

## OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB\_D\_3.1

### **An enabling legislative and policy environment in line with CEDAW and Istanbul Convention is in place and translated into action**

In 2021, significant progress was made in fully aligning the legislative and policy framework on eliminating violence against women and girls (EVAW) with CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention (IC), as well as to enhance the implementation of laws and policies and to respond to ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE)<sup>1</sup> 2021-2030 better reflects the intersectional nature of different forms of violence against women (VAW) and is more aligned with IC standards through inclusion of perpetrator work and measures to address VAWG during health emergencies. Additionally, domestic and gender-based violence (DV/GBV) survivors will receive better protection after the approval of the revised decree on the functioning of the Local Coordinated Referral Mechanism (CRM) adopted by the Government of Albania (GoA) on 2 June 2021. Lastly, efforts ramped up to curtail pandemic related rises in GBV, by ensuring quality access to specialized services. Through its EVAW portfolio, the Country Office (CO) significantly contributed to this year's achievements through its close collaboration and support to government partners and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), coordination with other UN agencies, and continuous engagement of women's civil society organisations (CSOs) through financial support and enabling spaces for convening and advocacy. All these processes were supported by UN Women, including the costing of the new strategy. This contribution was recognized by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP). Similarly, through its United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP) on EVAW, the CO provided technical expertise to the MHSP to revise the Decision of the Council of Ministers on the functioning of CRMs as acknowledged by the Ministry. In parallel, NHRIs are better able to monitor the implementation of national and international obligations. With the technical support of UN Women, following submission of a shadow report on the implementation of CEDAW, the Ombudsperson submitted for the first time a report to Parliament identifying gaps and challenges to the government's response to GBV during 2020 and 2021, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CO also contributed to translating into action the legal framework on EVAW through its long-lasting collaborations with women's organizations and local government units. About 270 service providers, from police, municipalities, and healthcare in at least 18 municipalities are better equipped to address cases of GBV, through training and continuous mentoring. Over 1,700 women and girls, including from vulnerable groups, gained access to psycho-social counselling; free legal aid; referral to specialized services; and socio-economic reintegration programs. Thanks to these efforts, women were better equipped to escape violent situations and were offered long-term recovery, including those living in rural areas where these services were non-existent before. In addition, the CO strengthened collaboration with the Vodafone Foundation for the development and launch of the Bright Sky mobile application, which facilitates VAW reporting. Awareness activities have been conducted to inform CSO partners on the use of this application and more will continue in 2022. In the framework of the Regional EVAW programme, UN Women Albania collaborated with Vodafone who donated 50 smartphones and internet plans to women from marginalized communities (Roma, LGBTQI, and women with disabilities) and trained the recipients in using the BrightSky mobile application to report violence. Moving forward, UN Women Albania's new Strategic Note (SN) 2022-2026 is more closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The office will continue to work closely with partners in civil society, the UN system, national counterparts, media, the private sectors and youth to fully achieve this outcome in the years to come, which would result in a legal framework that is in line with the country's needs as well as international standards; quality services and protection for survivors,

that are equitable and accessible to all; and a higher degree of transforming harmful social norms that are a breeding ground for gender-based violence. The EVAW work has also integrated relevant findings from the Country Portfolio Evaluation, including continuing integrating the Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) approach across its activities. The new SN places a sharp focus on quality and delivery of services for survivors due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which showed again the importance of specialized services, especially under emergency circumstances. In addition, in 2021 the CO reaffirmed the importance of ensuring government commitment through human and financial resources from the early stages of an intervention to guarantee sustainability and the national and local ownership of measures to combat VAW. Funding for this outcome was made possible thanks to the generous support received through the Government of Sweden through the UN Albania Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the European Commission.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB\_D\_1.2

### **National legal and policy frameworks adopt and mainstream gender equality principles.**

Significant progress was made towards gender-mainstreaming in legal and policy frameworks at the central and local level in line with international and national gender equality commitments, including the EU gender equality acquis. At the national level, the Government of Albania (GoA) was successfully supported to develop additional strategies and EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) programming documents that mainstream gender equality. In addition, nine IPA Unit officials in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development were familiarized with gender mainstreaming approaches, and regional cross-learning experiences were exchanged in UN Women's Gender Equality Facility meeting of practitioners in Neum/Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the local level, the Municipality of Gramsh signed the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life while 63 local officials were familiarized with European Charter Guidelines on how to draft a Local Gender Action Plan (Elbasan, Gramsh, Gjirokastrë, Tirana), and 4 draft local gender action plans were developed (in Tirana, Gramsh, Elbasan and Gjirokastrë). Across this work, UN Women provided high quality international and national expertise in the framework of the EU for Gender Equality UN Joint Programme and engaged in direct coaching sessions with public officials at the central and local level. Progress was also made in improving production, availability and use of gender statistics:

- The capacities of INSTAT's (Institute of Statistics of Albania) were significantly strengthened with regards to the production, availability and accessibility of gender statistics. INSTAT representatives benefitted from UN Women's technical support in a gender section in the PC-axis2 developing the new 5-year statistical programme and preparing the new "Women and Men" publication 2021. UN Women provided technical support in the framework of "Women Count" programme, as well as guidance in undertaking a thorough mapping of the PC-axis and recommendations for increasing the number of gender indicators and level of disaggregation, coaching, and mentoring the INSTAT team, and providing advice for preparing the new statistical programme and producing the Women and Men, 2021 edition.
- 44 CSO representatives and experts (43 women) have increased capacities on gender statistics and analyses. UN Women contributed to this result through the "Women Count" programme by designing the training, comprising of an introductory and an advanced session, inviting CSOs through an open call for applications and conducting a needs assessment prior to the training. According to pre- and post-training evaluation reports, the participants showed increased understanding, confidence and knowledge in the topics presented by UN Women. Feedback from the participants will serve to design future additional support in the areas of most interest and need. This initiative was undertaken jointly with INSTAT which contributed to all the stages of the training including its facilitation.
- The new National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) 2021-2030, has a comprehensive performance monitoring framework with indicators aligned to SDGs and key international and national GE obligations. UN Women's contribution included technical expertise to the overall development of the new NSGE, engaging top-level experts and ensuring a highly inclusive and participatory approach. The MHSP led the NSGE development process with

UN Women support involving all central level and local level institutions, CSOs, NHRIs and international development partners. A fruitful collaboration with UN agencies, the EU Delegation, national and local institutions was essential for achieving the results explained above. Moving forward, in the context of implementing the UN Women Albania Strategic Note (SN) 2022–2026, UN Women Albania will have an increased focus on strengthening the gender equality mechanism at the national and local level and on gender mainstreaming in future policies, programmes and plans. Funding for this outcome was made possible thanks to generous contribution of the European Union Delegation through the UN Albania Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the Government of Sweden.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB\_D\_1.3

### **Fiscal laws and policies prioritize revenue and budgetary allocations in favor of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.**

In 2021, budget policies prioritized revenue and budgetary allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE): for the 2022–2024 Medium Term Budget Program (MTBP) 45 budgetary programs, 60.8 % of the total budgetary programs, are engendered. The amount of funds planned for addressing gender equality issues is approximately 490 million USD, 9 % of the total budget. UN Women supported the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (MoFE) to achieve this result by providing technical assistance to MoFE and Line Ministries. Over 560 government officials (68% women and 32% men) from 11 line ministries now have increased knowledge on GRB integration including through use of gender statistics in MTBP 2022–2024, thanks to intensive capacity building efforts through a series of 10 trainings. Twenty Gender Equality Employees of all line Ministries, INSTAT and Albanian State Police have improved knowledge on GRB, gender statistics and gender analysis. For the first time in Albania, gender expenditures can be tracked and their impact measured thanks to the improved and engendered Albanian Finance Management Information System (AFMIS). The CO supported MoFE to use data from AFMIS to issue the First Gender Expenditure Monitoring Report 2021. The 2022 Budget is open and transparent to citizens and oversight mechanisms thanks to the Gender Sensitive Citizen's Budget 2022 published annually by MoFE with UN Women's technical assistance. Oversight bodies are increasingly proactive in demanding accountability of public institutions on budget allocations and application of GRB. In this context, UN Women was instrumental in establishing new partnerships with the Supreme Audit Institution, the Ombudsperson and the Anti-discrimination Commissioner, who are now more knowledgeable on gender equality and gender-responsive budgeting and demonstrate a commitment to co-draft thematic reports on GRB monitoring in public finances. Twenty municipalities have strengthened capacities to apply GRB within local budgets with focus on gender mainstreaming in policies and related budgets associated with municipal services. 203 municipal staff (60 men and 143 women) have improved skills on gender analysis and GRB application at the local level. Eight concrete initiatives were budgeted for and implemented by municipalities as a direct result of GRB training and mentoring processes, including:

- More women and girls in need in Kavaja Municipality will benefit from a special fund of 100 000 ALL through 2022 budget for awareness raising activities on how to access services
- More women and girls in the Municipality of Cerrik will be able to open new businesses due to two fiscal incentives budgeted in the 2022 Budget providing for 20% reduction of local taxes and tariffs for women and girls who want to start a business.
- For the first time, vulnerable women and girls in the Municipalities of Skrapar and Polican will benefit dedicated social care services due to a specific fund placed in the 2022 Budget which is linked with the municipalities' Local Social Care Plans.
- Women and girls in the Municipality of Rrogozhine can now access missing social services which are budgeted accordingly in the 2022 budget due to improved coordination and information sharing between the structures of social services and budget and finance departments.
- Vulnerable women, women head of households and women victims of domestic violence in Puka Municipality will be able to obtain social housing due to introduced specific criteria in the social housing program which is now more inclusive of these groups.
- Women and girls of Lushnja Municipality rural areas will be able to benefit from social care programs and activities due to a specific budget fund within its 2022 budget for activities with women and girls pertaining to social care programs.

UN Women contributed to these results through cooperation with the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), and jointly developed and delivered two standardized training modules for Local Government Units (LGUs) on gender responsive planning and budgeting. These modules will be used by ASPA also in the future to train local public administration on GRB. Over 1200 women and men in 12 municipalities partook in participatory budgeting processes. Over 840 vulnerable women and girls, including youth, older women, rural women, women with disabilities and unemployed women have benefited from training and awareness events and voiced their needs. About 20% of concerns that were raised will become priorities in the future budget. At the municipal level, the CO helped ensure that plans and budgets respond to the needs of vulnerable women and girls. Ten economic journalists are more knowledgeable on how to report on gender equality financing thanks to the first-of-its kind training by UN Women on GRB and its importance when they report. Ten grassroots CSOs demand accountability for gender equality and related allocated resources through 6 budget watchdog reports on integrated social care services, expenditure monitoring and accountability. UN Women trained, mentored and supported the CSOs to scrutinize budgets with a gender lens and produce watchdog reports which were shared with public stakeholders and municipalities. The results of social exclusion, vulnerabilities, and gender-based discrimination at the local level in 15 municipalities can now be measured using the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey as a baseline. UN Women and INSTAT finalized Gender Responsive Mapping of linkages between social inclusion and vulnerabilities, and the report is a key resource for future policy makers in the field of social protection. It highlights the peculiarities of women's poverty in Albania in 15 municipalities and provides evidence that income-based poverty measures, complemented with material deprivation and social exclusion, increase gender inequality. Twenty-six entrepreneurs, of which 15 women, have increased capacities to establish and develop their own social businesses in the upper Vjosa basin, thanks to 5 business plans that are now fully developed. The Albania Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) has identified GRB as a flagship area for the CO, recognizing the impact and significant results this work has achieved over the implementation of the previous SN. In this context, the UN Women SN 2022-2026 continues to include a significant focus on this thematic area and is closely aligned with the UNSDCF. Moving forward, the GRB portfolio will continue to leverage synergies with the ERAW work. These synergies have been highlighted as a good practice from previous programming to increase the impact of UN Women comprehensive programmatic interventions to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in a holistic fashion. Funding for this outcome was made possible thanks to the generous contribution of Sida, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through the Joint SDG Fund.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB\_D\_2.1

### **An enabling policy and legislative environment to promote and translate into action women's access to land, property and other productive assets.**

Thanks to the Gender Rural Equality and Tourism (GREAT) project, implemented by UN Women in partnership with FAO, in 2021 the draft National Intersectoral Strategy of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries was engendered and presented to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The new strategy is expected to, inter alia, provide disaggregated and higher quality data and further increase access of rural women and girls to productive assets and finance. An initial Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis was completed in three target areas (Elbasan, Kolonje and Puke). The analysis identifies bottlenecks that will serve as a raw material for designing interventions aimed at increasing productivity and income generated by women farmers. The identification of product incubator buildings and related development designs are completed. The product incubators will serve the purpose of increasing access and ownership of rural women to productive assets. Thanks to UN Women's support, rural women's contribution to Albanian social and economic life has become more visible. During International Day of Rural Women, with contribution from all project partners, an awareness raising campaign was launched focused on the contribution of rural women and girls in the local economic and social life through a video broadcasted in local TV stations and

social networks, an op-ed published in several local Albanian and English newspapers, and delivery of key messages in an event hosted by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. UN Women project results achievement was done in close partnership and collaboration with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS Tirana), the Embassy of Italy in Albania, FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, local government units and their significant contribution. The CO interventions are fully aligned with the new UN Women SP 2022-2025 and the new UNSDCF 2022-2026 for Albania. In this context, the area of women's economic empowerment will be approached from a broader perspective, capturing women's access to productive financial resources. A strong LNOB approach adopted across thematic areas of the SN continues to include a specific focus on promoting the role of rural women in economic and social life in Albania. Funding for this outcome was made possible thanks to the Government of Italy.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ALB\_D\_4.1

### **Women and girls in affected communities recover from the November 2019 earthquake in Albania and increase their resilience to natural hazards, including pandemics.**

Significant progress was made in promoting women's resilience and economic empowerment during 2021. Across 11 municipalities mostly affected by the 2019 earthquake, women especially those most vulnerable, were directly supported by UN Women's interventions. Specific results include the establishment of new partnerships at the central and local levels, including a network of focal points responsible for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in 11 municipalities, and at the central level, the Ministry of Defence and the National Agency for Civil Protection. However, the process of adoption of the National Platform for DRR and a National DRR Strategy and its Action Plan, which are the main entry points for engendering DRR in Albania, have been delayed due to the general elections that took place in 2021. There have been ongoing discussions about the 're-configuration' of the current National Civic Emergency Agency, which may have impacted its staff's full commitment in taking forward the National Strategy on DRR. The adoption of local DRR plans is dependent on the National Strategy, which is expected to be completed in 2022. At the local level, over 260 women and activists have engaged in 4 targeted municipalities on participatory local planning and budgeting processes, identifying their needs and priorities for reconstruction efforts in the municipalities most damaged by the earthquake, including through budget planning and approval process at the local level. Women's needs related to property rights in the 11 target municipalities were addressed as part of the reconstruction and construction efforts through legal information and concrete legal support. Fourteen awareness raising activities targeting 225 beneficiaries were organized during 2021, while 68 women and girls affected by the earthquake benefited from free legal counselling and assistance on their property rights. More than 160 women have been assisted with psycho-social and primary legal aid services related to domestic violence in the targeted municipalities. UN Women contributed by offering direct psycho-social and legal services to women survivors and strengthening the capacities of at least 454 service providers to address cases of GBV, including their ability to provide information and support services to women survivors of GBV in all 11 affected communities. This significantly strengthened a coordinated response to address GBV cases, especially in emergencies and post-disaster situations. Leveraging the UN Women- supported Empowerment Through Self Defense (ESD) initiative, 493 girls and young women in 12 municipalities are more aware about GBV. This campaign complemented an intensive 7 days ESD training of trainers for 30 teachers from 10 schools from the Earthquake damaged areas. Twenty local development practitioners from earthquake affected municipalities have deepened their knowledge and understanding on Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA), as a result of a one-week training, aiming at strengthening local capacities and increasing the economic resilience of women and girls. A Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA) has been prepared by UN Women for 10 municipalities damaged by the earthquake, strengthening women's economic empowerment. The analysis aimed at identifying opportunities for employment, self-employment, expansion of productive activities and market access for vulnerable women is orienting the next phase of direct support to at least 7 value chains of women beneficiaries in at least 6

municipalities. In Kamza, around 30 women are benefitting from the value chain interventions, while other 200 women are expected to benefit from the upcoming value chain interventions during 2022. Twenty other women from Kamza have been empowered through a small business programme intervention. Effective partnerships with civil society and partner organizations were critical to accomplish results. In 2021, the project engaged 7 CSOs alongside dedicated experts to design and implement impactful interventions with a significant reach. UN Women's contributions complemented the results achieved by partners in UN organizations operating under the overall UN earthquake response in Albania: UNICEF, FAO, RCO, and UNDP. Such coordinated approach ensured a holistic approach to DRR in Albania. As part of the new 2022-2026 SN, the office is adopting an increased focus on mainstreaming gender in the National DRR Strategy and Action Plan. Funding for this outcome was made possible thanks to the Government of Sweden through the UN Albania Multi-Donor Trust Fund