

## **SD4E MID-TERM EVALUATION**

**Programme title:**  
**Skills Development for Employment**  
**Country:**  
**Republic of Albania**

Financed by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and  
implemented by the United Nations Development Programme

### **FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

ALMM	Active Labour Market Measures
EPP	Employment Promotion Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
IPMG	Integrated Policy Management Group
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LLRYEC	Local Level Responses to the Youth Employment Challenge Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoSWY	Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
NAVETQ	National Agency for VET and Qualifications
NES	National Employment Service
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SD4E	Skills Development for Employment
SNA	Skills Needs Analysis
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Educational Training
VT	Vocational Training
VSD	Vocational Skills Development
WBL	Work-Based Learning
YEM	Youth Employment and Migration Programme

## **PREFACE**

This mid-term evaluation covers assistance to the Republic of Albania's Skills Development for Employment Programme implemented by the United Nations and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation.

This Evaluation Report has been prepared by Dietmar Aigner and Sabina Ymeri during the period May to June 2017 and reflects the situation at 02 June 2017, the cut-off date for the Report. The factual basis was provided by formal programme documentation, regular programme progress reports, other relevant sectoral and regional documents and materials, and interviews with the main parties.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SD4E MID-TERM EVALUATION

#### Introduction

This mid-term evaluation covers assistance to the Republic of Albania's Skills Development for Employment (SD4E) Programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).

The objective of the Mid-term review is to assess progress made towards the achievement of programme objectives and outcomes as specified in the Programme Document. In addition, it assesses early signs of programme successes and/or failures with the goal of identifying necessary changes to be made to set the programme on-track to achieving its intended results. The Mid-term review also reviews the programme strategy, and potential risks to the sustainability of its interventions.

The factual basis was provided by formal programme documentation, regular programme progress reports, other relevant sectoral and regional documents and materials, and interviews with the main parties.

#### Programme under review

The SD4E Programme (total budget CHF 3,171.000, out of which CHF 3,000.000 are donated by SDC) is envisaged for a period of four years. The operationalization of the Programme commenced in January 2015, whereas the actual implementation started in June 2015. The programme is now entering the third year of implementation. The main partner is the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MoSWY) and its subordinated bodies such as the National Employment Services (NES) or the National Agency for Vocational and Educational Training (VET) and Qualifications (NAVETQ).

#### Key evaluation findings

**Programme strategy:** The SD4E Programme is addressing relevant development problems of Albania and is based on realistic underlying assumptions. The programme's intervention logic is sound and the theory of change underlying it - although implicit - is quite clear and based on an appropriate analysis of the context, needs, desired outcomes and a combination of intervention approaches at different levels.

Flexibility is a key feature of the programme, which allows UNDP to tailor its activities to government's priorities, without however expanding beyond the scope of the programme. SD4E indicators at outcome and output level are sometimes over-ambitious and some of them would benefit from reformulation.

**Progress towards results:** Overall, the programme is largely on track with the implementation of activities. However, the context in which the programme operates has slightly changed since the start of its implementation, and the required overall policy/decision-making process has slowed down over the course of the programme. Consequently, some of the planned activities have been delayed.

Frequent changes in management of the MoSWY in the last year have further contributed to uncertainties on the timing of some of the activities. The MoSWY itself has limited staff capacity and relies extensively on outside partners for fulfilling its mandate. Delays in the adoption of the new VET law and the subsequent postponement of the development of the regulatory framework also puts another strain on the programme. The announced major

restructuring process of one of the key partners and beneficiaries, the NES – to be transferred into a new Agency for Employment and Skills - will be a lengthy process. This process will impact across the majority of SD4E components.

Full accreditation of the VET schools is not likely to be achieved by the end of the programme, as the accreditation process is still at the early stage of preparation.

**Programme implementation and adaptive management:** The SD4E programme management stimulates a rather effective programme delivery. Delays occurred during SD4E implementation are mostly related to the political and administrative environment, most notably the slow process of decision-making within the MoSWY. In turn, some of the processes undertaken are complex and require lengthy consultations and buy-in by government partners.

As from the available narrative reports, reporting against the indicator framework is not applied. Some indicators are questionable as concerns their relevance and measurability and should be revised.

The programme has developed an excellent relationship of trust and mutual understanding with all key governmental beneficiaries and is also developing relationships with non-governmental partners, in particular private sector representatives such as employers' organisations and other associations. Coordination with other Swiss-funded actions is excellent and takes place both in formal and informal settings.

**Programme sustainability:** Risks and assumptions are properly identified. In view of the key risks which are related to policy/ policy-making, inclusion of risk assessment into progress reporting could help to attract more attention from the Programme Steering Committee on these risks which are mainly outside of the direct programme control.

The risk of government ownership fading away seems rather unlikely now. However political ambitions are not predictable and the 2017 general elections could have an impact on the programme as they might lead to a major reshuffling for government responsibilities and priorities. For the time being it is unlikely that this will bring about major changes in the desired system architecture for VET. SD4E lessons learnt are continuously explored and applied, but hardly documented.

Sustainability of the Programme outputs depends largely on the MoSWY. The rapid adoption and expansion of policy-related outputs is essential for the durability of results being achieved. There is a need to proceed quickly with all necessary VET by-laws. These new legal provisions altogether will also influence the future role and competencies of the agencies subordinated to the MoSWY.

## **Conclusions**

**Conclusion 1:** Overall, the SD4E Programme is highly relevant in its intervention approach and addresses crucial key issues in respect of Albania's labour market. The programme design has been sound and logical in approach. Relative to its given timeframe, implementation remains still challenging due to the external political situation within which the programme must operate.

**Conclusion 2:** Targeting the skill needs of young men and women, has been a success factor for this intervention. The programme also focuses well on facilitating some evidence-based policies in VET and VSD, on strengthening the capacity of Albanian central institutions to improve active labour market measures aligned with policy objectives. VET providers and the private sector could have been better addressed throughout the SD4E design. The Programme has recognised this need and has adjusted some activities allowing now a stronger involvement of the business sector.

**Conclusion 3:** SD4E preparation and implementation is characterised by a strong participatory process. Cooperation and communication with other Swiss-funded actions

acting in the same sector is properly ensured. An impressive number of outputs has been already produced, these are of good quality.

**Conclusion 4:** The SD4E Programme Team has been pro-active in reducing delays for those issues which were within direct control of the programme. However, frequent changes in the Minister position and thus the absence of continuous leadership and decision-making power at the MoSWY provides a serious drawback to the speedy adoption of programme outputs. In addition, prior to the parliamentary elections planned for June 2017, there is currently a political standstill also adversely influencing the political support and leadership needed by the Programme.

**Conclusion 5:** Government partners' commitment at NES and NAVETQ is excellent within the various SD4E Components but the pro-active take up of outcomes being achieved by the Programme varies and could have been more strongly demonstrated by the MoSWY, representing the political lead institution. The implementation and cooperation structures initiated by the Programme at technical level have encouraged the participation of all relevant government and administration stakeholders.

**Conclusion 6:** There is a clear team spirit within the Programme and implementation quality and visibility is obvious. There is also a strong and integrated programme management, coordination and reporting structure which is much appreciated by all partners.

**Conclusion 7:** SD4E is expected to achieve most of its defined outcomes within the current timeframe for implementation but results and their sustainability needs to be now in the focus. Adoption of strategic outputs and then transferring them into intermediate and wider outcomes is lagging behind schedule in some cases, where the appearance of the desired political effects needs more time to materialise. Much will depend on the pro-active engagement of the MoSWY in making the programme achievements a durable success.

**Conclusion 8:** A shared vision by the political representatives on the overall direction and future of the VET system and its institutional setup is still lacking and this adversely affects, in particular, VET and labour market reforms. Whilst the programme offers a significant improvement for VET-related policy making, in line with Albania's declared political goals for this sector, the full potential still needs to be fully understood and realised by the political authorities.

Initiatives for building up institutions and capacities for the new VET system in Albania are only at the beginning and often characterised by fragmentation, since the political leadership and pro-active management of the key Ministry in the sector, the MoSWY, is still uneven. Immediate strengthening the policy-making and monitoring capacities of the MoSWY will be key for effectively delivering the intended reform of the VET sector. In addition, the successful transfer of the NES into a new Agency for Employment and Skills, together with a substantial strengthening of the capacities in the NAVETQ for implementing the accreditation processes for VET providers are further indispensable elements for making the Programme but also the overall reform processes a full success.

## **Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** Considering the still scattered initiatives for building up institutions and capacities for VET in Albania, there is an urgent need for developing a clear institutional roadmap with the sequencing of decisions and steps to be made to realise a full-fledged VET reform at central level. The PSC should consider such requesting such guidance document from the SD4E Programme. UNDP in collaboration with other key partners such as the EU-IPA project operating also at policy level, should be entrusted to prepare such document.

**Recommendation 2:** Based on such roadmap, adequate in-house capacities for policy making, implementation and monitoring should be revised and strengthened both, at the

level of the MoSWY and its subordinated agencies (NES, NAVETQ). A coherent effort for capacity building involving the MoSWY as the lead sector institution, SDC, UNDP, EU and possibly other donors should be developed and implemented, with a time horizon possibly exceeding the current timeline of the SD4E Programme.

**Recommendation 3:** Considering programme sustainability, the Programme Steering Committee should increase the dialogue about urgent steps needed for ensuring proper sustainability of outputs. Urgent government actions such as a formal adoption and dissemination of programme outputs, political and administrative decisions to be taken indispensable for the sustainability and impact of certain programme outputs, etc. should be identified, agreed and closely monitored by the Programme Steering Committee.

**Recommendation 4:** Indicators given in the log frame matrix should be reviewed and where needed revised to allow a realistic appreciation of the SD4E outcomes and outputs and their actual achievement.

**Recommendation 5:** Lessons learned need to be more formally documented as part of progress reporting. In addition, the next workplan could include a section, detailing which particular lessons have been identified/ applied for preparing the work plan.



## MAIN REPORT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background

Albania's vocational education and training (VET) and vocational skills development (VSD) system all too often has failed to equip students with the requisite knowledge, competences and skills for a successful transition into the labour market. This has resulted in an unsuitably qualified labour force, skills shortages and soaring youth unemployment. Recognizing the need to systematically address employment by re-orienting the vocational education and training and vocational skills development system towards labour market needs, and modernizing and extending outreach of employment services, the Albanian government adopted the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) globally and regionally has built a strategic vision that recognizes the importance of creating employment opportunities for addressing both, economic growth and reduction of poverty, inequalities and exclusion. Indeed, the first outcome of the recently adopted United Nations Youth System Wide Action Plan focuses on Employment and Entrepreneurship with the intention to ensure greater opportunities for youth to secure decent work and income over the life-cycle, contributing to a virtuous circle of poverty reduction, sustainable development and social inclusion. To support the integration of various youth employment policy objectives through coordinated action, UNDP Albania, in collaboration with other UN agencies has designed and implemented several skills development / employment related interventions.

After almost nine years of experience addressing labour supply interventions, UNDP Albania's strategic vision is to contribute to building a labour-market focused skills development system that is suited to enhance the employment and entrepreneurship aspects of the unemployed in urban and rural areas, while simultaneously addressing the skills needs of those employed in the formal and informal sectors and emerging entrepreneurs.

The ambition of the Skills Development for Employment (SD4E) Programme is to make a systemic contribution to the modernization of Albania's VET/ VSD system by addressing several key challenges: skills mismatch and unequal access to employment and training services; labour market challenges in rural areas; insufficient governance of funding for employment and training; lack of coordination / collaboration in the system; inadequate labour market information; and insufficient quality and relevance of VET and VSD providers and their programmes. The overall goal of the programme is that "more young women and men in urban and rural areas in Albania are employed or self-employed."

The SD4E Programme, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and implemented by the UNDP, is a four-year long intervention which aims to ensure that more of the young Albanian men and women in urban and rural areas are employed or self-employed.

## 1.2. Purpose of the evaluation

The objective of the Mid-term review is to assess progress made towards the achievement of programme objectives and outcomes as specified in the Programme Document. In addition, it assesses early signs of programme successes and/or failures with the goal of identifying necessary changes to be made to set the programme on-track to achieving its intended results. The Mid-term review also reviews the programme strategy, and potential risks to the sustainability of its interventions. Overall, the Mid-term review is intended to have a formative nature and it intends to improve the programme's performance in the second half of the implementation phase.

The Mid-term review is expected to provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The Mid-term review team, composed of one international consultant as the Team Leader and one national consultant as the Team Specialist, reviewed all relevant sources of information including documents prepared by the SD4E Programme Team.

The Mid-term review team follows a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the SD4E Programme team, government counterparts, the UNDP Country Office, the Swiss Embassy in Tirana, and other key stakeholders.

## 1.3. Methodology

The Mid-term review focuses on all four SD4E programme outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Improving and diversifying employment promotion measures, and advancing their governance
- Outcome 2: Improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes (elements of dual system)
- Outcome 3: Quality assurance and accreditation of VET/ VSD providers
- Outcome 4: Anticipating skills needs in the short and medium term

In this respect, the Mid-term review assesses four areas of programme progress: 1) Project strategy; 2) Progress towards results; 3) Programme implementation and adaptive management; and 4) Sustainability.

Evaluation Questions were established in the terms of Reference - ToR for the evaluation (see [Annex 1](#)). Evaluation questions defined by the ToR are summarised below:

1. Programme Strategy:
  - Review the problem addressed by the programme and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the programme results as outlined in the programme document.
  - Review the relevance of the programme strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
  - Review how the programme addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the programme concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country?
  - Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the programme design.

- Undertake a critical analysis of the programme's log-frame indicators and targets, and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
  - Assess whether the programme's objectives and outcomes or components are clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame
  - Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects.
2. Progress towards results:
- Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-programme targets.
  - Identify remaining barriers to achieving the programme objective during the remaining implementation timeframe.
  - By reviewing the aspects of the programme that have already been successful, identify ways in which the programme can further expand these benefits.
3. Programme implementation and adaptive management
- Review overall effectiveness of programme management as outlined in the programme document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
  - Review any delays in programme's start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
  - Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
  - Examine the use of the programme's results framework/ log-frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.
  - Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
  - Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
  - Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
  - Coordination with other projects: How has the programme interacted and coordinated with other Swiss/non-Swiss project implementers and vice versa? Is there room for improvement and closer collaboration?
  - Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
  - Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
4. Sustainability
- Validate whether the risks identified in the Programme Document, Annual Project Review/ and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date.
  - What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the programme's outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the programme benefits continue to flow? Is there

sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the programme? Are lessons learned being documented by the Programme Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the programme and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

The methodology for preparing this evaluation report comprised initial data collection, document research and literature survey, and interviews (see [Annex 5](#) and [Annex 6](#)). Following an initial desk analysis undertaken by the Evaluators, primary data has been gathered through structured and in-depth interviews with all the relevant stakeholders in Albania. The field visit to Albania enabled direct contact with implementing bodies, programme partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries and end-users and constitutes an important source of information.

In preparing this mid-term evaluation, an inception report, along with the detailed methodology, was prepared and approved by the end of May 2017.

Pre-defined indicators of achievement/ monitoring indicators have been followed up where possible. Moreover, further detailed evaluation indicators in line with the evaluation criteria have been applied for judgement. [Annex 2](#) provides a detailed evaluation matrix, linking evaluation issues and questions to evaluation criteria, indicators, sources of information and methods of data collection

This evaluation strictly adheres to the transparency norms and ethical principles set by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

#### **1.4. Constraints and limitations of the evaluation**

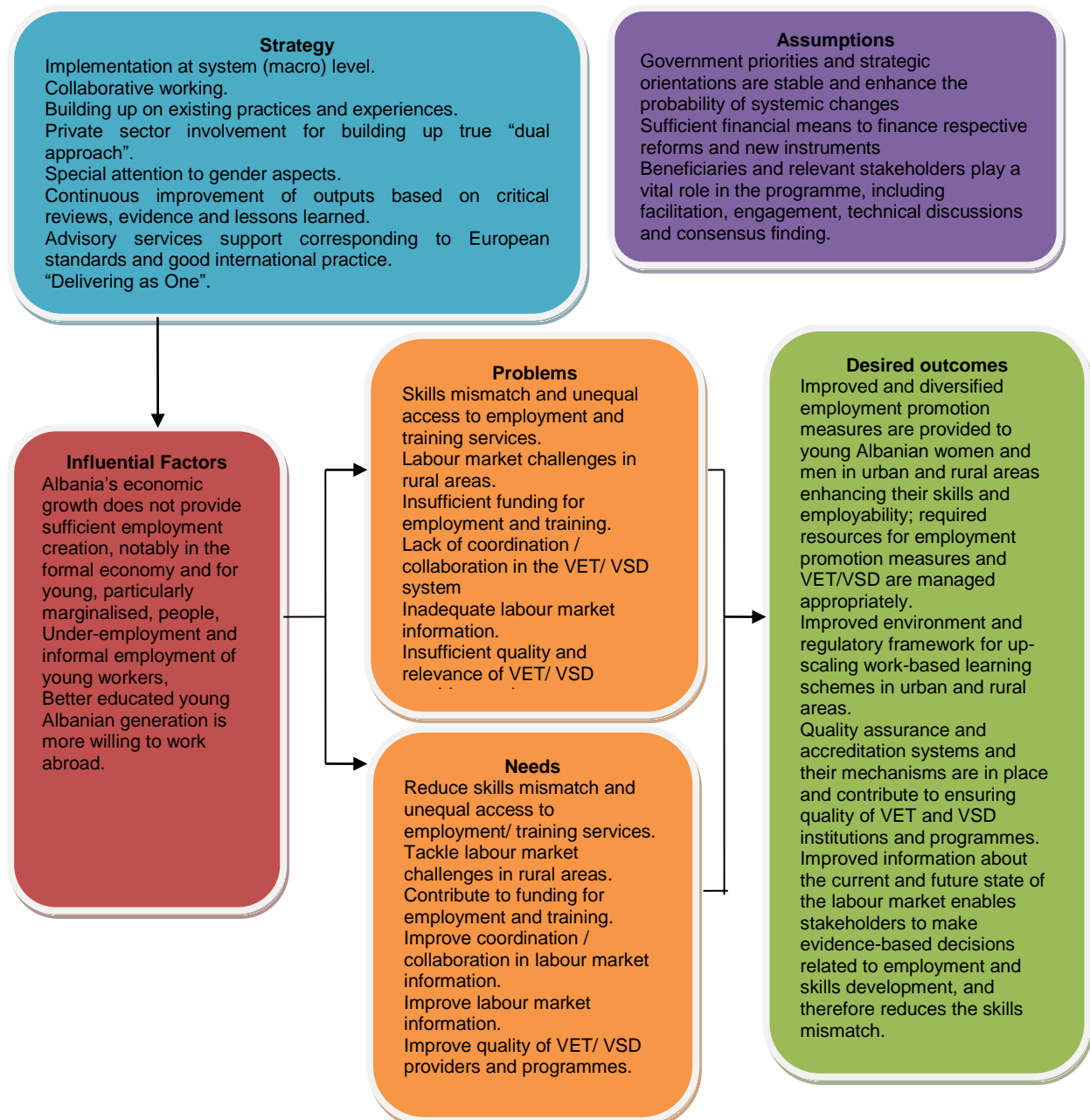
The level of analysis that has been achieved by this final evaluation was restricted by constraints in the field, namely the limited availability of in-country data and the limited number and quality of interview responses, as well as by the resources allocated to the evaluation in terms of staff and time.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTION CARRIED OUT

### 2.1. Initial concept

This evaluation report includes an initial draft of the Theory of Change of the programme under review as a benchmark for comparison during the evaluation and as common start point of agreement between the consultant and the managers of the evaluation. Overall, a Theory of Change is the product of a series of critical-thinking exercises that provides a comprehensive picture of the early- and intermediate-term changes in a given intervention that are needed to reach a long-term goal articulated by the intervention.

A Theory of Change model for the evaluated SD4E, based on a simplified re-construction of the underlying intervention logic, is presented below:



The ambition of the four year SD4E Programme is to make a systemic contribution to the modernisation of Albania's VET/ VSD system by addressing several key challenges:

- Skills mismatch and unequal access to employment and training services;
- Labour market challenges in rural areas;
- Insufficient governance of funding for employment and training;
- Lack of coordination / collaboration in the system;
- Inadequate labour market information; and
- Insufficient quality and relevance of VET and VSD providers and their programmes.

The programme approach combines a variety of elements, and is driven by the following key notions: a) build up on existing practices, b) activate existing resources and capacitate stakeholder groups to drive the reform process forward, c) provide evidence for decision making, and d) closely engage the private sector to increase the labour market orientation of VET/ VSD provisioning.

The total budget of the SD4E Programme is CHF 3,171.000, out of which CHF 3,000.000 are donated by SDC. UNDP's contribution amounts to CHF 171,000 (USD 180,000), particularly related to Outcome 1.

Direct beneficiaries include the MoSWY, NES, NAVETQ, INSTAT and the private sector (businesses, associations, professional representations). Indirect beneficiaries comprise the decentralised service of the direct beneficiaries and the Albanian youth in general.

## **2.2. Detailed description of its development: description of the hypothesis of change of the programme**

The SD4E Programme, financed by the SDC, and implemented by the UNDP, is a four-year long intervention. SDC and UNDP formalized the implementation arrangements through a Third-Party Cost-Sharing Agreement on December 12, 2014, covering the period of December 15, 2014 – December 31, 2018. The operationalization of the Programme commenced in January 2015, whereas the actual implementation started in June 2015. The programme is now entering the third year of implementation.

As of December 31, 2016, the level of disbursement and commitments of SDC funds reached 56%, whereas the programme's total level of disbursements and commitments combined amounted to 58%. In 2016, the SD4E programme reached 100% of its planned expenditures. Overall, budget disbursement commitment has been in line with the annual work plans.

The main activities and outputs produced so far are briefly summarised below. The structure of presentation follows the programme objectives and outputs:

### ***Outcome 1 of SD4E: Improving and diversifying employment promotion measures, and advancing their governance***

#### ***Output 1.1: Management of funds dedicated to employment promotion measures and VET/VSD is improved to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of fund utilisation.***

Revision of operational guidelines for the implementation of Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) in 2016: With support from SD4E the portfolio of employment promotion programmes for Albania expanded in 2016. Following support provided to the National

Employment Services (NES) under the Local Level Responses to the Youth Employment Challenge (LLRYEC) project for revising all operational guidelines (related to the selection, and implementation and monitoring of employment promotion programmes) pertaining to the NES and its regional/local employment offices, further adjustments were made. Capacity support on the revised procedures was provided at all levels (central and regional/local) targeting both employment specialists and directors of regional/local employment offices. SD4E has provided technical support to the MoSWY and NES in policy discussion pertinent to the establishment of an employment fund and/or alternative ways of managing the employment portfolio.

Review of scoring system / computerized application management system: Parallel to the operational guidelines, SD4E undertook a review of the scoring system for the allocation of ALMM funding, with the aim of identifying problems that have emerged, and determine/undertake necessary improvements. The changes were particularly necessary for the revisions made to the employment promotion programmes implemented in 2016. Based on the findings of this review the scoring system was revised. A computerized management system was also developed and used by NES for the evaluation of both phases of implementing ALMMs (March and August 2016). The system aimed at safeguarding transparent management, accuracy and assessment by the respective evaluation committee.

***Output 1.2: Operational plan is adopted to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the implementation of employment promotion measures.***

Complementary research on current employment measures in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equality, equity and distortive effects has been carried out. Five employment promotion programmes have been designed / revised, including programmes for women heads of households; orphans and youth and an action plan for the social re-integration of economic aid beneficiaries has been supported. Following a working group approach the drafting of the package of the ALMMs, i.e. operational plan has been facilitated. Training to staff responsible for applying and pursuing the operational plan has been provided.

Employment in Rural Areas: To simultaneously gauge the size or the rural employment/unemployment/ underemployment with the aim of informing future employment services to rural areas, and to understand the scale of informal employment in these areas, SD4E supported a study of the rural labour market. An international consultant will support the programme in mid-2017 in drafting policy recommendations on the extension of employment services to rural areas.

***Output 1.3: Impact measurement system is established enabling to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of employment promotion measures.***

Methodology for impact assessment of ALMMs: SD4E provided a preliminary analysis on the strengths and weaknesses of the current system of impact measurement. The programme supported the improvement of existing methods and elaborated complementary systems that provide valid, robust and informative results and that can be applied recurrently. During the first half of 2016, efforts focused on data collection for the impact evaluation of ALMMs implemented during 2014-2015, during the second half of 2016 the methodology for carrying out the impact assessment was developed. In addition, in collaboration with NES, it was ensured that the operational guidelines for the implementation of ALMMs included specific provisions on monitoring and evaluation.

Supporting the upgrade of the NES Information System: A preliminary assessment of the NES information system was carried out in mid-2016. A calendar/ scheduling system for the management of unemployed job-seekers periodic meetings/ counselling sessions with employment specialists was developed. The module is fully integrated with the current

national database and the current NES system in use. It covers all specifications demanded from the beneficiary (NES employees). The early prototype was fine-tuned in close collaboration with the Tirana Regional Employment Office, and the roll out of the calendar/scheduling system has been closely monitored. Once under full implementation at the Tirana office, the system will be used by other Employment Offices with large flows of unemployed jobseekers. In addition, the tracking module for registered unemployed jobseekers who subsequently benefit from either employment promotion programmes, and/or training from public vocational training (VT) centres has been developed.

***Output 1.4: New employment promotion measures are piloted and tested.***

Piloting of self-employment measure: In March 2016, the first round of the self-employment measure was launched, and potential applicants were invited to apply through the SD4E programme platform. 644 applications were received, out of which 440 were deemed as complete and were subject to further assessment on individual entrepreneurial skills and aptitude. 6 regional meetings were held informing applicants of the programme requirements and stages.

Of the 200 applicants invited to attend the self-employment training, 103 applicants registered. During the June-July 2016, a training programme was delivered to registered trainees. The candidates had the opportunity to attend training sessions on self-employment and preparation of business plans. 66 participants were positively evaluated, and were thus eligible to continue the process into mentoring and funding. 38 participants progressed further, and were thus eligible to register their companies. The mentoring phase of the programme commenced in September 2016 with mentors working alongside each participant for a 2-month period. As each participant worked through the mentoring process the business concept or idea was to be tested to make sure that it is feasible and potentially sustainable. The participants were guided and assisted in fully comprehending all the key issues and risks in establishing the new business. In October and November 2016, the finalists had the opportunity to present their business ideas in a fair format. By the end of December 2016, 34 out of the 38 participants have been supported by the programme through start-up grants. The second phase of this activity was launched in December 2016. The training phase was completed in early May 2017 and it is expected that more than 50 new businesses will be established and mentored through the programme.

The self-employment measure is currently being managed by SD4E, with the inclusion of NES and private sector representatives in the evaluation, selection and mentoring process. It is expected that responsibility will be fully transferred to NES by late 2018.

***Outcome 2 of SD4E: Improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes (elements of dual system)***

***Output 2.1: Feasibility study on work-based learning schemes in Albania is completed identifying best practices models.***

Feasibility Study on work-based learning (WBL): The feasibility study on models of WBL commenced at the end of October 2016. The feasibility study team outlined a detailed work plan which was discussed in the last WBL working group, where the experts presented the approach, tools and methodology to be followed. The collection of data has been done through semi-structured interviews at VET providers and companies that apply schemes related to WBL. The cost estimates combine micro and macro approaches – the first will attempt to shed light on spending according to functional parameters – leading to unit costs on case by case basis, the second to enable an understanding of availability of public funding to support a possible upscale of WBL schemes.



*Micro Approach:* The micro approach attempted to estimate the costs at unit level involved in the WBL schemes pertaining to this study at VET schools. This allowed obtaining information on measurement of unit costs at micro level regarding schools and companies that were interviewed. The interviews also provided information on the benefits of WBL at company level regarding the impact of training on the performance of enterprises and on the employee productivity.

*Macro Approach:* The macro approach entailed the analysing of the VET financing by the state budget for a retrospective period of 5 years and by considering mid-term perspectives of VET financing in Albania. This has been carried out through desk research of Annual State budgets, the Budget of MoSWY, the Medium-term Budget Programme and other financing schemes and by direct interviews. The findings enable a better understanding of the cost-benefits of the WBL schemes, to inform policy formulation on the relevant financing requirements.

The (draft) feasibility study and preliminary scoring tool was consulted with stakeholders in early June 2017. Upon its finalisation, a roadmap for further action is expected to be developed and guide the policy and institutional steps on the selection of and upscaling of model(s) for work-based-learning.

***Output 2.2: Models of work-based learning most relevant for system change are operationalised (for priority occupations).***

Technical support: SD4E supported various stakeholders and counterparts including MoSWY, NAVETQ, VET providers, private sector and other partner organizations implementing activities related to VET and employment. MoSWY has been supported in: 1) Conceptual support for events that MoSWY organized in the frame of VET promoting; 2) Support and facilitate Donor's Government VET coordination meeting which provided a snapshot of the coordinated efforts and interventions of the various partners and donors in VET sector; 3) Social Good Summit, which was organized in one of the VET schools with IT profile in Tirana; 4) Participate and provide inputs to various roundtables and debates on VET related issues.

The progress of work under these outputs 2.1 and 2.2 is closely related with the development of the legislative framework for VET. Following the late adoption of the new VET framework law in early 2017, a series of bylaws need to be developed which will be decisive in terms of shaping the future VET system in the country. SD4E, along with other development partners, has provided support to the MoSWY in developing the VET law and will continue work for the bylaws. At the same time, MoSWY has stalled the establishment of sectoral committees with private sector participation, which has resulted in a delay of SD4E outputs planned under this component.

As concerns the work on the VET law, SD4E assisted the MoSWY primarily with technical considerations based on their ad-hoc requirements. The final draft of the law can be considered as a legislative frame, often lacking specific provisions; thus, actual implementability depends heavily on a proper secondary legislation.

***Output 2.3: Regulatory framework that allows for implementation of the models is elaborated and adopted.***

*Related activities have commenced only recently.*

*Progress has been meagre in policy decision-making by the MoSWY relevant to the development of the VET law and secondary legislation. The project has played an active role in the policy discussions and is planning to continue its support for the development of VET by-laws in coordination with other development partners.*

### ***Outcome 3 of SD4E: Quality assurance and accreditation of VET/VSD providers***

#### ***Output 3.1: Policy and institutional environment for quality assurance and accreditation is developed.***

Designed interventions for a widely consulted “VET quality framework at the system level in Albania”: SD4E initiated the process of contracting international expertise for “*Designing and validating with stakeholders a VET Quality framework at the system level in Albania.*” The purpose was to articulate and agree with stakeholders’ vision, objectives, targets and standards on VET quality. Given that many donors are currently improving several quality aspects at the providers’ level, SD4E aims to put a frame on quality at the macro-level.

Improved VET Draft Law and new relevant sub-legal act on quality: The programme team provided technical inputs and comments to the MoSWY on the draft VET Law. Furthermore, SD4E in cooperation with NAVETQ finalized the draft order/guideline for “*Conducting Self-Assessment in the Institutions Offering Vocational Education and Training*”, which was submitted for signature to the Minister in June 2017. This important sub-legal act formalizes and institutionalizes the self-assessment process at the providers’ level (VET schools and VT centres), equally applicable for both public and private operators.

Intensified consultation, coordination and planning of future VET quality interventions, with national stakeholders, VET providers, donors, partners and experts: This was achieved mainly through the technical working group meetings on VET Quality Assurance (held twice during 2016), donors’ platforms of exchange or, additional meetings and consultations. Continuous communication and meetings with MoSWY and NAVETQ took place to discuss the needs of the institutions and tailor the next interventions to these needs. Regular consultation and communication with VET providers throughout 2016 with VET schools concerning their current self-assessment practices were carried out. Following drafting “*Guidelines for Conducting Self-Assessment in the Institutions Offering Vocational Education and Training*”, wide consultation took place. Regular communication has been maintained with partners supporting the VET system in Albania (i.e. European Training Foundation) or planning to implement future interventions in VET (i.e. World Bank).

Sound and evidence-based policy advice, guiding government decisions in assuring quality for Private VET Providers: Following the analysis conducted on the licensing and inspection procedures for private VT providers and the establishment of their database, the SD4E Programme provided to the Minister relevant policy recommendations.

#### ***Output 3.2: Quality assurance and accreditation criteria, standards, mechanisms and tools (at providers’ level) are developed and adopted.***

Implementation of the “Self-Assessment Guidelines” in 39 VET school and 10 VT Centres through NAVETQ: SD4E prepared two training sessions for supporting the application of the self-assessment process at the Providers level, during 2017. A training-of-trainers programme has been delivered to NAVETQ. Further, a tailored training programme for VET providers, has been designed and conducted by both NAVETQ and the Programme Team. The self-assessment tool and methodology has been developed and closely consulted with stakeholders. It is expected to be rolled out in September 2017, i.e. the new school year. The self-assessment exercise, to be undertaken by all VET schools and training centres, is an important first step towards the shaping of the quality assurance system.

The ongoing work in defining a good VET provider in the Albanian context contributes to both Output 3.1 and 3.2. On one hand, it serves as an input for policy makers and VET practitioners in further developing VET providers, both public and private, in Albania. It also initiates a debate among concerned actors on policy and practitioners level on fundamental VET quality aspects to be addressed both at school and at system level. Even though this work has the character of setting a vision rather than going deep into details, it nevertheless serves as a basis to articulate a national vision, incl. possibly key objectives on VET quality, and thereby support strategic VET development. Lastly, it will serve as a development tool/input rather than for (quality) control reasons and it will support the creation of a common understanding on what a good school is.

***Output 3.3: Quality assurance systems and accreditation procedures are applied in selected VET and VSD providers.***

*Related activities have commenced only recently.*

The project has worked closely with NAVETQ and other stakeholders in defining the desired features and feasibility of the future quality assurance system. The studies of best practices, consultations and support for the self-assessment tool under outputs 3.1 and 3.2 have contributed towards increased awareness and the initial stages of creating a common understanding on the desired standards. The actual development of the standards for quality assurance system is a lengthy process that will likely strain the resources of NAVETQ and rely heavily on the SD4E Programme as well as other partners. Hence, the accreditation process is not likely to commence before the end of 2018. Furthermore, following the development of quality standards, the government will need to decide whether and when to embark on an accreditation process that will require substantial human and financial resources.

***Output 3.4: Information on the quality assurance and accreditation framework is provided to stakeholders and interested groups.***

*Related activities have commenced only recently.*

Progress under this component is pending the commencement and results of the self-assessment exercise.

***Outcome 4 of SD4E: Anticipating skills needs in the short and medium term***

***Output 4.1: Inter-departmental LMI working group is established with a clear mandate and is fully operational.***

Key activity or this output has been the establishment of a coordination mechanism among various providers and users of LMI. A working group composed of representatives from INSTAT, the NES, the NAVETQ and MoSWY has been set up and is operating. Ultimately, the aim of the is that this platform becomes institutionalized.

***Output 4.2: Current LMI system is analysed, information demand and gaps are identified to enhance quality and relevance of LMI, and to enable skills forecasting.***

National List of Occupations and Occupational Descriptions: Following a preliminary assessment of the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) the revision of the National List of Occupations was identified as a pressing need. The aim of the classification system is to facilitate dialogue between the labour market and the education and training sector, boost skills-based job matching, and allow for international comparison across occupations. To adhere to international reporting requirements, the national list of occupations should have 100% matching with ISCO at the 3-digit level; however, this has not been the case with the existing list. SD4E supported NAVETQ in the process of elaborating occupational

descriptions both through securing inter-institutional collaboration, and outreach to the private sector. Whereas ISCO-08 sets the basis for defining all occupations, it is necessary that the descriptions capture the realities of the Albanian labour market. An independent organization of employers and business associations, was entrusted with ensuring that the structure of the classification system reflects private sector needs, and with the elaboration of over 270 occupational descriptions linked to the private sector. Expertise has also been provided for the elaboration of occupational descriptions for the remaining categories. The National List of Occupations has been shared with relevant stakeholders and has yet to be approved through a Decision of the Council of Ministers

***Output 4.3: Methods and tools that allow for skills forecasting and LMI are improved and institutionalised.***

Skills Needs Analysis (SNA) 2017: The latest SNA in Albania was carried out in 2014. SD4E provided technical support to the NES and Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) in implementing the methodological phase of the SNA 2017, including a further update and fine-tuning of the methodology, review of the questionnaire, sample size and criteria definition to have both national and regional SNA data with the same survey design and tools. A service provider has been contracted for implementing the SNA 2017.

***Output 4.4: Stakeholders are capacitated to utilise improved LMI for their decision-making.***

Online portals on Labour Market Information: Two web-based products have been developed and support information dissemination on the labour market and VET providers namely: 1) The Web Application on Labour Market Information and Trends; and 2) The Online Platform for Public and Private VT Providers. The Web Application targets mainly youth, and is designed to provide necessary information tailored to the expectations and interest of this target group, including information on career prospects of selected occupations, employment trends, wages, etc. The VT Portal creates an online platform for informing the public about opportunities offered by public and private providers of VT. Currently, 39 private VT providers have registered online.

### 3. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

This chapter examines the performance of the SD4E Programme, based on considerations of needs assessment and design, inputs, outputs, ownership, results and sustainability, set against the Evaluation Questions detailed in Annex 1.

#### 3.1 Programme strategy

***The SD4E Programme is addressing relevant development problems of Albania and is based on realistic underlying assumptions.***

Albania is undergoing wide-ranging legislative and policy reforms in education, with plans to modernise its employment services and policies. Reform VET is part of the Economic Reform Programme and National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) and Action Plan 2020. Responsibility falls under the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MoSWY), which is overhauling the legal framework for VET and employment; reorganising the VET provider network; developing an Albanian Qualifications Framework; curricula revision and introducing practice learning (with dual system elements); quality assurance and teacher training.

Overall, the programme design is well based on a thorough needs assessment and identification of the challenges and given contexts. It is based on the problems and challenges identified by the NESS 2012 – 2020. The NESS emphasizes the emerging need to bring the development of skills in line with labour market requirements. This aim is seen as a clear priority of the Albanian government.

The programme's intervention logic is sound and the theory of change underlying it - although implicit - is quite clear and based on an appropriate analysis of the context, needs, desired outcomes and a combination of intervention approaches at different levels (see also [Annex 3](#)).

The programme context has been assessed realistically and underlying assumptions and risks are still pertinent. Retrospectively, some parts of the programme design may have however been overly ambitious, in particular with relevance to VET and the considerable amount of time and resources for achieving the desired systemic change in the entire VET sector.

***The SD4E Programme strategy is very well thought through.***

The given programme strategy encompasses a policy/ institutional support project which is an appropriate mechanism for achieving the given outcomes and impact. Hence, due to the given complexity and multi-stakeholder involvement and the need to ensure continuous and timely support from the political decision-makers results are harder to achieve over the given relatively modest timeframe.

The programme deploys an effective intervention logic with an adequate mix of research to sustain evidence-based policy making; support for institutional building and inter-governmental coordination including capacity development; as well as development of regulatory instruments. The role of technical backstopping/ policy advice has become much more prominent during implementation than initially envisaged at the design stage.

The four programme components are closely interlinked and cross-fertilisation occurs between the different components as well as between SD4E and other projects, in particular other SDC-funded projects and the EU-IPA action, running in parallel at the MoSWY. Overall, the SD4E Programme has a holistic approach.

Lessons from previous projects (Youth Employment and Migration Programme - YEM, LLRYEC and other institutional building UNDP projects) have been incorporated. The programme approach also benefitted from lessons learnt from other partners. i.e. other SDC projects operating in the same sector, in particular from those exploring/ promoting work-based learning (WBL) models.

***The SD4E Programme is in line with the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014 - 2020 and the NESS 2014 – 2020.***

The programme has been developed in close consultation with government representatives and other stakeholders. Overall, the government has high ownership over the programme, due to both its relevance to government priorities and the highly inclusive approach applied by UNDP both at design stage as well as during implementation. All activities are developed in close collaboration with and widely consulted with the government key partners (MoSWY, NES and NAVETQ) as well as with private sector representatives and other stakeholders.

Flexibility is a key feature of the programme, which allows UNDP to tailor its activities to government's priorities, without however expanding beyond the scope of the programme. In fact, the high degree of flexibility can be regarded as one of the positive key features of the SD4E design. It appears to be much more responsive to changing needs than for instance EU programmes in the same area. Examples of this flexibility can be seen in the technical backstopping for the MoSWY, or in the organization of VET fairs and similar activities. Furthermore, the establishment of the Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG) in the sector of Employment and Social Policy is an opportunity for strengthening policy coordination both at inter-ministerial and inter-departmental levels. The IPMG is a new forum which needs to be reinforced in order to guide the policymaking process and follow progress achieved in NESS implementation. UNDP and SD4E have provided support to the IPMG at policy level and for the technical secretariat.

***Relevant gender issues have been incorporated in the SD4E programme design.***

The review of gender balance on the programme indicates that the programme maintains a gender sensitive approach. The defined target group of the programme are young women and men. Overall, the programme recognises that the situation of women in the Albanian labour market is less advantageous than that of men. It is stated that gender relevance will for instance be one of the variables to keep in mind during implementation for selection of priority occupations. Also, some of the introduced tools (i.e. ALMMs) target women directly. Indicators have been gender disaggregated wherever possible.

***SD4E indicators at outcome and output level are sometimes over-ambitious and some of them would benefit from reformulation.***

Indicators defined by the Programme Document are often relevant and fulfil SMART criteria. Baselines were not identified by the programme design but were later identified during the inception stage, to the extent possible. There is a number of indicators however, in particular at output level, that are defined overly ambitious and/ or related to higher levels of the intervention logic (outcome, impact). In some cases, data is/ will not be available; in other cases, the phrasing of indicators places an unrealistic burden on programme achievements, i.e. adoption of legislation after the programme has completed its preparatory work.

Consequently, some indicators would benefit from a revision (see separate [Annex 4.2](#) on logframe). Up to now the project reporting is not using the established indicators. Programme reporting is primarily done in a narrative way, without providing regular information on the achieved progress based on the given indicators.

***SD4E outcomes, objectives and components are clear and mostly feasible, subject to the suggested changes.***

The four defined outcomes directly respond to national policies, systems and services. In the main, the targets set are challenging but realistic and can be achieved within the given budget and time. This observation is valid for most parts of the programme.

An exception might be seen for the outcome/outputs related to VET accreditation, which is not likely to be achieved due to the need for the process to mature through a careful mapping, identification of current practices as well as development of new quality standards. Once the quality system has been developed and implemented, a political decision still needs to be made regarding the feasibility of embarking on an accreditation process which has political, other than human and financial costs. All these indispensable requirements for establishing a fully-fledged VET accreditation system, considerably exceed the intervention scope of the SD4E Programme as well as its given timeframe.

***The SD4E programme has already produced some beneficial outputs and results but many activities have commenced just recently.***

The programme is in the middle of its implementation and many activities have just started. However, encouraging results are identified in Outcome 1, with the increased transparency of EPP evaluation and the support for improving NES' capacity.

The programme/ UNDP has developed trust within all partner institutions, which is beneficial towards the achievement of the desired outcomes. Overall, UNDP has a certain leverage on policy decisions due to close dialogue with government authorities and the perceived high quality of their work/ advice. This leverage also supports programme implementation and achievement of results.

The various studies and reports already produced under the different components contribute to the creation of a knowledge-management resource base that may be used to inform policy making in the medium term.

## 3.2 Progress towards results

***The review of SD4E Programme progress report indicates the status of completed activities. However, it does not enable a thorough understanding of the degree of achievement of project outputs and eventual results. Overall, the programme is largely on track with the implementation of activities.***

The given logframe indicators at outcome level have been followed up the extent possible (details please see [Annex 4.1](#)). Based on the analysis of progress reports and annual workplans, it may be concluded that the programme is largely on track with the implementation of activities, as follows:

Outcome 1: Improved and diversified employment promotion measures are provided to young Albanian women and men in urban and rural areas enhancing their skills and employability; required resources for employment promotion measures and VET/VSD are managed appropriately.

Eight of the twelve output indicators under Outcome 1 have already been achieved, or are currently underway. These are related to the adjustment of existing employment promotion programmes and introduction of new ones; and the governance and operational systems for managing ALMMs. Currently the programme is supporting the piloting of the measurement system, which is a precondition for the elaboration of schedule and budgets, as well as assessments.

At outcome level, indicator I1 (number of employment programmes in urban areas) shows positive progress, with four revised and one new employment promotion measure adopted and enforced by the government. Indicators specific to rural employment are not likely to be achieved over the course of the programme, due to the context which is not favourable for extending services to rural areas in the medium term. It cannot be determined due to lack of data. Indicators related with participation rates in employment promotion programmes (EPP) show an increase in the number of university graduates benefitting from internship programmes. Between 2014 and 2016 there has been a decrease in the absolute number as well as relative percentage of young registered jobseekers. This maybe somewhat related to the decrease in youth unemployment over the same period. Other data on EPP participation rates (I3 – I6) cannot be determined at this stage due to unavailability of data, or must be viewed with caution given the low numbers of EPP participants compared to total registered jobseekers.

Outcome 2: Improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes in urban and rural areas.

Four of the six outputs under Outcome 2 are currently underway, with clear progress on the feasibility study for WBL (output 2.1) and the development of the VET law (output 2.3). Further development is subject to progress with the secondary legislation for the VET law (output 2.2; 2.3). At outcome level, indicators have not been achieved yet for reasons outside the programme's control, mainly the challenging context in which the legal and governance reform for WBL takes place.

Outcome 3: Quality assurance and accreditation systems and their mechanisms are in place and contribute to ensuring quality of VET and VSD institutions and programmes.

Two of the twelve output indicators have been completed or are currently under elaboration (output 3.2). Completion of the 3.1 outputs, related to the policy and institutional environment for quality assurance, is subject to further analysis and consultations, alongside the development of the regulatory framework. The remainder is scheduled to be pursued in the following months. At outcome level, the programme is currently working with NAVETQ to



support the self-assessment exercise and to ensure progress towards the definition of standards and models.

Outcome 4: Improved information about the current and future state of the labour market enables relevant stakeholders to make evidence based decisions related to employment and skills development, and therefore reduces the skills mismatch.

Four of the nine output indicators under outcome 4 have been achieved (output 4.1 LMI working group) or are under progress (output 4.2 – SNA and mid-term forecast). Following the completion of output 4.2, work on institutionalisation of LMI and capacitation of stakeholders for its use are scheduled in the following months. At outcome level, the indicators will be determined at a later stage.

***Compared to the time when the programme was launched, the political environment in which SD4E operates has become more challenging.***

The context in which the programme operates has slightly changed since the start of its implementation, the required overall policy/ decision-making process having slowed down over the course of the programme. Consequently, some of the planned activities have been suspended or are delayed.

Frequent changes in management of the MoSWY in the last year have further contributed to uncertainties on the timing of some of the activities. Following the 2017 general elections, a new government is expected to be in place only by September 2017.

The MoSWY itself has limited staff capacity and relies extensively on outside partners for fulfilling its mandate. The issue is exacerbated by the excessive workload put on the ministry for the ensuring the centralised management of VET schools. It is likely that this will be partially resolved with the restructuring of the NES, which however is also unlikely to become a speedy and swift process.

Delays in the adoption of the new VET law and the subsequent postponement of the development of the regulatory framework also puts another strain on the programme, which now will need to achieve many of its outputs only during the last year of implementation.

The announced major restructuring process of one of the key partners and beneficiaries, the NES – to be transferred into a new Agency for Employment and Skills - will be a lengthy process. This process will impact across the majority of SD4E components, in particular the management of employment funds, consolidation of the self-employment programme; as well as management of the VET schools. Considering the complexity of the envisaged institutional transition, the restructuring process will likely continue beyond 2018.

In addition, full accreditation of the VET schools is not likely to be achieved by the end of the programme, as the accreditation process is still at the early stage of preparation. In this respect, NAVETQ as the manager of the process also needs to expand its capacity in terms of number of staff to manage the new quality process effectively.

Deep involvement of the private sector is a key precondition in particular for achieving the Outcome 2. Institutionalisation of the inclusion of the business sector has not happened so far mostly due to resistance/ reluctance on the side of the MoSWY. However, there are also structural problems within the private sector which were already recognised in the programme design.

***Success factors benefitting the expansion of SD4E programme results are threefold.***

Firstly, it is the involvement of UNDP for implementing the programme. UNDP assumes the role of a close and trusted policy advisor for the MoSWY and other institutions. Consequently, it also has gained increase leverage on the policy-making process.

Secondly, the close coordination with stakeholders and the role of donor dialogue facilitator has contributed to the development of a joint government-donor agenda on VET. Such joint agenda is limiting overlapping and other loss of efficiency.

Thirdly, the effective combination of research with technical and policy level advice helps to achieve true results.

### 3.3 Programme implementation and adaptive management

***SD4E programme management stimulates a rather effective programme delivery.***

The programme is managed by a Programme Steering Committee (PSC) comprising UNDP, government institutions and the SDC which is a good platform for coordination and oversight. The PSC performs well as the main coordination body and link to the government. The PSC convenes twice per year; however, coordination takes place in an informal manner as well. For the programme, decision-making and reporting lines are clear and take place in a timely manner. The programme is demonstrating flexibility and can quickly adapt to changing circumstances or emerging needs. Any changes are communicated to the SDC in advance.

The programme reporting is based on a semi-annual and annual progress report, which is submitted to the PSC for approval. Other reports (mission, output) are also shared with beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Annual workplans with timelines for implementation are properly developed in line with the given results framework.

The Programme Team in charge of implementation consists of a Programme Manager, who is the primary interlocutor with beneficiaries and SDC; two full time professionals (Deputy Team Leader and Outcome Coordinator) and two part-time Programme Specialists in charge of the self-employment and innovation measures respectively. The Programme Team has slightly changed from the initial envisaged structure to better suit the actual programme needs. SD4E is implemented by a high-quality team of professionals. The various UNDP staff are highly motivated and dedicated to the programme, often working beyond the call of duty. Stakeholders at all levels confirm the constructive and professional attitude of the Programme Team.

***Delays occurred during SD4E implementation are mostly related to the political and administrative environment.***

There were no delays in starting the programme, as SD4E resumed some of the activities that were already being implemented under its predecessor, the LLRYEC project. VET has been however a new activity segment for UNDP. It started off with a series of intense consultation and mapping exercises; as well as a roadmap for the optimisation of the VET schools.

Delays have occurred over the course of the programme, in particular under Outcome 2 and 3. These delays are closely related/ dependent on the development of the VET law (adopted only in February 2017) and its relevant bylaws. SD4E has tried to mitigate adverse effects through active engagement in the development process and by performing an advisory role to the MoSWY.

In general, implementation delays have occurred due to the slow process of decision-making within the MoSWY. In turn, some of the processes undertaken require lengthy consultations and buy-in by government partners.

***Work-planning processes are clearly results based.***

The preparation of annual work plans takes full account of the programme's results-framework. Main activities necessary to meet the programme's outputs and outcomes are clearly listed, accompanied by realistic, appropriate time periods for specifying when activities will take place. Individual activities are broken down into manageable tasks. A task is something that can be managed by an individual and is easy to visualize in terms of resources required and the time it will take to complete. Key events or achievements (milestones) which allow also the monitoring of progress are defined.

***The SD4E results framework directly supports implementation and management.***

The results framework serves as the basis for the development of annual workplans, which detail the sub/activities to be carried out in the next period together with relevant timelines. Indicator baselines have been developed at inception stage. A Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan has also been developed, which indicates the frequency of monitoring and sources for monitoring progress indicators.

However, progress reporting does not clearly incorporate the M&E milestones to track progress, which makes it difficult to assess the extent of achievements in each area.

***The available SD4E monitoring tools are appropriate but not fully exploited by the programme for management and progress reporting.***

The monitoring framework and indicators often relies on national systems, mostly making use of publicly available indicators produced periodically by government agencies such as INSTAT, NES or NAVETQ. Some of the indicators are based on reports/ data produced by the programme for other purposes (i.e. baseline studies to inform policy-making, etc.). As from the available narrative reports, reporting against the indicator framework is not applied. As outlined above, some indicators are questionable as concerns their relevance and measurement and should be revised.

***The SD4E programme evaluation budget can be considered as just sufficient.***

Programme resources allocated for both mid-term and final evaluation amount to total 50,000 USD which equals to 1.6% of the entire programme budget. This can be considered as largely sufficient since the main scope of activities is centred in Tirana. In case the final evaluation should also encompass an increasing number of field visits and/ or interviews with regional and local stakeholders, a moderate adjustment of the budget might be needed.

***The SD4E Programme is properly managing all its stakeholder relations.***

The programme has developed an excellent relationship of trust and mutual understanding with all key governmental beneficiaries - MoSWY, but also in particular NES and NAVETQ, which is fruitful for the delivery of results.

The programme is also developing relationships with non-governmental partners, in particular private sector representatives such as employers' organisations and other associations.

***The SD4E Programme is properly coordinating its activities with all other relevant donor actions.***

Coordination with other Swiss-funded actions is excellent and takes place both in formal and informal settings. SDC projects in VET and private sector development coordinate at least quarterly in "partner events" facilitated by the Swiss Embassy. However, coordination takes more often place informally, on a needs basis. All SDC projects have largely benefitted from each other's experience, building on each-other's achievements and/ or are taking forward outputs. They have developed evident synergies and there does not seem to be any overlapping in implementation.

The coordination with other partners is also good, in particular with the EU-IPA project, located in the MoSWY, which is similarly working at policy level. This cooperation is especially important considering the role and leverage of the EU when it comes to promoting systemic change in VET; as well as for the monitoring and meeting of conditionalities in the framework of the EU/IPA direct budget support to the employment sector.

In addition, UNDP/SD4E have played the role of the facilitator for the "Friends of VET" donor roundtables initiated by the MoSWY.

***The SD4E Programme directly addresses declared government priorities; still government commitment could better materialise in terms of swift decision-making process.***

The programme is highly participatory and employs an inclusive, consultation based, approach. This has contributed largely to the continued ownership and active participation of government stakeholders at both technical and political level. As pointed out above, the political support in terms of effective decision-making is lagging behind, however.

***SD4E participation and public awareness are adequately ensured.***

As pointed out above the stakeholder involvement is high in principle and contributes positively to the programme delivery.

Concerning public awareness, the programme's communication and innovation sub-component has already achieved some interesting results related to increased awareness of and participation in the self-employment measure (such as champion videos, promotional materials); visibility for smaller initiatives (e.g. "Shengjergj" natural resources presumably leading to increased attractiveness as tourist destination and job creation).

### 3.4 Programme sustainability

***Appropriate risk management has been ensured.***

Risks and assumptions are properly identified in the Programme Document. During the programming, they were properly assessed and appropriate mitigation measures defined. The Risk Log Frame from the ATLAS Risk Management Module is accompanied by appropriate management responses. The last update of the Risk Log Frame dates from December 2016.

In view of the key risks which are related to policy/ policy-making, inclusion of risk assessment into progress reporting could help to attract more attention from the PSC on these risks which are mainly outside of the direct programme control.

***SD4E stakeholder ownership is not likely to diminish but political decision-making needs to accelerate.***

The risk of government ownership fading away seems rather unlikely now. However political ambitions are not predictable and the 2017 general elections could have an impact on the programme as they might lead to a major reshuffling for government responsibilities and priorities. For the time being it is unlikely that this will bring about major changes in the desired system architecture for VET.

***SD4E lessons learnt are continuously explored and applied but hardly documented.***

As pointed out above the programme is closely liaising with all other relevant donor actions in the sector and lessons learned are well shared and exchanged, benefitting for instance the preparation of annual work plans. Lessons learnt are not appropriately documented, however. A separate section has been introduced for the first time in the July-December 2016 progress report under “sustainability considerations”, however this section is not sufficiently elaborated or clear.

***Sustainability prospects of SD4E are still mixed.***

Sustainability of the Programme outputs depends largely on the MoSWY. The rapid adoption and expansion of policy-related outputs is essential for the durability of results being achieved. There is a need to proceed quickly with all necessary VET by-laws. These new legal provisions altogether will also influence the future role and competencies of the agencies subordinated to the MoSWY.

For instance, as concerns the SNA developed with the NES, ideally the NES should budget and carry out the SNA in the future. The current level of capacities within NES raises doubts about their ability to implement the SNA. Apparently, there will still be a need to outsource the SNA to specialised service deliverers.

***Sustainability of administrative capacity, i.e. of trained and experienced staff, is uneven.***

Administrative capacity building, that is the utilisation of the knowledge, skills and experience gained in SD4E, could be better sustained. In many beneficiary institutions, administrative sustainability is still adversely affected by inadequate working and remuneration conditions in the public service.

The main threats to sustainability are seen as low motivation, lack of incentives and low salaries in the civil service. In the absence of stable staffing it will be important to promote the identification and use of sustainable training systems, including team building and management, state-of-the-art supervision and anti-stress programmes.

***The role of UNDP in effectively assisting the MoSWY in some of their key tasks needs to be assessed from the development context and in view of the desired change.***

Without UNDP’s close involvement some of the systemic progress already made through the programme would have occurred much later, if at all. In view of the permanently

challenging political situation, complex and fragmented reform processes and still insufficient national capacities for managing substantial policy reforms, there is only moderate space for building up sustainable achievements at short notice.

The continuity of UNDPs operations over the years and the excellent relationship with all government stakeholders contribute also to building up some mid-term perspective for sustainable sector development.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This chapter sets out the Evaluators' conclusions on the strategy and performance of the SD4E Programme. Lessons learned from the strengths and weaknesses of the way the programme was programmed and implemented can help optimise the approach to current and future support.

### 4.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1:** Overall, the SD4E Programme is highly relevant in its intervention approach and addresses crucial key issues in respect of Albania's labour market. The programme design has been sound and logical in approach.

Individual activities demonstrate some innovative character as concerns the specific situation in Albania. Relative to its given timeframe, implementation remains still challenging due to the external political situation within which the programme must operate. Stakeholders at all levels confirm and appreciate that the programme took account of the prevailing governmental and administrative reality to the maximum extent and thus SD4E has been providing a pragmatic approach for ensuring ownership.

**Conclusion 2:** Targeting the skill needs of young men and women, has been a success factor for this intervention. The programme also focuses well on facilitating some evidence-based policies in VET and VSD, on strengthening the capacity of Albanian central institutions to improve active labour market measures aligned with policy objectives. However, cooperation between central institutions, VET providers and the private sector could have been better addressed throughout the SD4E design to facilitate stronger links for strengthening effective partnership principles. The Programme has recognised this need and has adjusted some activities allowing now a stronger involvement of the business sector.

**Conclusion 3:** SD4E preparation and implementation is characterised by a strong participatory process. Cooperation and communication with other Swiss-funded actions acting in the same sector is properly ensured. The same is true for the relationship with the IPA project, operating at the MoSWY. An impressive number of outputs has been already produced, these are of good quality. Flexibility has been demonstrated in the way the Programme has responded to emerging needs, particularly related to the MoSWY.

**Conclusion 4:** The SD4E Programme Team has been pro-active in reducing delays for those issues which were within direct control of the programme. However, frequent changes in the Minister position and thus the absence of continuous leadership and decision-making power at the MSWY provides a serious drawback to the speedy adoption of programme outputs. In addition, due to the parliamentary elections planned for June 2017, there is currently a political standstill also adversely influencing the political support and leadership needed by the Programme.

**Conclusion 5:** Government partners' commitment at NES and NAVETQ is excellent within the various SD4E Components but the pro-active take up of outcomes being achieved by the Programme varies and could have been more strongly demonstrated by the MoSWY, representing the political lead institution.

The implementation and cooperation structures initiated by the Programme at technical level have encouraged the participation of all relevant government and administration stakeholders. The SD4E has made very good use of working groups set up in various Components and has stimulated the establishment of overall coordination mechanisms which are worth maintaining for facilitating further reforms within the respective areas.

**Conclusion 6:** There is a clear team spirit within the Programme and implementation quality and visibility is obvious. There is also a strong and integrated programme management, coordination and reporting structure which is much appreciated by all partners.

**Conclusion 7:** The SD4E is expected to achieve most of its defined outcomes within the current timeframe for implementation but results and their sustainability needs to be now in the focus. Adoption of strategic outputs and then transferring them into intermediate and wider outcomes is lagging behind schedule in some cases, where the appearance of the desired political effects needs more time to materialise. Much will depend on the pro-active engagement of the MoSWY in making the programme achievements a durable success.

**Conclusion 8:** Overall, despite many enthusiastic and successful activities many opportunities presented to the MoSWY because of the SD4E support could be lost due to missing framework conditions for effective programme absorption. Despite its expected success, durable achievement of results of the SD4E remains challenging in view of the overall environment in which the programme is operating. Whilst the programme offers a significant improvement for VET-related policy making, in line with Albania's declared political goals for this sector, the whole potential still needs to be fully understood and realised by the political authorities.

A shared vision by the political representatives on the overall direction and future of the VET system and its institutional setup is still lacking and this adversely affects, in particular, VET and labour market reforms. Initiatives for building up institutions and capacities for the new VET system in Albania are only at the beginning and often characterised by fragmentation, since the political leadership and pro-active management of the key Ministry in the sector, the MoSWY, is still uneven.

Immediate strengthening the policy-making and monitoring capacities of the MoSWY will be key for effectively delivering the intended reform of the VET sector. In addition, the successful transfer of the NES into a new Agency for Employment and Skills, together with a substantial strengthening of the capacities in the NAVETQ for implementing the accreditation processes for VET providers are further indispensable elements for making the Programme but also the overall reform processes a full success.

## 4.2 Lessons learned

The following lessons learnt should be regarded as factors favourably affecting the spirit of SD4E delivery and approach:

**Lesson 1:** Inclusive and participatory approach at programme design and implementation ensures relevance, high ownership and active role and interest of government and non-government stakeholders.

**Lesson 2:** Effective coordination with stakeholders is pivotal to ensuring long-lasting results, in particular in terms of institutional/ policy-making projects. The employment and skills area is interdependent with structural developments, in the economy (macro level, enterprise level) and in the political environment. The combination of SDC interventions tackling both, demand and supply side seems to have an added value.

**Lesson 3:** Some processes need time to be fully elaborated, established and mature, including the time necessary for government and other stakeholder buy-in. This is in particular the case of the VET quality assurance system; where a change in the prevailing management culture and mentality also needs to occur.



## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

This Evaluation Report recommends two sets of actions. One set of recommendations concerns the need to strengthen effectiveness and sustainability of the SD4E Programme during its lifetime and beyond, whilst the second set of recommendations focus on the requirements for proper monitoring and reporting.

### 5.1 Effectiveness and sustainability of SD4E

**Recommendation 1:** Considering the still scattered initiatives for building up institutions and capacities for VET in Albania, there is an urgent need for developing a clear institutional roadmap with the sequencing of decisions and steps to be made to realise a full-fledged VET reform at central level. The PSC should consider such requesting such guidance document from the SD4E Programme. UNDP in collaboration with other key partners such as the EU-IPA project operating also at policy level, should be entrusted to prepare such document.

Implementing body: PSC, UNDP

Timing: with immediate effect

**Recommendation 2:** Based on such roadmap, adequate in-house capacities for policy making, implementation and monitoring should be revised and strengthened both, at the level of the MoSWY and its subordinated agencies (NES, NAVETQ). A coherent effort for capacity building involving the MoSWY as the lead sector institution, SDC, UNDP, EU and possibly other donors should be developed and implemented, with a time horizon possibly exceeding the current timeline of the SD4E Programme.

Implementing body: MoSWY, NES, NAVETQ; SDC, UNDP, EU

Timing: with immediate effect following adoption of the roadmap

**Recommendation 3:** Considering programme sustainability, the PSC should increase the dialogue about urgent steps needed for ensuring proper sustainability of outputs. Urgent government actions such a formal adoption and dissemination of programme outputs, political and administrative decisions to be taken indispensable for the sustainability and impact of certain programme outputs, etc. should be identified, agreed and closely monitored by the PSC.

Implementing body: PSC, UNDP

Timing: with immediate effect

### 5.2 Monitoring and reporting of SD4E

**Recommendation 4:** Indicators given in the log frame matrix should be reviewed and where needed revised to allow a realistic appreciation of the SD4E outcomes and outputs and their actual achievement. Annex 4.2 of this Evaluation Report provides some suggestions for reviewing the given indicators.

Implementing body: UNDP

Timing: with immediate effect

**Recommendation 5:** Lessons learned need to be more formally documented as part of progress reporting. In addition, the next workplan could include a section, detailing which particular lessons have been identified/ applied for preparing the work plan.

Implementing body: UNDP

Timing: with immediate effect

## ANNEXES

## Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

<b>Vacancy Number:</b>	UNDP/VA/2017---
<b>Post Title:</b>	International Consultant – SD4E Midterm Evaluation
<b>Project:</b>	Skills Development for Employment Programme
<b>Duty Station:</b>	Home-based with one 5-day mission to Tirana, Albania
<b>Duration of Assignment:</b>	20 working days
<b>Type of Contract:</b>	Individual contract
<b>Educational Background:</b>	Post-graduate degree in social sciences, international relations, political science, evaluation, international development or a related subject.
<b>Work Experience:</b>	Substantial technical knowledge on monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, and at least 10 years of relevant working experience

### Background

Albania's vocational education and training (VET) and vocational skills development (VSD) system all too often has failed to equip students with the requisite knowledge, competences and skills for a successful transition into the labour market. This has resulted in an unsuitably qualified labour force, skills shortages and soaring youth unemployment. Recognizing the need to systematically address employment by re-orienting the vocational education and training and vocational skills development system towards labour market needs, and modernizing and extending outreach of employment services, the Albanian government adopted the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020.

UNDP globally and regionally has built a strategic vision that recognizes the importance of creating employment opportunities as a means to addressing both poverty reduction and inequalities and exclusion. Indeed, the first outcome of the recently adopted United Nations Youth System Wide Action Plan focuses on Employment and Entrepreneurship with the intention to ensure greater opportunities for youth to secure decent work and income over the life-cycle, contributing to a virtuous circle of poverty reduction, sustainable development and social inclusion. To support the integration of various youth employment policy objectives through coordinated action, UNDP Albania, in collaboration with other UN agencies has designed and implemented several skills development / employment related interventions.

After six years of experience addressing labor supply interventions, UNDP Albania's strategic vision is to contribute to building a labour-market focused skills development system that is suited to enhance the employment and entrepreneurship aspects of the unemployed in urban and rural areas, while simultaneously addressing the skills needs of those employed in the formal and informal sectors and emerging entrepreneurs.

The ambition of the Skills Development for Employment (SD4E) Programme is to make a systemic contribution to the modernization of Albania's VET/VSD system by addressing several key challenges: skills mismatch and unequal access to employment and training services; labour market challenges in rural areas; insufficient governance of funding for employment and training; lack of coordination / collaboration in the system; inadequate labour market information; and insufficient quality and relevance of VET and VSD providers and their programmes. The overall goal of the programme is that "more young women and men in urban and rural areas in Albania are employed or self-employed." In order to achieve this goal, the programme focuses on four outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Improving and diversifying employment promotion measures, and advancing their governance
- Outcome 2: Improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes (elements of dual system)
- Outcome 3: Quality assurance and accreditation of VET/VSD providers
- Outcome 4: Anticipating skills needs in the short and medium term

The SD4E programme, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is a four-year long intervention which aims to ensure that more young Albanian men and women in urban and rural areas are employed or self-employed. SDC and UNDP formalized the implementation arrangements through a Third Party Cost-sharing Agreement on December 12, 2014, covering the period of December 15, 2014 – December 31, 2018. The operationalization of the programme commenced in January 2015, whereas the actual implementation in June 2015. The programme is entering the third year of implementation.

### Midterm Review Objectives and Approach

This assignment relates to the Midterm Review of the SD4E programme. The objective of the Midterm Review is to assess progress made towards the achievement of programme objectives and outcomes as specified in the Programme Document. In addition, it will assess early signs of programme successes and/or failures with the goal of identifying necessary changes to be made in order to set the programme on-track to achieving its intended

results. The Midterm Review will also review the programme strategy, and potential risks to the sustainability of its interventions. Overall, the Midterm Review is intended to have a formative nature and it intends to improve the programme's performance in the second half of the implementation phase.

The Midterm Review is expected to provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The Midterm Review team, composed of one international consultant that will be the Team Leader and one national consultant that will be the Team Specialist, is expected to review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared by the SD4E programme team (i.e. Programme Document, semi-annual reports, quality assurance documentation, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review).

The Midterm Review team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the SD4E Programme team, government counterparts (Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, National Employment Service, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training), the UNDP Country Office, the Swiss Embassy in Tirana, and other key stakeholders. A brief proposed methodology is expected to be submitted jointly with the application for this post, whereas a detailed methodology and data collection methods will be included in the Inception Report (*for further details see section on deliverables*).

The Midterm Review will assess four areas of programme progress: 1) Project strategy; 2) Progress towards results; 3) Programme implementation and adaptive management; and, 4) Sustainability. More specifically, for each of these areas, the Midterm Review team should carry out the following:

5. Programme Strategy:

- Review the problem addressed by the programme and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the programme results as outlined in the Programme Document.
- Review the relevance of the programme strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the programme addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the programme concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the programme design.
- Undertake a critical analysis of the programme's log-frame indicators and targets, and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Assess whether the programme's objectives and outcomes or components are clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects

6. Progress towards results:

- Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-programme targets.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the programme objective during the remaining implementation timeframe.
- By reviewing the aspects of the programme that have already been successful, identify ways in which the programme can further expand these benefits.

7. Programme implementation and adaptive management

- Review overall effectiveness of programme management as outlined in the Programme Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review any delays in programme's start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the programme's results framework/ log-frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.
- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?

- Coordination with other projects: How has the programme interacted and coordinated with other Swiss/non-Swiss project implementers and vice versa? Is there room for improvement and closer collaboration?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

#### 8. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Programme Document, Annual Project Review/ and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date.
- What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the programme's outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the programme benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the programme? Are lessons learned being documented by the Programme Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the programme and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

#### Deliverables

No.	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1.	Inception report	Midterm review team clarifies the objectives and methods to be used during the review	No later than 2 weeks from the Midterm Review mission date	The Midterm Review Team submits the report to UNDP
2.	Presentation	Initial findings	End of the Midterm Review mission	The Midterm Review Team submits the report to UNDP and the Swiss Embassy Office in Tirana
3.	Draft Final Report	Full report	Within 3 weeks from the Midterm Review mission	Send to UNDP
4.	Final report	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all the received comments have / have not been addressed in the final report	Within 1 week of receiving feedback on draft report	Send to UNDP

#### Competencies and Critical Success Factors

##### Core Values

##### Integrity:

- Demonstrate consistency in upholding and promoting the values of UN in actions and decisions, in line with the UN Code of Conduct.

##### Professionalism:

- Demonstrate professional competence and expert knowledge of the pertinent substantive areas of work.

##### Cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity:

- Demonstrate an appreciation of the multicultural nature of the organization and the diversity of its staff;
- Additionally, the individual should have an international outlook, appreciating difference in values and learning from cultural diversity.

##### Core Competencies:

##### Communication:

- Facilitate and encourage open communication and strive for effective communication.

##### Planning & Organizing:

- Develops clear goals in line with agreed strategies, identifies priorities, foresees risks and makes allowances accordingly.

##### Organizational Awareness:

- Demonstrate corporate knowledge and sound judgment.

##### Teamwork:

## Annex 1

- Demonstrate ability to work in a multicultural, multi-ethnic environment and to maintain effective working relations with people of different national and cultural backgrounds.

### Accountability:

- Takes ownership of all responsibilities and delivers outputs in accordance with agreed time, cost and quality standards.

### Functional Competencies:

- Strong analytical and M&E skills;
- Demonstrates leadership, team building and coordinating skills;
- Plans and produces quality results to meet established goals;
- Generates innovative, practical solutions to challenging situations;
- Conceptualizes and analyzes problems to identify key issues, underlying problems, and how they relate;
- Demonstrates substantive and technical knowledge to meet responsibilities and post requirements with excellence;
- Demonstrates strong oral and written communication skills;
- Demonstrates openness to change and ability to manage complexities;
- Responds positively to critical feedback and differing points of view.

## Recruitment Qualifications

### Education

- Post-graduate degree in social sciences, international relations, political science, evaluation, international development or a related subject.

### Work experience

- Substantial technical knowledge on monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, and at least 10 years of relevant working experience;
- Documented previous experience in evaluations in the UN system, and a solid understanding on the use of evaluation methodologies;
- Prior experience in employment / skills development related programmes is desirable;
- Demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking and policy advice;
- Strong inter-personal, teamwork and organizational skills;
- Excellent drafting skills and familiarity with information technology.

### Language

- Excellent communication and report-writing skills in English

## Evaluation Procedure

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that would take into account both the technical qualification of Individual Consultants as well as their financial proposals. The contract will be awarded to the candidate whose offer:

- Is deemed technically responsive / compliant / acceptable (only technically responsive applications / candidates will be considered for the financial evaluation)
- And has obtained the highest combined technical and financial scores.

*Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation – max points: 70*

Criteria A: Theoretical and practical familiarity with employment / self-employment / rural employment in a developing country context – max points: 35

Criteria B: Educational background– max points: 15

Criteria C: Adequacy of brief proposed methodology – max points: 20

*Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation – max points: 30*

UNDP retains the right to contact references directly. Due to large number of applications we receive, we are able to inform only the successful candidates about the outcome or status of the selection process.

*Due to a large number of applications we receive, we are able to inform only the successful candidates about the outcome or status of the selection process.*

## Application Procedure

Qualified and interested candidates are requested to apply by March 3, 2017 midnight.

The application should contain:

- Brief (1-2 pages) description of the **proposed methodology** for carrying out the midterm evaluation;
- **Cover letter** explaining why you are the most suitable candidate for the advertised position and a **brief methodology** on how you will approach and conduct the work (if applicable). Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application.
- Completed and signed **UN Personal History Form (P11)** for Service Contracts (SC) and Individual Contracts (IC) – Blank form [Download here](#).
- **Letter to UNDP Confirming Interest and Availability** - please complete the [attached form...](#)
- **Financial Proposal** - specifying a total lump sum amount (working days, travel, per diems, and any other possible costs) for the tasks specified in this announcement. *Please note that the **financial proposal is all-inclusive** and shall take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant/contractor during the contract period (e.g. fee, health insurance, vaccination and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of service, etc.). All envisaged **international travel costs** should be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel to join duty station/repatriation travel.*



## Annex 2 – Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Questions/ Criteria	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Data sources/ data collection
<b>Programme strategy</b> Review the problem addressed by the programme and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the programme results as outlined in the programme document. Review the relevance of the programme strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design? Review how the programme addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the programme concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country? Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the programme design. Undertake a critical analysis of the programme's log-frame indicators and targets, and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary. Assess whether the programme's objectives and outcomes or components are clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame. Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects.	Consistency of SD4E objectives and priorities with related country priorities and national sector development plans	Objectives of SD4E are in line with relevant country priorities and national sector development plans	Project/ programme documents; country/ sector strategies; Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Structured interviews with UNDP, national authorities, other programming and implementing actors, and final beneficiaries  This will be a mixture of primarily desk work and some assessment/ field work, using interviews, to gain qualitative insights into the responsiveness to actual/ changing needs
	Extent to which the intervention logic appears to be clear, practical, realistic and measurable	Intervention logic appears to be a sound response to the given problems, means, activities and desired outcomes	
		Appropriate identification of risks and assumptions Targets and Indicators are clear, practical, realistic and measurable Evidence of incorporation of lessons learned into project design	
	Responsiveness of the programme towards specific and evolving needs in respect to gender issues	SD4E programme documents reflect/ refer to specific and evolving needs in respect to gender issues	
<b>Progress towards results</b> Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-programme targets.	Extent to which the programme achieved progress in catalysing beneficial development effects	Evidence of catalysing real development effects Loss of programme/ project benefit directly attributable to inappropriate/ absent catalysing effects	Administrative data from UNDP and national authorities (if available); Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Structured interviews with UNDP, national authorities, other programming
	Extent to which the programme already achieved its expected results	Comparison of planned/ achieved results	
	Extent to which activities have been carried out according to planning	Comparison of planned/ realised activities	

Evaluation Questions/ Criteria	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Data sources/ data collection
Identify remaining barriers to achieving the programme objective during the remaining implementation timeframe. By reviewing the aspects of the programme that have already been successful, identify ways in which the programme can further expand these benefits.	Extent to which activities have been adjusted to consider evolving needs and context (flexibility)	Deviation of realised activities from the original planning and reasons for deviation	and implementing actors, and final beneficiaries  This will be a mixture of desk work for the mapping exercise and assessment as well as field work via interviews to gain qualitative insights into effectiveness, observable on the ground.
<b>Programme implementation and adaptive management</b> Review overall effectiveness of programme management as outlined in the programme document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement. Review any delays in programme's start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved. Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results? Examine the use of the programme's results framework/ log-frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start. Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive? Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation	Effectiveness of programme management	Quality and timeliness of response to management issues; Stakeholders confirm effective management mechanisms at all levels	Administrative data from UNDP and national authorities (if available); Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Structured interviews with UNDP, national authorities, other programming and implementing actors, and final beneficiaries  This will be a mixture of desk work for the mapping exercise and assessment as well as field work via interviews to gain qualitative insights into SD4E management and implementation, observable on the ground.
	Organisation of programme management	Programme management characterised by clearly defined and transparent responsibilities and reporting lines,	
	Effectiveness of time management	Quality and timeliness of response to delays	
	Effectiveness of work-planning processes	Quality and timeliness of process for work-planning	
	Effective use of SD4E results framework	Evidence that results framework is actively used for management and monitoring purposes	
	Quality, inclusiveness and alignment of monitoring tools	Evidence that key partners are fully involved into monitoring processes/ tools, aligned also with national systems	
	Proper use of financial and human resources for monitoring and evaluation	Financial and human resources for monitoring and evaluation ensure value for money	
	Efficiency of project management	Quality and timeliness of response to management issues; Stakeholders confirm effective management mechanisms at all levels	
	Extent to which coordination with other projects play a role to ensure smooth implementation of the programme	Quality and timeliness of response to coordination issues; Stakeholders confirm effective coordination mechanisms at all levels	
	Extent to which participation and country processes support the SD4E's activities and outcomes	Evidence that programme delivery benefits from adequate participation and country processes	
	Extent to which stakeholder involvement and	Evidence that programme delivery	

Evaluation Questions/ Criteria	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Data sources/ data collection
<p>budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?</p> <p>Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?</p> <p>Coordination with other projects: How has the programme interacted and coordinated with other Swiss/non-Swiss project implementers and vice versa? Is there room for improvement and closer collaboration?</p> <p>Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?</p> <p>Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?</p>	public awareness of the programme support the achievements of activities and outcomes	benefits from adequate stakeholder involvement and public awareness	
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <p>Validate whether the risks identified in the Programme Document, Annual Project Review/ and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date.</p> <p>What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other</p>	Extent to which Programme risks are duly identified, updated and managed	Risk management takes full account of already identified (and new) risks, thus contributing to results-based implementation and sustainability	<p>Administrative data from UNDP and national authorities (if available); Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Structured interviews with UNDP, national authorities, other programming and implementing actors, and final beneficiaries</p> <p>This will be a mixture of desk work for the mapping exercise and assessment as well as field work via interviews to gain qualitative insights into sustainability aspects, observable</p>
	Stakeholder ownership facilitates sustainability of SD4E outcomes	Stakeholders demonstrate full ownership in relation to maintaining/ expanding SD4E outcomes	
	Stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the programme	Stakeholders are fully aware of the need (and their role) to maintain SD4E outcomes	

Evaluation Questions/ Criteria	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Data sources/ data collection
key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the programme's outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the programme benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the programme? Are lessons learned being documented by the Programme Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the programme and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?	Extent to which lessons learned during the first phase of the programme have been properly capitalized and used	Identification of lessons learned in SD4E; Lessons learned have been integrated into SD4E where relevant and contribute to better implementation quality	on the ground.
<b>Lessons learned and recommendations</b>	Judgement criteria and indicators are not applicable for lessons learned and recommendations as they synthesise the findings of the evaluation questions, which have been developed using the judgement criteria and indicators specified above.		-

## Annex 3 – SD4E – Hierarchy of outcomes

Impact (overall goal)	More young women and men in urban and rural areas in Albania are employed or self-employed.			
Outcome	<b>1:</b> Improved and diversified employment promotion measures are provided to young Albanian women and men in urban and rural areas enhancing their skills and employability; required resources for employment promotion measures and VET/VSD are managed appropriately.	<b>2:</b> Improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes in urban and rural areas.	<b>3:</b> Quality assurance and accreditation systems and their mechanisms are in place and contribute to ensuring quality of VET and VSD institutions and programmes	<b>4:</b> Improved information about the current and future state of the labour market enables relevant stakeholders to make evidence based decisions related to employment and skills development, and therefore reduces the skills mismatch.
Output	<b>1.1:</b> Management of funds dedicated to employment promotion measures and VET/VSD is improved to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of fund utilisation. <b>1.2:</b> Operational plan of is adopted to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the implementation of employment promotion measures. <b>1.3:</b> Impact measurement system is established enabling to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of employment promotion measures. <b>1.4:</b> New employment promotion measures are piloted and tested.	<b>2.1:</b> Feasibility study on work-based learning schemes in Albania is completed identifying best practice models. <b>2.2:</b> Regulatory framework that allows for implementation of the models is elaborated and adopted.	<b>3.1:</b> Policy and institutional environment for quality assurance and accreditation is developed. <b>3.2:</b> Quality assurance and accreditation criteria, standards, mechanisms and tools (at providers' level) are developed and adopted. <b>3.3:</b> Quality assurance systems and accreditation procedures are applied in selected VET and VSD providers. <b>3.4:</b> Information on the quality assurance and accreditation framework is provided to stakeholders and interested groups.	<b>4.1:</b> Inter-departmental LMI working group is established with a clear mandate and is fully operational. <b>4.2:</b> Current LMI system is analysed, information demand and gaps are identified to enhance quality and relevance of LMI, and to enable skills forecasting. <b>4.3:</b> Methods and tools that allow for skills need forecasting and LMI are improved and institutionalised. <b>4.4:</b> Stakeholders are capacitated to utilise improved LMI for their decision making.

## Annex 4 – Indicators of Achievement

### 4.1 Follow up of Indicators

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
Impact (Overall Goal)	Impact Indicators		
More young women and men in urban and rural areas in Albania are employed or self-employed.	I1: Proportion of Albanians aged 15 to 29 employed or self-employed in <i>urban</i> areas I2: Proportion of Albanians aged 15 to 29 employed or self-employed in <i>rural</i> areas	<p><u>Baselines:</u>            I1: 28.2% of youth in Albania are employed in 2014. 33% of young male are employed in Albania. 23.3% of young females are employed in Albania. In 2012, 28.6% of young men in urban areas and 17.7% of young females were employed.            32.4% of youth in Albania are employed in 2016. 36.3% of young men and 28% of young women.            I2: Not determined in 2014. In 2012, 52.9% of young men and 46.9% of young females were employed.            Can't be determined in 2016 – other than employment in agriculture is on the rise. Agriculture census data (which was referred to as the source data for the indicator) was not published due to methodological errors.</p>	
Outcomes	Outcome Indicators		

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
<p>Outcome 1: Improved and diversified employment promotion measures are provided to young Albanian women and men in urban and rural areas enhancing their skills and employability; required resources for employment promotion measures and VET/VSD are managed appropriately.</p>	<p>I1: Number of new employment programmes in <i>urban</i> areas (specifically for young Albanian women and men)            I2: Number of new employment programmes in <i>rural</i> areas (specifically for young Albanian women and men)            I3: Participation rate in employment programmes of the unemployed young women and men in <i>urban</i> areas            I4: Participation rate in employment programmes of the unemployed young women and men in <i>rural</i> areas</p>	<p><u>Baselines:</u>            I1: 6 employment promotion programmes: DCM 48 - for jobseekers from disadvantaged groups, DCM 199 – for young jobseekers joining the labour market for the first time, DCM 27 – for vulnerable women, DCM 27 for the provision of on-the-job training, DCM 873 – for recent university graduates, providing them with internship opportunities largely in the public sector, and DCM 248 for people with disability.            One new employment promotion measure targeting youth orphaned prior to turning 18 years of age, approved through a decision of the council of ministers in January 2016. DCMs 27, 47, 48, 199 amended.            I2: No employment promotion programmes exist in / explicitly target rural areas.            No new employment promotion programmes specifically targeting those residing in rural areas. Have suggested dropping the indicator referring to rural employment.            I3: 38,212 registered youth unemployed jobseekers in 2013. 26.8% of all registered jobseekers are youth (15-29 years). 420 individuals of ages 15-24 years receive on-the-job training accounting for 45% of all who receive the programme. 34 individuals of ages 15-24 years receive the programme for jobseekers in difficulty accounting for 12% of all those receiving this programme. 115 individuals of ages 20-24 receive internship programmes for recently university graduates accounting for 67.3% of all those receiving this programme.            28,918 registered youth unemployed jobseekers in July 2016. 24% of all registered jobseekers are youth (15-29). 469 individuals of ages 20-24 receive internship programmes for recently university graduates accounting and 172 are beneficiaries of the on-the-job training / wage subsidies scheme.            I4: 0, cannot be determined.</p>	
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Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
	<p>I5: Difference of (self-)employment rate of participants (disaggregated by gender) in <i>urban</i> areas as compared with a control group, 4 / 12 months after completion</p> <p>I6: Difference of (self-) employment rate of participants (disaggregated by gender) in <i>rural</i> areas as compared with a control group, 4 / 12 months after completion</p>	<p>I5: Participating in employment promotion programme for jobseekers in difficulty compared to those registered jobseekers who do not participate increases the probability of being employed after one year by 63.0%; for on-the-job training by 55.3%; for internships by 29.2%. For females who receive employment promotion programme for jobseekers in difficulty compared to registered female job seekers who do not receive the programme, the probability of employment after one year increases by 62.2%.</p> <p>To be determined following the evaluation of the ALMMs implemented in 2015, 2016.</p> <p><i>Note: Numbers should be carefully viewed and used since participation rates over which results are calculated are very low compared to registered unemployed jobseekers.</i></p> <p>I6: Does not exist due to lack of employment promotion programmes in rural areas. Target to be determined once a programme targeting rural areas has been designed.</p> <p>Have suggested dropping the indicator</p>	



Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
Outcome 2: Improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes in urban and rural areas.	<p>I1: Number of work-based learning models identified for up-scaling and subsequent operationalization</p> <p>I2: Number of models selected for priority occupations which are integrated and reflected in the regulatory framework in terms of labour relations, their financing and incentive schemes for private sector buy-in</p>	<p><u>Baselines:</u></p> <p>I1: 0 work-based learning models have been institutionalized and up-scaled. All experiences have been in the form of pilots. Feasibility study and work with government geared towards the selection of suitable model(s).</p> <p>I2: 0 work-based learning models have been institutionalized and up-scaled. All experiences have been in the form of pilots.</p>	
Outcome 3: Quality assurance and accreditation systems and their mechanisms are in place and contribute to ensuring quality of VET and VSD institutions and programmes.	<p>I1: Number of self-assessments carried out (selected) in VET and VSD institutions</p> <p>I2: Number of training places in accredited VET institutions</p> <p>I3: Number of training places in accredited VET programmes</p> <p>I4: Number of training places in accredited VSD institutions</p> <p>I5: Number of training places in accredited VSD programmes</p>	<p><u>Baselines:</u></p> <p>I1: NA</p> <p>0. Project currently working with NAVETQ to support self-assessment exercise.</p> <p>I2 - I5: Have suggested dropping indicators (data otherwise not available); replacing with process indicators related with consolidation of quality system.</p>	

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
Outcome 4: Improved information about the current and future state of the labour market enables relevant stakeholders to make evidence based decisions related to employment and skills development, and therefore reduces the skills mismatch.	I1: Proportion of stakeholders reportedly using the new LMI system for decision making I2: Satisfaction of stakeholders with the new LMI system	<u>Baseline:</u> NA LMI system underway.	
Outputs (per outcome)		Output Indicators	Observations/ follow-up
Output 1.1.	Management of funds dedicated to employment promotion measures and VET/VSD is improved to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of fund utilisation.	I1: A report detailing the operating procedures exists I2: Operating procedures are adopted by the national authorities	I1: Exists / achieved I2: Achieved (Adoption of the ALMM package and relevant regulation)
Output 1.2.	Operational plan of is adopted to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the implementation of employment promotion measures.	I1: Number of new employment programmes covered in the operational plan I2: Operational plan for Albania is adopted by the national authorities	I1: 1 new and 4 revised measures included in the operational plan 2016 and 2017 I2: Achieved (ALMM package, same I2 in 1.1 above)

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
Output 1.3.	Impact measurement system is established enabling to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of employment promotion measures.	<p>I1: Report detailing the impact measurement system exists</p> <p>I2: Report on impact measurement system has been approved by the national authorities</p> <p>I3: Measurement system has been piloted</p> <p>I4: Proportion of employment measures assessed through the measurement system</p> <p>I5: Schedule when measurements are carried out exists, and budgetary means are ear-marked</p>	<p>I1: Achieved (ALMM measurement methodology approved; inserted in operational guidelines; consultant report expected on impact measurement)</p> <p>I2: In progress (as above)</p> <p>I3: Subject to I1-2</p> <p>I4: Subject to I1-2</p> <p>I5: To be achieved at later stage</p>
Output 1.4.	New employment promotion measures are piloted and tested.	<p>I1: Number of new employment measures described in the operational plan piloted in <i>urban</i> areas</p> <p>I2: Number of new employment measures described in the operational plan piloted in <i>rural</i> areas</p> <p>I3: Proportion of the piloted employment measures assessed and revised</p>	<p>I1: 1 new and 4 revised + self-employment programme (suggested merging I1 and 2)</p> <p>I2: 0</p> <p>I3: In progress</p>
Output 2.1.	Feasibility study on work-based learning schemes in Albania is completed identifying best practice models.	<p>I1: A feasibility study exists</p> <p>I2: Feasibility study is approved by the national authorities</p>	<p>I1: In progress</p> <p>I2: In progress</p>

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
Output 2.2.	Models of work-based learning most relevant for system change are operationalised (for priority occupations).	I1: Number of selected occupations for which one or several models have been chosen as the standard model to be scaled-up	I1: 0 - subject to progress in 2.1 above
Output 2.3.	Regulatory framework that allows for implementation of the models is elaborated and adopted.	I1: Recommendations for regulatory change are elaborated I2: Recommendations for regulatory change are disseminated I3: Regulatory change has been passed by parliament (legal change) or national authorities (other regulation)	I1: In progress I2: In progress I3: Not yet achieved Component subject to progress with preparation of secondary legislation for VET framework law
Output 3.1.	Policy and institutional environment for quality assurance and accreditation is developed.	I1: Recommendations for regulatory change are elaborated I2: Recommendations for regulatory change are disseminated I3: Regulatory change has been passed by parliament (legal change) or national authorities (other regulation)	I1-I2: In progress I3: Not achieved, subject to I1-I2 above. Have suggested rewording indicator as parliamentary decisions are outside the scope of the programme;
Output 3.2.	Quality assurance and accreditation criteria, standards, mechanisms and tools (at providers' level) are developed and adopted.	I1: Report describing standards, mechanisms and tools is elaborated I2: Report describing standards, mechanisms and tools is approved	I1: Self-assessment manual developed/ concept of a good VET provider under development I2: In progress

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
Output 3.3.	Quality assurance systems and accreditation procedures are applied in selected VET and VSD providers.	I1: Number of VET providers applying for accreditation I2: Number of VET providers being accredited I3: Number of VSD providers applying for accreditation I4: Number of VSD providers being accredited	I1: 0 I2: 0 I3: 0 I4: 0 <i>Caution must be given to the target values of the indicators so as to avoid false incentives such as setting accreditation standards too low in order to achieve high number of VET and VSD provider accreditations. Have suggested merging and rewording indicator to institution applying QM systems.</i>
Output 3.4.	Information on the quality assurance and accreditation framework is provided to stakeholders and interested groups.	I1: Proportion of stakeholders who are aware of the new Q&A and accreditation system I2: Number of VET providers applying for accreditation I3: Number of VSD providers applying for accreditation	I1: Pending achievements in outputs above, to be determined later. I2: 0 I3: 0 (have suggested deleting reference to accreditation)
Output 4.1.	Inter-departmental LMI working group is established with a clear mandate and is fully operational.	I1: Working group is established with the participation of all relevant departments / institutions I2: Working group meets on a regular base	I1: Achieved I2: Achieved (WG on SNA between NES, INSTAT and MoSWY)

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Observations/ follow-up	
Output 4.2.	Current LMI system is analysed, information demand and gaps are identified to enhance quality and relevance of LMI, and to enable skills forecasting.	I1: Report detailing the needs of the stakeholders, data gap as well as standards of data collection and analysis for future implementation is elaborated I2: Report is approved	I1: In progress I2: In progress (SNA methodology)
Output 4.3.	Methods and tools that allow for skills need forecasting and LMI are improved and institutionalised.	I1: Changes suggested in 4.2 are implemented. I2: Reformed LMI (report, website etc.) are produced for a first time I3: Institutions for enhanced LMI agree to include reformed LMI in their work plans and reserve respective budgets	I1: Pending progress in output 4.2 I2: Pending progress in output 4.2 I3: Pending progress in output 4.2 (have suggested rewording)
Output 4.4.	Stakeholders are capacitated to utilise improved LMI for their decision making.	I1: Proportion of stakeholders reportedly understanding the LMI I2: Proportion of stakeholders reportedly knowing how to access the LMI	I1: TBD I2: TBD (have suggested rewording)

## 4.2 Comments on Indicators

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Comments/ suggestions on Indicators
Impact (Overall Goal)	Impact Indicators	
More young women and men in urban and rural areas in Albania are employed or self-employed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Proportion of Albanians aged 15 to 29 employed or self-employed in <i>urban</i> areas</li> <li>I2: Proportion of Albanians aged 15 to 29 employed or self-employed in <i>rural</i> areas</li> </ul>	<p>Currently available data (LFS) does not distinguish between urban and rural areas; gender-specific disaggregated data is available, however.</p> <p><i>I1: Proportion of Albanians aged 15 - 29 employed or self-employed.</i></p> <p><i>I2: Proportion of Women aged 15 - 29 employed or self-employed</i></p>
Outcomes	Outcome Indicators	
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Improved and diversified employment promotion measures are provided to young Albanian women and men in urban and rural areas enhancing their skills and employability; required resources for employment promotion measures and VET/VSD are managed appropriately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Number of new employment programmes in <i>urban</i> areas (specifically for young Albanian women and men)</li> <li>I2: Number of new employment programmes in <i>rural</i> areas (specifically for young Albanian women and men)</li> <li>I3: Participation rate in employment programmes of the unemployed young women and men in <i>urban</i> areas</li> <li>I4: Participation rate in employment programmes of the unemployed young women and men in <i>rural</i> areas</li> <li>I5: Difference of (self-)employment rate of participants (disaggregated by gender) in <i>urban</i> areas as compared with a control group, 4 / 12 months after completion</li> <li>I6: Difference of (self-)employment rate of participants (disaggregated by gender) in <i>rural</i> areas as compared with a control group, 4 / 12 months after completion</li> </ul>	<p>Based on the current LFS, there is no differentiation in terms of urban/ rural areas possible; gender-specific disaggregated data is easier to collect as they exist.</p> <p><i>I1+I2: Number of new employment programmes (specifically for young Albanian women and men)</i></p> <p><i>I3+I4: Participation rate in employment programmes of the unemployed young women and men</i></p> <p><i>I5+I6: Difference of (self-)employment rate of participants (disaggregated by gender) as compared with a control group, 4 / 12 months after completion</i></p>

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Comments/ suggestions on Indicators
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes in urban and rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Number of work-based learning models identified for up-scaling and subsequent operationalization</li> <li>I2: Number of models selected for priority occupations which are integrated and reflected in the regulatory framework in terms of labour relations, their financing and incentive schemes for private sector buy-in</li> </ul>	<p>I1: no comment            I2: <i>At least one model selected and operationalised for priority occupations is available for integration into the regulatory framework</i></p>
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Quality assurance and accreditation systems and their mechanisms are in place and contribute to ensuring quality of VET and VSD institutions and programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Number of self-assessments carried out (selected) in VET and VSD institutions</li> <li>I2: Number of training places in accredited VET institutions</li> <li>I3: Number of training places in accredited VET programmes</li> <li>I4: Number of training places in accredited VSD institutions</li> <li>I5: Number of training places in accredited VSD programmes</li> </ul>	<p>I1: no comment            I2-I5: as there are no accredited institutions/ programmes likely to be achieved by the end of the SD4E, these indicators are not relevant at output level and should be deleted; their achievement depends on the existence of accredited programmes/ institutions which outside of the scope of the programme. Suggestions:  <i>Quality assurance and accreditation systems for VET/ VSD providers/ institutions established in line with EU/ international good practice</i>  <i>Number of VET/ VSD providers/ institutions sufficiently advanced towards accreditation</i>  <i>Number of VET/ VSD providers confirming improved service quality due to improved QA systems and accreditation procedures</i></p>
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Improved information about the current and future state of the labour market enables relevant stakeholders to make evidence based decisions related to employment and skills development, and therefore reduces the skills mismatch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Proportion of stakeholders reportedly using the new LMI system for decision making</li> <li>I2: Satisfaction of stakeholders with the new LMI system</li> </ul>	<p>No comment</p>



Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Comments/ suggestions on Indicators
Outputs (per outcome) and costs		Output Indicators	
Output 1.1.	Management of funds dedicated to employment promotion measures and VET/VSD is improved to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of fund utilisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: A report detailing the operating procedures exists</li> <li>I2: Operating procedures are adopted by the national authorities</li> </ul>	I1: no comment I2: <i>Operating procedures are <u>available</u> to the national authorities</i>
Output 1.2.	Operational plan of is adopted to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the implementation of employment promotion measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Number of new employment programmes covered in the operational plan</li> <li>I2: Operational plan for Albania is adopted by the national authorities</li> </ul>	no comment
Output 1.3.	Impact measurement system is established enabling to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of employment promotion measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Report detailing the impact measurement system exists</li> <li>I2: Report on impact measurement system has been approved by the national authorities</li> <li>I3: Measurement system has been piloted</li> <li>I4: Proportion of employment measures assessed through the measurement system</li> <li>I5: Schedule when measurements are carried out exists, and budgetary means are ear-marked</li> </ul>	no comment
Output 1.4.	New employment promotion measures are piloted and tested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Number of new employment measures described in the operational plan piloted in <i>urban</i> areas</li> <li>I2: Number of new employment measures described in the operational plan piloted in <i>rural</i> areas</li> <li>I3: Proportion of the piloted employment measures assessed and revised</li> </ul>	I1, I2: currently no segregation rural/ urban possible; possibly merge indicators I3: no comment

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Comments/ suggestions on Indicators
Output 2.1.	Feasibility study on work-based learning schemes in Albania is completed identifying best practice models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: A feasibility study exists</li> <li>I2: Feasibility study is approved by the national authorities</li> </ul>	I1: no comment: I2: <i>Feasibility study ready for use for work-based learning schemes</i>
Output 2.2.	Models of work-based learning most relevant for system change are operationalised (for priority occupations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Number of selected occupations for which one or several models have been chosen as the standard model to be scaled-up</li> </ul>	I1: <i>Number of selected occupations for which at least one model has been chosen and elaborated as the standard model to be scaled-up</i>
Output 2.3.	Regulatory framework that allows for implementation of the models is elaborated and adopted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Recommendations for regulatory change are elaborated</li> <li>I2: Recommendations for regulatory change are disseminated</li> <li>I3: Regulatory change has been passed by parliament (legal change) or national authorities (other regulation)</li> </ul>	I1-I2: no comment I3: parliamentary decisions are outside the scope of the programme; <i>Regulatory change ready for adoption by parliament (legal change) or national authorities (other regulation)</i>
Output 3.1.	Policy and institutional environment for quality assurance and accreditation is developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Recommendations for regulatory change are elaborated</li> <li>I2: Recommendations for regulatory change are disseminated</li> <li>I3: Regulatory change has been passed by parliament (legal change) or national authorities (other regulation)</li> </ul>	I1-I2: no comment I3: parliamentary decisions are outside the scope of the programme; <i>Regulatory change ready for adoption by parliament (legal change) or national authorities (other regulation)</i>
Output 3.2.	Quality assurance and accreditation criteria, standards, mechanisms and tools (at providers' level) are developed and adopted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Report describing standards, mechanisms and tools is elaborated</li> <li>I2: Report describing standards, mechanisms and tools is approved</li> </ul>	I1 and I2 are almost the same; one indicator is enough I1: <i>Report describing standards, mechanisms and tools produced in line with EU/ international good practice</i>

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Comments/ suggestions on Indicators
Output 3.3.	Quality assurance systems and accreditation procedures are applied in selected VET and VSD providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Number of VET providers applying for accreditation</li> <li>I2: Number of VET providers being accredited</li> <li>I3: Number of VSD providers applying for accreditation</li> <li>I4: Number of VSD providers being accredited</li> </ul>	I1-I4: accreditation is not likely to be achieved by the end of the programme; delete <i>Number of VET/ VSD providers applying improved QA systems and accreditation procedures</i>
Output 3.4.	Information on the quality assurance and accreditation framework is provided to stakeholders and interested groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Proportion of stakeholders who are aware of the new Q&amp;A and accreditation system</li> <li>I2: Number of VET providers applying for accreditation</li> <li>I3: Number of VSD providers applying for accreditation</li> </ul>	I1: no comment I2-I3: accreditation is not likely to be achieved by the end of the programme; delete Suggestion: <i>information on the new Q&amp;A and accreditation system available to stakeholders and interested groups</i>
Output 4.1.	Inter-departmental LMI working group is established with a clear mandate and is fully operational.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Working group is established with the participation of all relevant departments / institutions</li> <li>I2: Working group meets on a regular base</li> </ul>	no comment
Output 4.2.	Current LMI system is analysed, information demand and gaps are identified to enhance quality and relevance of LMI, and to enable skills forecasting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Report detailing the needs of the stakeholders, data gap as well as standards of data collection and analysis for future implementation is elaborated</li> <li>I2: Report is approved</li> </ul>	I1: no comment I2: <i>Report/ Methodology produced in line with EU/ International good practice and available for use</i>
Output 4.3.	Methods and tools that allow for skills need forecasting and LMI are improved and institutionalised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Changes suggested in 4.2 are implemented.</li> <li>I2: Reformed LMI (report, website etc.) are produced for a first time</li> <li>I3: Institutions for enhanced LMI agree to include reformed LMI in their work plans and reserve respective budgets</li> </ul>	I1: delete I2: no comment I3: <i>Reformed LMI available for institutionalisation in the respective work plans and reserve budgets</i>

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Comments/ suggestions on Indicators
Output 4.4.	Stakeholders are capacitated to utilise improved LMI for their decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: Proportion of stakeholders reportedly understanding the LMI</li> <li>I2: Proportion of stakeholders reportedly knowing how to access the LMI</li> </ul>	<p>I1: <i>Proportion of stakeholders reportedly having <u>access</u> to the LMI</i></p> <p>I2: <i>Proportion of stakeholders reportedly <u>able to fully use</u> the LMI</i></p>

## Annex 5 List of Interviews

UNDP/ SD4E Programme Team		
1.	Mr. Brian Williams	UN Resident Coordinator
2.	Ms. Limya Eltayeb	UNDP Country Director
3.	Mr. Eno Ngjela	UNDP Programme Specialist
4.	Ms. Dajna Sorensen	Programme Analyst, Deputy Team Leader, SD4E
5.	Ms. Silvana Haxhiaj	Project Coordinator, VET, SD4E
6.	Ms. Besa Pellumbi	Project Coordinator, Self-employment, SD4E
7.	Ms. Jorina Kadare	Innovation and Communication, SD4E
8.	Ms. Edi Bregu	Project Assistant
8.	Ms. Iris Kuqi	Former Outcome 3 Coordinator, SD4E
SDC / Swiss Embassy		
9.	Mr. Philip Keller	Embassy of Switzerland – Deputy Head of Cooperation
10.	Ms. Silvana Mjeda	Embassy of Switzerland – National Programme Officer
11.	Mr. Stefan Butscher	SDC Regional Advisor
Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth		
12.	Ms. Silvana Banushi	Director General on Employment and VET
13.	Ms. Genta Prodani	Director Employment Policies and Migration
National Employment Service		
14.	Ms. Brikena Nallbani	Deputy Director
15.	Ms. Etleva Gjela	Labour Market Information Specialist
INSTAT		
16.	Ms. Pranvera Elezi	Head of Labour Market Statistics Sector
National Agency on VET and Qualifications		
17.	Ms. Sonila Limaj	Director
Development Partners		
18.	Mr. Henry Leerentveld	Regional Director, Swiss Contact
19.	Mr. Fatjon Dragoshi	Deputy Team Leader, Skills for Jobs Project
20.	Mr. Niels Haderup	Team Leader, EU IPA - Support to Employment-oriented Vocational Education and Training
21.	Ms. Edlira Muhedini	Project Manager, RISI Albania
22.	Ms. Ermira Shyti	Intervention Manager, RISI Albania
Private Sector Representatives		
23.	Mr. Dritan Mezini	Albanian ICT Association
24.	Mr. Koli Sinjari	Biznes Albania
Programme Beneficiaries Self-employment Measure		
25.	Mr. Erjon Tusha	t-soft
26.	Ms. Migena Trupja	Migi's Food Boutique
27.	Ms. Mariona Zhuri	Bookstore „Prototype Studio“

## Annex 6 List of documents

Name of Originator	Date	Title of Document
UNDP	2014	Skills Development for Employment – Programme Document, Logframe, Budget, Work Plans
UNDP	2015, 2016	Skills Development for Employment – Progress Reports 1,2,3, 4
UNDP	2015, 2016	Skills Development for Employment – Steering Committee Minutes 1,2,3, 4
UNDP	2015, 2016	Gender Analysis; M&E Plan, Logframe with baselines; Atlas risklogs
MoSWY	2014	National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020
MoSWY	2015, 2016	National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 – Annual Progress Report
ETF, GIZ	2014	Baseline Study of Public VET Providers in Albania
ETF	2012	Work-Based-Learning: Benefits and Obstacles
KEK-CDC Consultants	2014	Capitalisation of Experiences – 20 years of Swiss VET support to Albania
NES	2016	Full package of ALMMs, DCMs, procedural guidelines
UNDP	2016	NES training package
UNDP, A. Ymeraj	2016	Promotion of employment and self-employment initiatives for youth through active labour market policies, Final Report
UNDP	2016, 2017	Self employment measure reports, trainings, promotional material
UNDP, M. Mece	2016	Youth and informal employment with a particular focus on rural areas
UNDP	2016, 2017	Work Based Learning Schemes in Albania, draft feasibility study and Approach Paper
UNDP, HDPC	2015	Reforming VET in Albania
UNDP, K. Sulka & D. Mezini	2016	Inclusion of private sector and vocational education
UNDP	2016	Skills Fair Video
UNDP	2016	Mapping of private VET providers, report, data and memo
UNDP	2016	Manual on Self-Assessment of VET providers
UNDP, L. Boci & F. Mehran	2017	Skills Need Analysis Sample Selection Report
UNDP	2016	National Index of Occupations and occupational descriptions
UNDP	2016	Extractions from ATLAS Risk Management Module
UNDP	2015, 2016	Other UNDP presentations and promotional material