

OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB_D_1.1

By 2026, government institutions ensure increased and more equitable investment in people to remove barriers and create opportunities for those at risk of exclusion (UNSDCF Outcome A).

Significant results were accomplished towards this outcome, specifically to ensure that government institutions at local level include the needs and priorities of most marginalized women and girls in their respective priorities and budgets, and more women from marginalized communities engage in local decision making, planning and budgeting processes. 73% of issues raised by vulnerable women during participatory budgeting processes in five municipalities were addressed and reflected in the municipalities’ local policies and budgets. As a result, women and girls from the target municipalities enjoy greater access to social and community services, as these have been fully budgeted and planned for. UN Women contributed this result through continued capacity building of local government units, leveraging best practices for efficient use of revenues and resources to plan and deliver gender responsive social services, and providing technical expertise on costing of such services. In addition, UN Women contributed to increase availability of gender-sensitive evidence to inform fiscal policy reforms and the design of integrated systems and programmes for gender and child sensitive social protection system, in particular in care economy. UN Women collaborated with UNICEF to conduct two research studies on 1) Developing a case for investing in free universal childcare in Albania: an analysis of childcare costs, fiscal revenue effects and gender centered multi-dimensional vulnerability and 2) Financing a social protection floor for vulnerable women, girls and children in Albania. Both studies provide tangible evidence on how gender sensitive public investment has important ramifications in terms of who benefits from childcare and job creation. They also provide essential information for policymakers that intend to adopt gender sensitive fiscal policy measures to empower women economically and, at the same time, tackle other economic and social priorities. Partnerships have been essential to achieve these results. UN Women continued to work closely with UN agencies in the context of UN Joint Programmes (JP) ‘SDG Financing Project’ and ‘Leave No One Behind’ (LNOB), generously supported by the Joint SDG Fund and the Swiss Development Cooperation through UN Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, respectively. In addition, UN Women’s partnership with PRISMA Network was strategic in the context of this outcome. The PRISMA network consists of 50 grassroots organizations working on participatory budgeting processes, which was leveraged to activate women and youth, to strengthen public discourse around gender equality with Local Government Units (LGUs), as well as to foster proper implementation of participatory budgeting processes with inclusion of all groups. Based on progress to date, the original strategy and theory of change for this outcome is still relevant and applicable. UN Women Albania is leveraging the new phase of the LNOB JP and other ongoing and newly developed interventions to ensure a systematic approach to promote inclusion of marginalized women and girls across thematic areas, and to guarantee a strong outreach to women and girls from marginalized communities, in partnership with grassroots CSOs and communities in remote areas. If, as expected, this strategy is successful, more women at risk of being excluded will benefit from increased access to social protection services that are gender responsive, and national partners at central and local level will have increased skills, evidence and knowledge to mainstream gender equality consideration in national and local programmes and policies.

OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB_D_1.2

By 2026, all persons benefit from, and contribute to, innovative and integrated policy solutions that accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive development, enhanced climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy (UNSDCF Outcome B).

Being the first year of implementation of the new SN, the outcome was not fully achieved yet. However, significant progress was made towards its realization and, gender equality was mainstreamed across policies and programmes pertaining to women's economic empowerment, climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Key achievements included: - The final draft of National Strategy for DRR 2023-2030 (pending approval) addresses the needs of women and girls. At local level, the Local Action Plan for Gender Equality (LAGP) 2023 - 2025 was approved in Durrës and includes, for the first time, a gender sensitive approach in regard to DRR related measures. UN Women contributed to these results by sharing official recommendations with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection to address the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including those living in three municipalities worst affected by the 2019 earthquake. These inputs were instrumental to ensure that gender equality considerations were reflected in the final draft strategy. UN Women also supported the municipality through technical assistance and capacity building. - The new National Strategy on Agriculture and Fisheries 2021-2027 includes specific measures and objectives pertaining to gender equality and rural women's empowerment. UN Women provided detailed recommendations to the draft strategy and engaged with key actors such as GIZ and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development during the drafting process, which was critical to ensure the inclusion of rural women's needs and priorities in the final approved strategy. - Empowerment through Self-Defense (ESD) is now part of the National Strategy for Youth (2022-2029), and it is incorporated in the extra-curricular programs of Albanian public schools. It will be rolled out in the first 60 public schools from January 2023 on. ESD is an innovative approach which aims to promote behavioral changes in communities, particularly in relation to issues such as gender-based violence, by fostering skills that enable emotional, psychological and physical safety of young women and men. In 2022, more than 700 youth learned about ESD, acquiring self-empowerment skills through dedicated sessions with their communities, while thousands of women and girls accessed this information via online communication channels. UN Women played a key role in advocating for the inclusion of this approach in the national strategy, through continuous lobbying and advocacy efforts at highest level in the Ministry of Education and Sport. - 760 women and activists were engaged and addressed their priorities in processes related to developing local budget plans. Their inputs focused on eight categories: Education, Social services, Social revitalization/post Covid-19, Health services, Housing, Mobility/Access, Public services, and Employment. 12 targeted municipalities received direct feedback in regard to women's priorities in the Mid-Term Budget Plan (MTBP) 2022-2024, alongside with know-how, methodology, templates, data collection and analysis provided by UN Women and its civil society partners. This enabled municipalities to improve planning and organizing participatory budgeting at local level with special focus on gender responsive indicators and social services. All 12 municipalities carried out consultations with women, and moving forward. The municipalities of Tirana, Durres, Kavaja and Lezha (about 50% of the total Albanian population) will systematically engage women in future processes. Partnership with the members of the PRISMA network, formed by UN Women and comprising of 50 NGOs and local partners with expertise on participatory budgeting, will be essential for ensuring adequate follow up to these commitments. - 150 vulnerable women in 11 worst-affected municipalities by the 2019 earthquake are economically empowered, as part of seven interventions implemented in six municipalities, in four identified value chains, namely: Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Traditional Food Value Chains and Handicrafts. These interventions used evidence and data on women's economic empowerment made publicly available through the Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA) in 10 municipalities, developed by UN Women. Proactive engagement of non-traditional partners such as the private sector was critical for these results. - Women living in earthquake damaged areas are better able to enjoy their property rights in the reconstruction process. At least 252 women are now able to prepare better for legal procedures thanks to legal expertise provided by UN Women and its CSO partner, the Centre for Legal and Civic Initiatives (CLCI). 10 cases were filed and presented to CLCI's lawyers to support women's access to free legal aid. UN Women

contributed to these results by sharing knowledge and building capacities of 128 state officials, professionals (e.g. notaries) and Local Government Units (LGUs) representatives, who are now better equipped to address women property rights in the reconstruction process, and by working closely with its CSO partner to build women's capacities. The generous support of the Government of Sweden and the Government of Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS Tirana) were essential to achieve these results. Key partners in this outcome include FAO, GIZ, the private sector, relevant municipalities and numerous CSOs that are engaged as Responsible Parties. The Theory of Change underpinning this outcome remains valid and more progress is expected in 2023, including the formation of Local Action Groups for rural women, and gender mainstream of rural and agricultural statistics and data collection, production and use in the context of the national Census which will be launched in 2023.

OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB_D_1.3

By 2026, all persons contribute to, gender-responsive governance that strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women's empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children (UNSDCF C2).

In 2022, significant progress was made towards the achievement of this outcome. At central level, 9% of Medium-term Budget Program 2023–2025 specifically support gender equality results. 47 budget programs of 11 ministries and two state institutions were engendered. Public institutions apply a gender-sensitive approach in their policies in a more regular way, which are better aligned with international standards and the EU gender equality acquis communautaire. Four budget standard instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economy contain gender responsive budgeting (GRB) as part of the budget implementation and for the first time a Gender Budget Statement is officially attached to the draft budget. GRB remained central to the overall planning and design of the state budget, including through the integration of key gender performance indicators in the Albanian Finance Management Information System (AFMIS). UN Women contributed to these efforts thanks to its partnership with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Institute of Statistics and other line ministries, providing continued assistance and mentoring on gender mainstreaming and GRB. The Government of Albania was better equipped to mainstream gender equality at central level. UN Women fostered strategic engagement with the newly formed unit of Strategic Programming Directorate of the State Agency for Strategic Programming and Assistance Coordination (SASPAC) and produced five Gender Mainstreaming Guidance Notes (Justice, Anti-Corruption, DRR, Health, ICT and Digitalization) to ensure that future policy, planning and programming documents align with the EU legal and policy framework on gender equality. Technical support on gender mainstreaming was provided to the National Strategy for Development and European Integration (NSDEI III), the draft National Strategy for Youth 2022–2029 and to the National Strategy on Employment and Skills 2023–2030. At local level, tracking of financing for gender equality was introduced for the first time. This exercise revealed that GRB constitutes 12% of local public finances, all 61 Albanian municipalities actively use key gender performance indicators in their budget planning and 33 concrete gender-responsive initiatives were budgeted. These results were achieved thanks to UN Women's support and capacity building efforts at the local level, including expert mentoring and technical support to municipalities' staff and local councils, which aimed to better equip local government institutions with knowledge to apply gender responsive budgeting principles and gender-responsive indicators. Partnership with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Albanian School of Public Administration was essential in systematically integrating GRB to capacity development of local administration. Gender responsive governance at local level was improved. More women and men benefit from gender sensitive policies tailored to their needs thanks to the finalization of Local Gender Action Plans (LGAPs) In 2022, five municipalities (Tirane, Elbasan, Gramsh, Gjirokaster and Durres) developed LGAP 2022 –2024 and adopted by the local municipal councils. The LGAPs make a significant contribution in implementing the EU Charter for Equality between women and men in local life, as well as the relevant provisions in the National Strategy for Gender Equality (2021–2030). In addition, the municipality of Lushnje signed the European Charter for Equality between women and men in

local life. This was achieved thanks to UN Women's support in provision of technical expertise, support and training throughout the preparation and adoption of the action plans. Over 1,500 women and girls, including those from rural areas and marginalized communities (Roma and Egyptian women, women living with disabilities and women from the LGBTI community from 20 municipalities) accessed improved specialized services for survivors of all forms of violence. This was possible thanks to increased capacities and knowledge of service providers, both public and non-public, which enabled women and girls to access short and medium-term psycho-social and legal counselling as well as long term economic-reintegration. Public service providers from Coordinated Referral Mechanisms, police, healthcare, social services, child support units improved their response and case management to support and reintegrate survivors of violence. In 11 municipalities affected by the 2019 earthquake, the availability of services for women victims of violence increased as women/girls and men/boys in these communities have more information about GBV and reporting mechanisms. 161 women/girls survivors of domestic violence/GBV benefitted from legal assistance orientation and referral services. 566 women survivors of gender-based violence received concrete support through direct and secondary legal aid services, while 123 women Domestic Violence(DV)/GBV survivors were supported by providing psychological services. UN Women contributed to these results by partnering with women's civil society organizations offering direct access to specialized services and legal support to women and girls experiencing violence. Women's CSOs played a key role also in enhancing institutional capacities, knowledge and expertise in implementing the current legal and policy framework to end violence against women and girls. The 2022, UNCT System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) Scorecard annual report revealed that UN Albania improved its score for UNCT SWAP Performance Indicator 5.2 on Gender Mainstreaming Capacities, meaning that UN personnel in Albania has increased skills to mainstream gender equality across projects and programmes. This is particularly important considering that the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in Albania follows a 'twin-track' approach to gender mainstreaming through integrating gender across all CF results as well as through a dedicated outcome level result. The UN Women led Gender Thematic and Results Group (GTRG), arguably the most active coordination group in the UNCT, continued to work through an intense workplan and delivered important results, such as a) the first comprehensive gender equality capacity and learning needs assessment in the context of the UNSDCF (and subsequent capacity development plan), b) a dedicated gender screening tool for UN Joint Programs (JPs), c) substantive engagement with key stakeholders on CEDAW state reporting, as well as joint advocacy. The 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women, also coordinated by UN Women through the GTRG, was instrumental in expanding public dialogue around gender-based violence. Several activities took place to promote activism for the elimination of violence against women: a dialogue series with five universities in Tirana mobilized some 200 students, increasing their knowledge and awareness about the impact of violence against women in Albania and promoting youth engagement against violence. The campaign was an opportunity to reinforce the UN-wide commitment to eliminate violence against women, which also figures as a UNSDCF output. The start of the campaign was marked by the signing of the second phase of the JP on EVAW, which will be led by UN Women and implemented jointly with UNDP and UNFPA. The next phase, generously supported by the Government of Sweden, will target all women in Albania, specifically those more at risk of being left behind and will focus more strongly on engaging men and boys and supporting stakeholders at the local level in systematically addressing all forms of VAW, beyond domestic violence. These results were achieved with support Sida, the European Union, and the European Commission. Considering progress made so far, the TOC for this outcome comprises the majority of UN Women's Albania work and remains relevant.