annual reporting, an end of phase report will provide a comprehensive overview of the achievements and lessons learned. Synopsis/key results will be included in the UN Albania mid-year update and the Annual Progress Report.

The fields of observation covered by the programme's monitoring are:

- Context: The institutional, social and economic conditions under which the programme is being implemented will be observed in order to allow for seizing opportunities (for involving additional actors, for supporting interesting local initiatives, etc.), for reacting to newly emerging risks, for adapting the policy dialogue led with authorities, etc.
- Results: The regular monitoring of and reporting on achievements is based on evidence provided by monitoring data, mainly the indicators defined in the logical framework.
- Efficiency: The programme's efficiency will mainly be assessed mainly financially, comparing budget with expenditures. Additional dimensions of efficiency (but not only) can be observed by also monitoring the quality of cooperation between involved actors and of processes necessary for implementing the programme.
- Cooperation: The many actors involved in the programme at different levels require intense, continued, sometimes punctual cooperation between them. The monitoring of the quality of these types of cooperation (in the field, at the level of the Steering Committee, among the implementing actors (UN organizations, CSOs, municipal services, etc.) can support the understanding of the programme also regarding qualitative dimensions.
- Processes: The quality of processes of the programme's implementation, e.g. the introduction of new practices for providing social services at local level, will be monitored in order to have a more complete, and again, also qualitative understanding of the programme's implementation.

The main instruments for monitoring are:

- The programme's logical framework will allow for assessing the implementation's progress, the achievement of objectives and foreseen outcomes and the provision of outputs. Indicators and target values defined for the different outcomes and outputs are the main means for assessing the programme's effectiveness, including impact.
- The annual work plans (AWP) set out the activities to be implemented by each Agency along with associated budgets/resources in line with the results framework. It will describe in detail the required inputs and the expected results within the given timeframe. In addition, the work plans will provide information on the contributing partners. The programme's AWP will be approved by the Steering Committee and will be the basis for programme activities throughout the year.
- The annual review of the programme will be conducted by the Steering Committee and the participating UN agencies, the Government of Albania, SDC and other key partners, and the findings will be used to contribute to annual review of the PoCSD and fine tune the upcoming annual work plan adoption. It will assess the performance of the programme focusing on the extent to which progress is being made and that these remain aligned to appropriate outcomes. The annual review meeting will endorse the Annual Programme Report (APR) and AWP for the upcoming programme period. The annual programme reviews may result in changes to the logical framework to adapt it to changing environments, priorities or policies. The mid-year and annual programme review will serve

to be conducted based on the Annual Programme Report. The APR will describe actual outputs delivered against those planned in joint work plans and progress towards the outcome in this PoCSD based on the indicators.

- The programme's budget (structured in line with the logical framework) and its comparison with actual expenditures. This will allow for assessing the utilization of financial resources, delays in expenditures and shortages of funds if disbursements are made rapidly. The information on the costs of interventions will allow for assessing important aspects of the programme's efficiency, including the timeliness of implementation.
- (Joint) field visits of members of the Steering Committee will allow these for making first hand observations that can contribute to their understanding of the context, of the conditions under which the programme is implemented, and of the programme itself and that will importantly feed into the steering capacities.
- Case studies on the situation in selected municipalities or of target groups, on interventions realized in the framework of the programme or on other topics relevant for the programme will be realized (or mandated). Such studies are to provide in-depth information that allows for improving the programme's steering and implementation.
- The monitoring results of other actors - directly involved in the programme's implementation or not. These actors include Albanian authorities, CSOs, bilateral and multilateral organizations. Their observations of the general context or of specific sectors (economy, social inclusion, social services, the performance of authorities' service delivery, etc.) can provide information that may be interesting information.
- Specific attention will be paid to collect disaggregated data for the vulnerable categories during programme implementation, monitoring and reporting.

83 Planned Reviews and Evaluations

Internal assessments of the programme's progress are regularly realized at specific moments, e.g. annual planning events and meetings of the Steering Committee. Should problems with the programme's implementation arise, internal assessments are to be carried out quickly, in order to react promptly and prepare adaptations that can improve the course of implementation. Internal assessments will be based on monitoring data and previous reports, and they will be important moments for taking decisions on the necessity for adapting the programme's approaches and implementation. The regular internal assessments will consist of a Mid-Term Review that will be comprised, amongst other, of assessment of the support received, the improvement of social services, and sustainability of the programme at all levels (target groups, CSOs, authorities).

A final evaluation involving the input of all key programme stakeholders, including the primary and secondary beneficiaries will be organized in the penultimate year of the programme. The evaluation will be carried out by independent external consultants, the respective terms of reference as well as the subsequent reports will be submitted to the Steering Committee. The evaluation will focus on the impact, efficiency, effectiveness (including an assessment of services by beneficiaries) and sustainability of the programme; it shall provide pertinent lessons learned and recommendations for the future orientation of potential support for social inclusion in Albania.

Annexes

A Logframe

B Detailed Budget

C Terms of Reference of Key Programme Staff and Expertise

D List of Abbreviations

E Overview of Marginalized/ Vulnerable Groups of persons in Albania

F UN's Programme Interventions in Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Albania

G Overview of key Donor Programme Interventions in Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Albania

H EU (IPA 2019) Social Inclusion action – Performance indicators used for EU Budget Support disbursements

I LNB Programme – Institutional Set-up

J Governance Architecture

K LNB Programme – Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee

L LNB Programme – Communication and Visibility Plan

Annex A Logical framework[76]

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
Impact (Overall Goal)	**Impact Indicators**		
Vulnerable persons and groups have improved access to public services that support their social rights, social inclusion and well-being, and are empowered to have a voice in public policy decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold decision-makers accountable for policy implementation.	*Social and human development context* Evolution of the indicators: (1) Population (as percentage) (a) At risk of poverty or social exclusion *Baseline (2017 = 51.8%; 52.3 % F, 51.3 % M)* (2018 = 49.0%; 49.9% F, 48.0% M) (b) At risk of poverty[77] *Baseline (2017 = 23.7%; 23.9% F, 23.5% M)* (2018 = 23.4%; *23.8% F, 23.0% M*) (c) At risk of abject poverty[78] *Baseline (2017 = 11.8%;* 2018 = 11.5%) (2) Human Development Report (a) Human Development Index (HDI) *Baseline (2017 = 0.790; 2019 = 0.795)* (b) Gender Development Index (GDI) *Baseline (2017 = 0.964; 2019 = 0.967)* (c) Gender Inequality Index (GII) *Baseline (2017 = 0.187; 2019 = 0.181)* (3) The number of vulnerable population (disaggregated data) that receive social services (financial and non-financial services) by municipalities and relevant organizations (service providers) and No. of municipalities providing community based social services for	-INSTAT: SILC -UNDP: HDI -MHSP, MESY, MFE: social inclusion relevant reports -EU: Annual verification reports of the public policy context linked to release of EU Budget Support tranches -Studies and reports of specialized CSOs -Reports of multilateral agencies/ bilateral donors -SSS: Annual Reports and/or Social Protection MIS	

[76] During the first 6 months of the 2nd phase of the Leave No One Behind project will be a discussion between the Swiss Embassy and UN on the MRM system for the project.
[77] At-risk-of-poverty threshold is defined as 60% of the median equivalised disposable income for all households.
[78] Abject poverty threshold is defined as 40% of the median equivalised disposable income for all households.

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
	at least three categories (people with disabilities, children and youth at risk, elderly, women) – Total number (country-wide/ all 61 LGUs) *Baseline 3a. (2020 = XXX,000[79], (xx% F, xx% M); xxx,000 financial services; xx,000* non-financial services (*xx% F, xx% M),* xx% PWD, xx% children, xx% youth at risk, xx% elderly, xx% women*)* *Target 3a. Annual Increase by 5%* *Baseline 3b. (2018 = 10 LGUs)* *Target 3b. 2025=40 LGUs* (4) Evolution of public expenditure (a) General government expenditure on Social Protection (as a % of GDP) *Baseline (2017 = 9.29%; 2019 = 9.47%)* (b) Spending for social care services for VGs from central government budget (%) *Baseline (2017 = 0.23%; 2019 = 0.21%)* *Target: Annual Increase by 2%*		
Outcomes	**Outcome Indicators**	**Data Sources Means of Verification**	**External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)**
Outcome 1: Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate gender responsive social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing their social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision-makers and service	(1) Improved/ expanded provision/ access to local social services (LNB target LGUs) (a) Vulnerable population that receive social services/ support by municipalities and relevant organizations (service providers) – (Number of people, disaggregated data) *Baseline (2018 = 29,978 (47% F, 53% M) in 18 LGUs; 2020 = 91,443 (49% F, 51% M) in 18*	SSS: Annual Reports and/or Social Protection MIS	Assumptions: -Government (central & local) continues to prioritize the provision of adequate local social service solutions/ responses to address vulnerable people and needs -The social service support received contributes to improved social inclusion

[79] The baseline will be established within June 2021

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
providers accountable for policy delivery.	*LGUs, of whom 63,630 (69.6 %) have received emergency services)* *Target: Annual increase of documented beneficiaries by 7% (50% F) in at least 30 targeted municipalities.* (b) Satisfaction with social services received by clients (incl. R&E, PWDs, gender related) (*Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied*)), *Baseline (2018 = 1.48 Overall; 1.53 PWDs; 1.37 Roma; 1.47 Egyptians;1.47 women, 1.49 Men; 2020 = 1.55 Overall; 1.51 PWDs; 1.54 Roma, 1.68 Egyptians; 1.55 Women; 1.54 Men)* *Target: 2.8 level of satisfaction of VGs in 30 targeted municipalities* (c) Number of PWDs (disaggregated data) receiving social services support *Baseline (2018 = 2,558 individuals (42% F, 58% M) in 18 targeted municipalities; 2020 = 1,901 individuals (41% F, 59% M) in 18 targeted municipalities)* *Target: Annual increase of documented beneficiaries by 2%* (d) Number of R&E (disaggregated data) receiving social services support *Baseline (2018 = 4,637 individuals (47% F, 53% M) in 18 LGUs; 2020 = 3,111 individuals (42% F, 58% M) in 18 targeted municipalities)* *Target Annual increase of documented beneficiaries by 7% (50% F)* (2) Dialogue forums for public engagement in planning and service monitoring operational (LNB target LGUs)	-LNB: Satisfaction Survey -Studies and reports of specialized CSOs -LNB: Annual Report	-Effective cooperation of civil society with local authorities/ service providers, via participatory policy consultations, to identify further needs/ local priorities Risks: -Requesting services leads to frustration or apathy, because service providers cannot satisfy expressed needs and/or access to services is limited or distant

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
	(a) Number of VG individuals (disaggregated data) and Nº. CSOs actively engaged in LGU social inclusion policy consultation events *Baseline (2018 = 2,100 individuals (50% F) and 25 CSOs engaged in participatory policy review in LNB targeted municipalities: 2020 = 8,500 individuals (50% F) and 150 CSOs)* *Target (2025 = 17,000 individuals (50% F), 200 CSOs)* (b) Number of issues raised by VGs in annual planning/budgeting. *Baseline (2018 = 35 issues raised; 2020 = 430 issues raised* *Target 2025 = 30% of issues addressed*		
Outcome 2: Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community based social services to boost social inclusion that are gender responsive and rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.	(1) Increased capacities to manage, provide and effectively plan/ budget services and responses to address needs of VGs (a) LGU has approved its Social Care Plan *Baseline (2018 = 5 (approved) of LNB target of 16 LGUs; 20 of 61 LGUs; 2020 = 28 (approved) of LNB target of 36 LGUs; 53 of 61 LGUs)* *Target (2022 = 30 of LNB target of 30 LGUs; 2025 = 61 LGUs of 61 LGUs)* (b) LGU has approved its Social Housing Plan *Baseline (2021 = 5 of LNB target of 5 LGUs; 2025 20 of LNB target of 61 LGUs)* (c) LGUs applying/ supported by Social Fund *Baseline (2019= 23 applied 14 supported; 2020 = 41 applied; 16 supported* *Target (2025 = 61 apply; 61 supported)* (d) LGUs with a functional NARU *Baseline (2018 = 0 of LNB target of 18 LGUs; 0 of 61 LGUs)*	-SSS: Annual Reports and/or -LGUs: Social Care Plans. Social Housing Plan -MHSP: data on Social Fund -SSS: Annual Reports and/or Social Protection MIS -LNB: programme implementation data	<u>Assumptions</u>: -Government (central & local) continues to prioritize the provision of adequate local social service solutions/ responses to address vulnerable people and needs -Effective cooperation of civil society with local authorities/ service providers, via participatory policy consultations, to identify further needs/ local priorities -Availability of sufficient financial means to sustain the extent of and the quality of services and their further development <u>Risks</u>: -Frequent changes in service portfolio and responsibilities of the key actors (staff rotation, staff turnover) -Authorities lack capacity to monitor the quality of services and social outcomes -Authorities fail to effectively build local ownership for social services expansion

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
	Target (2023 = 30 of LNB target of 30 LGUs; 2025 = 61 LGUs of 61 LGUs) (2) Improved LGU and service provider capacities, organization development, quality standards, and management of service delivery (LNB target of 30 LGUs) (a) Number of LGUs utilizing/operating the MIS for social care services/ social inclusion *Baseline (2018 = 0 LGUs; 2020 = 83 social workers are regularly using MIS)* *Target (2023 = 30 of LNB target of 30 LGUs)* (b) Evolution of local budget (all sources & own resources) allocated for social services/ social inclusion of VGs – funds allocated (annually) *Baseline (2018 = 1.7% (all sources); ALL* 356 *mil (own sources), 61 LGUs; 2020 = 2.1 % (all sources) ALL 416 mil (own sources) 61 LGUs)* *Target: Annual Increase by 2%*	-LNB: Review of local budget spending on social care services	
Outcome 3: National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund gender responsive social services through improved policy monitoring and evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards and empowered citizens and sustainable financing mechanisms.	(1) Legal framework for implementation of the Law on Social Care Services is complete (24 issues for sub-legal acts identified in the Law) *Baseline (2017 = 12 sub-legal issues resolved)* *Target (2023 = all 24 issues fully addressed)* (2) National institutions implement their social inclusion policy[80], regulatory framework and financing instruments, and provide regular assessment of and reporting on the policy implementation progress*)* – Annualised data: (a) Number of pieces of policy/ legislation/ regulation/ instructions/ national standards on social inclusion measures adopted	-MHSP and data on the legal framework and Decisions of the Council of Ministers -Data from MHSP, MESY, MFE (and their agencies/ services), and INSTAT -Studies and reports of specialized CSOs -Reports of multilateral agencies/ bilateral donors	Assumptions: -Government (central & local) continues to prioritize the provision of adequate local social service solutions/ responses to address vulnerable people and needs -Effective cooperation of civil society with national authorities, via participatory policy consultations, to identify further needs and priorities for reform/ funding -Availability of sufficient financial means to sustain the extent of and the quality of services and their further development Risks:

[80] Existing relevant strategies and National Actions Plans (NAPs)

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
		Baseline[81] *(2020 = 38)* *Target=53 (baseline included)* (b) Number of progress reports/ analytical reviews of policy/ instruments issued *Baseline (2020 =6)* *Targets = 13* (3) Evolution of state budget/funding for social services and social inclusion of VGs – funds allocated (annually) via key financing mechanisms *Baseline (2020: Social Fund = 200 million ALL; Social Housing = 2,629,000,000 ALL; Inclusive Education= ALL 2.2mil; Social Enterprise Fund = 537,740,000 ALL for the MTBP 2020-2022)*	-LNB: programme implementation data -MFE: Central Budget -MHSP: Budget -MESY: Budget	-Frequent changes in service portfolio and responsibilities of the key actors (staff rotation, staff turnover) -Authorities lack capacity to monitor the quality of services and social outcomes -Authorities fail to build effective societal ownership for social services expansion
Outputs (per outcome) and costs		**Output Indicators**	**Data Sources Means of Verification**	**External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)**
For outcome 1: Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate gender responsive social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing their social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision-makers and service providers accountable for policy delivery.				
Output 1.1	Marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups of all genders throughout Albania and selected municipalities are informed/ aware of their rights and entitlements in regard to accessing social care and support services, and are empowered to exercise their rights and entitlements and/or supported in their	(1) Information/ awareness raising actions (e.g. forums, fairs, open days, outreach actions) conducted by LNB-partner CSOs – (N°. of actions, and N°. of people reached, disaggregated data) *Baseline (2019 = 6,500 people reached via 230 events (35% PWD, 25% R&E, 20% youth, 20% women); 2020 = 15,437 people reached via 575 events (25% PWD, 28%R&E, 23% youth, 27% women))* *Target (2025 = 30,000 people reached (25% PWD, 25% R&E, 25% youth, 25% women))*	-LNB: programme implementation data -LNB: Annual CSOs Survey -CSOs: progress reports -LNB: programme implementation data -LNB: Annual CSOs Survey -CSOs: progress reports	<u>Assumptions</u>: -Target groups are interested in their empowerment and receptive to engage with/ participate in the progreamme -CSO partners are receptive for external support and can absorb it effectively -Awareness raising and information communication to the target groups on their rights and support service provision -Civil society (local citizens and CSOs) is interested in cooperating with local authorities in view of improving social service provision and social inclusion

[81] 6 by-laws, Law on social enterprise; 6 by-laws Law on Social Services; Law on Social Housing and 23 by-laws, Covid Protocols PwD; Law on Youth

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
	access to social services. *(LNB key target groups – R&E and PWDs – are also addressed under Output 1.2)*	(2) Engagement in participatory consultation processes for planning/ monitoring of social services organized in LNB-partner LGUs (a) Number of VG individuals/ volunteers or representatives trained on policy planning, monitoring/ appraisal (disaggregated data) *Baseline (2017 = 0 people trained; 2019 = 258 people trained (45% F, 55% M))* *Target (2025 = 1500 people trained (50% F))* (b) Number of public participatory dialogue/ consultations forums operational locally for VG individuals & CSOs to engage with LGUs *Baseline (2017 = 5 forums operational in 21 LGUs; 2019 = 6 forums in 40 LGUs)* *Target (2025 = 8 forums in 61 LGUs)*	-LNB: programme implementation data -LNB: Annual CSOs Survey -CSOs: progress reports -LNB: programme implementation data -LNB: Annual CSOs Survey -CSOs: progress reports -LNB: Annual LGUs Survey	-Local innovative measures to empower target groups in their access to services contribute to improved social inclusion Risks: -Requesting services leads to frustration or apathy, because service providers cannot satisfy expressed needs and/or access to services is limited or distant -Cooperation of civil society with local authorities and service providers is ineffective and/or inefficient, and not taken into consideration by authorities' in the assessment of policies/plans

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
Output 1.2	(LNB key target groups) R&E and PWDs are supported to access social services.	(1) Nº. of innovative models for local social service delivery enhancement supported to benefit R&E or PWDs as key target group *Baseline (2017 = 4 innovative models; 2019 = 11 innovative models; 2020 = 16 models)* *Target (2025 = 20 innovative models, baseline included)* (2) Nº. of (R&E, PWDs or other) beneficiaries targeted/ supported via innovative models for service delivery *Baseline (2017 = 120 PWDs (31% F) supported; 2019 = 436 PWDs (35% F), 1500 R&E (45% F) and 2300 Others (50% F) supported)* *Target (2025 = 3500 PWDs (50% F), 7,500 R&E (50% F), and 9,000 Others (50% F) supported)* (3) Nº. of vulnerable persons (disaggregated data) supported by LNB-partner CSOs to access social services *Baseline (2019 = 1050 individuals supported (70% M, 30% F))* *Target (2025 = 5000 individuals supported (50% F)*	-LNB: programme implementation data -LNB: Annual CSOs Survey -CSOs: progress reports -LNB: Annual LGUs Survey -ROMLAB	
Costs of Outcome 1:		1) In % of total cost: 54.4%	2) Total cost: CHF 4'030'000	
For outcome 2: Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community based social services to boost social inclusion that are gender responsive and rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.				

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
Output 2.1	Municipality, regional and local social service providers (public and non-public) are strengthened in their capacity for planning, providing and monitoring the scaling up/ extension of gender responsive social services, and the delivery of integrated social inclusion measures.	(1) Improved LGU and service provider capacities to manage, provide and effectively plan/ budget services – Nº. of partners & staff trained on applying standards/processes for needs assessment, budgeting and planning *(2017 = 150 staff trained from 2 partner LGUs/service providers; 2019 = 570 staff trained from 4 partner institutions)* *Target (2025 = 1500 staff trained from 5 partner institutions)* (2) Improved LGU and service provider capacities, organization development, quality standards, & management of service delivery – Nº. of partners & staff trained on applying standards/processes of service provision *(2017 = 899 staff trained from 3 partner LGUs/service providers; 2019 = 2560 staff trained from 4 partner institutions)* *Target (2025 = 5500 staff trained from 7 partner institutions)*	-LNB: programme implementation data -Contractor: progress reports -LNB: Annual LGUs Survey -LNB: programme implementation data -Contractor: progress reports -LNB: Annual LGUs Survey	Assumptions: -Partners are interested to develop the quality of social services, and to extend the range of services offered (types of services and/or geographical coverage) -Partners are receptive for external support and can absorb it effectively -Authorities effectively communicate with target groups on local policy/ services -Effective coordination between donors Risks: -Limited coordination or coherency between different local policy initiatives -Partners lack the capacity (staff and technical) to monitor and evaluate policy -Partners lack the financial capacity to sustain social services/ inclusion actions
Output 2.2	Knowledge management/ learning mechanisms ensure that lessons learned and 'good practice' models and tools linked to service delivery is appropriately shared between LGUs/ and service providers and 'good practice' is effectively scaled up.	(1) Nº. of peer-exchange meetings (between LGUs and/or service providers) & participants *Baseline (2017 = 0 peer-exchange meetings; 2019 = 8 peer-exchange meetings, with 75 participants, from 14 municipalities organizations)* *Target (2025 = 23 peer-exchange meetings, for 300 participants, from 30 municipalities)* (2) Nº. of partnerships of LGUs & universities *Baseline (2019 = 0 partnerships)* *Target (2025 = 10 partnerships in the field of social policy/services)* (3) Nº. of good practices in service provision that are scaled up and Nº. partners that do so	-LNB: programme implementation data -Contractor: progress reports -LNB: Annual LGUs Survey	Assumptions: -Partners are receptive to exchange knowledge and to learn good practices -Good practices exist that can be scaled up (by other partners, regional/ national) -LGUs and Universities cooperate to build local knowledge/ policy analysis Risks: -Partners lack the financial capacity to sustain knowledge learning mechanisms

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
		Baseline (2017 = 4 good practices scaled up in 4 LGUs; 2019 = 8 good practices scaled up by 25 partner organizations (LGUs/ providers)) *Target (2025 = 12 good practices scaled up by 40 LGUs partner organizations)*		
Costs of Outcome 2:		1) In % of total cost: 23.2%	2) Total cost: CHF 1'715'000	
For outcome 3: National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund gender responsive social services through improved policy monitoring and evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards and empowered citizens and sustainable financing mechanisms.				
Output 3.1	Ministries/ Agencies are supported in their further development of and in their implementation of gender responsive policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks, operational tools, funding mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation (and reporting) systems to guide evidence-based policy and strategic decision-making.	(1) Number of policy, legal, operational tools, funding mechanisms, and analytical reports produced to support the development, implementation, monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies *Baseline (2017 = 4 products; 2020 = 43 products)* *Target (2025 = 15 new products)* (2) Number of social inclusion strategies/ NAPs that operate standardized data collection systems for monitoring/ reporting on social inclusion policies and strategies including official statistics *Baseline (2017 = 0 strategies/ NAPs; 2019 =4 strategies/ NAPs)* *Target (2025 = All strategies/ NAPs)*	-Data from MHSP, MESY, MFE (and their agencies/ services), and INSTAT -Studies and reports of specialized CSOs -Reports of multilateral agencies/ bilateral donors -Contractor: progress reports -LNB: programme implementation data	Assumptions: -Government priorities and strategic orientations are stable -Authorities are receptive for external support and can absorb it effectively -Authorities effectively communicate the policy reforms to local partners & society -Effective coordination between donors Risks: -Delays in the adoption of secondary legislation/ regulation/ service standards -Limited coordination or coherency between different policy initiatives -Ministries lack the capacity (staff and technical) to monitor and evaluate policy
Output 3.2	Further development of the educational/ continuing education, training-provision and qualifications system, to ensure workforce professionalization is supported.	(1) Number of civil servants trained in the development, implementation, monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies in partnership with ASPA and other partner training institutions *Baseline (2017 = 0 staff trained; 2019 = 201 staff trained)* *Target (2025 = 500 staff trained)*	-LNB: programme implementation data -ASPA -ASCAP -Contractor: progress reports	Assumptions: -Government priorities and strategic orientations are stable -Partners are receptive for external support and can absorb it effectively Risks: -Limited cooperation between partners

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
		(2) Number of service providers (state and public service institutions) supported to further develop the continuing education, training-provision and qualifications systems *Baseline (2017 = 0 service provider partners; 2019 = 3 service provider partners)* *Target (2025 = 7 service provider partners)* (3) Number of professional standards, procedural/ operational systems, university training courses and curricula adapted or developed for operation of the occupational standards, education and certification of qualifications process/ system *Baseline (2017 = 0 products; 2020 = 2 products)* *Target (2025 = 7 products)* (4) Number of social care workers trained on the adapted/ new course curricula/ offer: pre-service and in-service *Baseline (2017 0 staff trained; 2020 = 600 student of social work trained)* *Target (2025 = 2000 students/staff trained)*	-LNB: programme implementation data -Data from MHSP, MESY (and their agencies/ services) -Professional 'Orders' -Universities -Studies and reports of specialized CSOs -Reports of multilateral agencies/ bilateral donors -Contractor: progress reports -LNB: programme implementation data	
Costs of Outcome 3:		1) In % of total cost 22.4 %	2) Total cost:	CHF 1'662'407
Activities (per output)				
List of activities for output 1.1: Marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups of all genders throughout Albania and selected municipalities are informed/aware of their rights and entitlements in regard to accessing social care and support services, and are empowered to exercise their rights and entitlements and/or supported in their access to social services.				
1.1.1 Their rights and the services they are entitled to are communicated to marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups.				
1.1.2 Existing civil society organizations supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups are supported in their institutional and professional advocacy capacities and to participate actively in planning and budgeting and in the monitoring of the implementation of local and national social inclusion policies and strategies.				

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
List of activities for output 1.2: (LNB key target groups) R&E and PWDs are supported to access social services.			
1.2.1 Models of tested inclusive services provision implemented at local level.			
1.2.2 Support to selected municipalities for establishment of comprehensive social services models for service delivery.			
1.2.3 Projects in line with the grant scheme's regulations are supported for new innovative services at local level.			
1.2.4 Local mechanisms are strengthened and scaled up in selected municipalities (and deconcentrated offices of social service, health, education, employment, and housing) for vulnerable and marginalized persons' and groups' empowerment via engagement in the operational delivery and out-reach of local and national social services, policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.			
List of activities for output 2.1: Municipality, regional and local social service providers (public and non-public) are strengthened in their capacity for planning, providing and monitoring the scaling up/ extension of gender responsive social services, and the delivery of integrated social inclusion measures.			
2.1.1 The structures and mechanisms of social service provision at municipal level are supported in their organizational and operational development.			
2.1.2 The staff of municipal social service providers are supported through capacity development.			
List of activities for output 2.2: Knowledge management/ learning mechanisms ensure that lessons learned and 'good practice' models and tools linked to service delivery is appropriately shared between LGUs/ and service providers and 'good practice' is effectively scaled up.			
2.2.1 Mechanisms are established and operational for knowledge learning/ sharing among municipalities in regard to the management of or the provision of social services in Albania, and good practices identified through research made available to all 61 municipalities in appropriate form (brochure, internet, intra-municipal exchange visits, intra-municipal peer review groups, study tours).			
2.2.2 Periodic presentations are provided (by University partners, professional associations), for knowledge learning by municipalities in regard to emerging academic research and analysis in the field of social work/ social services, and in regard to the development of the national policy framework.			
List of activities for output 3.1: Ministries/ Agencies supported in the further development of and implementation of gender responsive policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks, operational tools, funding mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation (and reporting) systems to guide evidence-based policy and strategic decision-making.			
3.1.1 MHSP, MESY, MFE, and SSS supported in the development of and in implementing their social inclusion legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks.			
3.1.2 MHSP supported in the further development of the Social Fund to promote/ expand/ scale up social care services targeted to vulnerable groups			
3.1.3 MHSP, MESY, MFE, SSS, and INSTAT supported in the development of and in implementing social inclusion policy and strategy monitoring mechanisms, and in the analysis of results and progress, so as to provide evidence-based input for policy and strategic decision-making purposes.			
3.1.4 MHSP (and MFE), in cooperation with SSS and SILSS, supported in the development of and in implementing social service quality inspection and monitoring systems, standards, regulation and tools, and the process of licensing and accrediting public and non-public service delivery institutions.			
List of activities for output 3.2: Further development of the educational/ continuing education, training-provision and qualifications system, to ensure workforce professionalization is supported.			
3.2.1 Professional associations (Orders), Universities (Social Work; Education), and ASCAP supported in the development of the continuing education/ qualification system, training curricula and standards, and training capacity in line with the requirements for workforce professionalization.			
3.2.2 National capacities are built, in partnership with ASPA and other training partners, for the development, implementation, and monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies.			

Annex B Detailed Budget

Annex B1: Detailed Budget per Intervention (**Outcome**; *Output*; Activity)

Description	Total SDC Contribution Budget (CHF)
1) Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing their social inclusion/ minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision-makers/ service providers accountable for policy delivery.	
1.1) Marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and selected municipalities are informed/aware of their rights and entitlements in regard to accessing social care and support services, and are empowered to exercise their rights and entitlements and/or supported in their access to social services.	*1,150,000*
1.1.1) Their rights and the services they are entitled to are communicated to marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups.	430,000
1.1.2) Existing civil society organizations supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups are supported in their institutional and professional advocacy capacities and to participate actively in planning and budgeting and in the monitoring of the implementation of local and national social inclusion policies and strategies.	720,000
1.2) (LNB key target groups) R&E and PWDs are supported to access social services.	*2,880,000*
1.2.1) Models of tested inclusive services provision implemented at local level.	700,000
1.2.2) Support to selected municipalities for establishment of inovative social services delivery.	1,500,000
1.2.3) Projects are supported for new innovative services at local level.	300,000
1.2.4) Local mechanisms are strengthened and scaled up in selected municipalities (and deconcentrated offices of social service, health, education, employment, and housing) for vulnerable and marginalized persons' and groups' empowerment via engagement in the operational delivery and out-reach of local and national social services, policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.	380,000
Subtotal Outcome 1	**4,030,000**
2) Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community based social services to boost social inclusion that are rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.	
2.1) Municipality, regional and local social service providers (public and non-public) are strengthened in their capacity for planning, providing and monitoring the scaling up/ extension of social services, and the delivery of integrated social inclusion measures.	*1,315,000*
2.1.1) The structures and mechanisms of social service provision at municipal level are supported in their organizational development.	590,000
2.1.2) The staff of municipal social service providers are supported through capacity development.	725,000
2.2) Knowledge management/ learning mechanisms ensure that lessons learned and 'good practice' models and tools linked to service delivery is appropriately shared between LGUs/ and service providers and 'good practice' is effectively scaled up.	*400,000*
2.2.1) Mechanisms are established and operational for knowledge learning/ sharing among municipalities in regard to the management of or the provision of social services in Albania, and good practices identified through research made available to all 61 municipalities in appropriate form (brochure, internet, intra-municipal exchange visits, intra-municipal peer review groups, study tours).	300,000
2.2.2) Periodic presentations are provided (by University partners, professional associations), for knowledge learning by municipalities in regard to emerging academic research and analysis in the field of social work/ social services, and in regard to development of the national policy framework.	100,000
Subtotal Outcome 2	**1,715,000**
3) National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved policy monitoring and evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards and empowered citizens.	
3.1) Ministries/ Agencies supported in the further development of and implementation of policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks, funding mechanisms, monitoring/evaluation (and reporting) systems to guide evidence-based policy and strategic decision-making.	*1,373,407*
3.1.1) MHSP, MESY, MFE, and SSS supported in the development of and in implementing their social inclusion legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks.	400,000
3.1.2) MHSP supported in the further development of the Social Fund to promote/ expand/ scale up social care services targeted to vulnerable groups.	540,000
3.1.3) MHSP, MESY, MFE, SSS, and INSTAT supported in the development of and in implementing social inclusion policy and strategy monitoring mechanisms, and in the analysis of results and progress, so as to provide evidence-based input for policy and strategic decision-making purposes.	293,407
3.1.4) MHSP (and MFE), in cooperation with SSS and SILSS, supported in the development of and in implementing social service quality inspection and monitoring systems, standards, regulation and tools, and the process of licensing and accrediting public and non-public service delivery institutions.	140,000
3.2) Further development of the educational/ continuing education, training-provision and qualifications system, to ensure workforce professionalization is supported.	*289,000*
3.2.1) Professional associations (Orders), Universities (Social Work; Education), and ASCAP supported in the development of the continuing education/ qualification system, training curricula and standards, and training capacity in line with the requirements for workforce professionalization.	189,000
3.2.2) National capacities are built, in partnership with ASPA and other training partners, for the development, implementation, and monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies.	100,000
Subtotal Outcome 3	**1,662,407**
Total of the three outcomes	**7,407,407**
Administrative Agent fee (1%)	*74,074*
Management fee (7%)	*518,518*
Grand Total	**8,000,000**

Annex B2: **Detailed Budget per Year**

Description	Total SDC Contribution Budget (CHF)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1) Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing their social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision-makers and service providers accountable for policy delivery.					
1.1) Marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and selected municipalities are informed/aware of their rights and entitlements in regard to accessing social care and support services, and are empowered to exercise their rights and entitlements and/or supported in their access to social services.	1,150,000	300,000	300,000	250,000	250,000
1.2) (LNB key target groups) R&E and PWDs are supported to access social services.	2,880,000	720,000	720,000	720,000	720,000
Subtotal Outcome 1	**4,030,000**	**1,020,000**	**1,020,000**	**970,000**	**970,000**
2) Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community based social services to boost social inclusion that are rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.					
2.1) Municipality, regional and local social service providers (public and non-public) are strengthened in their capacity for planning, providing and monitoring the scaling up/ extension of social services, and the delivery of integrated social inclusion measures.	1,315,000	350,000	315,000	300,000	313,375
2.2) Knowledge management/ learning mechanisms ensure that lessons learned and 'good practice' models and tools linked to service delivery is appropriately shared between LGUs/ and service providers and 'good practice' is effectively scaled up.	400,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Subtotal Outcome 2	**1,715,000**	**450,000**	**415,000**	**400,000**	**413,375**
3) National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved policy monitoring and evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards and empowered citizens.					
3.1) Ministries/ Agencies supported in the further development of and implementation of policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks, operational tools, funding mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation (and reporting) systems to guide evidence-based policy and strategic decision-making.	1,373,407	355,000	355,000	345,000	318,407
3.2) Further development of the educational/ continuing education, training-provision and qualifications system, to ensure workforce professionalization is supported.	289,000	75,000	75,000	70,000	69,000
Subtotal Outcome 3	**1,662,407**	**430,000**	**430,000**	**415,000**	**387,407**
Total of the three outcomes	**7,407,407**	**1,900,000**	**1,900,000**	**1,850,000**	**1,757,407**
Administrative Agent fee (1%)	*74,074*	*19,000*	*19,000*	*18,500*	*17,574*
Management fee (7%)	*518,518*	*133,000*	*133,000*	*129,500*	*123,018*
Grand Total	**8,000,000**	**2,052,000**	**2,052,000**	**1,998,000**	**1,898,000**

Annex B3: **Detailed Budget per Agency**

Description	Total SDC Contribution Budget (CHF)	UNDP	UNICEF	UNW	UNFPA	NPF
1) Vulnerable population requests & receives adequate social services from local authorities aimed at increasing their social inclusion/ minimizing vulnerability.						
1.1) Marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and selected municipalities are informed/aware of their rights and entitlements in regard to accessing social care and support services, and are empowered to exercise their rights and entitlements and/or supported in their access to social services.	1,150,000	450,000	230,000	350,000	120,000	
1.1.1) Their rights and the services they are entitled to are communicated to marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups.	382,250	172,250	50,000	100,000	60,000	
1.1.2) Existing civil society organizations supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups are supported in their institutional and professional advocacy capacities and to participate actively in planning and budgeting and in the monitoring of the implementation of local and national social inclusion policies and strategies.	767,750	277,750	180,000	250,000	60,000	
1.2) (LNB key target groups) R&E and PWDs are supported to access social services.	2,880,000	1,930,000	100,000	60,000	90,000	700,000
1.2.1) Models of tested inclusive services provision implemented at local level.	700,000					700,000
1.2.2) Support to selected municipalities for establishment of inovative social services delivery.	1,540,000	1,500,000			40000	
1.2.3) Projects are supported for new innovative services at local level.	300,000	300,000				
1.2.4) Local mechanisms are strengthened and scaled up in selected municipalities (and deconcentrated offices of social service, health, education, employment, and housing) for vulnerable and marginalized persons' and groups' empowerment via engagement in the operational delivery and out-reach of local and national social services, policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.	340,000	130,000	100,000	60,000	50,000	
Subtotal Outcome 1	**4,030,000**	**2,380,000**	**330,000**	**410,000**	**210,000**	**700,000**
2) Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage the process for scaling up the delivery of social services and developing services to boost social inclusion.						
2.1) Municipality, regional and local social service providers (public and non-public) are strengthened in their capacity for planning, providing and monitoring the scaling up/ extension of social services, and the delivery of integrated social inclusion measures.	1,315,000	377,000	550,000	93,000	95,000	200,000
2.1.1) The structures and mechanisms of social service provision at municipal level are supported in their organizational development.	530,000	220,000	250,000		60,000	
2.1.2) The staff of municipal social service providers are supported through capacity development.	785,000	157,000	300,000	93,000	35,000	200,000
2.2) Knowledge management/ learning mechanisms ensure that lessons learned and 'good practice' models and tools linked to service delivery is appropriately shared between LGUs/ and service providers and 'good practice' is effectively scaled up.	400,000	400,000				
2.2.1) Mechanisms are established and operational for knowledge learning/ sharing among municipalities in regard to the management of or the provision of social services in Albania, and good practices identified through research made available to all 61 municipalities in appropriate form (brochure, internet, intra-municipal exchange visits, intra-municipal peer review groups, study tours).	300,000	300,000				
2.2.2) Periodic presentations are provided (by University partners, professional associations), for knowledge learning by municipalities in regard to emerging academic research and analysis in the field of social work/ social services, and in regard to development of the national policy framework.	100,000	100,000				
Subtotal Outcome 2	**1,715,000**	**777,000**	**550,000**	**93,000**	**95,000**	**200,000**
3) National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved policy M&E systems, updated quality professional standards and empowered citizens.						
3.1) Ministries/ Agencies supported in the further development/ implementation of policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks, operational tools, funding mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation (reporting) systems to guide evidence-based policy/ strategic decision-making.	1,373,407	731,629	369,889	197,000	74,889	
3.1.1) MHSP, MESY, MFE, and SSS supported in the development of and in implementing their social inclusion legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks.	376,005	145,505	150,000	50,500	30,000	
3.1.2) MHSP supported in the further development of the Social Fund to promote/ expand/ scale up social care services targeted to vulnerable groups.	549,194	445,194	50,000	54,000		
3.1.3) MHSP, MESY, MFE, SSS, and INSTAT supported in the development of and in implementing social inclusion policy and strategy monitoring mechanisms, and in the analysis of results and progress, so as to provide evidence-based input for policy and strategic decision-making purposes.	308,208	80,930	89,889	92,500	44,889	
3.1.4) MHSP (and MFE), in cooperation with SSS and SILSS, supported in the development of and in implementing social service quality inspection and monitoring systems, standards, regulation and tools, and the process of licensing and accrediting public and non-public service delivery institutions.	140,000	60,000	80,000			
3.2) Further development of the educational/ continuing education, training-provision and qualifications system, to ensure workforce professionalization is supported.	289,000	119,500	139,000	30,500		
3.2.1) Professional associations (Orders), Universities, ASCAP supported in development of the continuing education/ qualification system, training curricula and standards, and training capacity in line with the requirements for workforce professionalization.	189,000	59,500	99,000	30,500		
3.2.2) National capacities are built, in partnership with ASPA and other training partners, for the development, implementation, and monitoring of social inclusion policies/strategies.	100,000	60,000	40,000			
Subtotal Outcome 3	**1,662,407**	**851,129**	**508,889**	**227,500**	**74,889**	
Total of the three outcomes	**7,407,407**	**4,008,129**	**1,388,889**	**730,500**	**379,889**	**900,000**
Administrative Agent fee (1%)	*74,074*	*40,081*	*13,889*	*7,305*	*3,799*	*9,000*
Management fee (7%)	*518,518*	*280,569*	*97,222*	*51,135*	*26,592*	*63,000*
Grand Total	**8,000,000**	**4,328,779**	**1,500,000**	**788,940**	**410,280**	**972,000**

Annex C Terms of Reference of Key Programme Staff and Expertise[82]

Post Title: Programme Coordinator

Scope of the assignment

The Programme Coordinator will be recruited by UNDP as the leading agency of the JP and will be directly responsible for the coordination, management, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the overall project implemented by all participating UN agencies. The Programme coordinator will also lead the team of experts involved in the implementation of UNDP share of activities. The main duties and responsibilities of the Programme Coordinator include the following:

1. **Coordination and liaising among UN agencies and implementing partners for the overall implementation of the UN JP.**
   - Provide strategic recommendations to the Project Steering Committee PSC for the overall coordination of programme activities;
   - Responsible for calling the Programme Technical Committee and for documenting the proceedings of the meetings;
   - Ensure that project activities are implemented in full accordance with the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) and the decisions of the PSC;
   - Respond to PSC directions for the implementation of programme activities;
   - Responsible for on-going communication between UN agencies and implementing partners;
   - Identify and present programme risks, concerns and mitigation recommendations to the PSC for its consideration;
   - Ensure quality and timely documentation of program implementation, progress and experiences, as well as regular financial and narrative reporting to PSC, donor as well as ensure regular reporting at output and outcome level.
   - Under the guidance of PoCSD outcome and output chairs ensure harmonization of project activities with other participating agencies contributing in output A.1 working group
   - Support monitoring and evaluation activities of the project and contribute to monitoring of outcome A and output A.1 indicators.
   - Ensure the coordination of the different components of the project in order to maximize efficiency and funds' use for results;
   - Coordinate the work and identify synergies whenever possible at with other donor or GoA funded interventions in order to increase the impact generated by the project;

2. **Manage implementation of UNDP share of activities under LBN project**
   - Guide the overall organization and execution of project activities as specified in the JP implementation plan;
   - Facilitate the implementation of activities of the third outcome of the programme;
   - Manage UNDP project team, provide technical guidance and resources to contracted consultants and/or organizations, as well as monitor their activities with a view to assure quality deliverables;

[82] Project Coordinator, Monitoring and NGO Liaison officer and Programme and Public Information assistant will be hired by UNDP as leading organization supporting the coordination, implementation, monitoring and public information of the whole Joint Programme. Other project staff will be hired by the participating agencies to serve implementation of the respective activities.

- Ensure the timely mobilization and utilization of project personnel, subcontracts, training and equipment inputs;
- Assume responsibility and accountability for project funds and their efficient delivery, as are the work plans and available budgets.
- Oversee all operational matters of implementation including financial management, administration and procurement and ensure that activities undertaken are adhered to UNDP rules and regulations at all times;
- Be responsible for regular updates in the project results and resources framework under his/her responsibility and related reporting tools by complying to UNDP rules and regulation.
- Travel around the county to coordinate, attend and monitor programme activities as deemed appropriate;

Competencies and Critical Success Factors

Core Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability
- Treats all people fairly without favouritism

Functional Competencies:

- Knowledge and expertise in Social Inclusion;
- Leadership, integrity, advocacy, proactive, diplomatic, open-minded, public speaking and training skills
- Technical knowledge in the designing, monitoring and evaluation of social inclusion policies and programmes.
- Analytical skills, initiative, sound judgment, results-oriented and efficiency in a multi-tasking environment
- Good inter-personal and teamwork skills, networking attitude, ability to work in multi-cultural environment
- Political and cultural sensitivity and commitment to UNDP's development objectives in the country.

Recruitment Qualifications

- Advanced postgraduate Degree in social science, human rights, law, or closely related field of studies;
- At least 10 years of professional management and coordination experience of programmes/projects in multi-stakeholder environment in the field of human rights and social development;
- Substantive technical knowledge in the field of social inclusion including the legal and institutional frameworks, knowledge and understanding of the principles of human rights approaches, etc.
- Demonstrated leadership abilities and organizational capacity including experience of managing international and local experts;
- Prior professional experience in social inclusion related programmes is desirable;
- Previous experience/familiarity with UNDP or other UN agencies is desirable;
- Excellent communication and report-writing skills in English and Albanian

Post Title:	Monitoring and NGO Liaison officer
Educational Background:	Master's degree in Development Studies or related field (i.e., business, economics, and public policy) is required.
Work Experience:	At least 7 years of professional management and coordination experience in complex, multi-stakeholder environment

Scope of the assignment

The Monitoring and NGO Liaison officer will work under the direct supervision of the Project Coordinator to perform the tasks described below.

1. **Conduct internal monitoring in accordance with the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) and project's main instruments for monitoring.**

- Ensure evidence and Develops Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and oversees its implementation and periodic revision;
- Develop, implement, and monitor the tools/systems for gathering, reporting, and analysing performance data for impact and sustainability of project implementation.
- Update regularly the M&E framework for all project components implemented by all participating agencies;
- Support and supervise collection and analysis of data for project M&E in accordance with timeframes set in the project work-plan;
- Assist the Project Coordinator to analyse the institutional, social and economic conditions under which the project is being implemented to allow for seizing opportunities and for reacting to newly emerging risks, for adapting the policy dialogue led with authorities, etc.
- Assist the Project Coordinator for the regular monitoring of and reporting on achievements based on evidence provided by monitoring data, mainly the indicators defined in the logical framework;
- Apply and promote the use of participatory documentation techniques that involve project participants and staff in the process;
- Collaborate closely with UN monitoring officer and contribute to the PoCSD monitoring at output and outcome level.
- Flag any (potential) risks, bottlenecks, challenges
- Draft and prepare progress and ad-hoc reports as and when required, e.g. draft background papers, analysis, sections of reports and studies, inputs to publications, etc.;
- Assist field level monitoring of activity of implementing partners
- Maintain regular communication with project beneficiaries and field level
- Keep database of project activity with beneficiary
- Quarterly, and annual work plans for the field level project activities
- Prepare and submit case studies on various surveys, good practices, and field programs.
- Keep regular field activity report and review, verify and reconcile variety of data and reports

2. **Participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the assigned implementing partner's projects**

- Monitor and analyse implementing partner's project development and implementation;
- Review relevant documents and reports (proposal, work project, project budget, etc.);
- Identify problems and issues to be addressed and proposes corrective actions;
- Liaise with other relevant parties; identify and track follow-up actions.
- Coordinate activities related to budget and funding (project preparation and submissions, progress reports, financial statements, etc.);

Competencies and Critical Success Factors

Core Competencies

- Innovation Ability to make new and useful ideas work
- Leadership Ability to persuade others to follow
- People Management Ability to improve performance and satisfaction
- Communication Ability to listen, adapt, persuade and transform
- Delivery Ability to get things done

Functional Competencies

- Minimum 7 years' of progressively responsible, professional-level experience related to program assessment, monitoring, and evaluation including designing monitoring systems, indicators, developing AME plans, data quality assessments, survey techniques, qualitative investigation, and statistical analysis.
- Project management skills
- Familiarity with the administrative, social and economic context of the country
- Analytical, communication and presentation skills
- Strong report writing and editing in English
- In-depth knowledge on development issues
- Attitude and approach Positive, constructive attitude and consistently approaches work with energy
- Computer proficiency MS Office

Recruitment Qualifications

- Master's degree in Development Studies or related field (i.e., management, economics, and public policy) is required.
- A minimum of seven (7) years' experience in development cooperation, and working on related projects is required.
- Hands on experience of monitoring and evaluation methodologies commonly used in development and humanitarian projects, and project design steps and process is an advantage.
- Fluency in English is required.

Post Title:	Programme and Public and Information Assistant
Educational Background:	University Degree in communication, journalism, social science, human rights, development studies or other related field is required
Work Experience:	At least 5 years of relevant professional work experience in development projects with significant involvement in the field of communication and / or public affairs.

Scope of the assignment

Programme and Public Information Assistant will be hired by UNDP as leading organization of the LNB project to support implementation of public information activities for all participating UN organizations. Working under the direct supervision of the LNB Project Coordinator, and in close working coordination with UN CO Communications Team, the incumbent is expected to perform the following tasks:

- Support Project Coordinator and liaise regularly with project team on project activities to increase outreach and ensure visibility of project results
- Develop the LNB project communications and visibility plan and ensure its implementation by all participating UN agencies,
- Collect and disseminate information related to thematic area, including inputs for donor reports and provides information when requested from various sources.
- Ensure effective dissemination of and access to information on project activities and results by identifying and synthesizing best practices and lessons learned through the implementation process in cooperation with project team.
- Coordinate with UN communication team to post information on UN CO website in both versions, English and Albanian as well as specific UN agencies websites as relevant.
- Use social media to spread information and awareness about the project and its impact on the ground.
- Maintain a press clippings file containing stories from the project activities.
- Maintain a follow-up system to ensure that project work plans in terms of public relations/information/advocacy and awareness activities are adhered to, inform direct supervisor of slippage.
- Organize press trips to project sites to keep media informed about project activities and impact.
- Create electronic folders on project documents, correspondence, reports and other materials ensuring safekeeping of all materials by following the established filing and archiving standards and procedures for the office.

Competencies

<u>Core Competencies:</u>

- Demonstrate corporate knowledge and sound judgment;
- Demonstrate and safeguard ethics and highest standards of integrity, discretion and loyalty.
- Sensitivity to cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age differences.
- Act as a team player while also taking individual initiative to complete outlined tasks;
- Sharing knowledge - across the programme in particular and the organization in general -through supporting the building of a culture of knowledge sharing and learning;

Functional Competencies:

- Excellent communication skills (written, spoken, composing, presentation) and ability to share expertise for capacity building;
- Excellent interpersonal skills including the ability to pose questions, listen, evaluate and capture opinions, suggestions and comments, both orally and in writing, in a clear and persuasive style tailored to match different stakeholders.
- Political and cultural sensitivity and commitment to UNDP's development objectives in the country;
- In-depth practical knowledge of inter-disciplinary development issues;
- Seeks and applies knowledge, information, and best practices from within and outside of UN;
- Ability to manage competing demands and meet deadlines;
- Proven networking, team-building, organizational and communication skills.

Required Skills and Experience

Education

- University Degree in communication, journalism, social science, human rights, development studies or equivalent.

Experience

- At least 5 years of relevant professional work experience, in development projects targeting vulnerable populations, with significant involvement in the field of communication and / or public affairs.
- Demonstrable experience in i) strategic communications, ii) content generation (photography, video shooting and editing, infographics and data visualization), iii) online engagement (website design, development and management, social media engagement, and media relations), and iv) media and communications training;
- Experience in leading development and implementation of communications strategies for UN agencies is an advantage;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English.

Language:

- Fluency in English and Albanian is required

Annex D List of Abbreviations

AA	Administrative Agent
ALL	Albanian Lek
APR	Annual Programme Report
AROPE	At risk of poverty or exclusion
ASCAP	Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CHF	Swiss Franc
COFOG	Classification of the Functions of Government
COVID	Coronavirus disease
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DaO	"Delivering as One" mechanism
ESPN	European Social Policy Network
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (German International Cooperation Agency)
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HDI	Human Development Index
IDU	Injecting drug users
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics
IPA	(EU) Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JP	Joint Programme
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning
LGU	Local Government Unit
LNB/ LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MESY	Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth
MFE	Ministry of Finance and Economics

MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MIS	Management Information System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSM	Men who have sex with men
MTR	Mid Term Review
NAP	National Action Plan
NARU	Need Assessment Referral Unit
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPF	Ndihmë për fëmijët (Help for Children Foundation)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PoCSD	Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
R+E	Roma and Egyptians
SC	Steering Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SILC	Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
SILSS	State Inspectorate of Labour and Social Services
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SSS	State Social Services
TC	Technical Committee
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VG	Vulnerable Groups of persons

Annex E Overview of Marginalized/ Vulnerable Groups of persons in Albania

Table: Main categories of people 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion' in Albania

Group of people at risk	Key contributory factors/ issues
Marginalized/ vulnerable women (and girls)	Groups at greater risk of vulnerability include: women heads of households, women in rural areas, women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, older women, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, women in detention, and refugee and asylum-seeking women. Evidence shows that women from marginalized groups (notably PWDs, R&E, and LGBTIQ) face additional forms of discrimination and violence, which intersects with their specific situation and societal attitudes towards them and thereby compounds existing gender inequalities that they face.
	As an overall group of persons, women experience lower rates of labour-force participation and of employment compared to men. There is also a higher concentration of women, compared to men, in the informal labour sector, as well as in undertaking of unpaid labour/ care responsibilities. In this respect, women have fewer social protection rights/ contributions, as well as more limited extent of/ access to independent financial means.
	Women experience inequalities in terms of certain 'traditional' societal assumptions regarding gender roles, and the family/ domestic sphere. This is evident, for women as an overall group of persons, in terms of the disparities, compared to men, in their undertaking of unpaid labour/ care. More specifically, women/girls in rural areas, and from the R&E communities experience greater inequality due to societal assumptions/ mentalities on gender roles and family/ domestic issues, which can limit their capacity for self-agency and empowerment, and is based on a level of dependency that exists for women/girls on male family counterparts. This ultimately can constrain women's access to relevant services and/or job opportunities, as well as their capacity to engage in decision-making.
	Women/girls experience significant risk in terms of being victims of violence (domestic and/or gender-based), sexual abuse or harassment. The 2019 VAWG Survey by INSTAT, UNDP, and UNWOMEN found that 1 in 3 women or 36.6% of women aged 18-74 currently experienced one or more of the five forms of violence (intimate partner violence, dating violence, non-partner violence, sexual harassment, and/or stalking), while 1 in 2 or 52.9% have experienced the same in their lifetimes. Evidence shows that women from marginalized groups face additional forms of discrimination and violence, which intersects with their specific situation and societal attitudes towards them. Although experiencing violence, women and girls from disabled, R&E, and LGBTIQ communities have traditionally not been paid sufficient attention in terms of inclusion in the legal and political framework, and its implementation towards the provision of necessary services in compliance with their specific needs.
	A 2016 study by FAO found that only 19% of women from rural areas received maternity leave compared to 59% of their urban counterparts – largely due to the high levels of informal employment. It is also possible that women's limited access to transportation in rural areas could have direct implications for women's access to health and social services, making them dependent on male counterparts and putting them further at risk of marginalization. In addition to healthcare, there are also disparities in accessing other basic services such as education,

Group of people at risk	Key contributory factors/ issues
	employment, and participation in decision-making between women who live in rural and remote areas compared with their urban counterparts.
	Groups of women that commonly face stigma and discrimination in society and service access include: PWDs, the R&E, and LGBTIQ communities.
Children, adolescents	Groups at greater risk of vulnerability include: children from low-income and single parent households, children with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian children, children at risk of exploitation or violence, children identifying as LGBTIQ, children in rural areas, and children in detention.
	Children (0-17 years old) are at greater risk of poverty than any other age group (29.6% of children overall: 28.7% of boys, 30.6% of girls). In 2018, children represented 22% of the entire population.
	While the Albanian Demography and Health Survey 2017-2018 indicates that some progress has been achieved in terms of health outcomes for young children, e.g. the prevalence of stunting has decreased from 19% in 2008 to 11% in 2018, levels of breastfeeding remain low. One in four (25%) children of age 6-49 months were found to be anaemic. Mostly affected are children belonging to households of the low wealth quintile.
	School attendance rates are generally strong (with no significant variation by gender, location or wealth), although with weaker enrolment rates for pre-primary year and for upper-secondary level. While some progress has been achieved, the main groups still facing challenges in attending mainstream schooling are children with disabilities and R&E children.
	Available body of evidence confirm that children face a range of types of violence and exploitation at home, at school, and in the community. The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children Survey 2017-2018 indicates that one in four adolescents of age 11, 13, 15 years old reported the experience of physical abuse once or twice in their lifetime, whereas 6% had experienced physical abuse many times during their life span. The 2018 UNICEF survey on children's experiences of internet use reveal that 3 out of 10 children have been exposed to real violence content; one in ten children report at least one unwanted sexual experience through the internet; one in four children reported they had at least one contact online with someone whom they had never met face-to-face before. While clear progress has been achieved in terms of the fight against hazardous child labour, risks remain that children from lower income households may be expected/ obligated to contribute (financially or as in-kind labour) to the family income and well-being. ILO data (ILOSTAT) indicates that 3.3% of children in Albania are child labourers.
	The number of children in institutional care is decreasing, although slowly. In 2019, 424 children (192 with disabilities) were registered in public residential care service (residential homes and development centres). The number separated from their families due to poverty is relatively high. Meanwhile, there are anecdotal evidence in respect to incidents of abuse and neglect of children living in residential care institutions.
Youth	In 2011, youth (ages 15-29) represented 25% of the entire population.
	Health, education, social protection and justice services for children and young people continue to suffer from a lack of human, financial and technical capacities as well as the limited outreach and coverage, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable young people such as PWDs, the R&E, and LGBTIQ communities, and those living in rural areas.

Group of people at risk	Key contributory factors/ issues
	While the youth unemployment rate has decreased over the recent period, to a level of 21.5% in 2019, the issue of youth employment remains a key element conducive to the future occupational and individual development of young people. Further efforts are required to raise the quality of and the relevance of education, VET and skills development training to ensure a greater match between qualifications/ skills and labour-market demand. Reflective of the lack of suitably attractive job opportunities/ perspective in Albania, young adults continue to be attracted by the possibility of emigration and/or shorter-term or seasonal job opportunities in the region. There are clear risks that certain youth are vulnerable to exploitation, most notably in relation to scam job opportunities, and may be potential victims of human trafficking, or to a life in servitude in the informal labour sector.
	While some progress has been achieved in promoting youth engagement in public policy participatory decision-making mechanisms, and via volunteerism, young people continue to exhibit distrust and disinterest in the political process, demonstrating a general apathy and indifference. Yet they remain active in elections, suggesting that they see the voting process as the main instrument with which to impact the political process.
Older persons	While older persons (65+ years old) are at lower risk of economic poverty than any other age group, there is a clear gender divergence in terms of being 'at risk of poverty': 14.0% overall; 12.5% of men, 15.4% of women.
	In 2011, older persons represented 11% of the entire population. Due to demographic changes (increasing life expectancy, reduced fertility, the continuing process of emigration of young adults), the population share of older persons in Albania is projected to reach 33% by 2031. This has clear implications for the future framing of and delivery of social protection, social care services, and social inclusion policy. It will require a closer linkage/ synergy between health care and social care services, effective models for quality, cost-efficient service delivery, as well as mechanisms for participatory policy engagement and communication.
	Older persons are of significantly higher risk to being disabled than the working-age adult population: 23% of the elderly, 3% of adults under 65.
	Older persons (primarily women) play a vital role in the provision of care responsibilities: for grandchildren (notably for migratory parents-of-child), their remaining parents, partner, close family/ others. Their role and the extent of volunteerism remains, largely, under-appreciated/ recognized.
Persons with disabilities (PWDs)	The total number of persons with disabilities is not known. Statistics do not provide information on the exact number of children with disabilities. The part of adults with disabilities in Albania's total population, according to the 2011 census, amounts to 6.2%. In absolute figures, their number is therefore about 175,000. Together with the children with disabilities, the total number of the target group can be estimated at over 200,000.
	A key element of the social protection reform process relates to the on-going reform of the disability assessment system, moving from a purely medical into the bio-psycho-social model of approaching disabilities. It is anticipated that certain persons will be assessed with low scores in terms of the functional extent of disability, whom will need to seek counselling regarding suitable employment opportunities, while for persons with severe disabilities the assessment should inform the design of a suitable package of care and support to be provided for them at the local level.
	In 2019, the State Social Service data indicate that 1,964 people with disabilities (of these 735 females), especially children, received social care services through 27 public centres and 28 non-public centres.

Group of people at risk	Key contributory factors/ issues
	However, 37 municipalities or 61% did not provide services for PWDs. Moreover, social care services for adults with disabilities are missing in the country except for some pilot model services supported by donors.
	With regard to assistive devices and aids for PWDs, and training on their use, the Ministry for Health and Social Protection (MHSP) provides 600-700 PWDs with wheelchairs annually, and the Health Care Insurance Fund covers the cochlear implant for children with hearing impairments. However, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has expressed its concerns about the lack of a transparent system for providing assistive devices and aids, and training on their use without discrimination. The lack of systematic access to assistive devices and technology at affordable cost for children with disabilities represents a major bottleneck in supporting inclusion and accessibility and fulfilment of rights to inclusive education (Article 24), independent living (Article 19), personal mobility (Article 20) and several other rights under the UNCRPD.
	With regard to education, during the academic year 2018-2019, 3,683 students with disabilities studied in mainstream pre-university education institutions (increased by 7% compared to the previous year), supported by 944 assistant teachers (increased by 35% compared to the previous year). The 2018 World Vision/ Save the Children household survey found that 75.7% of 1,354 children with disabilities (according to perceptions of parents) aged 2 to 17 years were accessing pre-university education. Further efforts are required to promote school mainstreaming of children with disabilities, and to ensure access to quality and inclusive education.
	With regard to health care, accessibility to services and facilities in the community for PWDs remains insufficient, particularly for those with intellectual disabilities and for those that require extensive support. Further efforts are required to improve services for the early identification of cognitive/ developmental etc. impairments, notably for autistic persons. Additionally, the delivery of early intervention services are either absent entirely in some areas of the country or families have to travel considerable distances or incur considerable costs to access them.
	With regard to employment/ skills, the situation for PWDs has improved in the recent years in terms of the existence of targeted government employment promotion, activation and skills development measures. However, further efforts are required to increase the presently low rate of labour-force participation and the employment rate for PWDs.
	Progress has been made to develop housing models and designs appropriate for independent/ semi-independent living of PWDs, but further efforts are needed to increase the availability/ coverage of such housing.
	PWDs commonly face transportation and other accessibility constraints to their accessing services or to their participation in public life. PWDs living in rural areas face additional obstacles in this regard to access services.
Roma and Egyptian communities (R&E)	There are no complete, accurate and undisputed statistics regarding the number of the Roma and Egyptian population in Albania. The results of the Albanian census of 2011 include figures of 8,301 Roma and 3,368 Egyptians. Unofficial estimates of the number of R&E range from 80,000 to 150,000 (i.e., between 2.6 and 5.2 per cent of the total population).
	Clear progress has been achieved by Albania to develop the policy framework and settings to improve the economic and social conditions of and social inclusion of the R&E, in a range of priority areas: education, employment, health, housing, social protection, and civil registration.

Group of people at risk	Key contributory factors/ issues
	However, significant efforts are required to deliver real socio-economic change so as to overcome the present extent of disparities that exist in terms of the outcomes/ opportunities of the R&E and the rest of society. Many R&E still face deep poverty, discrimination and exclusion in many spheres of life, including still in access to basic necessities such as electricity or even clean water. Unemployment is particularly high, and those who are employed occupy most often low paid positions. Informal employment continues to be very high among the marginalized R&E.
	There has been a positive trend in the field of education, notably so in regard of the enrolment of R&E primary school aged children (recently at 66%) and of the compulsory secondary level education completion (43%) rate for R&E. However, the enrolment and completion gaps between R&E and non-R&E children living in the same areas still remain significant.
LGBTIQ persons	While progress has been achieved by Albania to develop the legal protection and policy framework regarding LGBTIQ people, further efforts are needed to ensure implementation and enforcement of such equalities.
	LGBTIQ people, notably but not exclusively so in rural areas, continue to face stigma and discrimination in society. This can impact on their achieving equal access to state services (primarily evident in regard to access to appropriate health (including SRH) services) and employment. LGBTIQ people also face increased vulnerability to be victims of violence.
Others	Other groups of persons at risk of vulnerability or marginalization that exist, and therefore have potential social service care/ support needs, are: (1) Homeless persons; (2) Injecting drug-users; (3) Sex workers; (4) Persons at risk/ victims of trafficking; (5) Refugees; (6) Asylum-seekers.

Annex F UN's Programme Interventions in Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Albania

Supporting the implementation of social protection and social inclusion policies in Albania

MACRO LEVEL INTERVENTION (Ministries, Agencies)

- Improve policy and legislative framework for GBV&DV in line with international standards **EVAW**
- Enhance legislative and policy framework of child protection **CP**
- Integrating in the national budgetary framework equitable financing for SDGs **SDG Financing**
- Support national institutions to effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services **LNB**
- Policy and legislative support for Free Legal Aid for vulnerable groups **EFLAS**
- Integrating gender equality principles in public financing **FGE**
- Improving access to quality and inclusive education **IE**

MESO LEVEL INTERVENTION (Municipalities, Deconcentrated Offices, Service Providers)

- Establishment of Coordinated Referral Mechanisms for GBV&DV **EVAW**
- Strengthen mechanisms and capacities of child protection actors **CP**
- Supporting municipality and local social service providers in strengthening their capacity for planning, providing, and monitoring the scaling up/ extension of social services, and the delivery of integrated social inclusion measures **LNB**
- Establish local linkages between health and social protection services **IMSPSD**
- Response mechanisms for social protection, gender equality and child protection in emergencies **(Earthquake & Covid-19)**
- Strengthen local networks for SRH for youth **MISP**
- R&E returnees reintegration support **SEIR**

MICRO LEVEL INTERVENTION (Vulnerable persons and groups, CSOs)

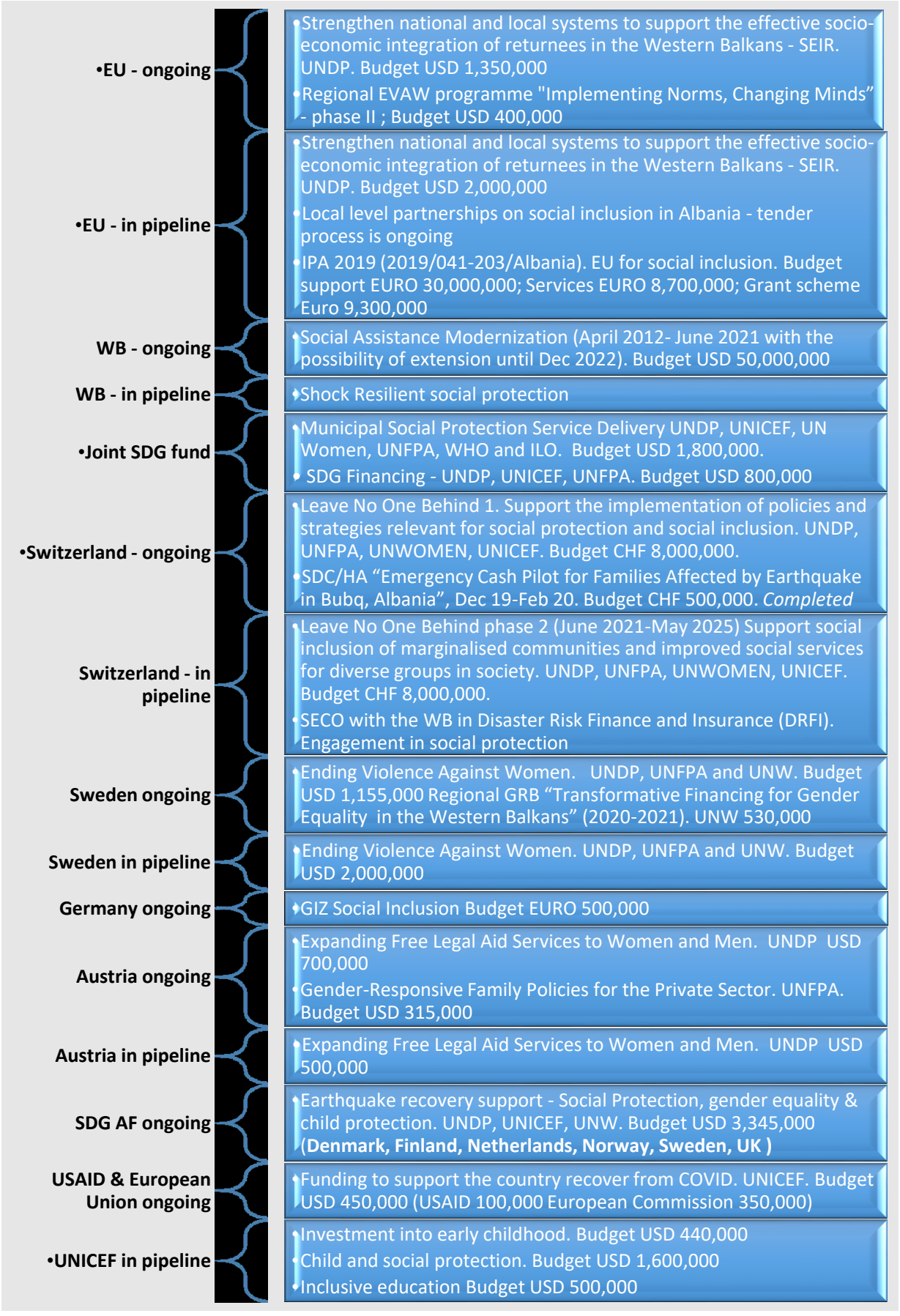
- Strengthen capacities of CSOs to monitor the distribution of social services **IMSPSD**
- Empower vulnerable groups to requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities, aiming at increasing their social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holding decision-makers accountable for policy delivery **LNB**
- Effective reintegration of R&E returnees including innovative activities on livelihoods **SEIR**
- Free Legal Aid Services for vulnerable groups **EFLAS**
- Increase resilience of communities, strengthen advocacy on social protection, gender equality and child protection in emergencies **(Earthquake & Covid-19)**

Legend:

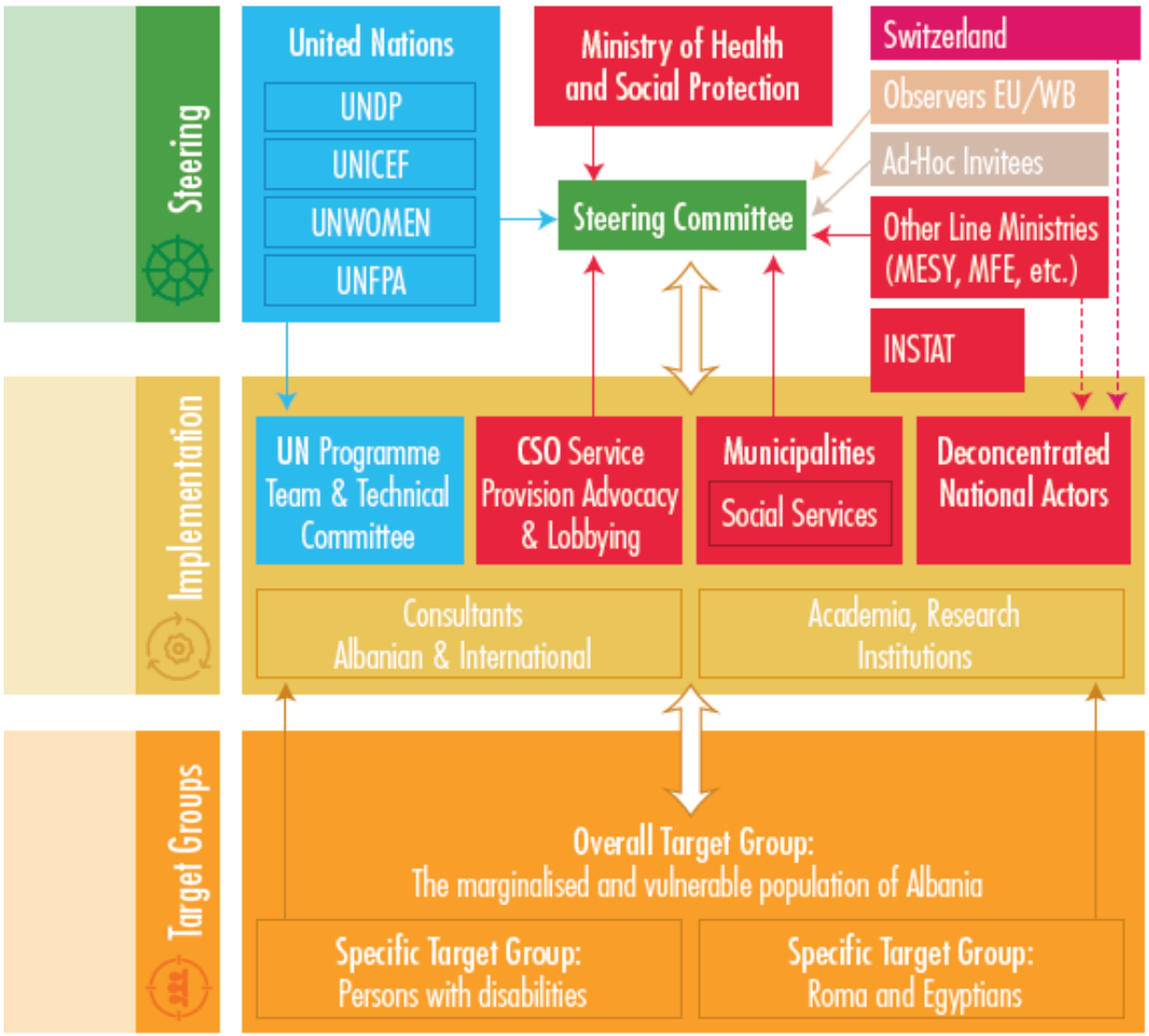
LNB - Leave No One Behind, UN Joint Programme
IMSPSD - Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Deliver, UN Joint Programme
EFLAS - Expanding Free Legal Aid to Men and Women in Albania
EVAW - End Violence against Women in Albania, UN Joint Programme
SEIR - **Socio-economic integration of returnees** in the Western Balkans
SDG Financing - Support to SDG Financing, UN Joint Programme
CP - Children Protection Programme
IE - Inclusive Education Programme
FGE - **Financing for Gender Equality** towards more Transparent, Inclusive, and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans
MISP – Sexual and Reproductive Health for vulnerable groups in emergencies

Earthquake & Covid-19	Support the country to recover from COVID-19 Earthquake recovery support - Social Protection, Gender Equality & Child Protection

Annex G Overview of key Donor Programme Interventions in Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Albania



Annex H LNB Programme – Institutional Set-up



⟺ "Production chain": from funding and steering to implementation and improved situation for target groups

⟶ Participation (and, regarding SDC, funding)

⟶ Hierarchic relation

Steering Committee co-chaired by Ministry of Health and Social Protection, SDC and UNRC

Target Groups | Albanian Actors at National and Local level | UN | Switzerland (funding agency)

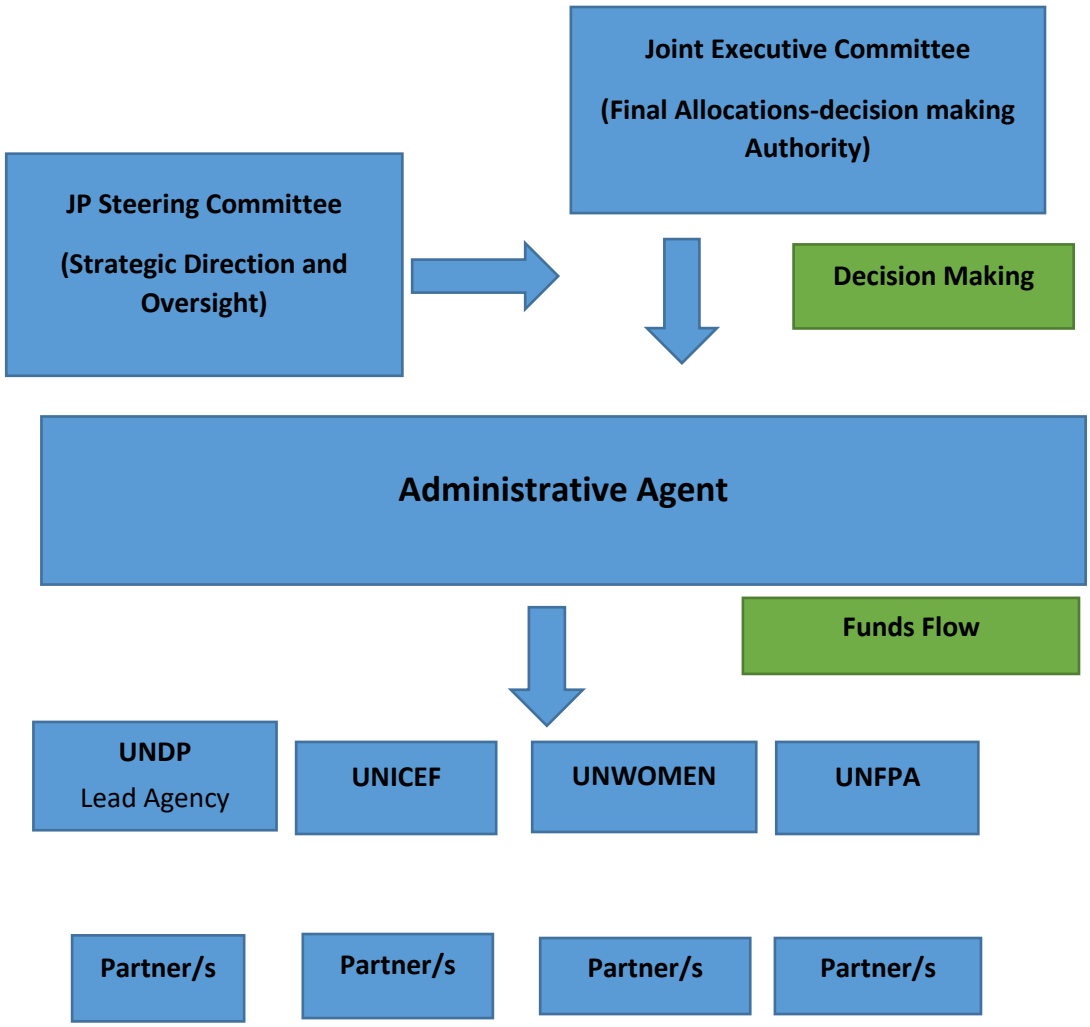
SC Ad- Hoc Invitees/Observers (new project partners, academia, private sector, etc)

SC Observers EU and WB

Leave No One Behind

Annex I Governance Architecture

SDG Acceleration Funding Mechanism[83]



[83] The funds for the implementation of this Joint Programme will be allocated through Albania SDG Acceleration Fund.

Annex J LNB Programme – Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee

DRAFT Terms of Reference

Programme Steering Committee (SC)

for the joint programme "Leave No One Behind" (LNB)

Introduction

Albania has made important steps towards establishing a democratic state, functioning market economy, maintaining a stable economic growth, and achieving human development. While income distribution is becoming more equal, poverty in Albania is still high. The development of Albania's systems for providing populations at risk of poverty or social exclusion with access to social protection, employment and skills and inclusive education has faced several challenges, the main ones being low levels of coverage, weak mechanisms for inclusivity and weak allocative and technical efficiency. Over the recent years the Government of Albania has adopted a range of significant strategies and action plans in regard to further priorities for social protection reform and for the promotion of social inclusion, and has built the legal framework of the social protection system with the vision of providing integrated social services capable to ensure the inclusion of all vulnerable groups and persons in Albania.

The focus of the LNB programme second phase is on the consolidation of the reform roll-out and strengthening of the results from the first phase. The programme contributes to the achievement of "SDCF 2022-2026" Outcome A, "By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion".

The aim is to empower vulnerable persons and groups to have equal access to public services that support their social rights, social inclusion and well-being, and to have a voice in public policy decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold decision-makers accountable for policy implementation. In order to achieve this, the programme pursues three objectives: to empower the beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion ***(Outcome 1)***; to capacitate municipalities/ regions and service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion ***(Outcome 2)***; by capacitating state authorities in the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion, and to further develop/ operationalize social inclusion funding mechanisms, including scaling up of the Social Fund ***(Outcome 3)***. The expected key results of the project contribute to improving the Social Protection system in Albania.

LNB is a joint programme supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and is implemented by four UN organizations – UNDP, UNICEF, UNW and UNFPA in close partnership with government of Albania. The strategic steering of the endeavour will be assured by the Steering Committee in which participate the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, SDC and representatives of the implementing UN organizations and civil society.

The role of the Programme Steering Committee

The overall objective of the Programme Steering Committee is to oversee and coordinate the operations of LNB programme. Based on the programme's initial plan and budget as well as on monitoring data, the SC oversees the programme's implementation and takes all necessary strategic decisions. It will provide policy guidance and recommendation regarding the programme strategy and objectives, receive and comment semi-annual reports, approve annual plans of operation and reports, and participate in the possible realization of a mid-term and end of phase evaluation.

Structure of the Steering Committee

The SC will be co-chaired by the Embassy of Switzerland, Ministry of Health and Social Protection and UN Resident Coordinator. It shall consist of members from key stakeholders involved in the programme and will include representatives from:

Members:

1. Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection **(co-chair)**
- Senior staff (director) assigned to Health and Social Protection Policies and Development portfolio
- State Social Services

2. Senior representatives from other selected Ministries
- Senior staff of Ministry of Education and Sports
- Senior Staff of Ministry of Finance

3. Embassy of Switzerland in Albania
- Ambassador / Head of Cooperation **(co-chair)**
- National Programme Officer

4. United Nations in Albania
- The UN Resident Coordinator **(co-chair)**
- UNDP Resident Representative
- UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
- UNICEF Representative
- UNICEF Deputy Representative
- UN Women Representative
- UNFPA Assistant Representative

5. Local government
- At least two LGUs representatives benefiting from the programme

6. Other Members:
- INSTAT
- At least two representatives of civil society organizations

Observers:

- EU Delegation in Albania
- World Bank

Ad-hoc members and observers can be invited to any SC meeting as requested by SC members and they may include WB and EU representatives, multilateral organizations, interested donors, development partners, academia, and representatives of projects working in the area of social inclusion and protection.

Secretariat:

The LNB Technical Committee serves as the Secretariat of the Steering Committee. It is composed of:

- One Programme Specialists in charge of social inclusion and protection portfolio from each UN participating agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA)
- Head of Help for Children (NPF)
- LNB Programme coordinator

The SC will be linked to both the Government-led coordination structures and the UN DaO structures. The Steering Committee will serve as a sub-set of the Outcome A Group of the PoCSD 2022-2026.

Frequency of meetings

As a rule, the SC will meet at least twice a year, and upon necessity. All SC members can request a meeting of SC within a week, if need be.

Specific tasks of the Programme Steering Committee:

- Review highlight reports at each meeting which are prepared by the Programme Staff and submitted to members of the Steering Committee 5 to 10 working days before each meeting;
- Review and approve the Annual Workplan of the Programme based on the programme's initial plan and budget
- Take stock at regular semi-annual intervals of the progress of work by the Programme team in line with an agreed work plan of the programme for its entire duration.
- Oversee and monitor indicators of progress, major milestones, evaluations and their follow-up;
- Comment on risks analysis and be an important instrument for policy dialogue to prevent them;
- Provide policy guidance and recommendation regarding the project strategy and objectives; guarantee cooperation and coordination;
- Review and endorse any strategic issues brought forward for the consideration of the Steering Committee.
- Participate in field visits in the project sites (SC members individually or jointly) to make first hand observations which will feed into the steering capacities;
- Ensure the observance of and address recurrently the two cross-cutting themes: governance and gender equality;

Quorum

For a SC to be held a quorum of 8 members must be present. This quorum should include the co-chairs, the representative of lead implementing agency, one representative from civil society and one representative from the municipalities. If a quorum is not reached when first request for meeting is announced, the SC may go ahead (in its second call for meeting) with co-chairs, lead implementing agency and other members present.

Decision Making

Decisions of the SC shall be reached by consensus. If no consensus can be reached during a meeting, a negotiation process is started, and a second meeting is called. If no consensus can be reached in the second meeting, then the three co-chairs shall take the decision.

Annex K LNB Programme – Communication and Visibility Plan

'LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND' (LNB2)
COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY PLAN: 2021 – 2025

I. Background of the "Leave No One Behind' Programme (LNB2):

'Leave No One Behind' is a UN Joint Programme implemented by four UN agencies in Albania (UNDP-leading agency, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women) through SDG Acceleration Fund. Supported by the Swiss Government, under the 'Government of Albania - UN Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development', the programme is undertaken as part of the 'Human Capital Development and Social Inclusion' outcome in **support of the vision for an overall inclusive society, that protects the vulnerable population from the risks of social or economic poverty or exclusion, on the basis of need, across the life-cycle via** increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion.

Overall objective: Vulnerable persons and groups have improved access to gender responsive public services that support their social rights, social inclusion and well-being, and are empowered to have a voice in public policy decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold decision-makers accountable for policy implementation.

Outcome 1: Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate gender responsive social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing their social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision-makers and service providers accountable for policy delivery.

Outcome 2: Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community based social services to boost social inclusion that are gender responsive and rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.

Outcome 3: National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund gender responsive social services through improved policy monitoring and evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards and empowered citizens and sustainable financing mechanisms.

Main features of the follow up phase include: support to complete and/ or updated national policy framework, to reinforce the public funding mechanisms for social services, to strengthen the national monitoring and evaluation systems, enhanced capacities at local level: municipality, services providers and empowered citizenry asking for services and inclusion. The project covers part of social protection (social services for vulnerable people), its second phase scales up the reform roll-out.

II. Communication and Visibility Plan

The aim of this Communication and Visibility plan is to raise awareness among the targeted audiences about the programme objectives, impact and results and advocate for a society with equal opportunities.

The Communications Plan also aims to raise awareness of the partnership, support and funding of the Swiss Government , with the UN agencies to leave no one behind in Albania.

The Communications plan puts a human face to the project by placing programme beneficiaries and partners at the forefront of the communications.

Having positioned as a key development component for social inclusion in the country, advocacy and information dissemination is critical to ensure the continuity of existing partnerships with all counterparts and direct/indirect beneficiaries in support of achievement of LNB final goal for advancement of social inclusion in Albania.

The primary ground on which this plan builds upon is that communications, specifically external communications, should be perceived as something that goes beyond a mere supplementary add-on, but rather as a critical tool that adds value to all the development work that is being carried out under the "Leave No One Behind' programme.

Specific Objectives:

Implemented in close collaboration with UN participating agencies in Albania, this communications plan will employ a myriad of communication tools and channels to reach its objectives.

Target Audience:

External Audiences

The Plan aims to reach the following groups:

- (1) Marginalized and vulnerable families and people, of all gender, including a specific focus on (2) persons with disabilities, and the Roma and Egyptian communities;
- Central Government;
- Local Government;
- International development partners;
- Local development partners
- Civil society organizations;
- International, local and national media;
- Academia

Internal Audiences

- SDC in Albania
- UN agencies in Albania and globally
- Partner NGOs

Expected Outcomes

1. Greater public awareness on LNB's work and impact on the ground through increased positive media coverage including social media and through a series of other communication tools and channels.
2. Enhanced promotion of capacitites raised through LNB programme at all levels of support, including local and central govrnements.
3. High quality communications products developed that reflect the work of LNB.
4. Strong advoccay around social inclusion agenda in Albania and how LNB helps in this direction.
5. Awareness raised about the partnership with SDC to advance social inclusion agenda in Albania to leave no one behind.

Communication tools and channels

To reach out the targeted audience certain forums/tools can serve to communicate and promote programme interventions/impact at different levels, such as:

- Media relations including meet the press-events, press trips to project sites, press releases.
- Strong LNB social media presence through social media accounts of the participating UN agencies and UN Albania platforms.
- High level field visits
- Info sessions
- Publications (studies, leaflets, brochures, etc)
- Story telling

- Signing/inauguration ceremonies (small grants agreements/establishment of new social services facilities.)
- Best practices exchange events
- Media relations including meet the press-events, press trips to project sites, press releases.
- Strong LNB social media presence through social media accounts of the participating UN agencies and UN Albania platforms.

The main channels of communications may vary according to the type of project activity/targeted audience, but may generally include one or several of the platforms below:

- Media Influencers
- Websites of participating UN agencies remain key communication channels.

Visibility standards and disclaimer

To ensure successful communication and to maintain the trusted public image of UN/LNB/SDC, it is imperative to adhere to existing corporate communications standards set forth by the respective UN partner agancies and SDC that includes editorial manuals and other such documents. Adherence to such standards ensure consistency quality and accuracy of information disseminated to the public and other audience.

The 'LNB Communication and Visibility Guidelines' is a manual already in place from LNB-Phase 1 that **provides clear guidance on standards, use of symbols, logos and disclaimers for each communication activity/product.**

Indicators of achievement

COMMUNICATION CATEGORIES	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT
Events	Conferences, public hearings, field events, roundtables etc.	N° of participants, general feedback, N° of media announcement coverage, issues discussed
Publications	Leaflets, brochures, guidelines, surveys and assessments, etc.	N° of copies distributed, N° of copies requested, general feedback,
Media relations	Media briefings, press trips to programme sites, Press-releases, articles, TV programmes	N° of media participation, N° of announcements: articles published print or online, N° of appearances in local/national TVs, N° of online visitors and engagement
Websites/Social media	Frequent posts related to the programme	Engagement, N° of visitors, N° of clicks per section, duration of visitors etc. (google analytics, Facebook insight etc).

Communication and Visibility Plan					
Specific Objectives	**Tools/Activities**	**Key Message**	**Target Audience**	**Budget**	**Outputs**
1. Ensure public awareness and visibility about LNB2 Project.	1.1 LNB project pages updated frequently. 1.2 Communicate results through Press Releases/Statements 1.3 Media trips to promote good models of interventions 1.4 Success stories in UNDP Medium 1.5 Use social media (Twitter/Facebook/YouTube/Blogs and Podcasting).	LNB Programme is progressing well and serving to leave none behind in Albania.	Overall public; central and local authorities; donor community; all relevant stakeholders; CSOs, affected vulnerable communities; Media; Academia	No cot TBD TBD	1.1 At least two results updates per year, according to project reporting cycles. 1.2 Press release/statements for important interventions (i.e. launching or completion of public works) - TBC[i] 1.3 At least 2 Media Trips yearly. 1.4 At least three stories featuring programme beneficiaries
2. Advocate for empowerment of persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, and vulnerable women, to request and have access to social services,	2.1 Develop and broadcast short video-diaries/documentaries to promote social inclusion/successful individual cases and work practices (as per LNB AWP respective outputs) 2.2 Awareness-raising activities in support of	Successful inclusion and integration are possible through an informed citizenry, promotion/replication of good practices of social care service provision and participation of all stakeholders, especially the	Beneficiaries/recipients of social care services; local authorities; social care service providers; CSOs working in this field; general audience;		2.1 At least 2 video-stories /documentaries for each year of project implementation. 2.2 Marking important international days of disability, such as: Disability Day - December 3rd/ World Down Syndrome Day – March 21st /World Autism Day -April 2nd /yearly

as a pre-condition to improve their lives	persons with disabilities as per LNB AWP respective output). 2.3 Awareness-raising activities in support of Rome and Egyptian empowerment (as per LNB AWP respective output)	vulnerable people in this process.			2.3 Marking important HR days, such as: International Roma Day -April 8th/International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – 21 March/ World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development - May 21st/yearly. TV and radio spots; broadcasting of video-documentaries in different social media platforms (possible collaboration with popular Cinema chains, like Cineplex and/or others); press releases School contests, cultural events TV and radio programs; dissemination of advocating messages through social media platforms and other dedicated web pages
Promote enhanced capacities of municipalities to effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services	3.1 Ensure visibility of any important round tables, capacity building event, conference, forums, and public talks organized at local level.	Successful social inclusion and sustainability is possible through enhanced capacities of LGUs as multipliers /promotion and replication of good	Central and Local government authorities; related CSOs; vulnerable communities; all other relevant stakeholders.	TBD	Press Releases; Public Talks; Launching of important studies/surveys - TBD

and promote social inclusion.		practices/models of social care service provision.			
4. Promote enhanced capacities of national institutions to implement their policy framework, to fund and provide social service	4.1 Ensure visibility of any important multi-stakeholders coordinating forums organized at central level to present expert research findings; Round tables, conference/workshops, and public talks	Successful social inclusion and its sustainability is possible when policy frameworks and legislation is implemented accurately and at large.	Central and Local government authorities; related CSOs; vulnerable communities; all other relevant stakeholders	TBD	Press Releases; Public Talks; Launching of important studies/surveys - TBD