**“Leave No One Behind” (LNB)**

**in Albania**

**Midterm Review**

**Evaluation Report**

**25 March 2020**

**Prepared by:**

Shawn Webb - Contract No.: ALB-170-2019

Blerjana Bino - Contract No.: ALB-012-01-2020

**Midterm Review Opening Page**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project/ outcome Information** | | |
| **Project title** | **Leave No One Behind (LNB)** | |
| **Atlas/ project ID** | **00105793** | |
| **Corporate outcome and output** | **Outcome 1: The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion**  **Output 1.1**: Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are empowered to request social inclusion  **Output 1.2**: Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are supported in their access to specific services  **Output 1.3**: The capacity of groups of Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable  **Output 1.4**: Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including Roma and persons with disabilities, participate in the monitoring of the implementation of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion  **Outcome 2: Municipalities effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion**  **Output 2.1**: Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion  **Output 2.2**: Social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up  **Output 2.3**: A grant scheme is set up for municipalities to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation  **Outcome 3: National institutions implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion & adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, developed capacities & empowered target groups**  **Output 3.1**: The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and other competent Ministries are supported in their implementation of policies and strategies and legal framework relevant for social inclusion and in plans for funding and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data  **Output 3.2**: The establishment of state funding mechanisms that support the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported | |
| **Country** | **Albania** | |
| **Region** | Europe and CIS | |
| **Date project document signed** | 31/05/2017 | |
| **Project dates** | **Start** | **Planned end** |
| 01/06/2017 | 31/05/2021 |
| **Project budget** | CHF 8.0 million ~~ USD 8.168 million | |
| **Project expenditure at the time of MTR** | Total disbursed and committed as of 31/12/2019 = USD 5,280,746 | |
| **Funding source** | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): allocated via the Albania One UN Coherence Fund | |
| **Implementing party** | UN Participating Organizations: UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, and UNFPA with UNDP as Lead agency/ Administrative Agent | |
| **Evaluation Information** | | |
| **Evaluation type** | Project/ outcome | |
| **Final/ MTR/ other** | **Midterm Review** | |
| **Period under evaluation** | **Start** | **End** |
| 01/06/2017 | 31/01/2020 |
| **Evaluators** | Shawn Webb (International Consultant – Team Leader)  Blerjana Bino (National Consultant – Team Specialist) | |
| **Evaluator e-mail** | sh\_webb@hotmail.com | [blerianabino@gmail.com](mailto:blerianabino@gmail.com) |
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**Table of Contents**

**Executive Summary i**

**List of acronyms and abbreviations iv**

**1. Introduction 1**

**1.1. Purpose of the Midterm Review 1**

**1.2. Evaluation scope and objectives 1**

**1.3. Evaluation approach and methods 2**

**1.4. Structure of the Midterm Review Report 2**

**1.5. Limitations 2**

**2. Description of the intervention 3**

**2.1. Overview of the LNB programme and of the UN programme context 3**

**2.2. Development context 3**

**2.3. Project description and strategy 5**

**2.4. Implementation arrangements 8**

**2.5. Main stakeholders and target groups 8**

**3. Findings 9**

**3.1. Project strategy (Relevance) 9**

3.1.1. Project design 9

3.1.2. Alignment with national policies, need and priorities 12

3.1.3. Relevance of the project in the international development policy framework 12

**3.2. Progress towards results (Effectiveness) 13**

3.2.1. Management of the project and the effectiveness of results achievement 14

3.2.2. Analysis of progress towards outcomes – Micro (community) level 16

3.2.3. Analysis of progress towards outcomes – Meso (municipal) level 18

3.2.4. Analysis of progress towards outcomes – Macro (system) level 20

3.2.5. Remaining barriers to achieving the project results 23

**3.3. Project implementation and adaptive management (Efficiency) 24**

3.3.1. Project management arrangements and the efficient delivery of results 25

3.3.2. Monitoring and evaluation, project steering, and risk management systems 26

**3.4. Sustainability 29**

3.4.1. Processes to ensure the sustainability of the project results and benefits 29

3.4.2. Knowledge management and the potential for scaling up 31

3.4.3. Steps to strengthen the sustainability of the project results and benefits 32

3.4.4. Future programme assistance needs… 33

**3.5. Cross-cutting themes 33**

3.5.1. LNB contribution to the SDGs 33

3.5.2. LNB cross-cutting themes (gender equality, governance, human rights) 34

3.5.3. LNB communication and visibility 35

**4. Conclusions 37**

**4.1 Programme design and relevance 37**

**4.2 Programme progress to results achievement 38**

**4.3 Programme management and adaptation 39**

**4.4 Sustainability and local ownership of the programme results/ benefits 40**

**5. Recommendations 42**

**5.1. On-going (LNB - Phase 1) 42**

**5.2. Future perspective (LNB - Phase 2) 43**

**Annexes 44**

Annex 1: MTR itinerary (field mission visit – summary) 45

Annex 2: List of persons interviewed 46

Annex 3: List of documents reviewed 49

Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix 50

Annex 5: LNB programme budget 56

Annex 6: Progress toward results (as of 31/12/2019) 58

Annex 7: Rating scale definitions 86

Annex 8: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Agreement Form 87

Annex 9: Terms of Reference 89

**Exhibits**

Exhibit 1: Intervention logic of the LNB programme 6

Exhibit 2: LNB programme budget – summary overview 7

Exhibit 3: LNB programme – planned chain of results for Outcome 1 10

Exhibit 4: LNB programme – planned chain of results for Outcome 2 11

Exhibit 5: LNB programme – planned chain of results for Outcome 3 11

Exhibit 6: LNB programme – status of results achievement for Outcome 1 16

Exhibit 7: LNB programme – status of results achievement for Outcome 2 18

Exhibit 8: LNB programme – status of results achievement for Outcome 3 21

Exhibit 9: Utilisation of the LNB programme budget 26

# **Executive Summary**

**Subject Description**

This Midterm Review (MTR) analyses the performance achieved to date in implementation of the “Leave No One Behind” (LNB) programme in Albania. LNB is a four-year Joint UN Project that aims to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities (with a specific focus on social care and social service provision, notably to reach marginalised groups or vulnerable persons), to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold the duty bearers accountable. The programme is implemented by four UN partner agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNFPA), over the period June 2017 to May 2021, through the UN Delivering as One mechanism. The programme is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation to the amount of CHF 8.0 million.

**Purpose and Objectives of the Midterm Review**

The purpose of the MTR is to present evidence-based analysis so as to support future decision-making, steering, and focus of the LNB programme going forward, while also ensuring the independent analysis of the programme and its effects, as a means of accountability. The primary audience/ users of the MTR include the UN in Albania, relevant national partners (ministries/ agencies) linked to promoting social inclusion, and the Swiss Embassy in Albania, and more broadly also the LNB programme partners at municipality and local level in Albania.

The objective of the MTR is to assess and present the results of the LNB programme, including an assessment of how the results have contributed to social services improvement in Albania, presenting conclusions, and recommendations. The MTR assesses lessons learnt and early signs of programme successes and/or failures, and reviews the progress and potential risks to the sustainability of its interventions. Overall, the MTR is intended to have a formative nature and intends to improve programme performance in the remaining implementation phase. In a forward looking way the MTR also identifies priority areas and strategic interventions that could support/ feed in to the formulation of a second, four-year phase for the LNB programme.

**Evaluation Methodology**

The overall approach and methodology of the MTR follows the guidance provided in the “UNDP Evaluation Guidelines” (2019), plus the requirements specified in the MTR terms of reference. The MTR assess the criteria of OECD/DAC evaluation guidelines: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The MTR, conducted by an International Consultant and a National Consultant, included the following approaches, methods, and activities: (a) documentation review; (b) semi-structured interviews with key informant persons and Focus Group Discussions with key partners/ stakeholders during the field mission and site-visits (20-24 January 2020); (c) the detailed assessment of the programme’s progress versus the results framework. The MTR is an evidence-based assessment, founded on a collaborative/ participatory approach in terms of its engagement with the diverse range of partners at central (national), municipal and local levels. In conducting the analysis, the evaluator has utilised the following performance ratings scale: (1) Highly Satisfactory; (2) Satisfactory; (3) Moderately Satisfactory; (4) Moderately Unsatisfactory; (5) Unsatisfactory; (6) Highly Unsatisfactory.

**Major findings and conclusions**

Overall, the **relevance** of the programme and the quality of the design of the action is rated as **highly satisfactory**. The programme builds on the solid policy and legal framework for social inclusion set up via previous UN projects, with the focus of the LNB programme to support the effective roll-out and enactment of the social services reform process and of social inclusion measures across Albania. Since social service delivery is realised mostly at local level, LNB’s intervention focuses on the local level. Two of the three planned outcomes reflect this thrust – by empowering the beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion (outcome 1), and capacitating municipalities and service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion (outcome 2). The third outcome reflects the need to anchor the interventions at system level, via the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion, including its funding.

The intervention logic and implementing strategy of the programme, including the definition of stakeholders and target groups, is clearly defined, and the theory of change narrative a credible outline of the causal pathway of results leading to socio-economic development change. The programme seeks to support the effective roll-out of social services reform and social inclusion measures across Albania to benefit all marginalised and vulnerable persons. Reflective of the levels of vulnerability to social exclusion faced by persons with disabilities and the Roma and Egyptian communities, specific focus is provided to measures supporting these groups.

The programme is closely aligned with national policies, needs and priorities for the promotion of social inclusion and reducing the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Feedback from project partners, stakeholders, and final-user beneficiaries supported via LNB, provided to the evaluator during the field phase mission, was entirely consistent in its positivity as to the continued high level of relevance of the goals and approaches of the LNB programme.

Overall, the **effectiveness** of the programme’s progress towards results achievement is rated as **satisfactory**. This is evidenced linked to each of the programme’s three outcomes; and in the case of outcome 1 (community level empowerment) the effectiveness is highly satisfactory. The results achievement and the contribution of LNB is evidenced across the whole of Albania, as well as at the local level in 25 target municipalities, and also for the breadth of the range of issues and specific target groups of beneficiaries that are addressed via the programme. Nevertheless, it is evident that challenges exist in terms of the timely achievement of the results and their further roll-out, most notably at the policy (system) level, in part also municipal level.

LNB has very successfully contributed to the empowerment of vulnerable groups and persons through a range of measures linked to advocacy and awareness raising, capacity building of civil society organisations, local networks and consultative structures to promote participatory social policy planning and monitoring process, as well as facilitated access to inclusive social services for final-users/beneficiaries at the local level. Around 7,000 persons from vulnerable groups have engaged in forums and debates with local authorities on issues of concern, and around 2,750 vulnerable persons have received quality social care services as a direct result.

Municipalities are being capacitated to fulfil their obligations linked to the provision and management of social care policy and services at the local level. This has included support that benefits all municipalities in Albania (e.g. methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, plus tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation), as well as specific support provided in selected municipalities to pilot test different mechanisms at the local and/or regional level, so as to learn practical lessons prior to facilitating the wider roll-out and scaling up of the range of initiatives to be undertaken by the partners in the next years. Of the 61 municipalities in Albania, 41 either now have an approved local Social Care Plan or in the process of the drafting/ finalising/ approval of the plan at the local level. In addition, the capacities of social care service providers are being enhanced via a number of practical training actions for professional staffs.

Ministries are being supported in the further development of the legal and regulatory framework for social inclusion, the introduction of mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of national policies and strategies, and for the establishment of funding mechanisms at central level to invest in social inclusion (e.g. the Social Fund, the Social Enterprise Fund, measures to support/ prevent out of school children, Social Housing). But, the process to adopt regulatory bylaws is still incomplete (notably linked to social housing), and the functional operation of the monitoring systems and tools developed via LNB is still to be fully realised by the partners.

Overall, the **efficiency** of the programme implementation and delivery is rated as **satisfactory**.

While the initial start-up period for the programme was slower than anticipated – a result of the reorganisation of central government institutions in autumn 2017 – the pace of implementation of the programme has satisfactorily progressed since 2018. As of 31/12/2019 (the end of month 31 of 48 for implementation), 65% of the total programme budget was disbursed or committed.

Implementation of the programme is undertaken in close cooperation and dialogue with partner organisations and stakeholders on the Albanian-side: central and local government, social service providers, and civil society. Feedback provided to the evaluator during the field phase mission attest of a strong level of satisfaction across the range of organisations as to the good level of cooperation that they have with the UN agencies, and the strength and quality of the consultative approach of the agencies in their provision of support, technical analysis/ advice.

While the overall efficiency of programme implementation and results delivery is satisfactory, it is evident that the efficiency of results delivery has at times faced challenges. The primary reasons for the constraints relate to: (1) the organisational and technical capacities, including staffing level, of governmental partners, central and local government, to be fully engaged with the actions in a timely manner; and (2) the pace of efficiency of the policy and the decision-making processes for the partners, most notably where this involves multi-agency cooperation. There is also scope for improvement in terms of the quality of the LNB performance monitoring framework in order that it may more efficiently and effectively support the analysis of progress in results achievement and country context, and thereby efficient and effective project steering.

Overall, the progress to date of the LNB programme to ensure the **sustainability** of the results and benefits after the end of the programme is **satisfactory**. The alignment of LNB with national/local policies and needs is a major factor contributing to the sustainability of results. The holistic approach of the LNB programme, addressing macro, meso and micro level, also contributes to sustainability. In addition valuable technical support/ advice has been provided to government partners linked to its development of funding mechanisms for social inclusion, the results of which are integral to building national/local financing capacity to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme results. Major factors that influence the non-achievement of sustainability of the programme results are: (1) Financial sustainability; (2) The capacity of governmental partners to ensure social inclusion and social care policy planning, monitoring and evaluation; (3) Staff turnover and the failure to internalise capacity building programmes.

It is important for the programme to develop a clear results achievement strategy linked to the sharing of good practice and how the results may be scaled up by the partners in the future.

**Recommendations**

The evaluator provides thirteen recommendations to the UN implementing partners. Five recommendations are provided to support LNB’s performance in the remaining implementation period for the current phase, and eight are provided to support the programme’s orientation in a potential follow-up phase. A selection of the key recommendations are summarised below.

Recommendation 1: It is important to ensure that all municipalities have achieved a basic level of progress linked to planning, budgeting and monitoring of social care services and provision.

Recommendation 4: Sustainability strategies to support the full transfer of the results and their sustained operation by the partners should be developed via LNB, in cooperation with partners.

Recommendation 6: It is important for LNB to continue its efforts to support the government to strengthen the function and delivery operations (effectiveness/ efficiency) of the recently established set of state financing mechanisms for social inclusion and social care services.

Recommendation 8: It is important for LNB to continue to support the development of social care models (e.g. integrated service approach, financing models for sharing of social services).

Recommendation 9: Supporting networking, knowledge sharing, peer to peer support, and the capitalization of experiences and results achieved so far between different partner groups.

# **List of acronyms and abbreviations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AAC | Augmentative and Alternative Communication |
| ALL | Albanian Lek |
| CEFA | Alternated Education and Vocational Training |
| CHF | Swiss Franc |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| DaO | “Delivering as One” mechanism |
| DCM | Decision of the Council of Ministers |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GRB | Gender Responsive Budgeting |
| EQs | Evaluation Questions |
| EC | European Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| EUR | Euro |
| IOM | International Organisation of Migration |
| INSTAT | Albanian Institute of Statistics |
| IPA | (EU) Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance |
| IPMG | Integrated Planning and Management Group |
| HH | Household |
| LGBTIQ | Initialism of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, intersex and queer/questioning. |
| LGUs | Local Government Units |
| LNB | Leave No One Behind |
| LSDG | Local Social Dialogue Group |
| MESY | Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth |
| MIS | Management Information System |
| MFE | Ministry of Finances and Economy |
| MHSP | Ministry of Health and Social Protection |
| MTBF | Mid-Term Budgetary Framework |
| MTR | Midterm Review |
| NAPPWD | National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities |
| NAPRE | National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians |
| NARU | Need Assessment Referral Unit |
| NE | Economic Assistance |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| NPF | “Ndihmë për fëmijët” – CSO |
| OECD/DAC | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee |
| PAK | Persona me Aftesi te Kufizura / Persons with Disabilities |
| PoCSD | Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development |
| PWDs | Persons with disabilities |
| R&E | Roma and Egyptians |
| SCSR | Social Care Services Reform in Albania / Support to Roma Social Inclusion |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SIIG | Statistical Integrity Indicators Group |
| SILC | (EU) Statistics on Income and Living Conditions |
| SIPD | Social Inclusion Policy Document |
| SRH | Sexual Reproductive Health |
| SSS | State Social Services |
| TC | Technical Committee |
| TEACH | Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNFPA | United Nations Fund for Population Activities |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| UNSSIA | UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Purpose of the Midterm Review**

The goal of the Midterm Review (MTR) is to provide an independent analysis of the progress achieved to date through implementation of the “Leave No One Behind” (LNB) programme in Albania. LNB is a four-year Joint United Nations (UN) Project that aims to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities (with a specific focus on social service provision, notably to reach marginalised groups or vulnerable persons), to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold the duty bearers accountable. The programme is implemented over the period June 2017 to May 2021.

The purpose of the MTR is to present evidence-based analysis so as to support future decision-making, steering, and focus of the LNB programme going forward, while also ensuring the independent analysis of the programme and its effects, as a means of accountability. The primary audience/ users of the MTR include the UN in Albania, relevant national partners (ministries/ agencies) linked to promoting social inclusion, and the Swiss Embassy in Albania (the donor financier of the programme is the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), and more broadly also the LNB programme partners at municipality and local level in Albania.

## **1.2. Evaluation scope and objectives**

The detailed scope and objectives of the MTR is defined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment – see Annex 9 – and specifically so in the context of the evaluation questions (EQs) that form the framework for the research undertaken and the analysis presented. The set of EQs is detailed in the context of the Evaluation Matrix for the MTR – see Annex 4. The MTR assessment reports on the whole LNB programme (all components, across Albania), covering the implementation period 01/06/2017 (start date) to 31/01/2020 (MTR ‘cut-off’ date).

The objective of the MTR is to assess and present the results of the LNB programme, including an assessment of how the results have contributed to social services improvement in Albania, presenting conclusions, and recommendations. The MTR assesses lessons learnt and early signs of programme successes and/or failures, and reviews the progress and potential risks to the sustainability of its interventions. Overall, the MTR is intended to have a formative nature and intends to improve programme performance in the remaining implementation phase. In a forward looking way the MTR also identifies priority areas and strategic interventions that could support/ feed in to the formulation of a second, four-year phase for the LNB programme. Specifically, the MTR assess the below criteria of OECD/DAC evaluation guidelines:

* Relevance – will assess to what extent the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of the intended beneficiaries, country needs and partners’ and donors’ policies.
* Effectiveness – will assess to what extent results at various levels, including outcomes, have been achieved based on planned activities.
* Efficiency – will assess how well and productively the programme has utilised the resources to reach the predefined goals.
* Sustainability – will assess preliminary indications of the degree to which programme results are likely to be sustainable beyond the programme’s lifetime (at the community and government level) and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability.

Impact assessment will not be able to be conducted at this stage of implementation, but the MTR does present changes that can be attributed at this stage to the programme intervention.

The MTR also addresses the following specific horizontal and cross-cutting issues: LNB contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); LNB cross-cutting issues (human rights, governance, and gender equality); and LNB communication and visibility.

## **1.3. Evaluation approach and methods**

The overall approach and methodology of the MTR follows the relevant guidance provided in the “UNDP Evaluation Guidelines” (2019), plus the requirements specified in the MTR’s ToR. The MTR was conducted by an International Consultant (Team Leader) and a National Consultant (Team Specialist), and included the following approaches, methods, and activities:

* The MTR is an evidence-based assessment, founded on a collaborative/ participatory approach in terms of its engagement with the diverse range of programme partners: institutions and individuals that have been involved in the design, or the implementation, and/or supervision of the programme, at central (national), municipal and local levels. In addition to government (national and municipal) and donor partners, this also involved consultations with local social service-providers, civil society advocates, and final-users.
* The MTR builds upon: (a) the review of relevant sources of programme information (e.g. project document, progress reports, key project deliverables), and the review of available country/ local context documents and statistical sources – see Annex 3 for a list of key documentation; (b) semi-structured interviews conducted with key informant persons and via Focus Group Discussions with key partners/ stakeholders undertaken during the field mission and site-visits – see Annex 1 for a summary of the field phase itinerary and Annex 2 for the list of partners interviewed/ consulted for their feedback; (c) the detailed assessment of the programme’s progress versus the results framework – see Annex 6.
* The main field mission phase consultations were undertaken between 20-24 January 2020, to conduct interviews/ Focus Group Discussions, and also to undertake site-visits to facilities and interviews in four municipalities (Fier, Lushnje, Tirana, Ure Vajgurore).
* The MTR team presented a ‘Debriefing’ of the preliminary findings/ achievements, risks, issues and priorities for the current and next LNB phase, at UN in Albania, on 24/01/2020.
* The Draft Evaluation (MTR) Report is submitted to the UNDP in order for its review of the validity of the MTR’s factual, technical and evidence-based assessment. It will subsequently be shared by the UNDP with key partners so as to obtain their feedback on the Draft Evaluation (MTR) Report. On the basis of the ‘comments’ received from all partners on the Draft, a detailed “Audit” of the process of ‘comments treatment’ will be provided to UNDP, alongside the preparation and submission of the Final MTR Report.

## **1.4. Structure of the Midterm Review Report**

The MTR presents analysis in terms of the following report sections: (0) Executive Summary; (1) Introduction; (2) Description of the intervention; (3) Findings (i.e. Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Cross-cutting themes); (4) Conclusions; (5) Recommendations.

The MTR Annexes provide additional details on the: (1) Summary of the MTR field phase itinerary; (2) List of persons interviewed/ consulted; (3) List of key documents reviewed; (4) MTR Evaluation Matrix; (5) LNB programme budget; (6) LNB programme progress toward results achievement; (7) Rating scales definition; (8) UNEG Code of Conduct; and (9) the key sections of the MTR Terms of Reference (ToR).

## **1.5. Limitations**

The main risks foreseen for the delivery of the assignment were: (1) Limited availability of key informant persons during the planned field mission; (2) Limited availability from government sources of recent statistical data on the context of poverty/ social exclusion. In regard to risk (1), this was mitigated via the detailed management of the meeting-scheduling by the UN and flexibility of partners to adapt to timing ‘fine-tuning’. In regard to risk (2), the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) released statistical survey results/ analysis, in December 2019, for years 2017-2018 based on Eurostat’s methodology for the Survey of Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC); in addition, the MTR has reviewed public data sources from the State Social Service; however, performance assessment of the programme against intended impact is data constrained.

# **2. Description of the intervention**

## **2.1. Overview of the LNB programme and of the UN programme context**

The LNB programme is implemented by the UN Team in Albania through the modalities of the Delivering as One (DaO) mechanism, within the context of the Government of Albania-UN “Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development” (PoCSD) for the period 2017-2021. The programme is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The LNB programme is jointly implemented by four UN partner agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNFPA), in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies and civil society organisations (CSOs) at the central and local levels, with UNDP the lead UN agency for overall implementation and coordination of the programme. During Phase 1 of the programme – from June 2017 to May 2021 – SDC funds the programme at the amount of CHF 8.0 million. It is envisaged, subject to future decision-making considerations and outcomes that a second four-year phase of the LNB programme be undertaken, over the period 2021 to 2025, also financed by the SDC. The programme covers all of Albania by improving social service provision across all 61 municipalities, as well as at the central (system) level, however specific geographic focus is also maintained by reacting to specific needs and challenges in selected municipalities.

Within the framework of the Government of Albania-UN PoCSD, the LNB programme is implemented in the context of Outcome 2 “Social Cohesion” under the theme of *Social Protection and Social Inclusion*. The “Social Cohesion” outcome also addresses the social development themes Health, Education, Child Rights Protection, and Gender-based Violence.

The overall goal of Outcome 2, “Social Cohesion”, under the PoCSD is that: *“All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalized and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights; and more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion”*. The overall goal of the LNB programme, with its focus on social service provision, is clearly and logically related to that end, that: *“Vulnerable persons and groups are empowered to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and hold them accountable”.* A summary overview of the LNB programme and strategy is provided in MTR section 2.3, below.

With regard to the global policy framework for international development, the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and LNB’s contribution to supporting Albania’s progress in achieving the SDGs, the LNB programme identifies linkages related to its contributing to SDGs 1-5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality), to SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and to SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities).

## **2.2. Development context**

While Albania has made clear progress in terms of the eradication of extreme and absolute poverty since the 1990s transition – to a large extent as a result of the rapid economic growth and rise in income levels experienced by Albanians in the period up to 2008 – further progress in achieving poverty reduction has been challenged over the past decade due to the period of European macro-economic instability, and consequent below trend economic growth. In 2018, the percentage of persons ‘at risk of poverty’ in Albania was 23.4%, while the ‘severe material deprivation’ rate was 38.3%, and the ‘at risk of poverty or social exclusion’ rate was 49.0%.[[1]](#footnote-1) Furthermore, “Albania has a weighty heritage of marginalised and vulnerable persons in dire need of support but who continue to receive no, or often inadequate, services”[[2]](#footnote-2). Notably, the incidence of poverty and exclusion continues to disproportionately affect specific segments of society, particularly: the Roma and Egyptians (R&E), persons with disabilities (PWDs), women, households (HH) with young children, HH with unemployed persons or only primary education.

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

Key strategies and action plans adopted by the Government in regard to social protection and social inclusion policy include the: Social Protection Strategy (2015-2020), Social Inclusion Policy Document (2015-2020), National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians (2015-2020), National Strategy for Social Housing (2015-2025), National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities (2016-2020), National Strategy on Gender Equality (2016-2020).

The Social Protection Strategy, adopted in December 2015, outlines the main elements of the future social care services system in Albania. The Strategy reflects the principles of equity and efficiency and is directly linked to Albania’s Mid-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF). The Strategy clearly articulates the need to better harmonize the existing different instruments of social protection, recognising that cash benefits alone cannot address the complex needs of vulnerable families and children. The Law on Social Care Services, adopted in November 2016, provides the foundations for fully shaping of a new locally based system of integrated social services, allowing Albania to make an essential step ahead towards a modern social protection system. The Law on Social Care Services brings clear provisions detailing the roles and accountabilities of key duty-bearers, at central and at local government levels, relating to social care services provision and its financing. The accountabilities and roles of the newly formed local government units (LGUs), set up in 2016, in relation to social care services in their territories are clearly articulated/ integrated in the National Inter-sectoral Decentralization Strategy (2015-2020) and the Law on Local Self-Government, both adopted in 2015.

More broadly, in the context of Albania’s territorial reform process and fiscal and administrative decentralisation, essential public services that perform critical roles in reducing poverty and social exclusion and in improving human capital are being delegated, deconcentrated and devolved to new regional bodies (employment and inclusive education), and to local governments (social care services), and require new funding mechanisms and effective management for coordinated delivery of services between the different tiers of government.

Recognising the scope of the social care reforms, the government structures at central and local level quite often struggle to implement social policies and programmes and address adequately the needs of marginalised groups, particularly R&E communities and PWDs, due to limited resources and capacities. In 2017, the administrative capacity of the newly formed LGUs linked to implementing social policies at the local level was under-developed[[3]](#footnote-3): only 10% of the LGUs had a local action plan for social inclusion; a Needs Assessment and Referral Unit for social care services was established in only 26% of the LGUs; a child protection unit in the structure responsible for social services was missing in 34% of the LGUs, while 44% of LGUs did not have a monitoring system on cases of children at risk and/or in need of protection; only 28% of LGUs had a system for monitoring the cases of violations of the rights of national minorities; a local action plan for implementation of the national action plan for the integration of R&E had been drafted in 21% of the LGUs; and in 84% of LGUs a local gender equality coordinator had been appointed.

Furthermore, publicly-funded social care services (other than institutional/ residential services) remain limited in Albania. Most social care services are provided by CSOs funded on a voluntary basis or by development partners. Services include residential centres, day care and community centres, mainly targeting the elderly, PWDs, and children. Specialised services are mainly to be found in larger urban areas (where 90% of service providers are active), while 75% are offered in the western and central areas of the country, the mountain regions being underserviced. 27 of the 61 LGUs do not provide any social care services, while others face challenges with regard to services outreach, human and financial resources allocation, quality and sustainability. Therefore, in order to ensure an effective response, it is critical to mobilise government, empower civil society and people in local communities to act in unison to promote the social policy reforms and to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives.

In 2017, public expenditure in Albania classified[[4]](#footnote-4) as social protection/ social security was 9.2% (as a % of GDP), and 2.9% linked to health, and 3.0% linked to education. Approximately three-quarters of the public expenditure linked to social protection is accounted for by social security benefit payments (primarily the provision of old-age and family pensions). Of the public expenditure related to social assistance provision (cash and in-kind benefits and social care services) for the vulnerable and disadvantaged persons, the vast bulk of this expenditure is accounted for by social benefit transfers (cash payments provided via the Economic Assistance (NE) and via the Disability Benefit Allowance (PAK) schemes), with less than 5% of the expenditure related to social assistance provision linked to social care services.

## **2.3. Project description and strategy**

The LNB programme interventions are all designed to support the implementation of Albanian policies and strategies relevant for the social inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups and persons, and especially so of PWDs, and R&E communities.

The LNB programme strategy is holistic in its approach to the improvement of social services and the promotion of social inclusion, with a series of interventions aimed at macro level (central government authorities and national services), at meso level (municipalities and CSOs), and at micro level (the target groups of final beneficiaries and CSOs). The programme covers all of Albania by improving social service provision across all 61 municipalities, as well as by improving national capacities for ensuring that social inclusion policies are suitably anchored, promoted, monitored, and financed at the system level. Reflective of the increased levels of vulnerability to social exclusion of PWDs and R&E, the programme also focuses on improving social service provision and local accountability mechanisms to react to the specific needs and challenges facing these target groups, to be undertaken in selected municipalities.

As shown in Exhibit 1 below, in order to achieve its overall goal (impact) the LNB programme specifies three outcomes to be realised, on the basis of successful delivery of nine programme outputs (which are to be achieved on the basis of implementing 24 core types of activities). Since service delivery is realised mostly at local level, LNB’s intervention focuses on the local level. Two of the three outcomes reflect this thrust – by empowering the beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion (outcome 1), and by capacitating municipalities and the service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion (outcome 2). The third outcome reflects the need to ensure the anchoring of LNB’s interventions at system level; it is to contribute to the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion, including its funding.

## **Exhibit 1: Intervention logic of the LNB programme**

Impact

All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights; and more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion

Vulnerable persons and groups are empowered to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and hold them accountable

National institutions implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, developed capacities & empowered target groups

Municipalities effectively manage the provision of social services and promote social inclusion

Outcomes

The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion and holds them accountable

Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion

Marginalised and vulnerable persons & groups throughout Albania and selected municipalities supported in their access to specific services

Outputs

Ministries are supported in their implementation of policies and strategies and in plans for funding of policies and strategies based on monitoring data

R&E and PWDs supported to access specific services

Delivery capacity of social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up

The capacity of groups of R&E, and PWDs as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable

The establishment of funding mechanisms for the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported

Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including R&E and PWDs, participate in monitoring implementation of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion

A grant scheme is set up for municipalities to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation

**Cross-cutting themes: Gender Equality; and Good Governance**

Regarding the main instruments (methods) for implementation/ delivery of the programme, LNB primarily avails of technical expertise and know-how of UN agencies and implementing partners to support “Capacity Building” (training for staff of partner organisations) and “Organisational Development” (support to strengthen the institutional capacities of partner organisations); supported by continuous “Policy Dialogue” with key partners and other actors. In order to support the development of social service provision at the local level benefiting PWDs and R&E, LNB also provides small-scale “Grant Funding” to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation, and for rehabilitation of social services facilities.

LNB is providing support at the national, municipal and local level in five main areas: Social Policy (design/planning/monitoring/funding); Institutional Development; Capacity Building of beneficiaries; Advocacy and Awareness raising; and Community Social Care Services. The main types of activities undertaken via the LNB programme are summarised below:

* Existing CSOs supporting marginalised and vulnerable groups’ access to social services are supported in their institutional and personal capacities;
* Models of tested inclusive services provision implemented at local level;
* Support to selected municipalities for rehabilitation of social services facilities;
* Structures and mechanisms for vulnerable groups’ participation in the planning, budgeting and monitoring of policies for social inclusion;
* The structures and mechanisms of social service provision at municipal level are supported in their organisational development;
* The staff of municipal social service providers are supported through capacity building;
* Good practices in providing social services are identified and shared;
* Ministries supported in implementing their policy framework related to social inclusion.

Regarding the LNB programme budget – CHF 8.0 million over four-years – this is fully detailed in the programme/project document: (i) overall budget per activity, outputs, outcomes over the four-years, (ii) overall budget per outputs, outcomes per year, and (iii) overall budget per UN agency and other implementing partner per activity, outputs, outcomes over the four-years. Further information on the LNB budget is provided in Annex 5, and also summarised below.

## **Exhibit 2: LNB programme budget – summary overview**

## **2.4. Implementation arrangements**

LNB is a Joint UN Project implemented by four UN partner agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, and UNFPA), in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies and CSOs. UNDP is the leading UN agency for overall implementation and coordination of the programme. Each participating UN agency implements activities and outputs, in line with their mandate and expertise, as defined and agreed in the respective joint work plans. In addition to the involvement of the UN partner agencies, the local CSO “Ndihmë për fëmijët” (NPF) – “Help for Children Foundation” – has been engaged by the UNDP as an implementing partner for the delivery of specific actions (regarding inclusive services delivery models) under LNB.

The project management structure for the LNB programme consists of a Steering Committee (SC) to oversee and coordinate the operations of this intervention, plus a Technical Committee (TC) to ensure a coordinated approach in the implementation of the programme.

The SC convenes at least twice a year, and upon necessity. The SC is composed of representatives of: the SDC (Swiss Embassy), the four UN partner agencies, line ministries/ agencies, selected LGUs benefiting from the project, and representatives of CSOs. Other key development partners (donors) active in the area of social inclusion may attend as observers. The SC oversees the project’s implementation and takes all necessary strategic decisions. It provides policy guidance and recommendation regarding the project strategy and objectives, receive and comment semi-annual reports, approves annual plans of operation and reports.

The TC consists of the technical experts of the four UN agencies and the NPF and meets at least four times per year. Its main mandate is to guide implementation of LNB, coordinate the practical implementation of interventions and ensure results are delivered timely and efficiently.

The LNB programme itself is managed by a dedicated project team of experts responsible to coordinate the implementation, monitoring and reporting of all of the programme components.

## **2.5. Main stakeholders and target groups**

The main stakeholder partners and direct beneficiaries of the LNB programme include:

* Government of Albania: primarily the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP), the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MESY), the Ministry of Finances and Economy (MFE), the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), and the State Social Service (SSS);
* Local Governmental Units (LGUs): while a range of programme actions are focused in specific LGUs, all 61 LGUs in Albania are partners and beneficiaries of the programme (e.g. via training actions, sharing of good practice) to implement activities linked to their responsibility for social service provision and coordination with other local authorities;
* Social service providers: public and CSO social service providers supported by LNB;
* CSOs: at national and local level representing the interests of different vulnerable and marginalised groups, via advocacy, lobbying, networking, and awareness raising actions promoting social inclusion and social services at the national and/or local level.

The principal target group(s) of final-users, direct or indirect, of the LNB programme include:

* Marginalised and vulnerable families, women and men, children/ youth including young key population across Albania,
* Persons with disabilities (PWDs), and Roma and Egyptians (R&E) across Albania.

These target groups are reached via municipalities’ social services departments and CSOs providing social services and representing the interest of the marginalised and vulnerable.

More broadly, the final beneficiaries of LNB are all citizens/ residents in Albania whom indirectly benefit via the existence of a strengthened system for social service provision and support.

# **3. Findings**

## **3.1. Project strategy (Relevance)**

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| **Relevance** – to what extent the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of the intended beneficiaries, country needs and partners’ and donors’ policies? |
| **Evaluation Questions**  *To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?*  *Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?*  *Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?*  *How relevant is the programme to target groups’, including central and local governments’, needs and priorities?*  *How relevant is the programme to other key stakeholders’ (executing agencies, partner organizations, including other UN agencies, NGOs etc.) needs and priorities?*  *To what extent is the programme aligned with the policies and strategies of the country, UN agencies participating in the programme and donors?*  *To what extent is the programme contributing to country system development?* |

## **3.1.1. Project design**

While the LNB programme is a *new* project endeavour to improve social inclusion in Albania, by contributing to improve social service provision, targeting marginalised groups and persons, LNB is also designed to build on the successful achievements of previous SDC-funded social inclusion projects implemented in Albania via UN partner agencies, and the local CSO NPF:

* “UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania” (UNSSIA), implemented during the period 2014-2017 by UN partner agencies UNDP, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, IOM, UNICEF, UNODC, and UNAIDS, under UNDP management;
* “Social Care Services Reform in Albania / Support to Roma Social Inclusion” (SCSR), implemented during the period 2012-2016 by UNICEF;
* “Alternated Education and Vocational Training” (CEFA) implemented by NPF up to 2016.

The UNSSIA and SCSR projects contributed to knowledge generation for evidence-based policy-making and the development of an enabling national policy and legal framework on social inclusion and social protection, as well as capacity building of Albanian institutions at central and local level, including CSOs, and support for innovative social inclusion models/ demonstrative projects. Key results relating to policy-making and the legal framework on social inclusion included the: Social Inclusion Policy Document (SIPD) 2015-2020, Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020, Social Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025, Action Plan on Health Promotion and The Reproductive Health Strategic Document, Law on Inclusion and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities, Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020, Law on Social Care Services, Law on the Order of Social Workers, Law on the Order of Psychologists, a standard package (“basket”) of social care services with appropriate costing-estimates developed, draft Law on Social Housing, Law on Social Enterprises, plus a national set of harmonised indicators on gender equality, child and family welfare statistics. The CEFA project contributed to knowledge generation for evidence-based policy-making via the piloting and successful further development of an innovative, integrated social service model approach to support the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and vulnerable persons (the R&E), through education and family/community development, and supporting the integration of the model by four municipalities, and thereby also support to the process of social services policy-making.

The intervention logic and implementing strategy of the LNB programme, including a narrative description of the theory of change, the definition of key stakeholders and target groups of final beneficiaries, the cross-cutting themes to orient the programme, and the project’s risk analysis and mitigation strategy is detailed in the programme document (project proposal). The intervention logic and strategy is clearly defined, and the theory of change narrative a credible outline of the causal pathway of results leading to socio-economic development change.

Based on the solid policy and legal framework for social inclusion set up under the previous projects, the focus of the LNB programme is to support the effective roll-out and enactment of the social services reform process and of social inclusion measures across Albania. The overall goal of the LNB programme is that “vulnerable persons and groups are empowered to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and hold them accountable”. Since social service delivery is realised mostly at local level, LNB’s intervention focuses on the local level. Two of the three planned LNB outcomes reflect this thrust – by empowering the beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion (outcome 1), and by capacitating municipalities (LGUs) and the service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion (outcome 2). The third outcome reflects the project’s concern with anchoring its interventions at system level; it is to contribute to the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion, including its funding.

Linked to each of the outcomes, the planned outputs to be delivered and the related types of activities to be implemented are well defined. The causal pathway of results achievement is logical, and the activities and outputs are clearly consistent with the attainment of the outcomes, the overall goal, and the intended impacts and effects of the LNB programme. The planned chain of results linked to each of the programme outcomes is presented below.

## **Exhibit 3: LNB programme – planned chain of results for Outcome 1**

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| **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Outcome** |
| Their rights and the services they are entitled to are communicated to marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups  Existing CSOs supporting marginalised and vulnerable groups’ access to social services supported in their institutional and personal capacities | Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are empowered to request social inclusion | The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion and holds them accountable |
| Models of tested inclusive services provision implemented at local level  Support selected municipalities rehabilitation of social services facilities  Municipalities and deconcentrated offices of employment, health and education are supported with coordinating mechanisms to expand service to R&E and PWDs  Grant-funded projects implemented for new local innovative services | R&E and PWDs throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are supported in their access to specific services |
| Providers of municipal services and groups of R&E and PWDs supported in establishing mechanisms for planning and monitoring  Community development activities organized in selected municipalities in support of R&E empowerment | The capacity of groups of R&E and PWDs as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable |
| Structures and mechanisms for vulnerable groups’ participation in the monitoring of national policies are established in selected municipalities  Vulnerable and marginalized groups representative organizations are trained in the monitoring of the implementation of social inclusion policies and strategies | Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including R&E and PWDs, participate in monitoring the implementation of social inclusion policies |

## **Exhibit 4: LNB programme – planned chain of results for Outcome 2**

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| **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Outcome** |
| The social service provision in the 61 Albanian municipalities is assessed  The structures and mechanisms of social service provision at municipal level are supported in their organisational development  The staff of municipal social service providers are supported through capacity development  Social Impact Assessment conducted at local level in the target municipalities to inform municipal investment and social service provision | Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion | Municipalities effectively manage the pro-vision of social services and promote social inclusion |
| Good practices in providing social services are identified and showcased  The selected good practices are made available to all 61 municipalities in appropriate form  The introduction of good practices is supported if municipalities request respective support | Delivery capacity of social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up |
| Rules of a grant scheme for funding projects for R&E and PWDs, and for improving social service provision to other vulnerable/marginalised groups  Calls for submitting project proposals are realised | Grant scheme is set up for municipalities to introduce innovative social services |

## **Exhibit 5: LNB programme – planned chain of results for Outcome 3**

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| **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Outcome** |
| Ministries supported in the introduction of mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of national policies/ strategies relevant for social inclusion  INSTAT supported in establishing standardized data collection system for monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion  National capacities are built in partnership with ASPA and other partners for implementation and monitoring of social inclusion policies/ strategies  Ministries supported in implementing policy framework related to social inclusion (social housing strategy, pre-school inclusive education, social enterprises law) | Ministries are supported in their implementation of policies, strategies and legal framework and in plans for funding and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data | National institutions implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, developed capacities and empowered target groups |
| Conceptual support to central and local government for the establishment of funding mechanisms at central and local level is provided | The establishment of funding mechanisms for the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported |

The LNB programme seeks to support the effective roll-out of the social services reform and social inclusion measures across Albania, via actions aimed at the national (system) level (outputs 3.1 and 3.2) and to target all 61 Albanian municipalities and to benefit all marginalised and vulnerable persons (outputs 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2). Reflective of the available financial resources, and the specific levels of vulnerability to social exclusion faced by PWDs and R&E, the programme partially purses a geographic focus to concentrate the actions targeted to these groups of persons (outputs 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3). This reflects the fact that especially the Roma population in majority is concentrated in a limited number of Albanian municipalities (e.g. Fier, Kruja, Lezha, Lushnja and Pogradec). The selection of the municipalities to receive targeted support under the programme was based on transparent criteria proposed by the implementers and approved by the Project Steering Committee: e.g. statistical data on numbers of vulnerable and marginalised persons, especially PWDs, R&E, the presence of other donor projects, the mapping of support delivered via the UN partner agencies in the first months of LNB implementation (i.e. partnerships at the local level already established), and, as competitive elements, status of service delivery, and preparedness of municipalities to cooperate, contribution of own financial and staff resources. 18 municipalities were identified to benefit via the targeting of LNB’s support during year-1.

The intervention objectives and implementation strategy of the LNB programme remain valid.

## **3.1.2. Alignment with national policies, need and priorities**

The LNB programme is closely aligned with national policies, needs and priorities linked to the promotion of social inclusion and the reduction of the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The LNB programme specifically focuses on the strengthening of social care service provision, as part of the wider development of the social protection system in Albania.

In terms of national policies, an overview of national strategies and action plans, plus laws to which the LNB programme aligns is detailed in the previous section (3.1.1) of the MTR, of which the Social Inclusion Policy Document (SIPD), Social Protection Strategy, Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities, and the Law on Social Care Services are the principal statements of national policies, needs and priorities. In addition, LNB also aligns with the national policies of the: Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020, Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, Action Plan on Youth 2014-2020, Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020, and Crosscutting Strategy for Decentralization and Local Governance 2015-2020. In many cases, these national strategies and action plans have recently been or are presently anticipated to be updated/ extended, as relevant, to cover the period 2020-2022 or beyond.

The LNB programme continues to be highly relevant to the needs and priorities of social service and social inclusion policy partners at national and local levels, including central and local governments (LGUs), social service providers, and civil society partners. The LNB programme is providing vital support to the different partners in the process of roll-out of significant social care reforms in Albania, via which social service delivery is primarily to be realised at the local/ community level, while the national level remains responsible for overall guidance, coordination, training, suitable financing and quality assurance of the sector/ policy.

The LNB programme continues to be highly relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups of final beneficiaries (marginalised and vulnerable families, women and men, and specifically of PWDs and the R&E), as evidenced via the support for the rehabilitation of social services facilities and to introduce innovative social services at the local level, and via actions to inform and empower marginalised and vulnerable groups and citizens to be engaged in contributing to their social inclusion and in accessing their basic right to social protection.

Feedback from project partners, stakeholders, and final-user beneficiaries supported via LNB, provided to the evaluator during the field phase mission, was *entirely* consistent in its positivity as to the continued high level of relevance of the goals and approaches of the LNB programme to the needs of their organisation and to addressing the needs of Albania regarding inclusion. The programme provides a relevant mix of interventions, at central, municipal, and local levels that collectively, and coherently, contribute to country system (national and local) development.

## **3.1.3. Relevance of the project in the international development policy framework**

The relevance of the LNB programme in the context of the international development policy framework and specific development policy and donor context of Albania is clearly evidenced.

With regard to the global policy framework for international development, the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, LNB contributes to supporting Albania’s progress in achieving SDGs 1-5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) – specific analysis of LNB’s contribution to the SDGs is provided in section 3.5.1 of the MTR.

The policy framework for the engagement of the UN in Albania is established in the UN and Government of Albania cooperation programme (PoCSD), currently for the period 2017-2021, and via the corporate and/or country programme documents of the different UN partner agencies as to their strategic goals/ priorities for engagement in Albania. The LNB programme is integral to the achievement of the *Social Protection and Social Inclusion* theme under Outcome 2 “Social Cohesion” of the PoCSD. Based on previous experience in Albania with the operation of the UN ‘Delivering as One’ context for joint programme cooperation between UN partner agencies, the LNB programme is also relevant to further consolidate this approach for joint planning and division of labour between UN agencies, so as to create effectiveness and efficiency gains, notably in terms of socio-economic inclusion and gender equality results.

For the bilateral donors still active in Albania the UN-Albania PoCSD has served as a relevant framework in which to potentially position their support in-country and/or to achieve a suitable ‘division of labour’ to collaboratively address the wider range of issues/ goals – be these actions undertaken by the donors in direct cooperation with the UN, or implemented separately. With regards to Outcome 2 “Social Cohesion” of the PoCSD, Switzerland is the key partner for the UN implemented actions in the area of *Social Protection and Social Inclusion*, Sweden the key partner in the area of UN implemented actions combatting *Gender-based Violence*. Other notable bilateral donors still active in Albania in terms of support provided in the area of social cohesion/ inclusion include Germany. For each bilateral donor the overall results of Outcome 2 “Social Cohesion” are of relevance to their individual country’s strategic priorities in the area: each bilateral donor seeks to promote social inclusion, stability and well-being within Albania.

Within the area of social protection, a suitable ‘division of labour’ has also been achieved between the measures of the World Bank and the UN: the World Bank supports reform of the two main social assistance programmes (Economic Assistance (NE) and via the Disability Benefit Allowance (PAK) schemes), the UN (including via LNB) supports strengthening of the management and delivery of social assistance and social care services to the citizens.

Prior to 2019, the European Union (EU) has principally addressed issues of social inclusion in Albania in terms of the promotion of socio-economic development, employment and skills, and via grants to CSOs including in the area of social service/ care provision. During the period 2015-2018 the EU also funded a project on economic and social empowerment targeted to R&E communities (in Durres, Gjirokastra, Shkodra, and Tirana), implemented by the UNDP. In the context of the EU’s Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) 2019 programme of assistance to Albania, the EU has recently approved a contribution of up to EUR 50 million for a programme in the areas of “Employment, Social Protection and Social Inclusion”. The LNB programme is specifically referenced in the EU’s programme action, and the strong role played by the UN in Albania in promoting social inclusion and social service reforms acknowledged.

## **3.2. Progress towards results (Effectiveness)**

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| **Effectiveness** – to what extent results at various levels, including outcomes, have been achieved based on planned activities? |
| **Evaluation Questions**  *Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-programme targets. To what extent have the expected outputs, outcomes and goal been achieved or are likely to be achieved?*  *What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes/ expected results/ outputs?*  *Identify remaining barriers to achieving the programme objective during the remaining implementation timeframe.*  *Did the programme contribute to capacity building and organisational development as planned?*  *To what extent have UN agencies coordinated effectively and created synergies in the delivery of assistance?*  *Is the current coordination set up producing the intended results?*  *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?* |

## **3.2.1. Management of the project and the effectiveness of results achievement**

Overall, the LNB programme’s progress towards results achievement has been satisfactory, which is evidenced linked to each of the programme’s three outcomes:

* **Community level**: Vulnerable groups are empowered on their rights and entitlements to social services and are mobilised for a meaningful participation in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms to advocate for their rights. Around 7,000 R&E, PWDs, women and youth have engaged in forums and debates with local authorities on issues of concern (e.g. access to social care services, employment, health, inclusive education, budgeting). Awareness raising actions on issues of social inclusion and social care, notably targeted to vulnerable groups, have been successfully undertaken at the local and at the national level, and the capacity of CSOs active in the area also strengthened at local and national level. A series of community based social service models and tools have been developed via the programme and are now operational at the local and regional levels (e.g. services for PWDs, R&E, inclusive education, child health and protection, and SRH). Support has also been provided to rehabilitate social care facilities, and for innovative local projects. Around 2,750 R&E, PWDs, women and youth have received quality social care services.
* **Municipality level**: LGUs are being capacitated to fulfil their obligations (as foreseen in the Social Protection Strategy, and the process of social care and territorial reforms in Albania), linked to the provision and management of social care policy and services at the local level. This entails support provided that benefits all of the LGUs in Albania (e.g. methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, plus tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation), as well as specific support provided in selected LGUs to pilot test the different mechanisms at the local and/or regional level (so far supporting 25 LGUs in total, to test mechanisms). Of the 61 LGUs in Albania, 41 LGUs either now have an approved local Social Care Plan or in the process of the drafting/ finalising/ approval of the plan at the local level. In addition to the LGUs, the capacities of social care service providers has been enhanced via specific training actions for professional staffs, and will be so more broadly also via the support now being provided in respect to the review/ update of university-level course curricula for social work education (pre-service and in-service skills and qualifications).
* **National (policy/ system) level**: After a slow start-up for the LNB programme at national level, good progress has been achieved to further consolidate the legal and regulatory policy framework for social inclusion and social care reforms in Albania. But, the process to adopt regulatory bylaws is still incomplete (notably to promote the social housing agenda). Reasonable progress is evident linked to supporting the establishment of state funding mechanisms for the promotion of social inclusion and social care focused on vulnerable groups and persons (e.g. the Social Fund, the Social Enterprise Fund, the measures to support/ prevent out of school children, plus Social Housing Programmes). But, these mechanisms are not fully tested in terms of their effectiveness or efficiency. Furthermore, the adequacy of the budgetary allocations (from central to municipal level) to effectively support the promotion of social inclusion measures also remains an issue. Adequate progress is evident linked to the establishment of the appropriate mechanisms and tools, including data-sharing protocols, necessary for data collection and analysis for the purposes of monitoring the implementation of social inclusion policies. However, the functional operation of the monitoring systems and tools is still to be fully achieved, notably in terms of the realisation of a ‘whole of government approach’ (e.g. inter-agency cooperation, and the necessary cooperation across the tiers of government).

The LNB programme has successfully contributed to capacity building and organisational development as planned, at national and local levels, of governmental, civil society, and social service provider partners. This will be an on-going process for the remaining project period, in order to consolidate the results achievement, to generate and share knowledge as to good practice for subsequent scaling up, and to ensuring the commitment of partners and decision-makers to the sustainability of the results beyond the implementation of project activities. To this end the programme’s institutional partnerships with relevant stakeholders are being further consolidated at central and local levels, and continuous consultations are in place to support the transfer of the project results to be embedded within the partners’ organisation. The set of advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms operational at the local level for a meaningful process of community participation in policy considerations, will also be central advocacy fora for developing the political ownership of the social care reforms at local level.

The LNB management and coordination set up are effective to support project implementation and results achievement. The novelty of the design of the programme and the holistic strategy and participatory approach followed to securing consultation, inclusiveness and stakeholders’ engagement with the programme are regarded by the partners to have significantly contributed to achieving the intended results, and in the development of local capacities and ownership.

The Joint UN Project approach is delivering the intended results effectively, notably via the provision of a common UN approach and policy offer to the Albanian partners so as to develop a coherent and integrated social inclusion and social service reform policy framework and a set of policy tools appropriate to the specific needs, context and customs of Albania. For a number of partners at the local level the LNB programme is strongly regarded as a UN project, rather than exclusively that of an individual UN agency, with policy and technical support provided to meet local needs by the UN agency technically appropriate to that end. The role of each participating UN agency in the delivery of the programme, in line with their mandate and technical expertise, is defined in the project document and in the LNB annual work plans. Coordination between the UN partner agencies to deliver the LNB programme is effectively realised via regular exchange of information on the implementation of actions, to support the identification of potential obstacles, emerging needs, and areas for coordinated actions to maximise potential synergies in the delivery of the assistance, notably at the local level.

The LNB programme is suitably coordinated with and interacts as appropriate with other donor financed actions in Albania in the field of social inclusion and social development. Initially this is achieved within the UN in terms of the programme’s coordination with the other components of the Government of Albania-UN PoCSD in the context of Outcome 2 “Social Cohesion”. The formal review of progress achieved under the PoCSD is undertaken on a semi-annual basis, which allows for suitable synergies to be developed between the different PoCSD components, when thematically appropriate, and for avoiding the duplication of UN programme/project efforts. In addition, the PoCSD provides a strong vehicle for the programming efforts by other donor partners active in Albania, ensuring that their actions can be suitably coordinated with those of the UN or clearly demarcated from the programme goals and efforts of the UN.

With regards to the LNB programme’s interaction and coordination with other Swiss projects in Albania in the Employment, Skills and Social Policy sector, there is a strong level of synergy between LNB’s specific focus on the development of social care services in Albania and the Swiss projects undertaken to promote skills development and economic opportunities for vulnerable groups of persons and those at risk of exclusion, and the Swiss projects to strengthen governance capacities and participatory accountability mechanisms for stronger municipalities in Albania. Alongside the LNB programme, the Swiss projects collectively promote social inclusion, economic well-being and livelihoods for those most at risk of poverty or social exclusion (the principle of “Leave No One Behind”), via empowering citizens to contribute to their social and economic well-being and to contribute to the expression of community needs and priorities so as to support local policy-making considerations.

## **3.2.2. Analysis of progress towards outcomes – Micro (community) level**

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| **Outcome 1**: The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion |

Overall, the progress towards achieving Outcome 1 has been highly satisfactory. LNB has very successfully contributed to further the empowerment of vulnerable people through a range of measures linked to advocacy and awareness raising, capacity building of CSOs, beneficiaries, local networks and structures to facilitate a participatory, consultative social policy planning, budgeting and monitoring process, as well as facilitated access to inclusive social services at the local level. The contribution of LNB is evidenced across the whole of Albania, and at the local level in 25 target municipalities, and also for the breadth of the contribution in terms of the range of issues and specific target groups of beneficiaries that are addressed via the programme.

With regards to the results at the micro (community) level, linked to the empowerment of vulnerable groups and persons on their rights and entitlements to social services, their capacity to access local services, and to be involved in policy-making processes linked to social inclusion and services, the progress in terms of results achievement is summarised below:

## **Exhibit 6: LNB programme – status of results achievement for Outcome 1**

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| **Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are empowered to request social inclusion:**  Technical support was provided to map social services and beneficiaries in 18 municipalities and to examine the level of satisfaction with the local provision of social services. This identified a total number of 121 service providers in the 18 municipalities; the mean value of reported services was around 3.5. The total number of beneficiaries was 29,978 (of which 2,558 are PWDs, 2,821 are Roma and 1,825 are Egyptian beneficiaries). The main service providers were local CSOs and local government agencies. The majority of service providers focused on children and multiple age groups. Overall, beneficiaries reported a low level of quality of the social services and their low level of satisfaction with the available services. A follow-up Satisfaction Survey is planned to be undertaken via LNB, the first half of 2020.  In the area of Inclusive Education, a capacity building and training programme for school teachers to identify vulnerable students at risk of dropout, and to include preventive measures in this regard was developed via LNB (and accredited by the MESY). The Early Warning System for school dropout is now mainstreamed at national level through setting up of 51 teachers’ professional networks, and roll-out of training and information sessions. In addition, intensive awareness raising campaigns have been undertaken in four pilot municipalities on the importance of children’s education and how to register children at school, plus awareness raising actions undertaken via the media and national television.  In the area of Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH), support has been provided for the establishment and development of a community-based model to increase demand of the vulnerable for quality integrated SRH services, now piloted in 11 municipalities, with 68 health education teams supported via capacity building. Awareness raising actions have been undertaken at the local level, plus via national CSOs supported with inclusive SRH programs to reach out to vulnerable groups (e.g. drug-users, LGBTIQ, sex workers).  In the area of child health and protection, the deconcentrated offices of health in four target regions are supported to strengthen regulatory frameworks and to enforce mechanisms for sustainable application of family outreach/home-visiting techniques by health care front-liners. Trained personnel of the 20 Health Centres have proceeded with implementation of 1,223 home visits (360 in Elbasan, 349 in Korça, 110 in Tirana and 404 in Vlora), using the new model, standards and instruments obtained and learnings received during the training. |
| **R&E and PWDs throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are supported in their access to specific services:**  With regards to the R&E, the model of integrated inclusive social services developed via the NPF to support families with complex long-term needs continues to be implemented in three municipalities (Kruja, Lezha and Fier), in compliance with the newly approved Local Social Care Plans, and in close cooperation and coordination with the LGUs and local service providers, via which 300 R&E families are supported through a set of services (education, access to skills and employment opportunities, economic empowerment, support with referral and facilitation to access social services, plus community awareness raising actions. Via the LNB programme support to access social services has been provided for 218 R&E families (78 in Fier, 73 in Lezha, and 67 in Kruja), access to quality and inclusive education provided for 300 R&E school age children, 149 R&E families supported via income generation schemes, and 240 families affected by the earthquake of November 2019 supported in the post-disaster emergency response with packages of supplies for emergency situation.  With regards to PWDs, capacity building support, and support to undertake research and/or awareness raising actions has been provided to a number of national CSOs and actors active in the field of advocacy and/or service support for PWDs, notably the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, Albanian National Association of the Deaf, Institute of Blind Students, and Help the Life Association. In addition, 13 organisations for PWDs, identified through a Call for Expression of Interest, have received training in areas of leadership, organisational development, management, technical skills, and advocacy. In addition to awareness raising actions targeted to specific groups of PWDs, broader based measures to inform PWDs about their rights and entitlements and how to access services have also been undertaken in three targeted municipalities, reaching well in excess of 1,440 PWDs and community members, and local communities capacitated to create policy dialogue forums. In addition, via LNB support has been provided in seven municipalities for the rehabilitation of local community centres and establishment of new service models with a particular focus on PWDs. Via the LNB grant scheme component, eight municipalities were selected via the first Call for Proposals (2019) to support innovative social services at local level, with Letters of Agreements with the municipalities signed and funds disbursed in November 2019. |
| **The capacity of groups of R&E and PWDs as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable:**  Capacity building support has been provided to establish Local Social Dialogue Groups (LSDG), now fully functional in six municipalities, to ensure public dialogue between local authorities and local stakeholders in developing and budgeting social care plans and ensuring that vulnerability issues are accounted for in local policy-making. LSDGs proved to be central advocacy fora for the political buy-in of the social care plans in all municipalities. R&E and non-R&E youth as well as PWDs are adequately represented in these fora alongside activists of CSOs working directly with all vulnerable groups and persons in need.  The programme has also assisted in strengthening capacities of health mediators from R&E communities in four municipalities (Korça, Berat, Elbasan and Shkodra) to participate in the monitoring of implementation of social services at the local level, via a training toolkit designed and tailored on the specifics of R&E communities, and via community meetings of health mediators, R&E community representatives, activists and other stakeholders. |
| **Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including R&E and PWDs, participate in monitoring the implementation of social inclusion policies:**  Support has been provided in targeted municipalities to establish and develop the capacities of local advocacy platforms capable to engage in community consultation on policy planning, budgeting and in monitoring legislation and social plans, and in advocacy related to social inclusion and social policies. These include Youth Advocacy Platforms, Forums of PWDs, Gender Responsive Budgeting Forums, Local Partnership Models on SRH and Rights, and an emerging CSOs National Advocacy Platform on issues of social inclusion, youth and SRH. The Forums of PWDs have been vocal with local and central institutions on accessibility issues in public premises, transport, health care, employment, education, public information.  In addition, support has been provided to a network of 30 journalists, comprising new graduates in journalism and young practicing journalists, which were trained on social protection and social inclusion issues, and how to engage in open and constructive dialogue. |

## **3.2.3. Analysis of progress towards outcomes – Meso (municipal) level**

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| **Outcome 2**: Municipalities effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion |

Overall, the progress towards achieving Outcome 2 has been satisfactory. LGUs have been supported in the development of their local organisational and staffing capacities linked to the planning, implementation and monitoring of local social care services provision and needs, to assist them fulfil their obligations in line with the Law on Social Care Services and the roll-out of social care reforms, with social care service provision and responsibilities at the local level. The support provided covers all of the LGUs in Albania, although for a number of programme initiatives the detailed implementation of developed methods/ tools/ training has been pilot tested in selected LGUs, to learn practical lessons, prior to facilitating the wider roll-out/ scaling up of the range of initiatives, which needs to be undertaken by the partners in the next years. Staffs of social care service providers have also been assisted via a number of practical training actions on specific working methods and behavioural analysis therapy techniques.

With regards to the results at the meso (municipal) level, linked to the capacities of LGUs and service providers to effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion, the progress in terms of results achievement is summarised below:

## **Exhibit 7: LNB programme – status of results achievement for Outcome 2**

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| **Local Government Units (LGUs):**  Support was provided to undertake a baseline Review of Local Budget Spending on Social Care Services in 15 municipalities (completed in June 2018), covering services/spending by the MHSP/ State Social Service (SSS), regional councils and the municipalities. A follow-up Review of Local Budget Spending is planned to be undertaken in the second half of 2020. Technical support has also been provided for the development of Budget Briefs for 21 LGUs, analysing how the financing for social care services is evolving and how the budgeting for social care services operates (budget directories and social care directories) at the LGUs. In the 6 municipalities where LSDG have been established, the budget briefs have been discussed within this forum aiming to increase the transparency of budget processes.  Linked to the issue of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), 3 LGUs have been supported to introduce and conduct participatory practices for GRB planning and monitoring, via trainings, awareness raising, plus via conducting participatory town hall meetings with community members in order to articulate their needs and priorities. In addition, 7 LGUs have been supported to introduce and conduct participatory practices to consider budget issues of youth interest. These processes have achieved a good level of community participation, as well as supported the detailed development of local plans and initiatives.  Capacity building support has been provided to the LGUs linked to the development and costing of local Social Care Plans (the methodological guidance on preparation of social care plans was developed in 2016, under the UNICEF implemented project on Social Care Services Reform), as well as to develop the capacity of social care directories and other relevant stakeholders with a set of organisational, managerial and technical knowledge, skills and competences for planning, budgeting and monitoring social care services.  As of autumn 2019, Social Care Plans were approved by the local Council in 27 LGUs, with the plans finalised for a further 6 LGUs but awaiting final local Council approval. For a further 8 LGUs the plan is either drafted or in the process of being drafted, prior to the process of final consultations of the plan and subsequently local Council approval. For these 41 LGUs, 24 of them have been supported in the process via the UN agencies, 11 LGUs by other donors (e.g. Save the Children, World Vision), and 6 prepared by the LGUs alone. For the remaining LGUs, 19 are reported as not yet having a plan even in the drafting phase; while for 1 LGU no information is available as to the status of its planning preparations.  The plans developed with the support of LNB follow the guideline template, which includes the following components: Introduction; Methodology used to develop the plan; Overview of the demography, economy, employment, education and health services at municipality level; Analysis of institutional, human and financial resources to provide social services at municipality level (an overview of current social services offered by the municipality, its institutional structures in place, human resources and financial resources, plus analysis of CSOs providing social services in the municipality); Analysis of social needs of groups at risk such as poor families, children at risk, PWDs, homeless families, alone elderly, R&E communities, youth at risk; SWOT Analysis; and the Definition of vision, areas of operation, aim and specific objectives. The Social Care Plan usually has four annexes: Actual situation of social service provision at the municipality; Needs for social care services for individuals or groups; Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; and the Detailed Cost and Budget Gap.  Support was provided to develop a clear methodology for municipalities to map and monitor over time the coverage and distribution of social care services (public and non-public) in their territories in line with the existing legislation on social care services. This is presently being piloted in the 6 municipalities where LSDG have been established, which will also be a valuable forum/ tool to monitor the coverage of social care services at the local level. In addition, support has been provided to MHSP to make functional a module on social care services as part of the national MIS for Social Protection managed by the SSS. Unlike the existing MIS modules, with data populated by the SSS, the module on social care services is to be populated with data by the LGUs. 200 staff from 19 LGUs have been trained on use of social care services MIS, but data population of the MIS module is only partially realised.  Additionally, a set of tools, guidelines and training materials were developed to support the LGUs fulfil their mandate linked to the function and operations of a Needs Assessment and Referral Unit (NARU) for social care services within the LGUs’ organisation: e.g. a Guide for NARU specialists, Guide for Social Workers, and Guide for Social Administrators. Training was provided to 250 staff from LGUs, and the tools pilot tested in 2 municipalities.  Capacity building support for the LGUs (employees of municipalities, social staff and finance experts) has also been provided via a range of differently focused training programmes: on the legislation on social care services and the LGUs tasks and duties as per the same law; the provision of integrated social services for the family; counselling cycle for employment.  In partnership with the Department of Social Work at the Faculty of Social Sciences, LNB also now contributes to pre-service and in-service capacity strengthening of social workers and other social protection staff: a review of the existing curricula of Social Work education at university and its adaption to prepare the social workers for the new system of social care services. The first outline of 7 modules for in-service training of social workers is prepared. |
| **Social Care Service Providers:**  Capacity building support has been provided for the professional staffs of social care providers, e.g. on the management of challenging behaviours while working with children with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders and learning difficulties and the empowerment of their parents as active agents in this process; plus on specific working methods and behaviour analysis therapy techniques. In addition, a training-of-trainers workshop for 16 professionals is delivered with the aim to provide cascade training. The staff is equipped with theoretical and practical knowledge on TEACH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children), AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication), and other connected methods considered worldwide effective for working with children with disabilities, in particular those with autism spectrum disorders.  In the area of Inclusive Education, a capacity building and training programme for school teachers to identify vulnerable students at risk of dropout, and to include preventive measures in this regard was developed (accredited by the MESY) and is now rolled-out.  Technical support was provided to map social services and beneficiaries in 18 municipalities and to examine the level of satisfaction with the local provision of social services. A follow-up Satisfaction Survey is planned to be undertaken via LNB, the first half of 2020.  In addition, via LNB support has been provided in 7 municipalities for the rehabilitation of local community centres and establishment of new service models with a particular focus on PWDs, while 8 municipality projects were selected for support via the LNB grant scheme component first Call for Proposals (2019) to support innovative social services at local level. A second Call for Proposals to support innovative projects will be launched in 2020. |

## **3.2.4. Analysis of progress towards outcomes – Macro (system) level**

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| **Outcome 3**: National institutions implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, developed capacities and empowered target groups |

Overall, the progress towards achieving Outcome 3 has been satisfactory. Ministries have been supported in implementing their policy framework related to social inclusion, the further development of the legal and regulatory framework, the introduction of mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion, and for the establishment of funding mechanisms at central level to invest in social inclusion. INSTAT has been supported in establishing standardised data collection systems for monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion. However, in certain cases the overall process of decision-making at national level, so as to anchor social inclusion policies and the use of evidence-based analysis within the system, has faced challenges due to the timeline required, notably for inter-agency consultations, leading up to decision-making.

With regards to the results at the macro (system) level, linked to the implementation of social inclusion national policies and strategies, the establishment of state funding mechanisms for social inclusion and the evolution of the funds for social services made available at national level, the progress in terms of results achievement is summarised below:

## **Exhibit 8: LNB programme – status of results achievement for Outcome 3**

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| **Social Inclusion Policy Document (SIPD):**  Technical support has been provided to partners (MHSP and INSTAT) linked to establishing the appropriate mechanisms and tools, including data-sharing protocols, necessary for data collection and analysis for the purposes of monitoring the implementation of the SIPD. This has been a priority since the first year of the LNB programme. However, at the time of this MTR, while the formal, technical agreement and data protocols between the partners for the SIPD monitoring processes is now finalised, the agreement was still to be formally adopted/ approved, and the system for monitoring of the SIPD is therefore still not yet operational. Formal approval in the area is indicatively foreseen by the partners in the first quarter 2020.  Technical support has also been provided to partners (MHSP and INSTAT) linked to the establishment and functioning of the Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group (SIIG) as part of the Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG) in the Employment, Skills and Social Policy sector. Final agreement is still to be reached in this area, as discussions continue between the partners as to their role as co-chairs of the SIIG sub-thematic group.  Technical support has also been provided to INSTAT to improve its data collection and management systems linked to indicators on social inclusion, vulnerability and poverty: this has resulted in the publication in December 2019 of the main results of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC), in line with EU/Eurostat standards, that measures living conditions, relative poverty and material deprivation in Albanian households 2017 and 2018.  INSTAT has also received support to enrich its child-focused indicators module, which will allow for the reporting of a broader number of indicators on an annual basis, as well as to conduct the secondary data analysis on demographic and health changes in Albania. |
| **Social Protection Strategy:**  Good progress has been achieved linked to the social protection strategy and social reforms.  Technical support has been provided to MHSP linked to the development of regulatory bylaws for implementation of the Law on Social Care Services, for example: (1) the Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) on the role and mission of the State Social Service (SSS); (2) the DCM on establishing the component of social care services in the national Management Information System (MIS) for Social Protection; (3) the DCM on the establishment of a state funding mechanism to invest in social care services (the Social Fund).  Technical support has also been provided to MHSP linked to the development of secondary legislation for implementation of the Law on Social Enterprises, for example: (1) on the registration of social enterprises; (2) the manual for the promotion and development of social enterprises; (3) for the determination of the periodic reporting forms on the activities exercised and the categories of the employed persons from the social enterprise; and (4) on the forms of supporting social enterprises through subventions (Social Enterprise Fund).  Technical support has also been provided to review the Action Plan of the Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020, and to update this to reflect the policy reforms that the Government has undertaken in the area of social assistance benefits (economic aid, disability allowance) and social care reform, and to expand the action plan’s priorities for the period to 2023.  Technical support has also been provided to MHSP to make functional the MIS module on social care services, to identify and validate with national stakeholders the set of indicators that will be collected, inputted and processed in the system according to the existing legislation on case management practices and social care services delivery. The national MIS for Social Protection is managed by the SSS, with the module on social care services an addition to the existing modules (e.g. on social assistance benefits). Unlike the existing MIS modules, with data populated by the SSS, the module on social care services is to be populated with data by the LGUs. While 200 staff from 19 LGUs have been trained on use of the MIS for social care services, data population of the MIS module is only partially realised. The related DCM establishes a deadline of late-2021 for LGUs to be compliant.  Support to MHSP has also been provided leading to its approval of the road map for the integration of the health and social services in the work of maternal and child health consulting services including universal progressive home visiting. Guidelines for the universal progressive home visiting were developed including the principles, approach, standards, as well as the role of the health system and the health personnel in the shift that focuses on the holistic care of the child prioritizing the most vulnerable. Checklists for home visiting standards by the patronage nurse were developed, and the training curricula and materials for training health professionals were produced (accredited by the National Centre for Continuous Medical Education) and the training programme piloted in 4 target regions.  The SSS was supported to undertake a Needs Assessment Report for Social Services in the 12 Regions of Albania, which provides information on identified need and gaps for social care services at LGU, regional and national level, and among groups in need for services. Additionally, a set of tools, guidelines and training materials were developed to support the LGUs fulfil their mandate linked to the function and operations of a Needs Assessment and Referral Unit (NARU) for social care services within the LGUs’ organisation: e.g. a Guide for NARU specialists, Guide for Social Workers, and Guide for Social Administrators. |
| **National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities (NAPPWD):**  Technical assistance was provided to MHSP linked to the methodological design for its undertaking of the mid-term assessment of the NAPPWD 2016-2020, which was presented in January 2019 to the National Council on Persons with Disabilities and also served as a stimulus for the Government to announce 2019 as the Year of Accessibility. Support has also been provided linked to the drafting of four bylaws for the 2014 Law on Inclusion of and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities. The DCM on “The modality of provision of personal assistance and the criteria for the selection of the personal assistant” was approved in December. 2019, and two DCM drafts are prepared for consultation with stakeholders. |
| **National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians (NAPRE):**  LNB programme support linked to the NAPRE and inclusion of the R&E is predominantly provided via the components at municipal and local level. In terms of the level of progress linked to implementation of the NAPRE 2015-2020, this is assessed by UNDP based on statistical data utilising a rating scale of 1 (low) to 5 (very satisfactory): on this basis the assessment rating has increased from a score of 3 in 2018 to a score of 3.66 in 2019. |
| **National Strategy for Social Housing:**  Further to the adoption of the Law on Social Housing by Parliament in May 2018, technical support has been provided to MFE linked to the drafting of related bylaws to support the law’s implementation. Around 40 bylaws are being drafted; at least 33 of them are DCMs, while the rest are various ordinances and guidelines (norms and standards). As of December 2019, 19 by-laws were designed and consulted, of which 10 are approved as DCMs. It is expected that support to the formulation of the bylaws will be finalised within May 2020. |
| **Inclusive Education (Children and Youth):**  Technical support has been provided to partners (notably MEYS and MHSP) linked to monitoring and reporting on the Child Rights Agenda (DCM of October 2018), and linked to the methodological design to undertake a mid-term assessment of the national action plan.  Technical assistance has been provided to MEYS to assess pre-university education policy and strategy and develop inclusive education policies and measures. This has achieved clear results in regards to measures addressing the issue of out-of-school children: an agreement was signed by MESY, MHSP, and Ministry of Interior in October 2018 aiming at identifying and enrolling in school all children at compulsory school age, including a regulation on the duties and responsibilities for each actor at local and central level. Linked to this, MESY has developed and rolled-out a standardised system of SMS alerts for use by local partners, and a training/ capacity building programme piloted in four municipalities.  Technical support has also been provided to MESY linked to the preparation of the Law on Youth, which was adopted by Parliament in December 2019. |
| **Establishment of state funding mechanisms for social inclusion:**  Technical support has been provided to partners (MHSP, MFE, and MESY) linked to the establishment and/or operation of state funding mechanisms for social inclusion.  The Social Fund was launched by MHSP in 2019 to support LGUs develop/ extend social care services at the local level, with 14 LGUs selected for the award of funding. The Social Enterprise Fund was established and a dedicated budget line for 2019-2021 approved as part of the MHSP budget, but a related call for proposals was not finally launched in 2019. The school drop-out prevention programme was launched by MESY for the academic year 2019-2020, building on a successful pilot of similar measures undertaken by Durres LGU. Spending on Social Housing Programmes at the local level was launched by MFE in 2018. |
| **Evolution of funding for social inclusion and social services:**  Detailed information as to the evolution of funding for social inclusion and social services is not immediately available: a set of funding mechanisms have been established by the Government in the recent years to support social inclusion, but it is too early to establish any trends as to how these evolve in terms of funding. Linked to the Social Fund, the budgetary allocation from MHSP in 2019 of about 100 million ALL has been increased for 2020 to a value of about 200 million ALL. Linked to the Social Enterprise Fund, the budget for 2019-2021 is about 250 million ALL. Linked to the school drop-out prevention programme, the budget for the academic year is about 50 million ALL. Linked to Social Housing Programmes, the budget in 2019 was about 720 million ALL, an increase of about 1.3% compared to 2018.  More broadly, the percentage of funds committed (as a % of GDP) for vulnerable groups from the central government budget declined from 0.34% in 2016, to 0.24% in 2017. The Review of Local Budget Spending on Social Care Services undertaken via LNB in 2018, found that the percentage of funds committed for vulnerable groups (including R&E, PWDs) by the targeted municipalities covered by the review was 2.9% of the local budget in 2017. A follow-up Review of Local Budget Spending is planned to be undertaken via LNB in 2020. |

## **3.2.5. Remaining barriers to achieving the project results**

Based on the evidenced progress achieved of the LNB programme to date, it is judged by the evaluator that there is no substantive risk to the overall achievement of the intended programme results and goal, or that the results will be achieved with significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Nevertheless, it is evident that challenges do exist in terms of the timely achievement of the results and their further roll-out, most notably at the policy (system) level, in part also at the municipal level linked to results delivery at the LGUs. It is also evident that limited risks exist to the full achievement of certain outputs versus the performance target.

Notably, in three key areas the process of decision-making and take-up of LNB’s outputs by the partners has still to be formally completed at the time of this MTR research field mission:

* Final inter-agency agreement on the operational procedures to be followed for the collection, monitoring and analysis of social inclusion data linked to the requirements of the SIPD – now indicatively foreseen by partners to be adopted in the first quarter 2020.
* Establishment and functioning of the Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group (SIIG) as part of the Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG) in the Employment, Skills and Social Policy sector – no concrete information on the realistic timeline was corroborated.
* Functioning of the MIS for social services – take-up of the module on local social service operations and provision is delayed in terms of the module’s data population by LGUs.

Furthermore, the overall process of decision-making at national level can face challenges to embed policy and regulatory reforms due to the lengthy timeline sometimes required to consult on and to formalise decision-making, notably for inter-agency collaboration. As social inclusion policy requires extensive policy coordination and collaboration between partners, and across the different tiers of government, there is a risk the full achievement of results may be delayed by a slow pace of take-up and further scaling up of the results on a national scale. Recognising that the next general election in Albania is set for mid-2021, there is a risk that the focus of senior decision-makers for policy-making may wane in the immediate pre-election period.

At the municipal level, while the majority of LGUs are now actively engaged in the process of developing their local capacities and organisational operations to manage social care services and reforms locally, it is also evident that a minority of LGUs are lagging behind in the process. As such there is a risk that some LGUs may struggle to complete even the fundamentals, e.g. adopting a local Social Care Plan and social care strategic vision in year 2020. This poses a risk to the LNB programme’s goal to support social care reform across the whole of Albania, and will leave a minority of LGUs in a weaker starting position to consolidate the social inclusion and social care results during the potential second phase of the LNB programme.

In addition, certain risks exist to the full achievement of two programme outputs versus the performance target set for the end of programme implementation: Output 1.2 and Output 2.2.

* Output 1.2: The target for the number of projects supported via the LNB grant scheme to introduce innovative social services is 20, but so far only 8 have been approved. A second Call for Proposals is to be launched via the programme in 2020. It will be important for LNB to ensure that this generates a good level of interest from the LGUs in terms of the number of project proposals submitted, and to ensure that LGUs fully understand the basic documentation requirements of the grant scheme for proposals to be judged as ‘administratively complete’ – 4 of the 17 proposals received linked to the first Call for Proposals did not comply with the initial documentation review control/check.
* Output 2.2: While certain progress has been achieved linked to the identification and sharing of good practice on social service provision (e.g. via communication mediums), progress to date achieved linked to the subsequent scaling up of identified good practices at municipal level is moderately unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, a specific research process to document good practices is now underway, and is indicatively to be completed in early spring 2020. For this purpose, four information session were organised in four locations, in autumn 2019, with the participation of a total of 112 representatives (public and non-public social service providers) from 24 municipalities. However significant progress needs to be achieved in 2020 to achieve the output targets.

## **3.3. Project implementation and adaptive management (Efficiency)**

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| **Efficiency** – how well and productively the programme has utilised the resources to reach the predefined goals? |
| **Evaluation Questions**  *Are the available technical and financial resources adequate to fulfil the programme framework?*  *Is the programme implemented in the most efficient way, making best use of available human, technical, technological, financial and knowledge inputs to achieve its desired results? Have there been any unforeseen problems? How well are they resolved?*  *Following up on risk management, how the risk is assessed? And how the risk is managed?*  *In relation to the upcoming EU IPA funding, how the synergies will be ensured?* |

## **3.3.1. Project management arrangements and the efficient delivery of results**

The LNB programme is a Joint UN Project implemented by four UN partner agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, and UNFPA) through the modalities of the Delivering as One (DaO) mechanism, under the framework of the PoCSD 2017-2021. The funds for implementation of the LNB programme are allocated through the Albania One UN Coherence Fund structure.

The modalities of the DaO mechanism are well established within the UN Country Team structures in Albania – at the request of the Government, Albania was one of the eight countries around the world to pilot UN efforts to “Deliver as One UN” in 2007. The DaO mechanism is guided by Standard Operating Procedures, to promote a cohesive coordinated UN approach.

The role of each participating UN agency in the delivery of the LNB programme, in line with their mandate and technical expertise, was defined during the programming exercise (and in the project document). Each agency implements its activities/ outputs as defined and agreed in the respective LNB annual work plans. The local CSO NPF is engaged by the UNDP as an implementing partner for the delivery of specific actions via the NGO Implementation Modality. UNDP is the leading UN agency for overall implementation and coordination of the programme. It is supported by a dedicated LNB project team hired to take charge of the overall management, delivery, monitoring, reporting, coordination, and visibility of the programme. The project management arrangements are well structured, based on clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the implementing partners, and for the overall coordination of their actions.

While the initial start-up period for the LNB programme was slower than anticipated – a result of the reorganisation of central government institutions in the autumn of 2017, when the functions of the planned main project beneficiary ministry were split into three ministries, thus delaying the formulation and endorsement of the first LNB work plan until the end of 2017 – the pace of implementation of the programme has satisfactorily progressed since 2018.

As of the mid-term of programme implementation (i.e. end of year-2, 31/05/2019), 40% of the total programme budget was disbursed or committed, a figure rising to 65% as of 31/12/2019 (i.e. 7-months later). While this does represent a significant increase in funding deployment over the 7-months period, it is primarily a reflection of clear progress achieved during the period in the awarding of the grant scheme funding to community-based social services projects. With an implementation period up to the end of May 2021, it is assessed that the available financial resources are adequate to fulfil the remaining programme needs. Overall, the pace of funding deployment as a percentage of the total LNB programme budget allocation per agency is broadly similar for each of the UN agencies, though somewhat of a speedier pace across the programme period in terms of funding deployment by UNFPA – as shown in Exhibit 9 below.

## **Exhibit 9: Utilisation of the LNB programme budget**

Implementation of the programme is undertaken by the UN agencies in close cooperation and dialogue with partner organisations and stakeholders on the Albanian-side: central and local government, social service providers, and CSOs. Feedback provided to the evaluator during the field phase mission, from project partners and stakeholders, attest of a strong level of satisfaction across the range of organisations as to the good level of cooperation that they have with the UN agencies, and the strength and quality of the participatory/ consultative approach followed by the agencies in their provision of support, technical analysis and advice. This approach is clearly essential for building local ownership and the capacities to develop appropriate technical outputs/ solutions, and to utilise and absorb the programme results.

While the overall efficiency of programme implementation and results delivery is good, it is evident that the efficiency of results delivery has at times faced challenges: mainly in terms of the efficiency of implementation and results delivery at the national (system) level, outcome 3 of the programme, in part also at the municipal level linked to results delivery at the LGUs. The primary reasons for the efficiency constraints relate to: (1) the organisational and technical capacities, including staffing level, of governmental partners, central and local government, to be fully engaged with the development and take-up of programme actions in a timely manner; and (2) the pace of efficiency of the policy and the decision-making processes for the partners, most notably where this involves multi-agency cooperation or ‘whole of government approach’.

These efficiency issues have traditionally been resolved by the UN agencies, via consultations at the technical level to address immediate obstacles (e.g. timing of the support), as well as via policy dialogue conducted with key partners and decision-makers where appropriate.

Nevertheless, in three areas the process of decision-making and take-up of LNB’s outputs by the partners has still to be formally completed at the time of this MTR research field mission:

* Final inter-agency agreement for operational monitoring linked to the SIPD.
* Establishment and functioning of the Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group (SIIG).
* Functioning of the Social Protection MIS component module for local social services.

## **3.3.2. Monitoring and evaluation, project steering, and risk management systems**

The project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, processes and key tools are defined in the project document and subsequently detailed in the LNB Internal Monitoring Plan. A specific person (monitoring coordinator) exists within the LNB project team dedicated to monitoring. Project monitoring covers as key fields of observation: (1) the country context; (2) programme results; (3) programme efficiency; (4) programme processes; (5) cooperation with partners.

The main instruments/ tools for project monitoring and steering are: (1) the project performance monitoring framework, derived from the project’s logical framework; (2) the project’s annual work plan, setting out the activities to be implemented per agency, the budget resources, and expected results; (3) the project’s budget; (4) on site field visits; (5) monitoring and analysis of risks; and (6) the annual Steering Committee review of the programme’s progress and results, and to discuss and endorse the LNB Annual Project Report and next annual work plan.

LNB’s performance monitoring framework specifies 40 indicators of achievement (some also define sub-indicators): 26 at the level of outputs, 10 at the level of outcomes, and 4 at the level of impact. Baseline data and targets linked to the indicators of achievement are defined in the framework – with the completion of most baseline data gaps during year-1 of implementation. An overview of the status of LNB’s programme performance is provided in Annex 6. This presents information on the programme results and the progress status towards achievement reported for each indicator as of 31/05/2018, 31/05/2019, and 31/12/2019. For each indicator, the evaluator’s assessment of the progress achieved and potential gaps is provided, as well as comments as to the suitability of the reported progress data compared to the set target.

Overall the specified indicators and targets of achievement provide for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data linked to the programme and the country context linked to social inclusion/ social services. Overall the indicators and the targets are relevant in regard to the measuring the achievement of the specific result to which they attach. However, in certain cases the baseline data presented is not fully complete for the purposes of monitoring progress (e.g. outcome 1), and in other cases the baseline data indicates that the target was already achieved at the outset of the programme (e.g. for output 1.3 the target was already exceeded).

More widely, the reporting of progress achieved does not always directly correlate with the specifics of the declared target. For example, for outcome 1 indicator 4: the target is an increased number and types of social services provided at the local level in targeted municipalities, for which the baseline is 25 types of service, but the reported progress does not report as to the number and types of services, only the number of persons that are supported. For example, outcome 1 indicator 5: the target is that 10% of issues/ concerns raised by target groups in LGU annual planning and budgeting of social services are addressed, but the reported progress only states the number of issued that were raised and supported, not the total number of issues raised (i.e. the percentage that were actually addressed is not evident).

Overall, there is room for improvement in terms of the quality of the performance monitoring framework in order that it may more efficiently and effectively support the analysis of project progress and results achievement, and thereby also efficient and effective project steering.

With regards to the monitoring and analysis of risks, the risks and mitigation strategy were defined in the project document and it is regularly reviewed by the project team and implementing partners during implementation. The annual and semi-annual progress reports present details on the major challenges to results delivery and achievement and the potential mitigation strategy and measures available to the project and UN to resolve the challenges. The semi-annual progress report issued in January 2020 provides an updated risk-log.

As throughout the period of project implementation, the greatest risk to the achievement of the results relates to the capacity and motivation of the government partners, central and local, to fully engage with the project and its goals to support the successful roll-out of social inclusion policies and the social care reforms, and to ensure the adequacy of its funding. The risks are partially addressed via the clear focus of the LNB programme on the targeting of certain support actions to LGUs considered to be drivers of change/ early innovators, where the level of ownership of the LGUs for the reforms has been effectively exhibited. But, this does not of itself address the risk that certain LGUs have, and may continue to have, limited local motivation and/or limited local funding as to be active partners and beneficiaries of the project in the process of roll-out of the social care reforms. At the national (system) level the project has limited leverage, apart from sustained policy dialogue and offers of support, to convince ministerial partners to contribute to the endeavour’s success when decision-making is delayed.

In relation to the upcoming EU IPA funding to assist Albania in the areas of “Employment, Social Protection and Social Inclusion”[[5]](#footnote-5) (EU contribution of up to EUR 50 million, over an indicative operational implementation period of up to 6-years), this combines a mix of budget support (EUR 30 million), complementary technical assistance (EUR 8.7 million), and grant scheme funding for individual local projects (EUR 11.3 million[[6]](#footnote-6)). There are clear potential synergies that could be developed between the LNB programme and the upcoming EU action[[7]](#footnote-7), and also areas for developing a clear demarcation between the programmes in order to avoid potential duplication of efforts[[8]](#footnote-8). The EU’s programming exercise for the IPA 2019 action went some way in its recognition of this fact and suitably involved its undertaking of consultations during the design phase with the established donors in Albania in the area of social inclusion. The LNB programme is specifically referenced in the EU’s programme action, and the strong role played by the UN in promoting social inclusion and social service reforms acknowledged.

Further to the formal European Commission (EC) Decision to allocate the specific EU funding, in late-2019, the EC (via the EU Delegation to Albania) is presently in the early stages of development of the programme actions linked to the complementary technical assistance[[9]](#footnote-9), plus the grant scheme funding mechanisms[[10]](#footnote-10). While it is not realistic to anticipate that any of the EU-funds for these components will be formalised as grant contracts before early 2021, this is clearly an essential period in time, now, during the EU’s initial procurement design, for the UN (with its established record in the area of social inclusion), and the EU (with its new and well financed initiative to address social inclusion in Albania, at a sectorial level rather than via smaller-scale actions targeted to specific issues), alongside the Government of Albania, to discuss in detail how the two donor programmes, and the funding goals and mechanisms of the Government, may suitably (effectively and efficiently) complement the other going forward. This opportunity should be utilised by the Government and the donor partners to inform the detailed, technical design of the EU’s planned complementary technical assistance and grant scheme procurement, and the future detailed, technical design of the goals for the anticipated second phase of LNB. It is essential for the Government and the donor partners to maximise potential synergies, where this is practical, and to minimise potential duplication of efforts.

## **3.4. Sustainability**

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| **Sustainability** – to assess preliminary indications of the degree to which programme results are likely to be sustainable beyond the programme’s lifetime (at the community and government level) and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability |
| **Evaluation Questions**  *Are the approaches and methods used likely to ensure a continued benefit after the end of the programme?*  *What are the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme?*  *Are all key stakeholders sufficiently and effectively involved? Are their expectations met and are they satisfied with their level of participation? 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?*  *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?*  *Based on lessons learned what specific recommendations could be given to each key partner under the joint programme that would contribute to the sustainability of the intervention?*  *What needs to be done and/or improved to ensure sustainability?*  *What type of interventions would need further programme assistance beyond the agreed timeframe?*  *What is the programme relation to the Social Fund established by the government?*  *Is LNB contributing to establish the right system to support sustainable capacity building? Is LBN ensuring no substitution effect?* |

## **3.4.1. Processes to ensure the sustainability of the project results and benefits**

Overall, the progress to date of the LNB programme to ensure the sustainability of the results and benefits after the end of the programme is satisfactory.

The alignment of LNB with national and local policies is a major factor contributing to the sustainability of the results. The results of the LNB programme are highly relevant to the country’s policy reform and legal framework on social inclusion, social care and social services (e.g. the Strategy for Social Protection has been extended till 2023; the same is expected for the Social Inclusion Policy Document; the Law No.121/2016 on Social Care Services, Law No.18/2017 on Child Protection, Law No. 22/2018 on Social Housing, Law on Social enterprise is fully operational with the completion of secondary legislation), supporting partners in terms of the further implementation and consolidation of the reform and legal framework. The programme remains relevant to the local self-government reform process and consolidation of the territorial and administrative reform, including further decentralisation and transfer of functions and competences from central government to the LGUs. The LNB programme results are highly relevant to the needs of the LGUs (capacity building, financial support, collaboration with CSOs as service providers; infrastructure; models of social service delivery, standards and procedures) to be able to provide social services as envisaged in the policy and legal framework. The LNB programme results are also highly relevant to the needs of the intended beneficiaries (R&E communities, PWDs and other marginalised communities) to access and receive better social services, as a basic human right, free from discriminatory practices, and to enjoy the right to responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making.

The holistic approach of the LNB programme, addressing macro, meso and micro level, also contributes to sustainability. By working with the central government and national services and with the local government and service providers, LNB brings about systemic change by working to ensure that social inclusion policies are suitably anchored, promoted, monitored, and financed at the system and operational level. In addition, by working with the target group of final beneficiaries and CSOs, the programme is reflective and responsive to the needs of these target groups and empowers them via advocacy, lobbying, networking, and awareness raising actions promoting social inclusion and social services at the national and/or local level.

The LNB programme’s approaches and methods for cooperation with partners also contributes to the prospects for sustainability. LNB has developed good mechanisms and procedures in place to promote close cooperation with central and local public authorities, CSOs and other stakeholders to ensure their consultation and participation in the design and implementation of activities, which is essential to building a clear sense of ownership of the outputs and to achieving the realisation of the outcomes, and longer-term sustainability of the results. The provision of tailored and customised capacity building support responding to the real needs/ priorities of the partners ensures that knowledge transfer and the quality of outputs is high. In addition, the provision of accredited capacity development activities, for example in child health, contribute to standardisation and sustainability of the programme interventions. The design of the programme, inclusiveness, stakeholders’ engagement and high commitment of the UN partners and LNB team to achieving the results are highly praised by the partners.

The main programme instruments used to promote/ ensure a continued benefit and further roll-out of the results after the end of the programme are “Capacity Building” (training for staff of partner organisations), and “Organisational Development” (support to strengthen the institutional capacities of partner organisations), plus investments to rehabilitate social services facilities or to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation. These instruments ensure knowledge transfer, ownership and embeddedness of social service modes, standard and procedures by national authorities, LGUs and service providers (CSOs).

The strengthening of organisations (for social serves provision, adapting and monitoring policies, providing financial support), the introduction and improvement of coordination mechanisms between institutions at central and local level, and the development of capacities of individuals (service providers, policy makers, beneficiaries of social services, etc.), together with strengthened governance, participatory policy and monitoring capacities and willingness to innovate and adapt the policy are expected to have effects beyond the project’s duration.

In addition, the main instruments are supported via “Policy Dialogue” with key partners and other actors (policy and technical consultation processes, as well as knowledge-sharing promoted). LNB has developed good policy dialogue with central public institutions (MHSP, SSS, MFE, MESY, INSTAT, and Agency for local self-governance), and with LGUs, CSOs, and media partners. Recognising that the achievement of social inclusion and social protection requires systemic societal and governmental change to be effected, sustained “Policy Dialogue” is critical to strengthen ownership and build further momentum and a critical-mass of support for the successful delivery of the social care and social service reforms.

Recognising that the achievement of social inclusion and social protection requires concerted and well targeted financial investments in the social sector over the longer-term, the LNB programme has provided valuable technical support and advice to the government linked to its development of state funding mechanisms for social inclusion. This includes support for the establishment of the Social Fund, the Social Enterprise Fund, measures to prevent Out-off School Children, and measures for Social Housing. In addition, support has been provided on the request of LGUs linked to the development of local financing models and streams. These results are integral to building national/local financing capacity so as to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme results across Albania. It is positive to note that the level of central government funding announced to be allocated via the Social Fund in year 2020 is double the budget foreseen in year 2019, the first year of the Social Fund’s operation.

Other results contributing to the sustainability of the benefits relate to the awareness raising, promotion, dissemination and exploitation of results to ensure sustainability after the life of the programme. On one hand, LNB raises awareness regarding social services thus enabling target groups to request quality social services and on the other hand, LNB promotes all project results through a combination of communication tools such as promotion of models of tested inclusive services provision at local level, rehabilitated social services facilities, etc.

## **3.4.2. Knowledge management and the potential for scaling up**

Recognising that the LNB programme is primarily one provided via technical expertise and support, and that the corresponding technical solutions and results are then made effective by the partner organisations and beneficiaries, knowledge management, learning and sharing is essential to building the longer-term sustainability and the potential for scaling up of the results.

The LNB programme is very well designed so as to provide an experimental ‘lab-approach’ to the pilot-testing of a range of interventions, models and mechanisms at the local level, so as to generate experience and knowledge as to lessons learned (positive and negative), prior to the potential fine-tuning of the models and their wider dissemination and scaling up, in other LGUs and/or nationally. In addition, via its training and methodological guidance support for the development of capacities in all of the 61 LGUs to manage social inclusion/ social care policy and planning, the programme is also in a position to learn lessons as to the specific hindering and/or supportive factors that influence the achievement of results at the local level.

The LNB programme implementing partners and project team documents lessons learned on a continual basis (meeting and activity reports, risks management log, semi-annual and annual reports), and there is overall good coordination and mechanisms are in place for knowledge and information sharing and knowledge learning. All LNB related activities, events, publications, concrete outputs have been disseminated through a combination of communication mediums. Generally, the expectations of partners are met and central and local public authorities as well as CSOs report satisfying levels of cooperation and engagement.

In the first-half of the LNB programme’s implementation period the lessons learned linked to the programme delivery were, understandably, mainly operational. Recognising that the programme is now in its third year for implementation, increased focus is correctly being provided via LNB to generate substantive evidences of lessons learned as to the effectiveness of the different social service and social care models and approaches that have been operated/ tested at the local level so as to deliver the intended programme results. A specific research process to document good practices (and presumably also to learn as to the reasons for less successful practice) is now underway, and is indicatively to be completed in spring 2020. This will be a key output to support decision-making as to the potential for further scaling up of actions/ results, both in the immediate period remaining for LNB implementation and over the medium-term via actions of central or local government, service providers, and civil society.

On the basis of evidence available to the evaluator, it is clear that the potential for scaling up of the programme’s results is highly satisfactory. This is most notable in terms of scaling up of actions to develop policy dialogue and advocacy forums/ participatory mechanisms to support local decision-making, which could also be evolved into regional networks and a national platform to promote awareness, dialogue and advocacy linked to social inclusion/ protection. It is also evident in terms of the potential to share and support the transfer of good practice between LGUs and/or service providers, notably in similar socio-economic or geographical environment, as to their experience, at the local level, with the models for delivery of services.

## **3.4.3. Steps to strengthen the sustainability of the project results and benefits**

Overall, the major factors which influence the non-achievement of sustainability of the LNB programme results are:

* Financial sustainability: at LGUs level to provide adequate, accessible, and suitably comprehensive social services within the means available (Social Fund, Social Enterprise Fund, municipality funds, revenue generation, donor support, service fees);
* Financial sustainability: at central level to provide an adequate, reliable level of financial support for social services provision, including targeted mechanisms to support LGUs. While it is recognised that the budgetary allocation for the Social Fund in 2020 is double that allocated in 2019, the adequacy and reliability of the budgetary allocations over the longer-term to effectively support social inclusion measures still remains an issue;
* Financial sustainability: limited experience to date of LGUs with the operation of cost-sharing/ financing mechanisms for long-term sharing of social services between LGUs;
* The capacity of governmental partners to expedite the consultation processes and timeline linked to the formal adoption of regulatory bylaws or inter-agency cooperation;
* Staff turnover and the failure to internalise capacity building programmes;
* The capacity and funding available to extend professional development of social care providers and staff delivering social services at LGU level and other providers;
* The capacity of governmental partners, central and local, to ensure social inclusion and social care policy monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance system is in place;
* Interest and commitment on the side of political level (Mayors, Municipality Council, MPs, ministers etc.) to remain focused on social care system reform and services provision;
* The slow pace for scaling up of the LNB results at national level, notably for the further consolidation of the model of integrated social support services for vulnerable groups.

In many respects these are issues beyond the direct influence of the LNB programme, although may be influenced via further policy dialogue, and potential technical support to partners.

Nevertheless, it is important for the programme to develop a clear results achievement and sustainability strategy linked to the development of the social inclusion and social care policy monitoring and evaluation systems. Progress to operationalise the key LNB results to support social inclusion monitoring and reporting processes has been delayed, on the side of the partners in terms of decision-making. It is reported (and corroborated) by partners that formal agreement for operational monitoring of the SIPD will be achieved in the near months, and that a limited number of LGUs will start to data populate and utilise the MIS module on social care services (a component of the integrated national Social Protection MIS) within 2020. If this were to eventuate, key partners (notably the SSS) will need support to consolidate the results.

It is also important for the programme to develop a clear strategy linked to the sharing of good practice and how the results may most effectively/ efficiently be scaled up by the partners over the next years, based on the anticipated date for phasing-out of LNB programme support. To promote sustainable results delivery supporting social service reform across Albania it is important to ensure that take up of the results is achieved for all municipalities and the LGUs.

Furthermore, it is important for the programme to develop a clear sustainability strategy linked to the process for full transfer and continued operation by central partners (ministries, agencies, universities and training institutes), of the key capacity building and organisational development methods, tools, and training curricula/ materials generated via the programme.

In addition, to support longer-term results achievement and sustainability, it is important for LNB to continue its efforts to support the government to strengthen the function and delivery operations (effectiveness/ efficiency) of the recently established set of state financing mechanisms made available to the LGUs for social inclusion/ social care, including to ensure the transparency and information provision made available to LGUs linked to funding schemes. The funding mechanisms are vital components to ensure sustainable provision of state funding for social inclusion at the local level, but they are only now in their initial period of operation. Therefore, technical support to review the first year(s) of operation would clearly be valuable, going forward, to support the Government’s future shaping of the mechanisms. It is evident that the mechanisms, if suitably transparent and operationally effective, have the potential to be utilised, in the future, as a means to link donors’ allocation of financing support in the area.

## **3.4.4. Future programme assistance needs…**

The LNB programme is envisaged to operate for a total period of eight years: the first four year phase to support further development of the regulatory framework and implementation/ roll-out of the social care reforms, the second four year phase to support consolidate the social care and inclusion reforms effectively, at the national, municipal and local level, across Albania. Whereas the potential second phase of the programme will need to modify its focus, the overall goals, intervention strategy and approach and the instruments for programme implementation remain highly relevant to the need of Albania as a country to ensure social inclusion of marginalised communities and improved social services for diverse groups in society.

In terms of specific issues for future focus of programme assistance, these potentially include:

* Strengthening of networking and sharing of good practice: e.g. LGUs, service-providers, CSO advocacy groups/ platforms;
* Further development of multi-disciplinary social services, as appropriate, to cater to the needs of diverse groups of persons;
* Potential synergies, cooperation, sharing of services, infrastructure, peer to peer support and other areas of collaborative work between LGUs to be assessed for future actions;
* Assessment of state financing mechanisms/ methodologies, after their initial operations;
* Actions to promote the full hand-over of results – second phase ‘exit-strategy’ for results maintenance in line with the end-of first phase sustainability strategy/plans;
* Other vulnerable groups/ persons in Albania in need of social protection, social care and services include: the elderly, adult PWDs, grandparent or single parent heads of family (and children), persons with mental health, migrants, the LGBTIQ community, and women victims of domestic violence.

In addition, there is need for improved synergies, integration and coordination regarding social care system, social services and empowerment through employment and education:

* A missing link between social inclusion policies and services at LGUs level and empowerment through employment. LGUs do not have clear competences regarding employment opportunities and a lot depends on the collaboration between LGUs and local/ regional Employment Services, under the MFE/ central government.
* The same missing link refers also to education, but there are better practices in place regarding collaboration between LGUs (providing social services) and local/ regional Education Offices (under the subordination of MESY).

## **3.5. Cross-cutting themes**

## **3.5.1. LNB contribution to the SDGs**

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| **Evaluation Questions**  *Assess whether the programme’s goal and outcomes and progress done so far are contributing to SDGs progress. To what extent has LNB contribution been relevant in the context of SDGs with special focus on the principle Leave no one Behind?* |

With regard to the global policy framework for international development, the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the LNB programme identifies linkages for its contribution to supporting Albania’s progress in achieving the SDGs 1-5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). In addition, the evaluator also identifies LNB’s contribution to supporting SDGs 16-17 (peaceful and inclusive societies, global partnership).

The LNB programme has a potential causal connection to 20 of the SDG targets[[11]](#footnote-11), and is also clearly designed with a focus on the principle of “Leave no one Behind” in terms of the identification of the ‘left behind’ communities and vulnerable population in Albania, marginalised and vulnerable families, women and men, and PWDs, and the R&E communities.

## **3.5.2. LNB cross-cutting themes (gender equality, governance, human rights)**

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| **Evaluation Questions**  *Assess whether the cross-cutting issues related to human rights, governance and gender equality, are addressed/promoted as an articulation of human rights principles.*  *To what extent and in what ways the cross-cutting issues of LNB programme – good governance and gender equality – are applied/ promoted?*  *To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?* |

The LNB programme is oriented by two cross-cutting themes: governance and gender equality, as an articulation of human rights principles.

Good governance has been addressed in the policy dialogue in the Steering Committee meetings and in the cooperation that LNB has established with various stakeholders. LNB has developed good policy dialogue and cooperation mechanisms with central public institutions, LGUs, CSOs, local communities, media and other stakeholders and consultation processes are undertaken as well as knowledge-sharing promoted. In addition, the LNB programme implementation and management reflects the principles of good governance. There is overall good coordination and mechanisms in place for knowledge and information sharing (Steering Committee, working groups, technical team, regular reporting, regular risk assessment). Also, semi-annual reports are presented to the Steering Committee meeting. There are adequate transparency mechanisms in place in terms of management of funds, procurement and purchase of services (available online at the [LNB Programme webpage](https://open.undp.org/projects/00104061) under UNDP Albania). In addition, there are also good efforts to ensure coordination and synergies with other partners and donors in the same or related areas (SDC projects such as VET, Strong Municipalities). Transparency is also enhanced through the dissemination of LNB activities, events, publications and other outputs and promotion of a culture of knowledge-sharing, collaboration and openness though the involvement of stakeholders. The interviewees from the central and local government as well as civil society during the fieldwork of this MTR highlighted particularly the positive approach of LNB in terms of inclusiveness, consultation, knowledge sharing and openness.

Generally, LNB has promoted gender equality in the entire project implementation and interventions have been designed to be gender sensitive, thus promoting social inclusion also from a gender perspective. First, semi-annual reports include partially gender segregated data. Second, capacity development of LGUs (Output 2.1 Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion) has focused on women particularly. As such by December 2019, 500 women are engaged on trainings and awareness meetings related to GRB; 50% of those engaged in public budget for GRB consultations in 3 municipalities were women; 128 (50% women) representatives of vulnerable groups are involved in planning and budgeting for Social Care Plans in 21 municipalities; 51 (90% women) professional public social service providers capacitated; 491 (75% F) municipal staff trained on the new legislation on social care services; capacity building of 800 (77% F) education staff. A similar approach can be observed in terms of gender equality consideration as an issue through the range of actions financed by the grant.

## **3.5.3. LNB communication and visibility**

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| **Evaluation Questions**  *Assess and review whether the communications and visibility guidelines and actions undertaken by UN agencies and implementing partners provide insights into the implementation of the programme activities.* |

In February 2018, LNB published and made available its Communication and Visibility Guidelines with the aim to ensure that information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of targeted or general audiences in the country, as well as the results and the impact of LNB have the appropriate visibility. The Guidelines offers instructions on how to communicate LNB’s activities and results using a variety of communication mediums such as digital media, publications, social media etc. The LNB programme’s [official webpage](http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/leave-no-one-behind.html) is nested under the UNDP main webpage and also under [UN webpage](http://www.un.org.al/projects/leave-no-one-behind). In addition, each implementing partner (UNFPA, UNICEF, UN WOMEN) include information about the LNB programme and its results in their respective official webpages. So far, all LNB related activities, events, publications, concrete outputs have been disseminated through a combination of communication tools with the primary focus on the usage of online platforms and social media.

In terms of online platforms, all LNB related materials and publications such as training manuals, guidelines, factsheets, local social care plans, leaflets and others are published in the Publication section of UNDP and the other three UN implementing partners. They are easily accessed and regularly updated. In addition, frequent and regular postings are made on social media of UNDP and UN Albania: Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. These constitute the main channels for dissemination for all LNB programme activities and outputs. As of June 2019, they accounted for around 200,000 visitors and nearly 60,198 views.

Further, videos are frequently used to promote the outputs of the LNB including testimonials from direct beneficiaries. Several short video-documentaries have been developed and disseminated so far also show casing success stories in particular municipalities.

In addition, the programme has also helped to build some visibility and communication approaches at LGU level, for example where supported municipalities are posting their Social Care Plans and other related activities on their website. Furthermore, the partners have also developed a dedicated Facebook account. [https://www.facebook.com/epd.development.](https://www.facebook.com/epd.development.9)

LNB programme also uses mainstream media to disseminate its activities, events, publications and outputs in general. Media outlets such as newspaper, online news media platforms, news channels and other outlets have reported on stories linked to the LNB outputs and outcomes. This has contributed in expanding audiences and reaching the public at large, thus helping in awareness raising. Further collaboration with local media could be of particular interest here in order to raise awareness about LNB’s objectives and outcomes at target municipalities.

A useful mechanism in terms of dissemination and visibility is the establishment of a 30-member network of journalists, comprising both graduating and new journalists, trained on social protection, poverty, social policies issues and international standards, as a mean to train and engage them into open and constructive dialogues with state and other public institutions on social protection and social inclusion issues. Several short stories were published by them on a [dedicated column](http://pozitivi.org/category/te-rinjte) established. This network should be consolidated further as it contributes not simply to the visibility of LNB activities and events, but most importantly to creating a pool of journalists that are aware of social protection issues and capable to report on them and engage with public authorities and communities in this regard.

Finally, the online communication mediums have been complemented with publications in hardcopy of relevant materials particularly Local Social Care Plans, training materials, leaflets and brochures. Considering the target groups of the LNB programme, particularly the marginalised communities with limited access to technology, the publications are a suitable tool to reach them for instance during information days.

The Communication and Visibility Guidelines, the actions taken by LNB for dissemination, visibility and knowledge sharing of LNB activities, events and outputs through online platforms and social media, and the collaboration with mainstream media have so far proven adequate in providing insights about the project implementation in a transparent and open manner.

# **4. Conclusions**

LNB is a four-year Joint UN Project that aims to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities (with a specific focus on social service provision, notably to reach marginalised groups or vulnerable persons), to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold the duty bearers accountable. The programme is implemented by four UN partner agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNFPA), over the period June 2017 to May 2021, through the UN Delivering as One (DaO) mechanism. The programme is financed by the SDC to the amount of CHF 8.0 million.

## **4.1 Programme design and relevance**

Overall, the relevance of the programme and the quality of the design of the action is rated as highly satisfactory. The programme builds on the solid policy and legal framework for social inclusion set up via previous UN projects, with the focus of the LNB programme to support the effective roll-out and enactment of the social services reform process and of social inclusion measures across Albania. Since social service delivery is realised mostly at local level, LNB’s intervention focuses on the local level. Two of the three planned outcomes reflect this thrust – by empowering the beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion (outcome 1), and capacitating municipalities (LGUs) and service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion (outcome 2). The third outcome reflects the need to anchor the interventions at system level, via the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion, including its funding.

The intervention logic and implementing strategy of the LNB programme, including a narrative description of the theory of change, the definition of key stakeholders and target groups of final beneficiaries, the cross-cutting themes to orient the programme, and the project’s risk analysis and mitigation strategy is detailed in the programme document (project proposal). The intervention logic and strategy is clearly defined, and the theory of change narrative a credible outline of the causal pathway of results leading to socio-economic development change.

The LNB programme strategy is holistic in its approach to the improvement of social services and the promotion of social inclusion, with a series of interventions aimed at macro level (central government authorities and national services), at meso level (municipalities and CSOs), and at micro level (the target groups of final beneficiaries and CSOs). The programme seeks to support the effective roll-out of the social services reform and social inclusion measures across Albania, via actions aimed at the national (system) level and actions to target all 61 Albanian municipalities and to benefit all marginalised and vulnerable persons. Reflective of the available financial resources, and the specific levels of vulnerability to social exclusion faced by PWDs and R&E communities, the programme partially purses a geographic focus so as to concentrate the implementation of the actions targeted to these groups of persons. The selection of the municipalities to receive targeted support was based on transparent criteria.

The LNB programme is closely aligned with national policies, needs and priorities linked to the promotion of social inclusion and the reduction of the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Albania, e.g. the Social Inclusion Policy Document (SIPD), Social Protection Strategy, Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities, Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians, the Law on Social Care Services, the Law on Social Housing, the Law on Social Enterprises.

Feedback from project partners, stakeholders, and final-user beneficiaries supported via LNB, provided to the evaluator during the field phase mission, was *entirely* consistent in its positivity as to the continued high level of relevance of the goals and approaches of the LNB programme to the needs of their organisation and to addressing the needs of Albania regarding inclusion. The programme provides a relevant mix of interventions, at central, municipal, and local levels that collectively, and coherently, contribute to country system (national and local) development.

## **4.2 Programme progress to results achievement**

Overall, the effectiveness of the programme’s progress towards results achievement is rated as satisfactory. This is evidenced linked to each of the programme’s three outcomes; and in the case of outcome 1 (community level empowerment) the effectiveness is highly satisfactory.

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| **Outcome 1 – Community level (citizens empowerment)**  LNB has very successfully contributed to further the empowerment of vulnerable people through a range of measures linked to advocacy and awareness raising, capacity building of CSOs, beneficiaries, local networks and structures to facilitate a participatory, consultative social policy planning and monitoring process, as well as facilitated access to inclusive social services at the local level. The contribution of LNB is evidenced across the whole of Albania, as well as at the local level in 25 target municipalities, and also for the breadth of the range of issues and specific target groups of beneficiaries that are addressed via the programme.  Vulnerable groups are empowered on their rights and entitlements to social services and are mobilised for a meaningful participation in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms to advocate for their rights. Around 7,000 R&E, PWDs, women and youth have engaged in forums and debates with local authorities on issues of concern. A series of community based social service models and tools have been developed via the programme and are now operational at the local and regional levels (e.g. services for PWDs, R&E, inclusive education, child health and protection, and SRH). Support has also been provided to rehabilitate social care facilities, and for innovative local projects. Around 2,750 R&E, PWDs, women and youth have received quality social care services as a direct result of the project. Awareness raising actions on issues of social inclusion, notably targeted to vulnerable groups, have been successfully undertaken at the local and at the national level, and the capacity of CSOs active in the area also strengthened at the local and national level. |
| **Outcome 2 – Municipal level (LGUs and service providers)**  LGUs are being capacitated to fulfil their obligations (as foreseen in the Law on Social Care Services and the process of territorial reforms in Albania), linked to the provision and management of social care policy and services at the local level. This has included support that benefits all of the 61 LGUs in Albania (e.g. methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, plus tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation), as well as specific support provided in selected LGUs (so far 25 LGUs in total) to pilot test the different mechanisms at the local and/or regional level, so as to learn practical lessons prior to facilitating the wider roll-out and scaling up of the range of initiatives to be undertaken by the partners in the next years. Of the 61 LGUs in Albania, 41 LGUs either now have an approved local Social Care Plan or in the process of the drafting/ finalising/ approval of the plan at the local level. In addition, the capacities of social care service providers has been enhanced via a number of practical training actions for professional staffs on specific working methods and behavioural analysis therapy techniques. Support is also being provided to review/ update university-level course curricula for social work education (pre-service and in-service skills and qualifications). |
| **Outcome 3 – System level (national government)**  After a slow start-up at national level, good progress is now being achieved. Ministries have been supported in implementing their policy framework related to social inclusion, the further development of the legal and regulatory framework, the introduction of mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion, and for the establishment of funding mechanisms at central level to invest in social inclusion. But, the process to adopt regulatory bylaws is still incomplete (notably linked to social housing). INSTAT has been supported in establishing standardised data collection systems for monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion. This resulted, in December 2019, in INSTAT publishing for the first time the main results of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) in line with EU/Eurostat standards.  Reasonable progress is also evident linked to supporting the establishment of state funding mechanisms for the promotion of social inclusion and social care focused on vulnerable groups and persons (e.g. the Social Fund, the Social Enterprise Fund, measures to support/ prevent out of school children, plus Social Housing Programmes). Adequate progress is evident linked to the establishment of the appropriate mechanisms and tools, including data-sharing protocols, necessary for data collection and analysis for the purposes of monitoring the implementation of social inclusion policies. However, the functional operation of the developed monitoring systems and tools is still to be fully realised by the partners. |

The LNB management and coordination set up are effective to support project implementation and results achievement. The novelty of the design of the programme and the holistic strategy and participatory approach followed to securing consultation, inclusiveness and stakeholders’ engagement with the programme are regarded by the partners to have significantly contributed to achieving the intended results, and in the development of local capacities and ownership. The Joint UN Project approach is delivering the intended results effectively, notably via the provision of a common UN approach and policy offer to the Albanian partners so as to develop a coherent and integrated social inclusion and social service reform policy framework and a set of policy tools appropriate to the specific needs, context and customs of Albania. The LNB programme is suitably coordinated with and interacts as appropriate with other donor financed actions in Albania in the field of social inclusion and social development.

Nevertheless, it is evident that challenges do exist in terms of the timely achievement of the results and their further roll-out, most notably at the policy (system) level, in part also at the municipal level linked to results delivery at the LGUs. In three key areas the process of decision-making and take-up of LNB’s outputs by the partners has still to be formally completed at the time of this MTR: (1) Final inter-agency agreement on the operational procedures to be followed for the collection, monitoring and analysis of social inclusion data linked to the SIPD; (2) Establishment and functioning of the SIIG; (3) Functioning of the MIS for social services. At the municipal level, while the majority of LGUs are now actively engaged in the process of developing their local capacities and organisational operations to manage social care services and reforms locally, it is also evident that a minority of LGUs are lagging behind in the process.

In addition, certain risks exist to the full achievement of two outputs versus the performance target set for the end of programme implementation: Output 1.2[[12]](#footnote-12) and Output 2.2[[13]](#footnote-13).

## **4.3 Programme management and adaptation**

Overall, the efficiency of the programme implementation and delivery is rated as satisfactory. The Joint UN Project is implemented by the UN partner agencies through the modalities of the DaO mechanism, which are well established within the UN Country Team structures in Albania, guided by Standard Operating Procedures to promote a cohesive coordinated UN approach. UNDP is the leading UN agency for overall implementation and coordination of the programme. It is supported by a dedicated LNB project team hired to take charge of the overall management, delivery, monitoring, reporting, coordination, and visibility of the programme. The project management arrangements are well structured, based on clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the implementing partners, and for the overall coordination of their actions.

While the initial start-up period for the LNB programme was slower than anticipated – a result of the reorganisation of central government institutions in the autumn of 2017 – the pace of implementation of the programme has satisfactorily progressed since 2018. As of 31/12/2019 (the end of month 31 of the 48 months for implementation), 65% of the total programme budget was disbursed or committed. It is assessed that the available financial resources are adequate to fulfil the remaining programme needs for the implementation period to the end of May 2021.

Implementation of the programme is undertaken in close cooperation and dialogue with partner organisations and stakeholders on the Albanian-side: central and local government, social service providers, and CSOs. Feedback provided to the evaluator during the field phase mission attest of a strong level of satisfaction across the range of organisations as to the good level of cooperation that they have with the UN agencies, and the strength and quality of the consultative approach of the agencies in their provision of support, technical analysis/ advice. This approach is clearly essential for building local ownership and the capacities to develop appropriate technical outputs/ solutions, and to utilise and absorb the programme results.

While the overall efficiency of programme implementation and results delivery is satisfactory, it is evident that the efficiency of results delivery has at times faced challenges. The primary reasons for the constraints relate to: (1) the organisational and technical capacities, including staffing level, of governmental partners, central and local government, to be fully engaged with the actions in a timely manner; and (2) the pace of efficiency of the policy and the decision-making processes for the partners, most notably where this involves multi-agency cooperation.

The project monitoring and evaluation system, plus risk assessment processes and tools are clearly defined and operational, and project steering is suitably undertaken on the basis of the monitoring data generated, and the review of the progress and risks to results achievement.

LNB’s performance monitoring framework specifies 40 indicators of achievement. Overall the specified indicators and targets of achievement provide for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data linked to the programme and the country context linked to social inclusion/ social services. Overall the indicators and the targets are relevant in regard to the measuring the achievement of the specific result to which they attach. However, the reporting of progress achieved does not always directly correlate with the specifics of the declared target. As such, there is some room for improvement in terms of the quality of the performance monitoring framework in order that it may more efficiently and effectively support the analysis of project progress and results achievement, and thereby also efficient and effective project steering.

## **4.4 Sustainability and local ownership of the programme results/ benefits**

Overall, the progress to date of the LNB programme to ensure the sustainability of the results and benefits after the end of the programme is satisfactory.

The alignment of LNB with national and local policies and needs is a major factor contributing to the sustainability of the results. The results of the LNB programme are highly relevant to the country’s policy reform and legal framework on social inclusion, social care and social services, are highly relevant to the needs of the LGUs to be able to provide social services as envisaged in the policy and legal framework, and also highly relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries (R&E, PWDs and other marginalised communities) to access and receive better social services, as a basic human right, and to benefit from participatory decision-making processes.

The holistic approach of the LNB programme, addressing macro, meso and micro level, also contributes to sustainability. By working with the central and local government and local service providers, LNB brings about systemic change to ensure that social inclusion policies are suitably anchored, promoted, monitored, and financed at the system and operational level. By working with the target group of final beneficiaries and CSOs, the programme is reflective and responsive to the needs of these target groups, and empowers them via advocacy, lobbying, networking, and awareness raising actions promoting social inclusion and social services.

Recognising that the achievement of social inclusion/ protection requires well targeted financial investments in the social sector over the longer-term, the programme has provided valuable technical support/ advice to the government linked to its development of funding mechanisms for social inclusion. In addition, support has been provided on the request of LGUs linked to the development of local financing models. These results are integral to building national/local financing capacity so as to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme results.

Recognising that the programme is primarily one provided via technical expertise and support, the function of knowledge management, learning and sharing is essential to building the longer-term sustainability and the potential for scaling up of the results. The LNB programme is very well designed so as to provide an experimental ‘lab-approach’ to the pilot-testing of a range of interventions, models and mechanisms at the local level, so as to generate experience and knowledge as to lessons learned (positive and negative), prior to the potential fine-tuning of the models and their wider dissemination and scaling up, in other LGUs and/or nationally. In the first-half of the programme’s implementation lessons learned linked to the programme delivery were, understandably, mainly operational. With the programme now in its third year for implementation, increased focus is correctly provided via LNB to generating substantive evidences of lessons learned as to the effectiveness of the social service and care models and approaches that have been operated and tested at the local level. This will be important to support decision-making as to the potential for further scaling up of actions/ results, both in the immediate period remaining for LNB and medium-term via actions undertaken by the partners.

Overall, the major factors which influence the non-achievement of sustainability of the LNB programme results are: (1) Financial sustainability; (2) The capacity of governmental partners, central and local, to ensure social inclusion and social care policy planning, monitoring and evaluation; (3) Staff turnover and the failure to internalise capacity building programmes. In many respects these are issues beyond the direct influence of the LNB programme, although may be influenced via further policy dialogue, and potential technical support to partners.

Nevertheless, it is important for the programme to develop a clear results achievement and sustainability strategy linked to the development of the social inclusion and social care policy monitoring and evaluation systems; progress by the partners to operationalise the key LNB results to support social inclusion monitoring and reporting processes has been delayed.

It is also important for the programme to develop a clear strategy linked to the sharing of good practice and how the results may most effectively/ efficiently be scaled up by the partners over the next years. To promote sustainable results delivery supporting social service reform across Albania it is important that take up of the results is achieved for all municipalities and the LGUs.

Furthermore, it is important for the programme to develop a clear sustainability strategy linked to the process for full transfer and continued operation by central partners (ministries, agencies, universities and training institutes), of the key capacity building and organisational development methods, tools, and training curricula/ materials generated via the programme.

In addition, to support longer-term results achievement and sustainability, it is important for LNB to continue its efforts to support the government to strengthen the function and delivery operations (effectiveness/ efficiency) of the recently established set of state financing mechanisms made available to the LGUs for social inclusion and social care services. Technical support to review the first year(s) of operation would clearly be valuable, going forward, to support the Government’s future shaping of the mechanisms. It is evident that the mechanisms, if suitably transparent and operationally effective, have the potential to be utilised, in the future, as a means to link donors’ allocation of financing support in the area.

# **5. Recommendations**

On the basis of the evaluation findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made to the UN implementing partners. These are sub-divided between recommendations intended to support LNB’s performance in the remaining implementation period for phase 1, and those intended to support the programme’s orientation in a potential follow-up phase.

## **5.1. On-going (LNB - Phase 1)**

At the municipal level, while the majority of LGUs are now actively engaged in the process of developing their local capacities and organisational operations to manage social care services and reforms locally, it is also evident that a minority of LGUs are lagging behind in the process.

**Recommendation 1**: In order to ensure that all LGUs have achieved a basic level of progress linked to the planning, budgeting and monitoring of social care services and provision, targeted support and encouragement should be provided via LNB to those LGUs that do not yet have a Social Care Plan under preparation, in order that the plans’ drafting be achieved in 2020.

Principal Addressees (R1): LNB, MHSP, SSS, LGUs, National Agency for Support of Local Self Governance

In three key areas the process of decision-making and take-up of LNB’s outputs by the partners has still to be formally completed at the time of this MTR: (1) Final inter-agency agreement on the operational procedures to be followed for monitoring implementation linked to the SIPD; (2) Establishment and functioning of the SIIG; (3) Functioning of the MIS for social services.

**Recommendation 2**: Sustained policy dialogue with the partners is essential to expedite decision-making in each of the three areas identified. The functionality of the systems is central to the long-term success of the LNB programme and its intended development results/goals. Failure to operationalise the systems substantially hampers the monitoring of social inclusion.

Principal Addressees (R2): LNB, MHSP, INSTAT

**Recommendation 3**: Further technical support and encouragement should be provided via LNB to the LGUs to operationalise the MIS module for social services, and to the SSS to consolidate the process and also its capacities for analytical review of the data generated.

Principal Addressees (R3): LNB, SSS, LGUs

LNB needs to develop a clear results achievement and sustainability strategy linked to: (1) The development of the social inclusion and social care policy monitoring and evaluation systems; (2) The process for full transfer and continued operation by central partners of the key capacity building and organisational development methods, tools, training curricula/ materials; (3) The sharing of good practice and how the results may most effectively/ efficiently be scaled up.

**Recommendation 4**: Sustainability strategies to support the full transfer of the results and their sustained operation by the partners should be developed via LNB in consultation with the relevant partners. While it is foreseen that a follow-up LNB phase may be undertaken, which could support partners to consolidate operation of the outputs/results, it is necessary to ensure that all of the first phase results are embedded within the partner organisations prior to the completion of the first phase in May 2021. Draft sustainability strategies to be achieved in 2020.

Principal Addressees (R4): LNB, MHSP, MFE, MEYS, INSTAT, SSS, National Agency for Support of Local Self Governance

Overall the programme performance indicators and targets are relevant in regard to the measuring the achievement of the specific result to which they attach. However, the reporting of progress achieved does not always directly correlate with the specifics of the declared target. There is room for improvement in terms of the quality of the performance monitoring framework in order that it may more efficiently and effectively support the analysis of project progress and results achievement, and thereby also efficient and effective project steering.

**Recommendation 5**: LNB team, supported as relevant by the UN partner agencies, should undertake a detailed review and as necessary revision of the indicators, baseline and target data utilised in the LNB programme performance framework (comments on the indicators and targets, and the relevance of the progress status data is provided by the evaluator in Annex 6).

Principal Addressees (R5): LNB and UN partner agencies

## **5.2. Future perspective (LNB - Phase 2)**

**Recommendation 6**: It is important for LNB to continue its efforts to support the government to strengthen the function and delivery operations (effectiveness/ efficiency) of the recently established set of state financing mechanisms for social inclusion and social care services.

Primary Addressees (R6): LNB, MHSP, MFE, MEYS

**Recommendation 7**: It is important for LNB to continue to support consolidate the structures and processes for monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance of social service provision.

Principal Addressees (R7): LNB, SSS

**Recommendation 8**: It is important for LNB to continue to support the development of social care models, notably to strengthen the take-up of service integration and the operation of a multi-service approach to social service delivery, and in the development of models and financing mechanisms for the sharing of social services between two or more LGUs.

Principal Addressees (R8): LNB, SSS, LGUs, National Agency for Support of Local Self Governance

**Recommendation 9**: Supporting networking, knowledge sharing, peer to peer support, and the capitalization of experiences and results achieved so far: (1) between the different advocacy forums developed via LNB, so as to operate within regional and/or national networking platforms; (2) between the LGUs; (3) between social service providers.

Principal Addressees (R9): LNB

**Recommendation 10**: Supporting networking, knowledge sharing, and the capitalization of experiences and results achieved so far between local and central governments through facilitating the feedback flow from local to central government, and follow up mechanisms.

Principal Addressees (R10): LNB, National Agency for Support of Local Self Governance

**Recommendation 11**: Strengthening and intensifying awareness raising campaigns on social inclusion, particularly access and delivery of social services for marginalised communities.

Principal Addressees (R11): LNB, MHSP, SSS

**Recommendation 12**: Explore with the MHSP and partners the possibilities of health and/or social insurance companies’ contribution to cover costs for social services or to co-share costs.

Principal Addressees (R12): LNB, MHSP

**Recommendation 13**: Support CSOs that are interested to do so to transform into social enterprises and benefit from the Social Enterprise Fund.

Principal Addressees (R13): LNB, MHSP, MFE

# **Annexes**

Annex 1: MTR itinerary (field mission visit – summary) 45

Annex 2: List of persons interviewed 46

Annex 3: List of documents reviewed 49

Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix 50

Annex 5: LNB programme budget 56

Annex 6: Progress toward results (as of 31/12/2019) 58

Annex 7: Rating scale definitions 86

Annex 8: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Agreement Form 87

Annex 9: Terms of Reference 89

# **Annex 1: MTR itinerary (field mission visit – summary)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Location** | **Description** |
| 19/01/2020 | Tirana | MTR International Consultant arrives to Tirana |
| 20/01/2020 | Tirana | Opening meeting with LNB coordination team  Meetings with: (i) UN Team; (ii) UN staffs involved in the LNB programme; (iii) LNB Implementing Partner (NPF); (iv) Ministry of Education, Science and Youth; (v) Swiss Embassy |
| 21/02/2020 | Tirana | Meetings at: (i) Ministry of Education, Science and Youth; (ii) Ministry of Health and Social Protection; (iii) State Social Service; (iv) Tirana Municipality (LGU) |
| 22/01/2020 | Fier/ Baltëz/ Levan  Lushnje  Ure Vajgurore/ Poshnje  Tirana | Meetings at: (i) Fier Municipality (LGU); (ii) site-visits to facilities, to meet staffs and/or final beneficiary-users in Baltëz and in Levan  Meetings at: (i) site-visit to facility, to meet staffs and observe final beneficiary-users in Lushnje; and to meet with Lushnje Municipality (LGU)  Meetings at: (i) site-visit to facility, to meet staffs in Poshnje, and observe Ure Vajgurore context  Meeting with: (i) LNB coordination team |
| 23/01/2020 | Tirana | Meetings with: (i) Ure Vajgurore Municipality (LGU); (ii) Ministry of Finances and Economy; (iii) site-visit to facility, to meet staffs and observe final beneficiary-users in Tirana; (iv) Institute of Statistics; (v) National Agency on Local Autonomy  Focus Group Discussions with: (i) LGU municipal representatives responsible for social services planning/ monitoring; (ii) key local CSOs – service providers/ innovators and advocacy partners |
| 24/01/2020 | Tirana | Meetings at: (i) European Union Delegation; (ii) Ministry of Health and Social Protection  Debriefing presentation: held at the UN offices, with representatives/ staffs of the UN, Ministries, Implementing Partners, and the Swiss Embassy |
| 25/01/2020 | Tirana | MTR International Consultant departs from Tirana |
| 31/01/2020 | Tirana | MTR National Consultant conducts the final field phase interview at: (i) Ministry of Health and Social Protection |

# **Annex 2: List of persons interviewed**

| **Date** | **Name** | **Gender** | **Organisation** | **Position** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 20/01/2020 | Brian Williams  Limya Eltayeb  Roberto De Bernardi  Manuela Bello  Michele Ribotta | M  F  M  F  M | UN  UNDP  UNICEF  UNFPA  UN Women | UN Resident Coordinator  Resident Representative  Representative  Head of Office  Country Representative |
| 20/01/2020 | Entela Lako  Anduena Shkurti  Mirela Bylyku  Dhurata Vrenozi  Alketa Zazo  Linda Bushati  Elda Hallkaj  Mariana Bulku  Dorina Tocaj  Elida Nuri  Elsona Agolli  Erisa Cela | F  F  F  F  F  F  F  F  F  F  F  F | UNDP  UN LNB  UN LNB  UN LNB  UNICEF  UNICEF  UNICEF  UNICEF  UNFPA  UNFPA  UNFPA  UN Women | Programme Specialist  LNB programme team (Coordinator)  LNB programme team  LNB programme team  Social Protection Specialist  Early Childhood Education Specialist  Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist  Health and Nutrition Specialist  Program Analyst on Sexual and Reproductive Health  Program Analyst  Programme Manager |
| 20/01/2020 | Shpresa Spahiu | F | Help for Children Foundation (NPF) / LNB implementing partner | Executive Director |
| 20/01/2020 | Besnik Rama | M | Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth | Education Specialist |
| 20/01/2020 | Adrian Maître  Silvana Mjeda | M  F | Swiss Embassy | Ambassador  Programme Officer |
| 21/01/2020 | Lorena Haxhiu | F | Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth | Deputy Minister |
| 21/01/2020 | Merita Xhafaj  Erol Como | F  M | Ministry of Health and Social Protection | General Director of Health and Social Protection Policies and Development  Head of Primary Health Care Department |
| 21/01/2020 | Anisa Subashi | F | Municipality of Tirana | Head of Social Services Department |
| 21/01/2020 | Lida Leskaj | F | State Social Service | Deputy Head |
| 22/01/2020 | Eriselda Sefa | F | Municipality of Lushnje | Head of the Cabinet |
| 22/01/2020 | Nerita Heqimi | F | Community Centre, Ura Vajgurore | Director |
| 22/01/2020 | Agron Margilaj | M | Municipality of Fier | Head of Social Services Department |
| 22/01/2020 | Zana Sadikaj | F | 'Trifon Prifti'' 9-year school, Hamil, Fier | Director |
| 22/01/2020 | Beneficiary | M | Medicinal Plants Collection Centre, Fier | Formal business supported via LNB |
| 22/01/2020 | Beneficiary | M | Weldering Services Centre, Fier | Formal business supported via LNB |
| 22/01/2020 | Beneficiary | M | Barber shop, Baltëz, Fier | Former student supported via LNB (vocational training course) |
| 22/01/2020 | Ardian Maksutaj | M | Levan, Fier | Beneficiary family of the Integrated Social Services model |
| 22/01/2020 | Entela Lako  Anduena Shkurti | F  F | UNDP  UN LNB | UNDP Programme Specialist  LNB programme team (Coordinator) |
| 23/01/2020 | Juliana Memaj | F | Municipality of Ura Vajgurore | Mayor |
| 23/01/2020 | Doris Andoni | F | Ministry of Finances and Economy | Head of Social Housing |
| 23/01/2020 | Aferdita Seiti | F | Foundation 'Help the Life’, Prush, Tirana / local social service provider | Executive Director |
| 23/01/2020 | Elsa Dhuli | F | INSTAT | Acting General Director |
| 23/01/2020 | Bekim Murati | M | National Agency for Support of Local Self Governance, Ministry of Interior | Head |
| 23/01/2020 | Ndricim Qosa  Meme Xhaferaj  Shefki Lika  Ilir Zguri  Marte Fetaj  Azem Nuhu  Denisa Mamillo  Daniela Deda  Blerta Laçi  Filip Vila | M  M  M  M  M  M  F  F  F  M | Municipality of Belsh  Municipality of Durres  Municipality of Elbasan  Municipality of Korca  Municipality of Lezha  Municipality of Maliq  Municipality of Permet  Municipality of Shijak  Municipality of Shijak  Municipality of Shkodra | Social Care Services  Director of Social Care Services  Social Care Services  Director of Social Care Services  Director of Social Care Services  Director of Social Care Services  Head of Programme Unit  Social Care Services  Social Care Services  Director of Social Care Services |
| 23/01/2020 | CSO representatives participating in the focus group discussion |  | Institute of Romani Culture in Albania  Roma Women Rights Centre  Albanian Disability Rights Foundation  Albanian National Deaf Association  Youth Voice Network  Albania Community Assist  Observatory for Children  ACPD  STOP AIDS  Aksion +  AISI  GADC  Today for the Future  ISOP  Europartners  ESA  Albanian Social Services Association  Partners for Development Foundation |  |
| 24/01/2020 | Enkelejda Lopari | F | EU Delegation | Programme Officer |
| 24/01/2020 | Denada Seferi | F | Ministry of Health and Social Protection | Head of Health and Social Protection Development Programmes |
| 24/01/2020 |  |  | **MTR Debriefing presentation/ meeting** |  |
| 31/01/2020 | Bardhylka Kospiri | F | Ministry of Health and Social Protection | Deputy Minister |

# **Annex 3: List of documents reviewed**

**LNB programme documents and commissioned reports**

* Programme Document (project proposal)
* Semi-annual Progress Reports: issued December 2017, December 2018, January 2020
* Annual Progress Reports: issued June 2018, June 2019
* LNB Programme Brochures: (a) Programme at a Glance, (b) Programme to Date Update number 1, (c) Programme to Date Update number 2
* A Review of Local Budget Spending on Social Care Services (2018)
* A Satisfaction Survey on Social Services (2018)
* Call for Proposals (Community-based Social Services Grants) – Guidelines for Application (first call for proposals) (2019)
* Evaluation Report for the Community-based Social Services Grants (2019)

**Donor partner documents**

* Government of Albania-UN “Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development” for the period 2017-2021
* Government of Albania-UN “Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development” for the period 2017-2021 – Progress Report 2018
* Government of Albania-UN “Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development” for the period 2017-2021 – 2019 Joint Work Plans -Mid Year Review
* UNDP: Country programme document for Albania (2017-2021)
* ILO: Albania Decent Work Country Programme (2017-2021)
* World Bank: Country Partnership Framework for Albania 2015 – 2019
* Swiss Cooperation Strategy: Albania 2014-2017
* Swiss Cooperation Strategy: Albania 2018-2021
* EU/EC: Indicative Strategy Paper for Albania for the period 2014-2020 (update 2018)
* EU/EC: annual Progress Reports on Albania (in the context of EU enlargement policy)
* EU/EC: Annual Action Programme for Albania for the year 2019 “EU for Social Inclusion”
* Municipalities for Europe (EU-funded project): “Municipalities in the EU integration process of Albania” (2018)

**Government of Albania documents**

* National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020
* National Strategy for Social Protection 2015 – 2020
* Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020
* Social Housing Strategy 2016-2025
* National Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020
* National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020
* National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020
* (Albania) Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals (2018)
* INSTAT: Income and Living Conditions in Albania, 2017-2018 (December 2019)

# **Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix**

| **No.** | **Evaluation Questions** | **Judgement Criteria/ Indicators** | **Sources of Verification** | **Methodology** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **RELEVANCE** | | | | |
| 1 | To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid? | Programme objectives and benefits generated remain relevant to needs | National and local strategies and plans linked to social inclusion, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 2 | Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives? | Programme results framework and theory of change remain relevant, and reflects the added value of LNB to promote systemic change | Programme document and results framework (and any amendments), and national and local strategies and plans linked to social inclusion | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 3 | Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects? | Programme results framework and theory of change remain relevant, and the identified assumptions true | Programme results framework, monitoring tools, progress reports, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 4 | How relevant is the programme to target groups’, including central and local governments’, needs and priorities? | The extent to which the target groups assess the programme as relevant to their needs and priorities, and development plans | National and local strategies and plans linked to social inclusion, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 5 | How relevant is the programme to other key stakeholders’ (executing agencies, partner organizations, including other UN agencies, NGOs etc.) needs and priorities? | The extent to which other key stakeholders assess the programme as relevant to their needs and priorities, and development plans | Other stakeholders’ development policies and plans linked to social inclusion, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 6 | To what extent is the programme aligned with the policies and strategies of the country, UN agencies participating in the programme and donors? | The extent to which the programme is closely aligned, and reflects the strategies and goals of Albania, and is closely aligned with the strategies and goals of donor partners | National and local strategies and plans linked to social inclusion, and donor development policies and plans, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 7 | To what extent is the programme contributing to country system development? To what extent has LNB contribution been relevant in the context of SDGs with special focus on the principle Leave no one Behind? | -The extent to which key decision-makers assess the programme as relevant to needs and priorities  -The extent to which Albania’s plans linked to the SDGs reflect on the principle Leave no one Behind and information on the LNB programme | National strategies, plans and progress reports linked to the SDGs (notably linked to SDGs 1-5, 10, and 11), and to the principle of Leave no one Behind | Document review  Interviews |
| **EFFECTIVENESS** | | | | |
| 8 | Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-programme targets. To what extent have the expected outputs, outcomes and goal been achieved or are likely to be achieved? | -Performance assessment of actual progress against intermediate and end-of-programme targets  -Assessment of the likelihood that end-of-programme targets can be achieved | Programme results framework, progress reports, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 9 | What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes/ expected results/ outputs? | Assessment of reasons for the over-achievement and the under-achievement of progress towards meeting the programme targets | Programme results framework, progress reports, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 10 | Identify remaining barriers to achieving the programme objective during the remaining implementation timeframe. | Assessment of the main barriers/ constraints to achieving the programme objective to promote systemic change in social inclusion | Programme results framework, progress reports, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 11 | Did the programme contribute to capacity building and organisational development as planned? | The extent that capacity building and organisational development has occurred due to the programme | Programme results framework, progress reports, national and local plans, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 12 | To what extent and in what ways the cross-cutting issues of LNB programme – good governance and gender equality – are applied/ promoted? | The extent that the cross-cutting issues are referred to/ reflected in the programme and actions’ design, monitored during implementation, and considered in decision-making | Programme document, monitoring tools, progress reports, documents linked to design/ implementation of the set of actions supported by the programme, stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 13 | To what extent have UN agencies coordinated effectively and created synergies in the delivery of assistance? | The extent to which the partner agencies coordinate and review their actions and the timely delivery of these under the programme | Programme document, progress reports, information on UN Joint Work under the programme, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 14 | Is the current coordination set up producing the intended results? | Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of coordination set up | Coordination committee minutes, progress rpt., stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 15 | 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? | -The extent to which the programme is judged by other donors and project implementers as relevant to their specific project(s) portfolio (e.g. potential synergies with LNB)  -The extent to which the LNB team consults/ coordinates with donors | Programme progress reports, information on donors’ cooperation/ consultations linked to their development actions in Albania, LNB coordination committee minutes, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 16 | To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights? | Assessment of reasons for the over- and the under-achievement of progress towards meeting the programme targets on gender, etc. | Programme progress reports, national and donors’ reports on the progress of advancing gender equality etc. in Albania | Document review  Interviews |
| **EFFICIENCY** | | | | |
| 17 | Are the available technical and financial resources adequate to fulfil the programme framework? | The extent that the resources have been deployed in line with budget, and results are in line with targets | Programme results framework, progress and financial reports | Document review  Interviews |
| 18 | Is the programme implemented in the most efficient way, making best use of available human, technical, technological, financial and knowledge inputs to achieve its desired results? Have there been any unforeseen problems? How well are they resolved? | -Milestones within annual plans are consistent with results framework  -Assessment of reasons for over- and under-achievement of progress  -Assessment of the main barriers/ constraints & unforeseen problems that hinder programme efficiency  -Evidences of steering committee considerations and decision-making | Programme results framework, monitoring tools, progress and financial reports, information on UN Joint Work under the programme, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 19 | Following up on risk management, how the risk is assessed? And how the risk is managed? In relation to the upcoming EU IPA funding, how the synergies will be ensured? | -Evidences of risk assessments conducted by the programme team, & steering committee consideration  -The extent that synergies exist of LNB & EU IPA, and not duplication, and that a cooperation plan agreed | Programme progress reports, risk management plan, risk assessment reports, the relevant EU IPA programme document and reports/ information linked to the EU’s consultations with donor partners | Document review  Interviews |
| **SUSTAINABILITY** | | | | |
| 20 | Are the approaches and methods used likely to ensure a continued benefit after the end of the programme? | -The extent to which the programme results have been institutionalised by partners (national and local)  -Evidence of sustainability planning | Programme progress reports, info. on sustainability planning actions, national/local partners’ actions and plans for continued sustainability | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 21 | What are the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme? | Assessment of major factors that promote or hinder the achievement of sustainability and the process of sustainability planning by partners | Programme progress reports, national partners’ actions and plans (regulatory, technical, financial) for sustainability, stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 22 | Are all key stakeholders sufficiently and effectively involved? Are their expectations met and are they satisfied with their level of participation? 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? | -The extent to which the target groups and key stakeholders assess their involvement in the programme (e.g. planning, direct user, monitoring of policies) suitable  -The extent to which stakeholders feel ownership of the results of the LNB programme and support the process of post-programme sustainability planning and funding | Programme progress reports, national partners’ actions and plans (regulatory, technical, financial) for sustainability, stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 23 | 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? | -Evidences of knowledge-management and learning actions  -Evidences of lessons learned (incl. good practice) being shared with partners via the programme actions  -The extent to which stakeholders are aware of the lessons learned | Programme progress reports, information on knowledge-management and learning actions, the extent of outreach to relevant partners and their utilisation of good practice, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 24 | Based on lessons learned what specific recommendations could be given to each key partner under the joint programme that would contribute to the sustainability of the intervention? | Assessment of the measures that can be taken by each key partner, notably over the remaining period of LNB Phase 1, to contribute to the sustainability of the intervention, where this is not already assured | Programme progress reports, national partners’ actions and plans (regulatory, technical, financial) for sustainability, stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 25 | What needs to be done and/or improved to ensure sustainability? | Assessment of the key risks or gaps in planning to ensure sustainability | Programme progress reports, partner plans, stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 26 | What type of interventions would need further programme assistance beyond the agreed timeframe? | Assessment of development needs/ priorities (medium-term) re. social inclusion, and types of intervention | National and local strategies and plans linked to social inclusion, and statistics (poverty/exclusion trends) | Document review  Interviews |
| 27 | What is the programme relation to the Social Fund established by the government? | Evidences of Social Fund budget allocations and linkages of the Fund to LNB’s capacity building actions | Information on the Social Fund (and related government funds for social inclusion) and budget allocations | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |
| 28 | Is LNB contributing to establish the right system to support sustainable capacity building? Is LBN ensuring no substitution effect? | Evidences of LNB capacity building actions (e.g. training, operational, knowledge-management/ sharing) being institutionalised at national level and/or by local partners | Programme progress reports, national partners’ actions and plans (regulatory, technical, financial) for capacity building training/support sustainability, stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| **CROSS-CUTTING THEMES/ ISSUES** | | | | |
| 29 | **LNB contribution to SDGs** – assess whether the programme’s goal and outcomes and progress done so far are contributing to SDGs progress. | Assessment of progress by Albania linked to SDGs and the extent of LNB contribution to this (primarily linked to SDGs 1-5, 10, and 11) | Programme progress reports, national strategies, plans and progress reports linked to the SDGs and the principle of Leave no one Behind, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 30 | **LNB cross-cutting issues –** assess whether the cross-cutting issues related to human rights, governance and gender equality, are addressed/promoted as an articulation of human rights principles. | Assessment of the extent to which the cross-cutting themes are mainstreamed within and across the programme, as a matter of principle | Programme document, monitoring tools, progress reports, documents linked to design/ implementation of the set of actions supported by the programme, stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews |
| 31 | **LNB communication and visibility** – assess andreview whether the communications and visibility guidelines and actions undertaken by UN agencies and implementing partners provide insights into the implementation of the programme activities. | -Assessment of extent, diversity, and media/tools utilised by partners for communications and visibility, and the extent of outreach or awareness raising so achieved  -Assessment of extent to which key stakeholders are familiar with the programme and on-going activities | Programme progress reports, the communications and visibility guidelines, the communications strategies of key partners, the communications & visibility outputs, and stakeholder feedback | Document review  Interviews, site-visits |

# **Annex 5: LNB programme budget**

**Detailed budget per year**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Total SDC Contribution Budget (CHF)** | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** |
| **The vulnerable population receives adequate social services from local authorities** | | | | | |
| Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania are empowered to request and access adequate social services | 910,000 | 225,000 | 225,000 | 225,000 | 235,000 |
| R&E and PWDs in selected municipalities are supported in the capacities to request & access specific services supporting their inclusion | 3,010,000 | 740,000 | 750,000 | 750,000 | 770,000 |
| The interface between municipal service providers and groups of R&E and PWDs is improved | 250,000 | 70,000 | 60,000 | 60,000 | 60,000 |
| Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including R&E and PWDs participate in the monitoring of national policies | 200,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 |
| **Sub-total Outcome 1** | 4,370,000 | 1,085,000 | 1,085,000 | 1,085,000 | 1,085,000 |
| **Municipalities effectively manage the provision of social services** | | | | | |
| Municipal and private service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing social service & promoting social inclusion | 1,740,000 | 445,000 | 435,000 | 430,000 | 430,000 |
| Social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up | 415,000 | 100,000 | 105,000 | 105,000 | 105,000 |
| A grant scheme allows the introduction of innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation | 7,407 | 7,407 | - | - | - |
| **Sub-total Outcome 2** | 2,162,407 | 552,407 | 540,000 | 535,000 | 535,000 |
| **National institutions implement their social inclusion policy framework** | | | | | |
| The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth & other competent Ministries are supported in their monitoring of implementation of policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data | 755,000 | 184,444 | 196,852 | 196,852 | 176,852 |
| The establishment of state funding mechanisms (Social Fund) that support the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported | 120,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 35,000 | 25,000 |
| **Sub-total Outcome 3** | 875,000 | 214,444 | 226,852 | 231,852 | 201,852 |
| **Total of three outcomes** | 7,407,407 | 1,851,851 | 1,851,852 | 1,851,852 | 1,851,852 |
| Administrative Agent fee (1%) | 74,074 | 18,519 | 18,519 | 18,519 | 18,519 |
| Management fee (7%) | 518,518 | 129,630 | 129,629 | 129,630 | 129,629 |
| **TOTAL BUDGET** | 8,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 |

**Detailed budget per Agency**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Total SDC Contribution Budget (CHF)** | **UNDP** | | **UNICEF** | **UNW** | **UNFPA** | **NPF** |
| **The vulnerable population receives adequate social services from local authorities** | | | | | | | |
| Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania are empowered to request and access adequate social services | 910,000 | 440,000 | | 230,000 | 100,000 | 140,000 |  |
| R&E and PWDs in selected municipalities are supported in the capacities to request & access specific services supporting their inclusion | 3,010,000 | 2,000,000 | | 100,000 | 70,000 | 40,000 | 800,000 |
| The interface between municipal service providers and groups of R&E and PWDs is improved | 250,000 | 250,000 | |  |  |  |  |
| Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including R&E and PWDs participate in the monitoring of national policies | 200,000 | 80,000 | | 50,000 | 50,000 | 20,000 |  |
| **Sub-total Outcome 1** | 4,370,000 | 2,770,000 | | 380,000 | 220,000 | 200,000 | 800,000 |
| **Municipalities effectively manage the provision of social services** | | | | | | | |
| Municipal and private service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing social service & promoting social inclusion | 1,740,000 | 200,000 | 690,000 | | 170,000 | 80,000 | 600,000 |
| Social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up | 415,000 | 415,000 |  | |  |  |  |
| A grant scheme allows the introduction of innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation | 7,407 | 7,407 |  | |  |  |  |
| **Sub-total Outcome 2** | 2,162,407 | 622,407 | 690,000 | | 170,000 | 80,000 | 600,000 |
| **National institutions implement their social inclusion policy framework** | | | | | | | |
| The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth & other competent Ministries are supported in their monitoring of implementation of policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data | 755,000 | 260,000 | 280,000 | | 140,000 | 75,000 |  |
| The establishment of state funding mechanisms (Social Fund) that support the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported | 120,000 | 30,000 | 60,000 | | 30,000 |  |  |
| **Sub-total Outcome 3** | 875,000 | 290,000 | 340,000 | | 170,000 | 75,000 |  |
| **Total of three outcomes** | 7,407,407 | 3,682,407 | 1,410,000 | | 560,000 | 355,000 | 1,400,000 |
| Administrative Agent fee (1%) | 74,074 | 36,824 | 14,100 | | 5,600 | 3,550 | 14,000 |
| Management fee (7%) | 518,518 | 257,768 | 98,700 | | 39,200 | 24,850 | 98,000 |
| **TOTAL BUDGET** | 8,000,000 | 3,977,000 | 1,522,800 | | 604,800 | 383,400 | 1,512,000 |

# **Annex 6: Progress toward results (as of 31/12/2019)**

*(A) Data on the results, indicators, the baseline, target, and status of progress achieved (end of Year-1, end of Year-2), extracted from the LNB Annual Progress Reports (performance monitoring framework)*

*(B) Data on the latest status from the LNB Semi Annual Progress Report (middle of Year-3, covering the period June to December 2019)*

*(C) Comments are provided by the evaluator*

## **Impact**

| **Impact** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vulnerable persons and groups are empowered to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives and hold them accountable | Evolution of human development and diminishment of social exclusion as reflected in authorities’ reporting on SIPD 2015-2020 and SILC indicators | Low level of social inclusion in the main areas defined in SIPD and SILC indicators | Improved social inclusion in main areas defined in SIPD and SILC indicators | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | Slight progress in implementation of SIPD due to lack of necessary structures and clear line of responsibilities in policy implementation  At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion Indicators is 49 % in 2018 (SILC).  Progress is made in providing inclusive services to R&E with an improved overall rating 3.66 in 2019 vs 3 in 2018. Marked progress is made in reaching strategic goals related to civil registration and social protection which has reached out over 2,000 families with inclusive services in the last two years.  PWDs continue to face difficulties in assessing social services (education, employment, healthcare, social care). | Slight progress achieved: SILC data published by INSTAT in Dec. 2019 covering years 2017 and 2018. Further data will be issued by INSTAT in 2020, e.g. SILC data for 2019, which will represent a third year of data, and thereby an initial indication of trends  Following the earthquake Nov. 2019, the Post Disaster Needs Assessment on social protection is to be issued mid-Feb. 2020  But, progress on monitoring the SIPD indicators is not yet achieved and the SIIG is not established. |
| Evolution of number of R&E as well as PWDs considered as vulnerable | 400,000 persons are considered vulnerable | Reduced number of vulnerable persons due to social inclusion policies by 4% | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | 145,952 vulnerable persons planned to benefit social services in 21 municipalities | It is understood that 400,000 refers to Albania’s overall population of marginalised and vulnerable persons – the data valid for the year 2014.  This data should be disaggregated – R, E, PWDs, other persons, and also on the basis M, F.  The progress data relates to LNB results; it does not provide data to assess the impact. |
| Vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania benefit from improved delivery of social services by local authorities (data disaggregated according to specific target groups, including men and women) | Number of vulnerable persons that benefit of social services (financial and non-financial services) – R, E, PWDs, M, F | 80% (320,000) of vulnerable persons (R, E, PWDs, M, F) have access to improved social services | *No information provided* | 2138 beneficiaries have access to social services and 5668 representing the demand (R&E, PWDs, women and youth) are influencing the local authorities to social care services in the framework of LNB Programme | 2,756 beneficiary access social services  7,052 representing the demand (R&E, PWDs, women and youth) are influencing the local authorities to social care services in the framework of LNB Programme |
| The framework conditions for social care service provision, including funding evolve positively as compared to the situation of 2017 | Incomplete legal framework for Social Funding: DCM pending | DCM for Social Funding approved and implemented in LGUs | *No information provided* | DCM for Social Funding methodology approved 20/03/2019  Social Enterprises Fund is set up in the value of 249,760,000 ALL for the timeframe 2019-2021 providing subsidies to social enterprises activity | DCM for Social Funding methodology approved 20/03/2019  Social Fund 2019 - 115,505,264 ALL (22 municipalities supported)  Social Fund 2020 - 200 million ALL  Fund for Social Enterprises is set up in the value of 249,760,000 ALL for the timeframe 2019-2021 providing subsidies to social enterprises activity  CoM Guide on financial mechanism to support out of school drop-out children at local level approved. (600 children benefited in the academic year 2019-2020) | Reasonable progress achieved to assist establish legal framework and financing mechanisms for social inclusion: Social Fund, Social Enterprise Fund, Out-of-school-children measure, Social Housing Programmes. |
| Per cent of LGUs funding/ budget for social care services: 0.85% in 2017 | Annual increase by 2% of Social Funding | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | A follow-up Review of Local Budget Spending is planned to be undertaken via LNB in 2020. |

## **Outcomes**

| **Outcome 1** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion | The number of vulnerable population that receive adequate social services by municipalities and relevant organizations (CSOs/ service providers) | Number of documented beneficiaries that receive social services: 10,064 in 2018 | Annual increase of documented beneficiaries by 7% in at least 10/15 targeted municipalities | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  All needs of VGs for SS planned in SCP (Social Care Plans) of 16 municipalities  438 persons received pre and post counselling sessions and have been tested for HIV/Hep. B | Initiated/ ongoing  All needs of VGs for SS planned in SCP (Social Care Plans) of 21 municipalities (145,952 vulnerable persons planned to benefit social services) | There is a need for a clearer demarcation of these 2 indicators in terms of what is being measured: e.g. beneficiaries of financial social services, and for non-financial social services, with data for all Albania (61 LGUs) and for the LNB targeted municipalities?  The total number of beneficiaries of non-financial social services in 18 municipalities was 29,978 in 2018 – the Mapping and Satisfaction Survey  Data on number of persons re. Social Care Plans is the total number that are assessed as vulnerable in the 21 municipalities.  It is recommended that further data should be collated for year 2020 as to the actual number of documented beneficiaries that receive social services (financial and non-financial). |
| Improved and expanded provision of social services by municipalities throughout Albania | Number of beneficiaries receiving social services in Albania in 2017 | Annual increase of number of beneficiaries receiving social services recorded in the national database by 5% | Initiated/ ongoing  148 PWDs in 5 LGUs (31% F) have benefited from expanded service provision (new centre in Shijak serving 13 PWDs) and improved service provision (135 PWDs in four centres in Lushnja, Pogradec, Saranda, Bulqiza) | Initiated/ ongoing  166 PWDs in 5 LGUs (31% F) have benefited from expanded service provision and improved service provision (Shijak, Lushnja, Pogradec, Saranda, Bulqiza) | Initiated/ ongoing  198 PWDs in 6 LGUs (31% F) have benefited from expanded service provision and improved service provision (Shijak, Lushnja, Pogradec, Saranda Bulqiza and Ura Vajgurore) |
| Satisfaction with social services received by R&E and PWDs in target municipalities of intervention (sex-disaggregated data) | Level of satisfaction by VGs (M & F) with SS in targeted municipalities: 1.48 in 2018 (1-5 scale, ranging from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied)) | Annual improvement by 2% of satisfaction level of VGs (M & F) with SS in at least 10/15 targeted municipalities | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | A follow-up Satisfaction Survey is planned to be undertaken via LNB in the first half of 2020. |
| Increased coverage of needs of R&E by non-financial assistance (housing, health, education, employment etc.) | Existing number and types of social services provided at local level in targeted municipalities in Albania: 25 types social services | Increased number and types of social services provided at local level in targeted municipalities in Albania | Initiated/ ongoing  300 school aged R&E children and 197 families in 3 LGUs (Fier, Lezhe, and Fushe-Kruja) supported with an increased number and type of services through Integrated Social Services Model (50% F) | Initiated/ ongoing  300 school aged R&E children and 190 families in 3 LGUs (Fier, Lezhe, and Fushe-Kruja) supported with an increased number and type of services through Integrated Social Services Model (50% F)  (300 R&E benefit of assistance for quality education; 35 youth attending VET courses  32 parents/youth are employed  77 families are implementing income generation schemes  16 youth attending an internship  300 (190 R&E) children involved in summer camps  15 children registered in pre-school program and nursery program  11 beneficiaries provided with civil registration services  3 youth registered in high/professional schools) | Initiated/ ongoing  300 school aged R&E children and 218 families in in 3 LGUs (Fier,Lezhe, and (Fushe-Kruja) supported with an increased number and types of services through Integrated Social Services Model (50 % F) | There is a need for greater clarity as to what is being measured, e.g. the number of R&E that benefit from non-financial social service assistance, the number of services offered and/or of service providers that provide non-financial support?  Ideally, data should cover all of Albania (R&E) and the LNB targeted municipalities. |
| Number of issues/ concerns raised by target groups addressed in annual planning and budgeting of social services in target municipalities | Number of issues/ concerns/ recommendations raised by VGs in annual planning/ budgeting. at targeted municipalities  Baseline: 35 issues raised/ supported (2 pre-school programmes for Roma, social care planning, 2 youth & SRH and 31 issues raised by women in consultation processes, Tirana municipality) | 10% of issues/ concerns addressed in annual planning and budgeting at targeted municipalities | Initiated/ ongoing  Hearing sessions for 31 issues raised by women in consultation processes in Tirana scheduled in September 2018 | Initiated/ ongoing  8 issues raised during planning/ budgeting for GRB by VGs, in 3 municipalities  8 issues raised and addressed in 16 (municipalities) Local Social Plans  4 issues addressed in planning for SHR  6 issues raised in 6 municipality related to SHR (Diber Durres, Fier, Korce, Lezhe, Permet) | Initiated/ ongoing  8 issues raised during planning/ budgeting for GRB by VGs, in 3 municipalities  50 issues raised and addressed in 21 (municipalities) Local Social Plans  4 issues addressed in planning for SHR  6 issues raised in 6 municipality related to SHR (Fier, Durres, Permet, Korce, Lezhe, Diber) | The progress status data is incomplete (and the baseline).  The target is that 10% of issues raised are addressed; but there is no data on the total number of issues raised (i.e. also those not addressed); the data is mainly only for the number of issues addressed.  It is also judged by the evaluator that the target of 10% is extremely unambitious. |

| **Outcome 2** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Municipalities effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion | Improved capacities, organization development and quality management of service providers, and effective planning and budgeting | Limited number of public service providers that implement standards of service provision, new services, needs assessment, planning and budgeting for service provision  Baseline: (a) Four municipal public service providers in 2017 implement standards for service provision for PWDs; (b) Health and education public service providers in 11 LGUs apply health and pre-school standards; (c) Social welfare staff in 11 LGUS apply needs assessment and planning of social care services | Increased number of public service providers that implement standards of service provision, new services, needs assessment and planning and budgeting: 9 service providers | Initiated/ ongoing  61 LGUs have been recently informed on the new MTBP format 2019-2021 & GRB | Initiated/ ongoing  61 LGUs have been recently informed on the new MTBP format 2019-2021 & GRB  5 new models of community-based services to the specific needs of PWDs are being set-up (Diber, Permet, Kruje, Ura Vajgurore, Vlora)  6 LGUs (Fier, Durrës, Përmet, Korçë, Lezhë, Dibër) are budgeting for youth in the municipality social plan | Initiated/ ongoing  61 LGUs have been recently informed on the new MTBP format 2019-2021 & GRB  2 new models of community-based services PWDs (Ura Vajgurore and Dibra) functioning and 5 in process (Permet, Kruje, Vlora, Maliq, Korce)  11 LGUs budgeting for youth | Good progress is apparently achieved, notably linked to local budgeting practice.  However, in order to assess progress it is important that updated data is also provided linked to the 3 baseline data sets. The outcome goal for LNB is for an increased number compared to the baseline data… plus the introduction of other/ new standards of service provision and planning. |
| 850 staff trained and apply standards of service provision, new services, needs assessment and budgeting and planning  Baseline: (a) 25 in disability service provision standards in 2017; (b) 200 in pre-school education; (c) 279 in health service standards; (d) 70 municipal staff in social care planning; (e) 276 municipal staff in participatory budgeting; (f) 119 persons trained in Primary Health Care (PHC) in 2017 | At least 100 trained staff of service providers applies standards of service provision, new services, needs assessment, planning and budgeting | Initiated/ ongoing  29 professional staff (90% women) capacitated in service provision for PWDs in five centres (5 LGUS) | Initiated/ ongoing  51 professional staff (92% F) capacitated in service provision for PWDs in nine centres (6 LGUS)  390 municipal staff trained on planning and budgeting for social care services  200 municipal staff are trained on use of MIS for SS  500 women are engaged on trainings and awareness meetings re. GRB  38 social workers (3 municipalities) trained on counselling for employment  CB 800 education staff trained  89 persons trained in PHC | Initiated/ ongoing  51 professional staff (92% F) capacitated in service provision for PWDs in nine centres (10 LGUS)  491 municipal staff trained on planning and budgeting for social care services  200 municipal staff are trained on use of MIS for SS  500 women are engaged on trainings and awareness meetings re. GRB  38 social workers (3 municipalities) trained on counselling for employment  CB 800 education staff trained  89 persons trained in PHC | Very good progress is apparently achieved, with around 1,650 staff of service providers now trained compared to baseline of 850.  However, there is apparently a decline in the number of persons trained in PHC… but this appears not to include the staffs trained on issues of SRH, or the health officers in 4 target regions applying family outreach/ home-visiting techniques. |
| Qualitative and quantitative evolution of the services and role of non-public service providers | Number of non-public service providers and typology of services provided: (a) 121 service providers in 18 municipalities; 50.41% non-public; (b) Typology of services: 25 types social services | Annual increase in typology of service provision by non-public actors by 2% | Initiated | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | A follow-up Mapping and Satisfaction Survey is planned to be undertaken via LNB in the first half of 2020. |
| Perceived quality of services provided by non-public service providers: 1.65 in 2018 | Improved perceived quality of service provision on annual basis by 5%??? | Initiated | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | As above |

| **Outcome 3** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| National institutions implement their social inclusion policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, developed capacities and empowered target groups | Progress in implementation of social inclusion national policies and strategies especially:  (a) Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020 (SIPD): Number of regulations and instructions on social inclusion measures that involve two or more target ministries (cross-sectoral, issue-based approach)  (b) Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020): % of population with access to ‘standard package’ of social care services  (c) National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 (NAPD):  (c1) Number of new legal amendments drafted to align with Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and international/ national standards on persons with disabilities  (c2) Number of components of Action Plan PWDs implemented  (d) National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians (2015-2020) (NAPRE); Level of implementation of National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian Integration  (e) National Strategy for Social Housing 2015-2025 (NSSH): No. legal acts related to implementation of the legal framework to social housing strategy | Limited progress in implementation of SI national policies and strategies  Baseline:  (a) Three (SIIG) + other regulations by other ministries  DCM on statistics  DCM on social Fund  (b) 0.2% of population have access to standard package of services  (c1) One in 2016  (c2) 0 components (interventions) implemented in 2017  (d) Rated 1 of an estimated rating of 1 to 5 (UNDP assessment of NAPRE progress on basis of ROMALB data).  (e) 0 in 2017 | Improved reported progress in implementation of SI national policies and strategies:  (a) Eight in 2020  (b) Annual increase by 1%  (c1) Six in 2020  (c2) 15 components implemented until 2020  (d) Rated at least 3 (2020)  (e) Six in 2020 | Initiated/ ongoing  (a) By-law “On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subsidies pending approval  (b) *no information provided*  (c1) *no information provided*  (c2) interventions for PWDs implemented: (1) Improved access to information for blind students and community; (2) Blind Institute functioning as resource Centre; (3) One new social care service established and capacity building for 27 professional staff in 5 centres  (d) *no information provided*  (e) 1 new law on Social Housing adopted | Initiated/ ongoing  MESY budgeted 50 million ALL for academic year 2019-2020 for supporting out of school children  (a) 4 DCM for social care services law  A financial framework designed for SE “On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subventions”  1 Draft Youth Law submitted to Parliament/approval  Youth Action Plan 2015-2020 review consultations initiated  Technical work on Action Plan on Elderly drafted & consultations ongoing  (b) Social Protection Strategy is being reviewed  MIS will be operational in 19 municipalities  (c1) M&E report on NAPPWD / NAPCH implementation  To support the regular (annual) monitoring of Child Rights Agenda a DCM is approved on 26.10.2018  (c2) interventions for PWDs implemented: (1) Improved access to information for blind students and community; (2) Blind Institute functioning as resource Centre; (3) One new social care service established and capacity building for 27 professional staff in 5 centres and 4 new social care services under rehabilitation; (4) National stakeholders supported to identify gaps/ challenges in area of accessibility for PWDs; (5) Coordination of MHSP and NAIC to improve the accessibility of the ministry website for PWDs; (6) Promotion of community-based social services for PWDs; (7) capacity building for disability Focal Point at central & local level  (d) Rated 3 in 2018  (e) 1 new law on Social Housing adopted  3 DCM on housing approved and 8 DCM drafted | Initiated/ ongoing  MESY budgeted 50 million ALL for academic year 2019-2020 for supporting out of school children  (a) 6 DCM for social care services law (including social fund)  A financial framework designed for SE “On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subventions”.  Youth Law approved  Youth Action Plan 2015-2020 review in process  Technical work on Action Plan on Elderly drafted & consultations ongoing  (b) Social Protection Strategy reviewed and expanded to 2023  200 municipal staff trained on MIS in 19 municipalities  (c1) M&E report on NAPPWD and NAPCH implementation  To support the regular (annual) monitoring of Child Rights Agenda a DCM is approved on 26.10.2018  DCM of the disability law on personal assistance approved in Dec. 2019  (c2) interventions for PWDs implemented: (1) Improved access to information for blind students and community; (2) Blind Institute functioning as resource Centre; (3) CB for public service providers at municipality level; (4) M&E of the NAPPWD conducted; (5) A new model of service for independent living for PWDs over 21 years old designed and piloted; (6) Six new models of community-based services for PWDs designed and being implemented; (7) Accessibility promoted; (8) Participation of PWDs promoted through awareness raising; (9) CB of DPOs conducted; (10) National stakeholders supported to identify gaps and challenges in the area of accessibility for PWDs; (11) Coordination of MHSP and NAIC to improve the accessibility of the ministry website for PWDs; (12) 6. CB for disability Focal Point at central and local level  (d) Rated 3 in 2018 and 3.66 in 2019  (e) 1 new law on Social Housing adopted  10 DCM on housing approved and 9 DCM drafted/ consulted | Reasonable progress achieved.  But, progress on monitoring the SIPD indicators is not yet achieved, and the SIIG is not established.  But, progress of LGUs in populating the MIS module on social services is slow to be achieved. |
| Evolution of the funds for social services, including for Roma and PWDs, made available at national level | Per cent of funds committed for VGs (including R&E, PWDs) from central government budget: 0.34% in 2016, 0.24% in 2017 | Annual increase of central government’s budget for social services by 2% | Baseline established by budget survey June 2018 | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | A follow-up Review of Budget Spending is planned to be undertaken via LNB in 2020. |
| Per cent of funds committed for VGs (including R&E, PWDs) by targeted municipalities: 2.9% in 2017 | Annual increase of targeted municipalities budget for social services by 4% | Baseline established by budget survey June 2018 | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | As above |
| Establishment of state funding mechanism for social enterprises development | Lack of state funding mechanism for social enterprises development in 2016; draft by-law on financial framework for the operationalization of social enterprises in process | State funding mechanism established and operational | Initiated/ ongoing  By-law “On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subsidies”  Dedicated budget item to support social enterprises subsidy foreseen in the MHSP MTBP 2019-2021 - *MTBP preparation and approval cycle ends in June* | Initiated/ ongoing  DCM “On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subsidies”  Social Enterprises Fund has been created in the value of 249,760,000 ALL for the timeframe 2019-2021 | Initiated/ ongoing  DCM “On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subsidies”  The fund for Social Enterprises has been created in the value of 249,760,000 ALL for the timeframe 2019-2021 | Good progress achieved to establish the Fund, but there was unfortunately no call for proposals launched in 2019.  It is anticipated to be operational in 2020, after further progress is achieved by the government in the promotion of the social enterprise model and in the process for businesses to obtain social enterprise status. |

## **Outputs**

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| **Outcome 1: The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion** |

| **Output 1.1** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are empowered to request social inclusion | Extent/ level of participation of vulnerable population in the consultation process of planning and budgeting of social services | Low level of participation of VGs in consultation processes of planning and budgeting of social services: 5-7% of participants represent VGs in targeted LGUS (2017)  10% of youth from VGs represented in consultation meetings | Increased level of participation of VGs in consultation processes of planning and budgeting of social services in targeted LGUS: 20% of participants represent VGs | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  2577 persons (50% women) involved in public budget for GRB consultations in 3 municipalities  52 (50% women) representatives of VGs are involved in planning and budgeting for SCP in 11 municipalities  72 participants (of whom 28 LGU officials from 21 municipalities) involved on consultation process for the implementation of the Law on Social Housing | Initiated/ ongoing  2577 persons (50% women) involved in public budget for GRB consultations in 3 municipalities  128 (50% women) representatives of VGs are involved in planning and budgeting for SCP in 21 municipalities  212 staff from 45 municipalities involved on consultation process for the implementation of the Law on Social Housing | Very good progress is apparently achieved.  But the progress data does not report on the share of participants representing VGs as a percent of the total number of participants. |
| Extent of issues/ needs raised by vulnerable population and addressed in planning and budgeting of social services in pilot municipalities | Number of issues/ concerns/ recommendations raised by VGs in annual planning/ budgeting (at targeted LGUs): 17 issues raised in annual planning and 3 issues addressed in budgeting  4 issues supported (pre-school programmes for Roma, social care planning, youth and SRH) | At least 10% of issues/concerns addressed in annual planning and budgeting | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  8 issues raised and addressed during social care planning/ budgeting by VGs  8 issues raised during planning/ budgeting for GRB by VGs, in 3 municipalities  7 issues raised for PWDs and 4 addressed for individuals/ or community  10 issues raised for youth (including R&E) in 3 municipalities | Initiated/ ongoing  50 issues raised and addressed during social care planning/budgeting by VGs  8 issues raised during planning/ budgeting for GRB by VGs, in 3 municipalities  7 issues raised for PWDs and 4 addressed for individuals/ or community  10 issues raised for youth (including R&E) in 3 municipalities | See the comment above linked to Outcome 1, the fifth indicator.  The progress status data is incomplete (and the baseline) when compared to the data required as per the target.  It is also judged by the evaluator that the target of 10% is extremely unambitious. |

| **Output 1.2** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are supported in their access to specific services | Number of cases of requests by Roma and Egyptians and their organisations for improved service provision | Number of cases of requests by R&E and their CSOs submitted in 2017 at country level and targeted LGUs.: 0 cases | Annual increase by 10% of number of cases of requests submitted by R&E and their CSOs at country level and targeted LGUs | Initiated/ ongoing  77 requests for improving service provision submitted by 77 R&E families for ISS in 3 LGUS (19 requests for NE; 5 for civil registration; 17 for VET courses; 33 for employment; 1 for social housing; 2 for health services) | Initiated/ ongoing  224 requests for improving service provision submitted by R&E families for SS in 3 LGUs (42 requests for NE; 15 requests for civil registration; 35 requests for VET courses; 77 requests for employment; 16 requests for social housing; 55 for health services)  10 adult PWDs supported with services to conduct independent living  At least 4 Roma organizations have contributed to improved service provision trough the LSDG groups | Initiated/ ongoing  224 requests for improving service provision submitted by R&E families for SS in 3 LGUS  At least 4 Roma organizations have contributed to improved service provision trough the LSDG groups | Very good progress is achieved. |
| At least 7 grant fund projects, a majority of them for Roma and PWDs, are realised every year starting in 2018 | Lack of projects addressing specific services for R&E and PWDs | At least 20 projects are funded and implemented realised by 2020 | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  18 project proposals for R&E & PWDs are under consideration | Initiated/ ongoing  7 project for SS for R&E and PWDs under implementation | 8 projects were selected in the 1st Call for Proposals via LNB (7 are now underway, 1 to start). A further CfP to be launched via LNB in 2020. |
| At least 8 social services facilities are rehabilitated for providing new quality services | Existing number of rehabilitated social services facilities for providing quality services: 5 (2017) | At least 13 social services facilities are rehabilitated and operational for providing quality services in 2020 | Initiated/ ongoing  4 social services facilities identified for rehabilitation in 4 LGUs. One is being rehabilitated | Initiated/ ongoing  4 social services facilities rehabilitated and 1 under rehabilitation in 4 LGUs | Initiated/ ongoing  4 social services facilities rehabilitated and 3 under rehabilitation | The progress to date linked to this output indicator has slowed, but the goal to rehabilitate 8 is achievable. |

| **Output 1.3** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The capacity of groups of Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable | Policy dialogue mechanisms and monitoring mechanisms with participation of CSOs, community members in place and functional | Existing number of policy dialogue mechanisms established and operational in LGUs:  Policy dialogue on disability established in 4 LGUs in 2017  Policy dialogue on health established in two LGUs (Durres and Shijak)  Policy dialogue on education established in 7 LGUs (Lezha. Rroskovec, Fushekruja, Shkodra, Vlora, Elbasan, Berat)  Policy dialogue on youth (youth voice network) established at national level & in 3 LGUs (Shkodra, Vlora, Cerrik)  Two public education Forums on participatory budgeting and GRB established in 5 LGUs (Tirana, Berat, Fier, Vlora, Saranda) | Policy dialogue and monitoring mechanisms established and functional in at least 10 LGUs in 2020 | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  30 public hearing sessions informed on GRB in 3 LGUs  Policy dialogue on youth in 3 LGUs  Policy dialogue on SCP in 11 LGUs  LSDG operational in 6 LGUs  Policy dialogue on youth (youth voice network) in 9 municipalities (Dibër, Pogradec, Durrës, Përmet, Korçë, Lezhë, Fier, Tiranë, Maliq)  Local partnership mechanisms for health set up in 4 LGUs (Kukës, Fier, Lezhë, Permet)  4 policy dialogues on out of school children held (in Shkodra, Lezha, Korca, Durres) | Initiated/ ongoing  30 public hearing sessions informed on GRB in 3 LGUs  Policy dialogue on youth in 3 LGUs  Policy dialogue on SCP in 21 LGUs  LSDG operational in 6 LGUs  Policy dialogue on youth (youth voice network) in 11 municipalities  Local partnership mechanisms for health set up in 9 LGUs (Kukës, Lezhë, Fier, Permet, Puke, Malesi e Madhe, Elbasan, Berat, Korce)  Four policy dialogues on out of school children held (Shkodra, Lezha, Korca and Durres) | The baseline data indicates that the target was already achieved in terms of the number of LGUs utilising some form of policy dialogue and monitoring mechanisms.  It is also judged by the evaluator that the target of only 10 additional LGUs to operate such mechanisms by 2020 is extremely unambitious. |

| **Output 1.4** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including Roma and persons with disabilities, participate in the monitoring of the implementation of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion | Number of vulnerable group representatives trained in monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies | Lack of trained VGs representatives in monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies: 0 | At least 100 VGs members (at least 30 women) trained in monitoring | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  65 (72% F) representatives of municipalities trained on how to apply/ monitor the distribution of social care service  60 (50% F) youth activists trained on how to monitor youth policy implementation  76 children (48 boys and 28 girls) up to 18 years old trained on the monitoring of the NAPCH  90 (50% F) PWDs trained on monitoring legislation of PWDs  LSDG members (12 are representatives of VGs) are trained in services mapping and monitoring of social care plans | Initiated/ ongoing  65 (72% F) representatives of municipalities trained on how to monitor distribution of social care services  60 (50% F) youth activists trained on how to monitor youth policy implementation  76 children (48 boys and 28 girls) up to 18 years old trained on the monitoring of the NAPCH  90 (50 % F) PWDs trained on monitoring legislation of PWDs  LSDG members (12 are representatives of VGs) are trained in services mapping and monitoring of social care plans | Very good progress is achieved. |
| Number of occasions in which representatives of the target groups participate in the monitoring of national policies | Low number of reported occasions in which VGs representatives have participated in monitoring of national policies: 6 occasions 2017 | Increased number of reported occasions in which VGs representatives have participated in monitoring of national policies: 8 in 2020 | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  8 occasions for SHR monitoring groups in 3 municipalities: Fier, Durres, Permet  1 occasion for NAAPWD (2016-2020) monitoring and mid-term evaluation in 4 municipalities (Shkoder, Vlore, Tirana, Korce)  3 consultations for Social Protection Action plan 2019-2023 | Initiated/ ongoing  8 occasions for SHR monitoring groups in 3 municipalities: Durres, Permet, Fier  1 occasion for NAAPWD (2016-2020) monitoring and mid-term evaluation in 4 municipalities (Shkoder, Vlore, Tirana, Korce)  3 consultations for Social Protection Action plan 2019 – 2023 | Good progress is apparently achieved. |
| Number of (approved) recommendations made by representatives of the target groups taking part and involved in monitoring/making decisions (by disaggregated data | Low number of (approved) recommendations made by representatives of the target groups taking part and involved in monitoring/ making decisions (by disaggregated data) in 2016/2017  5 recommendations approved (3 for Roma pre-school programme, and two on youth friendly services and SRH) | Increased number of (approved) recommendations made by representatives of the target groups taking part and involved in monitoring/ making decisions (by disaggregated data): 10% in 2020 | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  6 issues for SHR: (1) Adolescent health & sexuality, HIV/AIDS; (2) Peer Education; (3) Adolescent development; (4) Budgeting for and with Young People; (5) Advocacy on ICPD/SRH; (6) recommendation related to 8 action areas included in the government evaluation report of the NAAPPWD  1 approved recommendation re. budgeting for OOSC (Durres)  Recommendations of LSDG have all been taken into considerations | Initiated/ ongoing  6 issues for SHR: (1) Adolescent health & sexuality, HIV/AIDS; (2) Peer Education; (3) Adolescent development; (4) Budgeting for and with Young People; (5) Advocacy on ICPD/SRH; (6) recommendation related to 8 action areas included in the government evaluation report of the NAAPPWD  1 approved recommendation re. budgeting for OOSC (Durres)  Recommendations of LSDG have all been taken into considerations | See the comment above linked to Outcome 1, the fifth indicator, and Output 1.1. |

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| **Outcome 2: Municipalities effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion** |

| **Output 2.1** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion | Number of social service providers (public and non-public) participating in training, conferences, etc. | Low number of social service providers (public and non-public) participating in training, conferences.  It is estimated that around 4,000 staff of public social service providers are trained in social inclusion, social protection, health, education | 150 representatives (at least 30% women) of all 61 Albanian municipalities trained | Initiated/ ongoing  29 (90% women) professional public social service providers capacitated  Strengthening of LGUs capacities to operationalize their functions related to SRH, Education, Gender and Social Protection and Inclusion, started in 3 LGUs (Fier, Permet, Durres) | Initiated/ ongoing  51 (90% women) professional public social service providers capacitated  399 (75% F) municipal staff trained on the new legislation on social care services  250 municipal staff trained on how to use the set of tools that supports the NARUs  200 municipal staff trained on MIS  CB of 800 (77% F) education staff trained  208 service providers for SHR | Initiated/ ongoing  51 (90% women) professional public social service providers capacitated  491 (75% F) municipal staff trained on the new legislation on social care services  250 municipal staff trained on how to use the set of tools that supports the NARUs  200 municipal staff trained on MIS  CB of 800 (77% F) education staff trained  208 service providers for SHR | Very good progress is apparently achieved. |
| Number of service providers (public and non-public) supported in their organisational development | Low number of the service providers (public and non-public) supported in their organisational development.  11 LGUs (510 staff) supported in organizational development  25 CSOs supported in organizational development | The service providers of 20 Albanian municipalities supported in their organisational development | Initiated/ ongoing  One public service provider supported in its organizational development (municipality of Shijak)  Elaboration of Social Care Plan in 8 LGUs initiated | Initiated/ ongoing  One public service provider supported in its organizational development (municipality of Shijak)  11 LGUs supported on their organizational for Social Services  18 LGU staff & 40 CSO for SHR | Initiated/ ongoing  One public service provider supported in its organizational development (municipality of Shijak)  11 LGUs supported on their organizational for Social Services  18 LGU staff & 40 CSO for SHR  13 DPOs (30 participants) in better playing their advocacy and lobbying role | Very good progress is achieved. |
| Number of operational mechanisms for cooperation between LGU and target groups in the field of social services | Existing number of operational mechanisms for cooperation between LGU and target groups in the field of social services: in 2016/2017: 5  Four local partnership mechanisms on health set up in 4 LGUs  One participatory budgeting in 1 LGU (Tirana) | At least 10 municipalities have established functional mechanisms for cooperation between LGU and target groups in the field of social services | Initiated  Participatory budget procedures that ensure cooperation between LGU and citizens drafted | Initiated/ ongoing  5 municipalities have established functional mechanisms for planning and budgeting for SS  6 functional mechanisms for planning and budgeting for SS – LSDG  Functioning of mechanism in 16 LGUs for the elaboration SCP  8 functional mechanisms for SHR | Initiated/ ongoing  5 municipalities have established functional mechanisms for planning and budgeting for SS  6 functional mechanisms for planning e budgeting for SS – LSDG.  Functioning of mechanism in 21 LGUs or the elaboration SCP  8 functional mechanisms for SHR | Very good progress is achieved. |
| Number of relevant organisations supported by LGUs to provide adequate social services at local level for R, E, PWDs | Existing number of organizations supported by LGUs to provide adequate SS at local level for R, E and PWDs: No baseline data can be collected. No data available for this baseline, however, there are a number of organisations that are supported by LGUs to provide social services | Increased number of organizations supported by LGUs to provide adequate SS at local level for R, E and PWDs: xxxx in 2020 | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | *No information provided* | No baseline data is apparently available for this indicator, and its target is thus also not established. |

| **Output 2.2** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up | Number of good practices divulgated annually | Existing no of good practices disseminated: 3 in 2016 | At least 10 good practices are disseminated every year | Initiated/ ongoing  3 good practices divulgated (related to social services for children with disabilities) | Initiated/ ongoing  4 good practices divulgated (related to social services for children with disabilities) | Initiated/ ongoing  5 good practices divulgated (related to social services for children with disabilities) | The progress to date linked to this output indicator is moderately unsatisfactory.  Nevertheless, a process to document good practices is underway, and is indicatively to be completed in early spring 2020. For this, 4 information session were organized in four locations with participation of 112 representatives of public and non-public social service providers from 24 municipalities. |
| Number of addressees of the divulgated good practices | Existing number of addressees of the divulgated practices: 5 (PWDs community centres) in 2017 | All Albanian social services (public and non-public) reached out | Initiated/ ongoing  5 community centres in 5 LGUs benefited in 2018 | Initiated/ ongoing  5 community centres in 5 LGUs | Initiated/ ongoing  7 community centres in 7 LGUs | As above.  The progress to date linked to this output indicator is moderately unsatisfactory. |
| Change of practice in service provision | Existing number of good practices in service provision that are applied/ scaled up: 4 in 2017 in 2 LGUs (disability) | 50% of the practices divulgated result in scaling-up, in changes of service provision in at least 10 Albanian municipalities | Initiated/ ongoing  One good practice related to Integrated Social Services (for R&E) initiated in 3 LGUs | Initiated/ ongoing  One good practice related to Integrated Social Services (for R&E) initiated in 3 LGUs | Initiated/ ongoing  One good practice related to Integrated Social Services (for R&E) initiated in 3 LGUs | As above.  The progress to date linked to this output indicator is moderately unsatisfactory. |
| Number of exchange activities (study tours, intra-municipal showcase exchange visits) and/or best practices forums organised though project support | 0 in 2017 | At least four exchange activities (study tours, intra-municipal showcase exchange visits) and/or best practices forums organised though project support | Initiated/ ongoing  2 exchange visits re. to community services (children with disabilities) organized (4 community in 4 LGUs centres participated) | Initiated/ ongoing  3 exchange visits re. to community services (children with disabilities) organized (5 community centres in 5 LGUs involved)  1 learning study visit was held in Lucerne related to SS for children and families (with 15 representatives from 8 municipalities) | Initiated/ ongoing  3 exchange visits re. community services for children with disabilities organized. (5 community centres in 5 LGUs involved)  1 learning studies visit held in Switzerland related to SS for children and families/30  1 exchange visit related to integrated social services (three municipalities Kruja, Lezha and Fieri, 30 municipal staff participated)  representatives from 8 municipalities | Good progress is achieved. |

| **Output 2.3** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A grant scheme is set up for municipalities to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation | The mechanisms of the grant scheme are in place (grant assessment guidelines and evaluation commission) | No grant scheme mechanism available in 2017 | Grant mechanism established and operational; Grant assessment guidelines and evaluation commission available in end of 2017 | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  Grant guidelines are in place | Initiated/ ongoing  Grant guidelines are in place | Grant scheme for innovative social services was established and operational in 2019. |
| Number of calls for submitting proposals are realised in a transparent manner | 0 in 2017 | At least two public calls issued until 2020 | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  One public call issued and 120 trained on writing proposals in partnership with ASPA | Initiated/ ongoing  One public call issued, and 120 municipal staff trained on writing proposals in partnership with ASPA  16 municipal staff trained on project management and financial reporting (from 8 wining municipalities) | A second Call for Proposals under the grant scheme is to be launched by LNB in 2020. |
| Number of proposals approved and implemented | 0 in 2017 | At least 20 proposals approved and implemented by LNB grant scheme until 2020 | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  18 proposals submitted - Approval process ongoing | Initiated/ ongoing  8 proposals approved and first tranche disbursed | As of end of 2019: 8 proposals approved; for 7 first tranche disbursed.  Potential risk that the number of awarded projects may be below 20. |

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| **Outcome 3: National institutions implement their social inclusion policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, developed capacities and empowered target groups** |

| **Output 3.1** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and other competent Ministries are supported in their implementation of policies and strategies and legal framework relevant for social inclusion and in plans for funding and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data | Number of service providers (state institutions) supported on policy and law implementation | Five (5) service providers (state institutions) supported on policy and law implementation in 2016 | Fourteen (14) service providers (state institutions) to be supported on policy and law implementation | Initiated/ ongoing  5 state institutions supported:  1. Blind Student Institute (CB + technology)  2. MHSP (to implement NAPPWD 2016-2020; bylaws for the law on Social Care Services and bylaw on SE  3. MFE (to implement housing policy)  4. Council of Ministers supported (in drafting a Decree for Result Indicators that will facilitate the monitoring and reporting of the Children Agenda till 2020 by MHSP)  5. INSTAT capacitated (to upgrade technology for data collection to perform SILC and supported to enrich the child-focused indicators and data collection on vulnerable youth and elderly) | Initiated/ ongoing  9 state institutions supported:  1. Blind Student Institute (CB + technology)  2. MHSP (to implement NAPPWD 2016-2020; bylaws for the law on Social Care Services, Social Fund modalities and bylaw on SE)  3. MFE supported to draft 8 DCM on housing policy (3 of them approved)  4. Council of Ministers supported (in drafting a Decree for Result Indicators that will facilitate the monitoring and reporting of the Children Agenda till 2020 by MHSP)  5. INSTAT capacitated (to upgrade technology for data collection to perform SILC, enrich the child-focused indicators, and data collection on vulnerable youth and elderly and include data collection on disabilities, R&E and gender biased sex selection in the methodology of Population and Housing Census 2020)  6. MEYS supported (to review Law on Pre-University Education with regard to inclusive education, Law on Accessibility to Schools and public consultation of Law on Youth and to review the Youth Action Plan 2015-2020)  7. Institute of Public Health and Directorates of Public Health supported (with inclusive programs to prevent HIV&AIDS)  8. SSS supported (on data analysis for needs assessment of SS)  9. MI, MESY, MHSP signed a new agreement on OOSC | Initiated/ ongoing  10 state institutions supported:  1. Blind Student Institute (CB + technology)  2. MHSP (to implement NAPPWD 2016-2020; bylaws for the law on Social Care Services, Social Fund modalities and bylaw on SE; Social Protection Strategy; one bylaw of Law 93/2014 on Inclusion of and Accessibility for PWDs approved  3. MFE supported to draft 19 DCM on housing policy (10 of them approved)  4 CoM supported in drafting a Decree for Result Indicators that will facilitate the monitoring and reporting of the Children Agenda till 2020 by MHSP  5. INSTAT capacitated to upgrade technology for data collection to perform SILC, enrich the child-focused indicators, and data collection on vulnerable youth and elderly and include data collection on disabilities, R&E and gender biased sex selection in the methodology of Population and Housing Census 2020  6. MEYS supported to review Law on Pre-University Education with regard to inclusive education; Youth Law approved, and the review of Youth Action Plan 2015-2020 in process; Midterm monitoring report for NCHRA till 2020 approved  7. Institute of Public Health and Directorates of Public Health supported with inclusive programs to prevent HIV&AIDS  8. SSS supported on data analysis for needs assessment of SS  9. MI, MESY, MHSP signed a new agreement on OOSC  10. ASPA (Albania School of Public Administration) CB of municipal staff involved in social services and disability issues. | Good progress is achieved. |
| Evolution of the quality of management of social inclusion and social services. Progress in implementation of SI demonstrated in the Annual reports on SI 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 | No Annual Report on SI available | Progress in Improved quality of management of SI and SS provision | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing  MIS on Social Services is operational | Initiated/ ongoing  MIS on Social Services is not operational | MIS on Social Services is not yet operational.  Progress on monitoring the SIPD indicators is not yet achieved.  It is understood that these constraints will be addressed by partners in 2020. |
| Standardized data collection system on monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies established and operational | Lack of standardized data collection system on monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies (SIIG) | Standardized data collection system on monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies implemented | Initiated/ ongoing  CB and technology provided to INSTAT for SILC | Initiated/ ongoing  CB and technology provided to INSTAT for SILC | Initiated/ ongoing  CB and technology provided to INSTAT for SILC | In progress. |
| Number of civil servants trained in monitoring and data collection on social inclusion policies in partnership with ASPA and other partner training institutions | 0 in 2017  No child related indicators identified in the national statistics plan | At least 150 civil (at least 30% women) servants trained | Initiated/ ongoing  Child focused indicators module drafted | Initiated/ ongoing  Child focused indicators module drafted  180 health personnel trained in 4 four regions on holistic care of children focusing on the most vulnerable  81 (82% F) civil servant, disability focal point trained in partnership with ASPA  MI, MESY, MHSP signed a new agreement on OOSC | Initiated/ ongoing  Child focused indicators module drafted  180 health personnel trained in 4 four regions on holistic care of children focusing on the most vulnerable  81 (82% F) civil servants, disability focal point trained in partnership with ASPA  MI, MESY, MHSP signed a new agreement on OOSC | Very good progress is achieved. |

| **Output 3.2** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Progress Status 31/05/2018** | **Progress Status 31/05/2019** | **Progress Status 31/12/2019** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The establishment of state funding mechanisms that support the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported | Number of LGUs that fund services through Social Fund | 0 in 2017 | At least 10 LGUs fund services/ projects through Social Fund | *No information provided* | Initiated/ ongoing | Initiated/ ongoing  14 LGUs supported by government and 7 LGUs supported by LNB (21 in total) | Good progress is achieved. |
| Social Enterprise funding mechanism developed | Draft by-law on financial mechanism for SE in process | Social Enterprise funding mechanism operational and accessible | Initiated/ ongoing  By-law “On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subsidies is pending approval  A dedicated budget item to support SE subsidy in MHSP MTBP 2019-2021 | Initiated/ ongoing  3 regulatory acts for SE endorsed  The fund for Social Enterprises has been created | Initiated/ ongoing  6 regulatory acts for SE endorsed  The fund for Social Enterprises has been created  Registration of social enterprises has initiated | Good progress achieved to establish the Fund, but there was unfortunately no call for proposals launched in 2019.  It is anticipated to be operational in 2020. |

# **Annex 7: Rating scale definitions**

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| **Highly Satisfactory (HS)** | Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major objectives, and yield substantial benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”. |
| **Satisfactory (S)** | Project is expected to achieve most of its major objectives, and yield satisfactory benefits, with only minor shortcomings. |
| **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** | Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance or Project is expected not to achieve some of its major objectives or yield some of the expected benefits. |
| **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)** | Project is expected to achieve its major objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major objectives. |
| **Unsatisfactory (U)** | Project is expected not to achieve most of its major objectives or to yield any satisfactory benefits. |
| **Highly Unsatisfactory (U)** | The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major objectives with no worthwhile benefits. |

# **Annex 8: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Agreement Form**

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| **UNEG Code of Conduct Agreement Form**  **Evaluators:**  1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.  2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.  3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and: respect people’s right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people’s right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.  4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.  5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders’ dignity and self-worth.  6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/ or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.  7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation. |
| **Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form**  Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System  Name of Consultant: **Shawn Webb** (MTR International Consultant)  I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.  Signature [Provided in separate scan attachment file to the UNDP]  Date: 24/12/2019 |

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| **UNEG Code of Conduct Agreement Form**  **Evaluators:**  1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.  2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.  3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and: respect people’s right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people’s right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.  4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.  5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders’ dignity and self-worth.  6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/ or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.  7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation. |
| **Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form**  Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System  Name of Consultant: **Blerjana Bino** (MTR National Consultant)  I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.  Signature [Provided in separate scan attachment file to the UNDP]  Date: 13/01/2020 |

# **Annex 9: Terms of Reference**

**Background**

Albania has made important steps towards establishing a democratic state, functioning market economy, maintaining a stable economic growth, promoting social inclusion, and achieving human development. During the last years the Government of Albania (GoA) has built the legal framework of social protection system with the vision of providing integrated social services capable to ensure the inclusion of all vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, the government structures at central and local level quite often fail to implement social policies and programmes and address adequately the needs of marginalized groups, particularly Roma and Egyptian communities and persons with disabilities, due to limited resources and capacities. Therefore, in order to ensure an effective response, it is critical to mobilize government, empower civil society and people in local communities to act in unison to fulfil national and international obligations and to have a voice in public decision making affecting their lives.

In line with current challenges Albania needs to address, and the Outcome 2 of the UN’s Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) with the GoA, the UN is engaged in implementing the Leave No One Behind Joint Programme.

The Leave No One Behind (LNB) Programme builds upon the vast experience of the UN in addressing social inclusion and the needs of the vulnerable groups. LNB supports the implementation of the newly shaped vision of the social sector in Albania, in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the country’s aspirations towards European Union (EU) integration. The LNB avails of technical expertise and know-how of UN agencies aiming at allowing for greater impact and outreach by focusing on the municipal level and its linkage to the national level.

The programme’s goal – *system change for the improvement of social services and the participation of persons in need in public decision-making* – supports the vision of an overall inclusive Albania. The programme assumes that the improvement of the social services supports social inclusion.

The joint programme will also support Albania’s progress in view of achieving SDGs - being directly related to social protection/inclusion - especially SDGs 1-5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, 10 (reduced inequalities), and 11 (sustainable cities and communities).

In order to achieve the goal, the programme focuses on three outcomes:

Outcome 1: The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion and hold them accountable.

Outcome 2: Municipalities effectively manage the provision of social services and promote social inclusion.

Outcome 3: National institutions implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system developed capacities and empowered target groups.

The programme’s target groups who will indirectly and directly benefit from improved social services, are the marginalized populations of Albania, with persons with disabilities often being the most vulnerable, along with Roma and Egyptians as well as children and women. The improvement of their social inclusion will be supported by interventions at macro level (central government authorities and national services), at meso level (municipalities and civil society organizations), and at micro level, actively involving the project’s target groups into the project’s implementation. The project will cover all of Albania by improving social service provision across all 61 municipalities, however specific geographic focus will be maintained by reacting to specific needs and challenges in selected municipalities.

The LNB programme is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and is implemented through the modalities of the Delivering as One (DaO) mechanism, under the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, with the joint participation of UN agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA, and in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies at the central and local levels.  UNDP is the lead UN agency for the overall implementation and coordination of the LNB Programme.

**Midterm Review Objectives and Approach**

This assignment relates to the Midterm Review of the LNB programme. The objective of the Midterm Review is to assess and present results including an assessment of how results have contributed to social services improvement, conclusions, and recommendations. In addition, it will assess lessons learnt and 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 progress, 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. In a forward looking way the review will also identify priority areas and strategic interventions that should feed in the formulation of a second four-year phase for LNB programme.

The purpose is backward and forward-looking: performance assessment of the LNB joint programme during the first two year of implementation as the basis for updating the theory of change (as relevant), including the planned approaches for the rest of programme implementation and strategic positioning for longer term support in this area. The knowledge generated by the evaluation should contribute to improve LNB programme performance as well as support UN system policy steering and support to national priorities. The mid-term review findings will feed in the Evaluation of the Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2017-2021 to be conducted during the first quarter of 2020.

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 LNB 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 LNB Programme team, government counterparts (Ministry of Health and Social Protection), the UN agencies, 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 the below criteria of OEDC/DAC guidelines:

* **Relevance** –will assess to what extent the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of the intended beneficiaries, country needs and partners’ and donors’ policies.
* **Effectiveness** – will assess to what extent results at various levels, including outcomes, have been achieved based on planned activities.
* **Efficiency** – will assess how well and productively the programme has utilized his resources to reach the predefined goals.
* **Sustainability** – will assess preliminary indications of the degree to which the programme results are likely to be sustainable beyond the programme’s lifetime (both at the community and government level) and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability.

Impact assessment will not be able to be conducted at this stage of programme implementation, but the review will present changes that can be attributed at this stage to programme intervention.

More specifically, for each of these criteria, the Midterm Review Report should provide conclusions, lessons learnt, and recommendations questions outlined below.

**Programme relevance**

* To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?
* Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
* Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
* How relevant is the programme to target groups’, including central and local governments’, needs and priorities?
* How relevant is the programme to other key stakeholders’ (executing agencies, partner organizations, including other UN agencies, NGOs etc.) needs and priorities?
* To what extent is the programme aligned with the policies and strategies of the country, UN agencies participating in the programme and donors?
* To what extent is the programme contributing to country system development? To what extent has LNB contribution been relevant in the context of SDGs with special focus on the principle Leave no one Behind?

**Programme effectiveness**

* Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-programme targets. To what extent have the expected outputs, outcomes and goal been achieved or are likely to be achieved?
* What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes/expected results/outputs?
* Identify remaining barriers to achieving the programme objective during the remaining implementation timeframe.
* Did the programme contribute to capacity building and organisational development as planned?
* To what extent and in what ways the cross-cutting issues of LNB programme – good governance and gender equality - are applied/promoted?
* To what extent have UN agencies coordinated effectively and created synergies in the delivery of assistance?
* Is the current coordination set up producing the intended results?
* 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?
* To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

**Programme efficiency**

* Are the available technical and financial resources adequate to fulfil the programme framework?
* Is the programme implemented in the most efficient way, making best use of available human, technical, technological, financial and knowledge inputs to achieve its desired results? Have there been any unforeseen problems? How well are they resolved?
* Following up on risk management, how the risk is assessed? and how the risk is managed? In relation to the upcoming EU IPA funding, how the synergies will be ensured?

**Sustainability**

* Are the approaches and methods used likely to ensure a continued benefit after the end of the programme?
* What are the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme?
* Are all key stakeholders sufficiently and effectively involved? Are their expectations met and are they satisfied with their level of participation? 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?
* 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?
* Based on lessons learned what specific recommendations could be given to each key partner under the joint programme that would contribute to the sustainability of the intervention?
* What needs to be done and/or improved to ensure sustainability?
* What type of interventions would need further programme assistance beyond the agreed timeframe?
* What is the programme relation to the Social Fund established by the government?
* Is LNB contributing to establish the right system to support sustainable capacity building? Is LBN ensuring no substitution effect?

**The midterm review report should also cover:**

**LNB contribution to SDGs** – assess whether the programme’s goal and outcomes and progress done so far are contributing to SDGs progress.

**LNB cross-cutting issues** – assess whether the cross-cutting issues related to human rights, governance and gender equality, are addressed/promoted as an articulation of human rights principles.

Having this said, mid-term review report should assess the extent to which LNB initiatives have considered addressing gender equality issues in the design, implementation and outcome of the initiative and if both women and men can equally access the programme’s benefits to the degree they were intended through gender analysis process. A keen focus should be given to aspects covered by LNB interventions that have taken into close considerations the specific needs of women and girls. Furthermore, the mid-term review report should also address the extent to which LNB programme has advocated for the principles of equality and inclusive development and has contributed to empowering and addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations in the Albanian society.

**LNB communication and visibility** – assess and review whether the communications and visibility guidelines and actions undertaken by UN agencies and implementing partners provide insights into the implementation of the programme activities.

**Expected Outputs and Deliverables:**

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| **No.** | **Deliverable** | **Description** | **Timing** |
| 1. | Inception report that includes the evaluation matrix | 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 |
| 2. | Debriefing meeting | Presentation of key findings | End of the Midterm Review mission |
| 3. | Draft Report | Full report | Within 4 weeks from the Midterm Review mission |
| 4. | Consultation on the draft report | UNDP in cooperation with other UN agencies and SDC organize a consultation process on the draft report and provide the MTR team with a consolidated feedback. | Within 4 weeks from the submission of the draft report |
| 5. | 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 |

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

1. INSTAT: “Income and Living Conditions in Albania, 2017-2018” press release/ note (16 December 2019) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Government of Albania: “Albania - Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals” (June 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Municipalities for Europe (EU-funded project): “Municipalities in the EU integration process of Albania” (2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. IMF: Government Finance Statistics (GFS), Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The overall goal of the specific EU programme is: “To expand coverage, inclusiveness and effectiveness of social care services, pre-university education and employment opportunities for youth and adults in Albania, including populations at risk of exclusion”. The outcome goal of the programme in the area of social protection is: “To improve accessibility and quality of integrated social care services at the local level” with a special focus on youth, women, Roma, PWDs and long-term unemployed. The social protection outputs of the programme are: (1) A functional integrated system of social and community care services at local level is established; (2) Financial and regulatory framework for modern social care practice and standards established; (3) Improved child well-being in schools [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Of which, EUR 9.3 million is via Direct Management of the EU Delegation to Albania (linked to the whole programme), and EUR 2.0 million via Indirect Management with Albania (linked to training, supplies and works specifically to enhance inclusive quality learning and promote educational attainment in pre-university education) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For example: Performance indicator number 1 for the EU budget support relates to the MIS of Social Care Services, that it is established and operational, and that 18 municipalities have entered records for 80% of the cases, including stock, based on the method of calculation with data for 2020 (to be assessed in the 2Q/2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For example: the UN efforts to promote a coherent approach and planning process for the development of local Social Care Plans could be consumed within the goal of a wider EU process to prepare local socio-economic plans [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. An EU/EC procurement “Service Prior Information Notice” (EuropeAid/140619/DH/SER/AL) was published on 30/12/2019 for TA to support implementation of the reform programme, with an indicative budget of EUR 7.0 million [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Indicatively three grant scheme lots via the Direct Management of the EU/EC, relating to: (1) Service delivery (social protection/ inclusion, employment, and/or education services) at the local level, with an EU grant of approx. EUR 100-300,000 per project, for approx. 25-35 projects to be selected via min. two Calls for Proposals; (2) R&E inclusion (education and employment) at the local level, potentially as a single EU grant of approx. EUR 2.0 million to an international organisation / national state institute; (3) Inter-municipal cooperation, with an EU grant of approx. EUR 100-150,000 per project, for approx. 10 projects to be selected via min. two Calls for Proposals [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere:** 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere; 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions; 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable; 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services…

    **Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture:** 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round; 2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including… stunting and wasting in children… the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

    **Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages:** 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality… and under-5 mortality…

    **Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all:** 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes; 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

    **Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls:** 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights…

    **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries:** 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status; 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices…; 10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

    **Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable:** 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums; 11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

    **Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels:** 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels; 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

    **Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development:** 17.15 Respect each country’s policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development; 17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries… to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The target for the number of projects supported via the LNB grant scheme to introduce innovative social services is 20, but so far only 8 were approved. A second Call for Proposals is to be launched via the programme in 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Progress to date linked to the identification, sharing and scaling up of good practice is moderately unsatisfactory. A research process to document good practices is now underway; indicatively to be completed in early spring 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)