



This project is funded  
by the European Union



# UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) EU4SCHOOLS

## EVALUATION OF PHASE I

EVALUATION REPORT

Final approved version 23 March 2023

PAUL VAN HOOF  
ELIRA JORGONI

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION  
COMMISSIONED BY: UNDP ALBANIA

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors'  
and do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP Albania



## Table of Contents

Acronyms .....	3
1. Executive Summary.....	4
2. Introduction .....	8
2.1. Programme Description and geographical scope	8
2.2. Management and implementation arrangements	9
3. Background .....	11
3.1. Earthquake response	11
3.2. Initial damage assessment for the education sector	12
3.3. Two consequent crises: the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine	12
3.4. Management of the education sector	14
3.5. Institutional actors involved in the post-earthquake reconstruction.	16
4. Evaluation objectives, approach, and methodology .....	18
4.1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation	18
4.2. Evaluation criteria and elaboration of key questions	18
4.3. Methodology/Theoretical Framework and limitations	19
5. Findings .....	21
5.1. Relevance, intervention logic and coherence	21
5.2. Performance	24
5.3. Efficiency	28
5.4. Effectiveness	31
5.5. Impact	34
5.6. Sustainability	39
6. Lessons learned and the potential for scaling up .....	44
7. Conclusions and recommendations.....	47
8. Annexes .....	51
Annex 8.1 Evaluation Matrix	52
Annex 8.2. Workplan and deliverables	55
Annex 8.3. Status of education facilities Phase I of the EU4Schools programme as per 30.11.22	56
Annex 8.4. Itinerary and list of people met during the EU4Schools Programme Phase I evaluation	57
Annex 8.5. Documents Reviewed	59
Annex 8.6. Ethical/Safeguarding considerations	60
Annex 8.7. Limitations and mitigations	61
Annex 8.8. Terms of Reference	62
Annex 8.9. Additional construction works phase I	73
Annex 8.10. Photos of the targeted facilities Phase I	77

## Acronyms

ADF	Albanian Development Fund
BBB	Building Back Better
BBT	Building Back Together
DLP	Defect Liability Period
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FMRD	Framework for Monitoring and Reporting Data
GD	Group Discussions
GDP	Growth Domestic Production
GDPUE	General Directorate of Pre-university Education
GoA	Government of Albania
H&S	Health and Safety Manuals
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IoC	Institute of Construction
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LG	Local Government
LOPUE	Local Offices of Pre-University Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MoIE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAfCP	National Agency for Civil Protection
NAIS	National Agency for Information Society
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
RDPUE	Regional Directorates of Pre-University Education
SCR	State Commission for Reconstruction
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TM	Tirana Municipality
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TS	Technical Secretariat
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WB	World Bank

## 1. Executive Summary

The “EU4Schools” Programme is part of the European Union’s financial commitment made during the International Donor’s Conference, organized in Brussels on February 17, 2020, to support the post-earthquake reconstruction efforts following the earthquake that struck Albania on 26 November 2019. In April 2020 the EU and UNDP signed a contribution agreement to implement the EU4Schools programme by UNDP Albania. The EU contributed €15,000,000 to the first phase of the programme, while UNDP contributed another €115,000. The original programme duration was foreseen to be 18 months which has initially been extended to 32 months and subsequently to 39 months. The end date of the programme is 30 June 2023. The EU and UNDP have signed an agreement for a second phase of the EU4Schools programme (€60 million), which is not part of this evaluation. Together with the €15 million for Phase II, the EU has allocated in total €75 million for the reconstruction of the education sector in the eleven municipalities most affected by the earthquake.

The overall objective of EU4Schools Phase I is to support national and local governments in reducing further social and economic losses and to accelerate the recovery process through educational facility repairs and reconstruction. The EU4Schools Phase I targeted five affected municipalities, namely: (i) Durrës, (ii) Kavaje, (iii) Kruje, (iv) Kamez and (v) Kurbin. The programme focused on reconstruction and repairing an estimated 22 educational facilities, including kindergarten, primary (or 9-year) schools and secondary schools, from which indicatively 11 would be repaired and 11 reconstructed.

The evaluation assessed all aspects of the programme interventions, outcome and output results and its allocated resources in relation to the programme’s results. This was done through the implementation of a mix-methods approach across all the six OECD/DAC Evaluation criteria Relevance, Coherence, Impact, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. In addition, particular attention was paid to the following cross cutting issues such as gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities, accessibility, human rights, environment, and waste management, as well as to communication and visibility dimensions. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the planned specific objective/outcome and results/outputs have been achieved since the beginning of the programme and the likelihood of their full achievement by the end of the programme in November 2022 (based on the Programme Document/Description of the Action and its results’ framework). The evaluation looked into the overall programme performance and results, covering all education facilities being repaired/reconstructed and retrofitted in five Municipalities so far.

### Key Findings and conclusions

**The EU4Schools programme fully integrates and translates the vision and principles of the GoA as presented in the Post Disaster Needs Assessment report related to the recovery process after the earthquake as well as the nine principles as defined during the International Donor Conference in February 2020, into a practical and realistic approach.**

The Programme is **contributing to the achievement of the targets set within the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030** in particular to the following SDGs, SDG 4 “Quality education”, SDG 9 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”, SDG 10 “Reduced Inequalities”, SDG 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions” and SDG 17 “Partnership for the Goals”.

**The selection of UNDP by the EU for managing the implementation of the EU4Schools programme is highly relevant in the given context.** Due to its extensive local knowledge and existing partnerships with the national and local governments and its inclusive approach, UNDP has a high level of credibility and trust.

The implementation of the first phase of the EU4Schools was initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic and the work plan was carefully assessed to ensure that it reflected the measures approved by the Government of Albania. **UNDP was agile in adopting strategies to address the resulting challenges efficiently and effectively to better respond to emerging needs**, such as the post-earthquake impact and pressure to deliver, the pandemic, the general/local elections, and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

**The Programme's Monitoring and Evaluation system is the backbone of the programme and ensures optimal efficiency and transparency. Detailed guidelines and procedures** have been developed regarding implementation and monitoring of progress.

**The tender process applied by the programme was transparent, impartial, and fair according to both design and construction companies who participated in various tenders and both won and lost tenders.** The various detailed manuals and related procedures, the effective M&E system, quality assurance and contract management ensured that the EU4Schools programme met and even surpassed most UNDP quality standards both in process management as well as quality of results.

**The EU4Schools programme generated a very high level of visibility of both the programme's activities as well as the role of the EU in the Albanian reconstruction process using a comprehensive public campaign strategy with a wide variety of communication means.** For many people it was the first time that they saw any result from Albania's engagement with the EU. As a result, the visibility of the programme as well as its transparency and accountability are excellent.

**The portal developed by the EU4Schools programme (<https://eu4schoolportal.al>) played an important role in this communication strategy and in increasing the visibility of the programme to all levels of stakeholders, while it also enhanced the transparency and accountability of the programme.** To many direct and indirect stakeholders this level of transparency was unprecedented in Albania and a good example of how the implementation of public infrastructure works can be done in a transparent manner.

**The EU4Schools programme has handed over 20 out of 22 intended education facilities in accordance with its BBB and BBT principles and it has done so in within a reasonable time frame.** One facility is awaiting testing and commissioning while one facility will not be completed due to external factors prohibiting its completion and will be replaced with other facilities during the second phase.

**7,586 pupils have benefited from Phase I of the programme. All 37 external stakeholders that were interviewed by the evaluation team were very satisfied both with the technical and esthetical quality of the facilities as well as with the interaction process with the UE4Schools team, especially related to responsiveness and transparency.** As one school manager mentioned *"It is the first time we are able to teach in such high-quality education facilities"*.

In several cases there were delays in the approval of the design, confirmation of the title deeds, which had an impact also on the issuing of the construction permit, or due to delays in the demolition of the old facilities and connections to the electricity network. These delays were outside the control of the programme and **the programme team assisted and enabled critical partners in the programme to implement their roles and functions as good and speedy as possible.**

**The action contributed to building sustainable infrastructure and putting the guiding principles of recovery and reconstruction into action.** The intervention managed to integrate **Build Back Better (BBB) standards**, including multi-hazard disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems; rebuilding in

line with international standards, with a focus on Eurocode 8; promoting a culture of resilience in development and maintenance of the infrastructure; and rebuilding stronger and safer in full consideration of the environmental standards. The detailed engineering designs have **integrated Energy Efficiency measures**, within the construction cost restrictions and local parameters. The implementation approach involved both “doing no harm” (or risk management) and “doing good” (or enhancing the economic, environmental, and social co-benefits) in infrastructure implementation. In all designs the needs and interests of people living with a disability have been integrated to ensure optimal access and inclusion.

Other principles integrated into the programme’s implementation process are active community participation, referred to as **Build Back Together (BBT)** in various stages of the construction process. The programme paid careful attention to **promoting gender equality and by mainstreaming it actively in all consultation and awareness raising activities.**

As a result, several professionals mentioned that **the EU4Schools programme has lifted the standard for the construction of education facilities to a higher level in Albania and that the standards and certain procedures used by the programme should be institutionalized in the Albanian context.**

**UNDP’s approach to working with the public officials as equal partners**, and its understanding of contextual and institutional challenges, while maintaining a high standard of the implementation (from the design to the handing over of facilities), was highly appreciated by all partners. **Stakeholders highlighted that UNDP contributed to increased ownership and quality of results that should remain for many years to come.**

**The EU4Schools phase I used innovative approaches and mechanisms that have generated experience and knowledge and valuable lessons learned.** The experience generated through the consolidation of various processes of repair and reconstruction of education facilities has helped the programme **reflect and capitalise on each key step.**

**The EU4Schools programme integrated various measures to increase the sustainability of the reconstructed education facilities. Important in this regard have been its efforts to maximize community involvement, shared responsibility, and local ownership of the facilities.** Empowering parents and pupils to actively participate in the decisions related to services they benefit directly from, such as education, can play a greater role in holding the key actors accountable for the teaching and learning needs and contribute to the maintenance of these facilities.

Findings from the evaluation confirmed that despite all efforts by the programme, following the handover of the repaired/reconstructed education facilities, **the sustainability of investment is facing risks due to (i) the lack of awareness and capacities to plan and secure the necessary municipal resources, (ii) limited financial means of the municipalities to allocate the necessary resources, and (iii) the lack of capacities both at the school and municipality level to operate and maintain the installed advanced technology equipment themselves.**

### Key Recommendations

Regarding all operational matters, including process management, procedures, M&E practices, quality assurance, partnership management and external communications, the EU4Schools programme has performed exemplary, and no major adjustments are necessary for the successful completion of Phase II.

**The EU4schools programme is very well designed combining a range of interventions, mechanisms, and instruments, to generate a rich experience and knowledge that can be further disseminated**

**and scaled up.** Indeed, the lessons learned, and their dissemination are essential to building longer-term sustainability and the potential for scaling up the results. To contribute further to the sustainability of this important intervention in the sector, and before the end of the second phase of the programme, **it will be important to support wider reflective processes with the central and local government to promote the institutionalisation of key processes and approaches.** The evaluation recommends that towards the end of Phase II the UNDP and the EUD support the GoA through its Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and MoES to organise a national workshop focussing on lessons learned from the reconstruction process.

**The major recommendation of this evaluation focuses on the development and implementation of additional activities to further enhance the long-term sustainability of the investment, such as the adequacy of resources and capacities to ensure smooth operation and maintenance of the facilities.**

These issues go beyond the direct influence of the EU4Schools programme, however, the education facilities constructed by the EU4Schools programme are affected and thus the reputation of all the partners might be damaged if the facilities are not functioning properly anymore after a few years. Both UNDP and EU are well positioned to introduce potential Public Finance Management improvements in the policy dialogue with the government. The programme could provide arguments and well documented evidence which can contribute to a more effective policy dialogue. **A good starting point would be the implementation of a study commissioned by the EU4Schools programme before the end of phase II on the key elements impacting the sustainability of education facilities, based on a carefully designed methodology agreed upon with the relevant authorities and the EUD.**

The objective of the study would be to support the government in clarifying the roles and strengthen the delivery operations of the education services through transparent financing mechanisms that reflect the needs and capacities of each LG.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Programme Description and geographical scope

The “EU4Schools” Programme is part of the European Union’s financial commitment made during the International Donor’s Conference, organized in Brussels on February 17, 2020, to support the post-earthquake reconstruction efforts following the earthquake that struck Albania on 26 November 2019. In April 2020 the EU and UNDP signed a contribution agreement to implement the EU4Schools programme by UNDP Albania. The EU contributed €15,000,000 to the first phase of the programme, while UNDP contributed another €115,000. The original programme duration was foreseen to be 18 months which has initially been extended to 32 months and subsequently to 39 months. The end date of the programme is 30 June 2023. The EU and UNDP have signed an agreement for a second phase of the EU4Schools programme (€60 million), which is not part of this evaluation. Together with the €15 million for Phase II, the EU has allocated in total €75 million for the reconstruction of the education sector in the eleven municipalities most affected by the earthquake.

The EU4Schools Phase I targeted five affected municipalities, namely: (i) Durrës, (ii) Kavaje, (iii) Kruje, (iv) Kamez and (v) Kurbin. The programme focused on reconstruction and repairing an estimated 22 educational facilities, including kindergarten, primary (or 9-year) schools and secondary schools, from which indicatively 11 would be repaired and 11 reconstructed (see table 1).

Table 1. Planned type of education facilities to be reconstructed by the EU4Schools programme.

Typology of facilities	
<b>EU4Schools 1:</b>	5 kindergartens, 11 primary education schools (9-year schools), 3 joint schools, 2 high schools, 1 professional high school
Typology of activities (repair/reconstruction)	
<b>EU4Schools 1</b>	<b>Repair:</b> 12 education facilities <b>Reconstruction:</b> 10 education facilities
<b>By municipalities</b>	5 Local Governments: Durrës (5), Kavaje (2), Kamez (3), Kruje (7) and Kurbin (5)
<b>Total duration of the action (months):</b>	The time frame for EU4Schools 1 is 39 months ( <b>1 April 2020 – 30 June 2023</b> ).

Source: EU4Schools programme

The Programme is contributing to achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, more specifically to SDG 4 “Quality education”, SDG 9 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”, SDG 10 “Reduced Inequalities”, SDG 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions” and SDG 17 “Partnership for the Goals”. Moreover, the programme is in line with the 2019-2021 UNDP Strategic Plan: Development Setting C. Build resilience to shocks, crisis, and Signature Solution 3: Enhance prevention and recovery for resilient societies.

#### Programme Goal and Outcomes

**The overall objective of EU4Schools Phase I is to support national and local governments in reducing further social and economic losses and to accelerate the recovery process through educational facility repairs and reconstruction.**



The specific objectives are:

- a. To support repairing and reconstruction, including basic furnishing, of education facilities in municipalities affected by the earthquake according to international standards.
- b. To provide increased transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness to the recovery process.

The Programme expected results are:

1. Education facilities repaired and furnished,
2. Education facilities reconstructed and furnished,
3. Strengthened transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in this process of recovery.

The recovery strategy in general and that of the EU4Schools programme, in particular, is based on the resilience and sustainability oriented 'Build Back Better' (BBB) approach. BBB interventions are intended to strengthen disaster-risk management of the government and communities; reduce risks and vulnerabilities to future disasters; and catalyse the economy and rebuild livelihoods, which differ from interventions that merely restore and resume to pre-disaster levels.

### Beneficiaries and target groups

The EU4School programme targets the following groups:

- Local service providers of education, including creches, pre-schools, primary schools, and secondary schools, including Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools,
- Children, students, and their families, in the areas affected by the earthquake,
- Teachers, academic and administrative staff in the educational facilities affected by the earthquake,
- Local communities.

The final Action beneficiaries include all residents of targeted local communities.

## 2.2. Management and implementation arrangements

The EU4Schools programme is implemented by UNDP Albania. The programme management structure for phase 1 consists of a Programme Steering Committee and an Action Team, interacting in a broader programme context with partners and all interested stakeholders. A technical Assurance Group which assures that works performed by contractors for the preparation of technical designs, civil works and supervision are carried out properly and in line with national and programme standards has been added in phase 2 of the programme.

The **Programme Steering Committee** (PSC) is established to oversee and coordinate the operations of Phase I and Phase II interventions and is consulted on all strategic decisions. It provides policy guidance and recommendations regarding strategy and objectives of the Action, receives, and comments on semi-annual reports, and approves annual plans of operation and reports. The PSC convenes at least twice a year, and upon necessity. All PSC members can request a meeting within a week if need be. It is composed of representatives from the European Union Delegation (EUD) in Albania, as the Donor, UNDP, as the Implementing Agency, a representative of the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure (previously the role of the Ministry of State for Reconstruction (see also section 3.5 of the report), a representative from the Ministry of Education and Sports, the UN Resident Coordinator and one representative from each of the beneficiary municipalities. It is co-chaired by a representative of the EU Delegation in Albania and the UNDP resident representative.

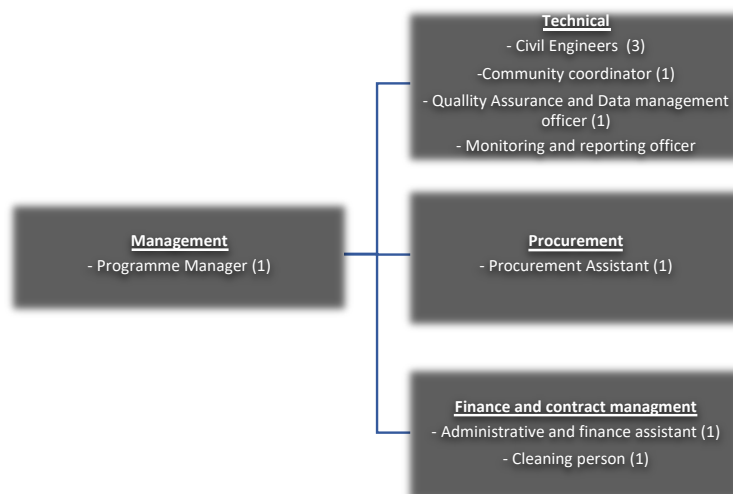
In terms of **management responsibility** for the action, UNDP is responsible for carrying out all activities under the Action and ensuring coordination with national and international actors. This

entails ensuring that results and targets are reached within agreed deadlines. UNDP is also in charge of carrying out all procurement for services, goods, equipment, and works and managing grant award procedures. UNDP is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Action, in line with the set targets and Action indicators. The monitoring responsibilities are managed by the **Action team**. Semi-annual and final reports prepared by the UNDP are submitted to the EU Delegation. Ad hoc updates are also produced as requested by the EUD.

Existing coordination mechanisms, such as the **State Committee for Reconstruction** and related coordination mechanisms are used to promote the action but also regularly disseminate information to key national and international stakeholders. In addition to bilateral initiatives by other international donors, UNDP is implementing several recovery actions that create synergies and enhance its effects, wherever possible.

The **EU4School programme team** is comprised of full-time staff and consultants. The team includes four main units: (i) Programme management, (ii) Technical staff/engineers, (iii) Procurement and (iv) Finance and contract management, as per the figure 1 below.

Figure 1. EU4School programme team (Phase I)



Source: EU4Schools programme Description of Action

The UNDP country office provides additional support to the programme team, especially for tasks related to communication and procurement.

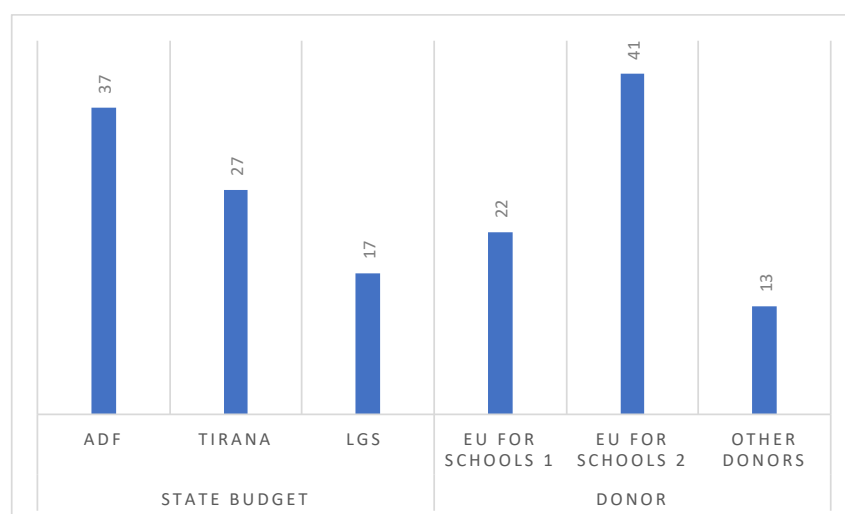
### 3. Background

#### 3.1. Earthquake response

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit Albania on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019 causing 51 fatalities, leaving 17,000 people displaced, and ultimately affecting more than 200,000 people in 11 municipalities<sup>1</sup>. The Government of Albania (GoA), with support from the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB), released a Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report on 5 February 2020<sup>2</sup> that served as the key guiding tool for the international donors' conference held on 17 February, through which donors pledged €1.15 billion to fund recovery activities.

The lion's share of international donor grants was pledged to the housing sector (39.3%) and education sector (35.2% or €98.05 million). Several donors, such as the EU, Germany, Slovenia, Slovakia, Qatar, Croatia, and Greece are funding the reconstruction of about 71 education facilities affected by the earthquake. Figure 2, below, shows the number of education facilities supported by donors and the GoA<sup>3</sup>. The EU financing support to the education sector implemented through the EU4Schools programme represents 76% of the total donor contributions in the sector, and covers about 82% of the total schools to be reconstructed through direct donor funding.

Figure 2. Number of Education Facilities Supported by Donors and the GoA.



Source: Based on the donor agreements as per May 2021 and information from UNDP

The initial assessment (PDNA 2020) of the total value of damage and losses in the education sector was estimated at €72.35 million (ALL 8.9 billion) and the total needs for reconstruction and recovery were estimated to be €94.83 million (ALL 11.67 billion). The real reconstruction costs in the education sector, following the detailed assessments and start of reconstruction works, have not been reported yet by the GoA.

<sup>1</sup> Lezha, Kurbin, Rrogozhina, Vora, Kavaja, Mirdita, Shijak, Durrës, Kruja, Tirana and Kamza.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Albania, Council of Ministers (2019); Post Disaster Needs Assessment, volume A Report February 2020. Accessible at: <https://albania.un.org/sq/node/46378>

<sup>3</sup> Trias (April 2021) Technical Support to the Post Earthquake Recovery in Albania. Final Monitoring Report. Commissioned by EUD Albania.

### 3.2. Initial damage assessment for the education sector

The PDNA, which was carried out in less than two months (mid-December 2019 to February 2020) assessed the main damages in each of the key sectors and provided estimated costs for damages and losses. In the education sector, the damages were reported to have affected 321 education facilities (including crèches, pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, vocational and education training schools, high education schools and dormitories) in all the affected municipalities. These facilities represented, at the time of the assessment, 24% of all educational facilities. About 90% of damaged institutions are in the public sector and 60% of destroyed and damaged schools are in rural areas.

The municipalities of Tirana and Durrës recorded the highest share of damage, with 55% and 21%, respectively. Schools were also damaged in smaller municipalities such as Vora, where half of all education facilities were either fully or partially destroyed. Furthermore, 60% of the destroyed and damaged schools are in rural areas. In addition to infrastructure, the earthquake also damaged physical assets such as furniture, labs, ICT equipment, libraries, textbooks, and other learning materials. The education sector was extra hard hit because the physical infrastructure of most education facilities, especially in rural areas, did not meet current building standards on safety and accessibility.

The Reconstruction Programme of the GoA targets a total of 160 educational facilities (pre-university schools, kindergartens, and dormitories) for repair and reconstruction in all affected municipalities.<sup>4</sup> Based on the PDNA report, recovery needs are prioritised and sequenced over the short, medium, and long term. The short-term needs refer to interventions that focus on the continuation of educational services through the provision of transportation for relocating children and teachers to host schools, the provision of teaching and learning materials, the training of teachers on psycho-social support and close monitoring of enrolment and attendance of children, especially the vulnerable groups. Institutional arrangements for reconstruction were expected to be established as well as policies and guidelines for improving school safety. The medium-term needs are dominated by the reconstruction of infrastructure and physical assets. Human resource needs at various levels were planned to be strengthened to ensure compliance and quality assurance in all phases of reconstruction. In the long-term, efforts were to concentrate on risk reduction, such as translating disaster-risk education into regular pre-and in-service teacher training, and on the implementation of effective disaster-risk management in all schools of the country.

### 3.3. Two consequent crises: the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine

**Covid-19 pandemic.** Phase I of the programme started in April 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic had already impacted the country. 572,000 students in preschools and higher education suffered the consequences of the pandemic that disrupted education since March 9, 2020. School closures have been linked with interrupted education and limited social interaction. For the most vulnerable children, it also limited their access to essential services like information on disease prevention, water and sanitation, measures against violence, psychological support etc. At least 11,000 students were identified as not having access to online learning, many of them due to living in remote and rural areas with no internet or devices at home. Roma children and children with learning difficulties and disabilities have also not accessed online learning.

---

<sup>4</sup> A total of 81 education facilities are being reconstructed through the Reconstruction Fund; ADF will complete 37 and TM 27, and 17 educational facilities assigned to different actors, including LGs. However, data is not periodically updated by the GoA, to provide a clear picture of who is doing what in the sector.

Like in many other countries, Albania's education system was not built to deal with extended shutdowns like those imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers, administrators, and parents have worked hard to keep learning alive; nevertheless, these efforts were not likely to be as effective as the education that is delivered in the classroom. This pandemic deepened the equity challenges for the most vulnerable students who will consequently require additional resources.

During the implementation of Phase I, the supply chain disruption for construction materials impacted the delivery timeline and construction work costs. Key partners from the public institutions were working from home or intermittently from the office, and personal contact was limited. This was a key challenge for the whole governance and education system, as well as impacted everyone else. Many processes were delayed, resulting in delayed construction works and evaluation processes due to the pandemic situation. UNDP reviewed the planning and tasks to address the programme's needs. Issues of health and safety gained prominent importance in the epidemiological situation. The priority shifted to respecting the protocols and preventive measures, as well as adopting them to different work processes (working with the programme team, working with the public actors, engaging with communities and school level activities, as well as construction works). All protocols approved by the government on COVID-19 protective measures were adopted. Masks were produced and distributed to all participants in consultation meetings, respecting the distance and organisation of meetings in open spaces was strongly promoted.

To address this challenge as well as ensure the delivery of a programme that was created to address a recent crisis during a consecutive crisis was not easy, especially since, differently from the earthquake, the pandemic affected everyone. During the first year of the implementation, the EU4Schools team worked part-time in the office and part-time from home. The fieldwork was not suspended, but rigorous measures were adopted to ensure the safety of staff working in the field. Whereas methodologies suitable for virtual communication and consultation were prepared and integrated across the planned activities.

**The war in Ukraine.** During the implementation of Phase I of the programme, the country was affected by the consequences of the energy crisis and the power supply disruption caused by the war in Ukraine. On October 8, 2021, the Government of Albania declared a state of Emergency for Energy and while the price and provision of energy for families and small businesses is guaranteed by the GoA, middle and large businesses must secure their energy supply by paying market prices<sup>5</sup>. Large-scale street protests were registered across Albania owing to the sharp rise in fuel and food prices triggered by the war in Ukraine. Albania is particularly vulnerable to food security issues because it imports about 50% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine. In response to street protests that erupted in March, triggered by a sharp rise in fuel and food prices, the government introduced a set of measures. The government announced a package of measures worth €30 million to alleviate the economic impact of the war in Ukraine, including a price cap on the fuel of €1.76 per litre. Whereas the GoA regularly updates the price cap for fuel, such a measure was not taken for other raw materials used in the construction industry. Moreover, supplies of raw materials such as iron, cement, fuel etc., were disrupted and together with the increased costs of civil works have impacted the timeframe for the project implementation.

In May 2022, the GoA, passed a Normative Act (Act. No 10, dated May 18, 2022) for the financial compensation of the construction companies following the increase in prices for some construction materials. In total, it was anticipated that the fund allocated ALL 6 billion (€51.78 million) from the state budget. Beneficiaries are about 300 public works companies that are implementing a public

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://kryeministria.al/newsroom/vendime-te-miratuara-ne-mbledhjen-e-keshillit-te-ministrave-date-22-tetor-2021/>  
<https://kryeministria.al/newsroom/vendime-te-miratuara-ne-mbledhjen-e-keshillit-te-ministrave-date-9-dhjetor-2021/>

contract for reconstruction works following the earthquake, which were to be compensated from 5 to 30% of the value of iron, bitumen, cement, plastic pipes, aluminum, copper, and zinc materials. The compensation is done through a contract addendum or extension, subject to approval from the procuring authority.<sup>6</sup>

The above risks were not foreseen in the Action Description. The EU4Schools programme was quick in reflecting on the challenges and risks and tried to monitor the situation closely and plan for mitigating actions. Following contractors' requests to take these unforeseen increased costs into account, the management team engaged in intensive reflections within the country office and regional/global UNDP offices. Yet, the decision was not to increase the contract costs, especially given the frequent fluctuating prices per typology of construction material.

**Political and economic context.** On July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Albania held its first inter-governmental conference with the EU, marking the launch of its formal EU accession talks. The April 2021 parliamentary election confirmed the Socialist Party's position as the main political force. The party maintained its representation of 74 legislators in the 140-seat parliament. Yet, throughout the implementation of the EU4Schools I, the political arena has remained unstable. On May 14, 2023, the country will hold local elections – which is likely to have some impact on the implementation of the second phase of the EU4Schools programme as well as introduce new challenges in re-establishing relations with the new municipal teams, where relevant.

Albania's budget deficit narrowed from 6.7% of GDP in 2020 to 4.5% of GDP in 2021. EUI (2023) expects the deficit to remain substantial in 2023, at 4.2% of GDP, narrowing only slightly from the initial estimate of 4.4% of GDP in 2022. The war in Ukraine triggered higher inflation rates that reached 7.4%. (INSTAT), in December 2022 mostly driven by food and energy prices. (INSTAT). Given widespread poverty and a lack of trust in politicians, Albania is highly vulnerable to political instability and social unrest, a risk to monitor during the coming 12-24 months.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.4. Management of the education sector

The decentralization process was initiated in 2015 with many competencies assigned to the regional education offices, while local education offices have low levels of autonomy. The municipalities are recipients of funding when it comes to the reconstruction of schools, yet they hardly have an education department or even a sector well-resourced to be able to respond fully to their mandate. They need to track the demographics of children that are ready to attend preschool and organise the preschool network to meet anticipated needs. Furthermore, the local governments (LGs) will also have to determine the number and distribution of education facilities within the LG's jurisdiction. Table 2 below summarizes the responsibilities of the various levels of government regarding preuniversity education.

---

<sup>6</sup> Media article summarising the presentation of the Normative Act in the Parliament, by the Minister of Finance and Economy, Mrs. Ibrahimaj, "The increase in the prices of materials, Ibrahimaj: We will compensate the construction companies with ALL 6 billion" ("Rritja e çmimeve të materialeve, Ibrahimaj: Do kompensojmë me 6 mld lekë kompanitë e ndërtimit"). Last accessed on February 14, 2023, available at <https://www.monitor.al/rritja-e-çmimeve-te-materialeve-ibrahimaj-do-kompensojme-me-6-mld-leke-kompanite-e-ndertimit/>

<sup>7</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit (January 2023). Country Report – Albania.

Table 2. Responsibilities of central and local level institutions regarding the provision of basic education services.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>
<b>Central level</b>	
MoES RDPUE & LOPUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- approve the National Strategy of Pre-university Education.</li> <li>- support the educational institutions for the continuous improvement of the quality of educational service.</li> <li>- cooperate with the units of the local government through the RDPUE and LOPUE.</li> <li>- ensure the didactic equipment for the public educational institutions by the formula "per student"(equips the school labs, library and covers internet costs);</li> <li>- make use of the special fund of the annual budget for rewarding the employees of educational institutions for outstanding achievement;</li> </ul>
<b>Local level</b>	
LGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- construction and restoration of the buildings of the public educational institutions, in accordance with the standards approved by the Council of Ministers, with the state budget funds or funds from conditioned transfers or own revenues.</li> <li>- guaranteeing the inviolability of the educational institutions under its jurisdiction, as well as their surrounding premises; (hires school guards)</li> <li>- protecting the maintaining the public educational institution.</li> <li>- guaranteeing hygiene and sanitary conditions in the buildings of public educational institutions. (Hires cleaning staff)</li> </ul>

Source: GoA Law No. 69/2012).

From 2019 Local Governments are expected not only to exercise greater administrative control over these functions, but also to start financing their functions from their overall income. Financing of the pre-university education is defined through a) state budget; b) revenues of local government units; c) donations and sponsorships; d) revenues obtained from the educational institution; e) other legitimate revenues"<sup>8</sup>. According to the MoFE, LG revenues, from 2015 to 2021, but also those planned for 2022, have increased by about 2.3 times, while expenses, which include investments, have increased by about 60%. In total, from the 2.1% of GDP they accounted for before the reform, today they account for 3.3% of GDP. The unconditional transfer has increased by 40% during the last years, yet it accounts for only 1% of GDP.

The MoFE carried out a financial health and management assessment of the local governments in 2020<sup>9</sup>, classifying them into five main categories, as summarised in the table 3 below. Findings of this assessment indicate that most of the municipalities affected by the earthquake face financial difficulties, which will affect their ability to cover all operational and maintenance costs of the educational facilities in their area.

Two of the municipalities affected by the earthquake are facing severe financial difficulties and approaching bankruptcy, Kavaja (Phase I) and Vora (Phase II). The finding of this assessment highlight also the capacities of these LGs to fully perform their role in the maintenance of the education facilities and ensuring the sustainability of the investments (discussed more under the respective section of the report).

<sup>8</sup> Law no.69/2012, Article 37, Planning the financing at public pre-university education.

<sup>9</sup> MoFE (2020) Report on the status of financial difficulties of local self-government units.



Table 3. Status of the financial situation of local governments in Albania.

Main categories	Performance of LGs affected by the earthquake
<b>(i) municipalities that face some financial problems whose arrears are at the level of up to 15% of the planned expenses;</b>	Shijak (up to 5% or 1.52%) Durrës (up to 5% or 4.21 % ) -(Phase I) Tirana (5% or 3.22%) Kruja (5.18%) - (Phase I) Kurbini (13.58%) - (Phase I) Mirdita (13.18%)
<b>(ii), municipalities that face financial difficulties which have arrears above the level of 25% of the planned expenses;</b>	Kamza (16.06%) - (Phase I)
<b>(iii) municipalities with serious financial difficulties whose arrears are over 80% of the planned expenses;</b>	Rrogozhina (26.77%) Lezha (26.16%) Kavaje (69.74%) -(Phase I) Vore (74.76%)
<b>(iv) municipalities with insolvency, whose arrears exceed 100% of planned expenses.</b>	NA

Source: MoFE (2020) Report on the status of financial difficulties of local self-government units

### 3.5. Institutional actors involved in the post-earthquake reconstruction.

The Government of Albania has expressed commitment to lead the recovery and reconstruction efforts. It established an 'Act on Damage Relief from Natural Disasters,' (Normative Act No 9) as well as a Reconstruction Fund to allocate and disburse resources for post-disaster activities efficiently and transparently across all levels of Government.

The necessary legislative and institutional arrangements for the recovery effort, started with the appointment of the Minister of State for Reconstruction and the approval of the Normative Act No.9 on damage relief from natural disasters, dated 16 December 2019. This act defined the newly formed **State Commission for Reconstruction (SCR)** as the prime authority responsible for addressing the aftermath of natural disasters and endorsed the **National Agency for Civil Protection (NAfCP)** to act as its Technical Secretariat (TS). The Normative Act also defined the authorities and responsibilities of other institutions in the reconstruction and recovery process; the key reconstruction programmes and their operating principles; as well as the establishment of a Reconstruction Fund for the allocation and disbursement of resources for post-disaster reconstruction.

**In July 2022, the position of Minister of State for Reconstruction has been abolished.** The new institution designated to be the coordination and implementing partner for reconstruction, on behalf of the Government of Albania, is the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MoIE). Creating ad hoc structures and changing them before the process is completed, may have an impact on the institutional memory of the reconstruction process as many of the challenges and solutions, might not be sufficiently well documented.

The **Albanian Development Fund (ADF)** and the **Tirana Municipality (TM)** are the main implementing entities for the reconstruction process. Tirana Municipality has the responsibility to implement all reconstruction interventions in its jurisdiction, while the ADF oversees the reconstruction and rebuilding projects of severely damaged private housing as well as public infrastructure in the territories of the other municipalities. Each municipality is, in turn, responsible for the identification of needs and damage assessment process for the affected communities, approval of programme beneficiaries, and management of the housing programmes within their territories. To speed up the process, more responsibilities were delegated to the municipalities outside of Tirana, related to



managing reconstruction works; reconstruction project designs for severely damaged buildings; and some aspects of public infrastructure work, including education facilities and other public buildings.

Other agencies, relevant to the reconstruction of the education facilities, included in the reconstruction process are the **National Agency for Territorial Planning** and TM were assigned for the formulation of development plans (included education facilities); the **National Agency for Information Society** (NAIS) assumed responsibility for the design of the GoA's unique web-based earthquake platform. The **Institute of Construction (IoC)** is tasked with providing technical expertise to municipalities in the damage assessment process and technical review of the reconstruction plans for each school. In this context, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between UNDP and IoC to accelerate the process of technical review and other relevant issues.

The main institution responsible for policymaking and setting the standards in education is the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). The **General Directorate of Pre-university Education (GDPUE)** is the implementing structure of MoES, which ensures the deconcentrated control of this level of education at the regional and local levels. The GDPUE is organised in four Regional Directorates of Pre-University Education (RDPUE), in Lezha, Durrës, Korça and Fier, as well as 52 Local Offices of Pre-University Education (LOPUE) covering all 61 municipalities. The GDPUE is responsible for managing and coordinating the implementation of policies in pre-university education and is a key actor in ensuring the adequate implementation of the EU4Schools programme guaranteeing that the standards are applied in the repaired /reconstructed facilities and the equipment provided.

Whereas, the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute for Cultural Heritage have been involved and consulted related to architectural sites discovered in the same/proximity area to the education facilities targeted for reconstruction and repairs by the programme. This was in particular relevant for Durrës.

**Municipalities**, as the formal owners of the education facilities, are the main partners of the EU4Schools programme at local level, both in terms of implementation of the reconstruction process and maintenance of all education facilities. More specifically, the municipality is expected to:

- (i) Coordinate with all local actors and make available the relevant documentation for the repair and reconstruction of the educational facilities,
- (ii) Deal with any liability that may arise from land and assets ownership, or any other property related issue,
- (iii) Responsible to follow the necessary procedures and issue the relevant construction permits in a short time,
- (iv) Make available the objects that will be repaired and the land site for those that will be reconstructed (including the demolition of former buildings) to the UNDP contractor in order to start works as per the agreed schedule, and
- (v) Provide regular maintenance of the educational facilities repaired and reconstructed after they have been handed over.

## 4. Evaluation objectives, approach, and methodology

### 4.1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The Final EU4Schools Phase I Programme Evaluation aims to review and assess: (i) the relevance, (ii) effectiveness, (iii) efficiency, (iv) impact, (v) lessons learned and (vi) sustainability of the Programme. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the planned specific objective/outcome and results/outputs have been achieved since the beginning of the programme and the likelihood of their full achievement by the end of the programme in June 2023 (based on the Programme Document/Description of the Action and its results' framework). The evaluation looked into the overall programme performance and results, covering all education facilities being repaired/reconstructed and retrofitted in five Municipalities so far.

### 4.2. Evaluation criteria and elaboration of key questions

The objective of this independent evaluation was to examine the overall performance of the EU4Schools Phase I programme including its results, inputs, activities, and how the outputs contributed to the reduction of the social and economic losses from the earthquake, and to the acceleration of the recovery as the main outcome of the programme (see Annex 8 for the complete ToR). The evaluation includes an analysis of the effectiveness of the EU4Schools Phase I methodology, approach and communication with stakeholders and beneficiaries and their feedback. It also included an assessment of the impact created by COVID-19 on the programme implementation. In addition, the Programme Evaluation is expected to identify recommendations for any potential improvement in Phase II of EU4Schools or any spin-off of the Programme. It also looked into critical programme aspects, such as:

- The partnership between the programme and impacted Municipalities, and other local/central authorities, and the agreed implementation framework.
- The methodology used for BBB and BBT and its relevance and benefits for the programme.
- The methodology for transparent and real-time information of the public.
- The impact of the programme in improving education quality in implementation.

Finally, the evaluation examined the programme processes, innovations, and strategic partnerships, that proved critical in producing the intended results/outputs and the factors that facilitated and/or hindered the progress in achieving the results/outputs, both in terms of the external environment and risks, as well as internal, including weaknesses in programme design, management, human resource skills, and resources.

The evaluation did not assess the physical quality of the renovated and constructed schools and whether they meet both the Albanian as well as the EU standards. The evaluators for that aspect used UNDP monitoring reports. Moreover, the evaluation was structured on:

- The main and specific objective of the EU4schools programme,
- The initial analysis of the programme progress reports,
- Initial consultations with the UNDP EU4schools team, and
- The scope of work as described in the ToR,

The Programme Evaluation used five core questions as an overall guidance that are linked to the result chain and relate to the content and actual performance of the programme. All five evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability), including the questions listed in the Terms of Reference under the scope of work of this evaluation are integrated in the specific questions

under these core questions. The nine principles of engagement foreseen in the Statement of Intent at the occasion of the Donor Conference, namely: consistency, clarity, participation, transparency, accountability, equity, efficiency, resilience, and sustainability are integrated in these questions as well.

### 4.3. Methodology/Theoretical Framework and limitations

The approach proposed by the evaluation team is based on the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (revised edition June 2021) and the requirements as specified in the ToR.

Results are measured both through qualitative and quantitative means, including: i) a review of programme results from documentary means, ii) in-situ assessment of results and practices through various tools and methods thorough Interviews with partners/stakeholders, and iii) triangulation of the information through comparison of information collected and validation meetings. The evaluation used a combination of tools and questions (see Annex 1) tailored to the different stakeholders and following the Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions. The evaluation included the following approaches, methods, and activities, building on:

- a) **A review of relevant sources of programme information** (e.g. project document, progress reports, Examples of MoUs with participating municipalities, Programme/Action Steering Committee reports and minutes, key project deliverables). For a selected number of education facilities (see below), evaluators reviewed examples of tender process records, of contracts with engineering and construction companies, reports of consultation sessions with beneficiaries (before and after completion), examples of testing and commissioning reports and other inspection and follow up reports, examples of post completion quality assurance reports and other process documentation at school level. In addition, the team reviewed available context documents, reports, and relevant legal framework (see Annex 5 for a list of key documents reviewed).
- b) **A detailed assessment of the programme's progress versus the results framework**
- c) **Semi-structured interviews conducted with Key Informants and through Group Discussions** with key partners/stakeholders undertaken during the **field mission and site-visits**.
  - a. *Sampling*: In order to capture a representative picture of the performance, the consultants have randomly selected one education facility in each of the five municipalities (Durrës, Kavaja, Kamza, Kurbin and Kruja) that underwent more detailed inspection/analysis. The selected facilities included three reconstruction and two repair sites, and a mix of preschools, primary, and secondary schools. The selected facilities were:
    - b. Pre-schools (4): "Kopshti Nr 8" (Kamza)
    - c. Primary schools (5): "Gjoke Elezi" (Kurbin) – combined facility primary and preschool; "Mehmet Babamusta" (Kavaja); Combined facility kindergarten and primary school "Fiqiri Kurti" (Kavaja); "Dom Nikollë Kaçorri" (Kamza); Combined facility kindergarten and primary school "Korb Muça" (Kruja);
    - d. Secondary school (2): "Dhosi Liperi" (Durrës); "Skënderbeu" (Kruja);
  - d) During the field work, the evaluation team (indirectly) assessed the quality of the work completed in the selected facilities, the actual realisation of the Build Back Better and Build Back Together objectives and collect information for the lessons learnt.
  - e) The **field mission** took place between 16-27 January 2023, conducting interviews/ Group Discussions, and undertaking site-visits to a sample of education facilities and interviews in all five municipalities targeted by Phase I. See Annex 4 for a summary of the field phase itinerary and partners interviewed.

- f) The team presented during a ‘**Debriefing**’ meeting, the preliminary findings/achievements, risks, issues related to sustainability, lessons learned and recommendations to consider before the finalisation of Phase II of the EU4Schools Programme, on 27.01.2022.
- g) The **Draft Evaluation Report** is being submitted to the UNDP for its review of the validity of the factual and evidence-based assessment. Based on the feedback received on the Draft, a detailed review process will be provided to UNDP, alongside the preparation and submission of the **Final Evaluation Report**.

#### Limitations

The key risks identified were that the timeframe included end of the year public holidays, and the slower start after the new year, as well as the availability of identified stakeholders. Both key risks were mitigated, thanks to the efficient support and coordination between the Evaluation Team and UNDP EU4Schools programme team, as well as the flexibility to start the field visit in mid-January. A more in-depth review of these risks and the mitigations used is presented in Annex 7.

#### Cross-cutting issues

One of the ways in which the EU4School programme differs from regular reconstruction programmes is its intention to pay extra attention to several cross-cutting issues as mentioned in the “Description of the Action”. In particular, the programme intends to address gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities; accessibility and vulnerable groups; human rights and equal opportunities and environment and waste management.

The evaluation team assessed:

- How the EU4Schools programme integrated these cross-cutting issues into its approach and actual activities?
- How did the programme perform on the implementation of activities related to these cross-cutting issues?
- What has been the outcome of these activities?

The information was gathered through a review of the available programme documents and reports, including M&E data, interviews with the programme staff as well as with stakeholders at the local and education facility level.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Relevance, intervention logic and coherence

Relevance to the national priorities for reconstruction in the education sector.

The Description of Action of Phase I of the **EU4Schools programme fully integrates and translates the vision and principles of the GoA as presented in the PDNA report<sup>10</sup>** related to the recovery process after the earthquake **as well as the nine principles as defined during the International Donor Conference in February 2020<sup>11</sup>, into a practical and realistic approach.**

The EU4Schools programme is **based on the principles of “Building Back Better” (BBB)** which focuses on enhancing resilience, build capacity and social capital and reduce the risks and effects of future disasters **and “Building Back Together” (BBT)** which means that it will work together with local governments, local institutions, and communities to design and implement recovery activities rapidly with a participatory approach and a transparent and accountable system.

These principles are reflected in the objectives of the EU4Schools Programme Phase I, which are: **“to support national and local governments in reducing further social and economic losses, and to accelerate the recovery process through educational facility repairs and reconstruction”.**

The specific objectives of the programme are:

- a) To support repairing and reconstruction, including basic furnishing, of education facilities in municipalities affected by the earthquake according to international standards.
- b) To provide increased transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness to the recovery process<sup>12</sup>.

The detailed standards and procedures as developed by the Programme that are partly described in the Description of Action and worked out in more detailed individual strategies, like:

- Tendering strategies and procedures,
- Operational work manuals and Health and Safety Manuals,
- Consultation and Communication strategies
- Manual of Procedures

have all integrated the BBB and BBT principles in a practical, realistic, and coherent manner.

Phase I of the EU4Schools programme included only 14% of all the education facilities (22 out of 160 facilities listed in the reconstruction programme) affected by the earthquake. Phase I and 2 combined will reach 20% of all the facilities. While the number might not be that large, the schools included in the programme are often the more difficult and costly ones to reconstruct and located in rural areas where there is in general a lack of funds to build and maintain good schools.

Relevance to the UNDP mandate.

The conceptualization of EU4schools programme was more relevant to the overall need of Albania to recover as fast as possible from the earthquake in 2019 than to the needs of the poor and vulnerable groups in particular.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid page 84-87

<sup>11</sup> Delegation of the European Union in Albania (2020); EU4Schools Annex I Description of the Action. Page 7

<sup>12</sup> Ibid Page 6

**The needs of ethnic minority groups, in particular those of Roma and Egyptian communities, were addressed during the selection process of the facilities** that would be included in Phase I of the EU4Schools Programme. The programme selected e. g. the “Ismet Nanushi” and “Dhosi Liperi” schools in Durrës to be included in the programme because these are located in areas with a high percentage of people of Roma origin.

In addition, **the number of facilities included in the programme that are located in rural areas are over-represented** to ensure that good quality education facilities are also build in less prosperous areas with children that have normally less opportunities to receive good quality education.

The specific **needs of women and girls were integrated in the design of the EU4Schools Programme** where relevant, by collecting gender aggregated data, and by focusing on their particular needs during the consultation process. **The designs of all targeted educational facilities addressed the specific needs of women and girls** as users of the facility. In addition, the programme aimed to encourage women engineers, architects, designers, and other technical women specialists to be part of the implementing teams<sup>13</sup>.

Particular attention has been given to the needs of pupils (and teachers) living with a disability to enable them to have full and equal access to the education facilities and to participate as much as possible as equals in the regular education programme.

Regarding environmental protection and sustainability, the programme was guided by the Energy Performance Building Law, Energy Building Code and Governmental Decree on Minimum Requirement for the introduction of Energy Efficiency measures in Buildings as well as the EU Construction & Demolition Waste Management Protocol. All designs aimed for optimal building energy efficiency and minimizing the carbon footprint of the facilities within the construction cost restrictions and local parameters. Examples are the use of better joinery and green heating systems, thermal insulation facades, the use of heat pumps and LED lights, etc.

#### Relevance to Albania’s efforts to achieve the SDG targets.

The Programme is contributing to the achievement of the targets set within the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 in particular to the following SDGs:

- SDG 4 “Quality education”,
- SDG 9 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”,
- SDG 10 “Reduced Inequalities”,
- SDG 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions” and
- SDG 17 “Partnership for the Goals”.

#### Relevance to UNDP’s comparative advantage.

**The selection of UNDP by the EU for managing the implementation of the EU4Schools programme is highly relevant in the given context.** Based on its extensive local knowledge and existing partnerships with the national and local governments and its inclusive approach, UNDP has a high level of credibility and trust. Also, for the design/supervising and construction companies UNDP is a trustworthy and reliable partner known to adhere to high quality standards.

Differently from the approach of the GoA and the ADF, which were focused mainly on fast reconstruction, the EU4Schools programme integrated recovery as a key element towards resilience, ownership and sustainability and did not compromise on the predefined EU standards and reconstruction principles. **The design of the programme maximized local ownership of the**

---

<sup>13</sup> Delegation of the European Union in Albania (2020); EU4Schools Annex I Description of the Action. Page 23

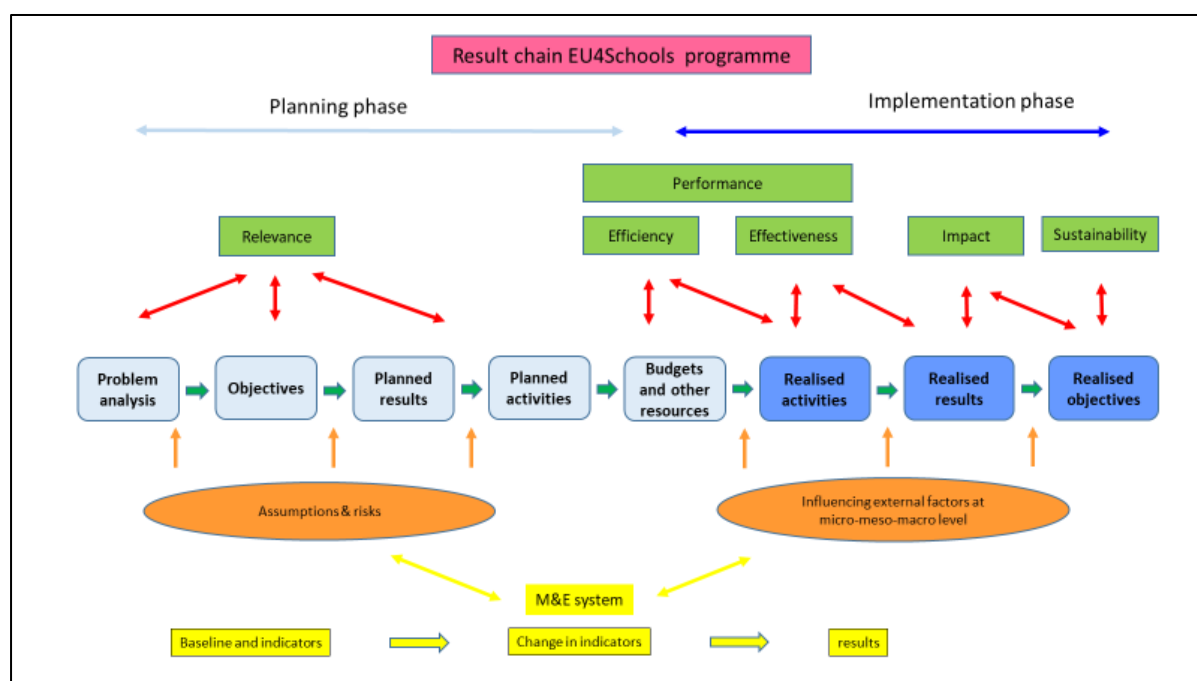
reconstruction process and of the resulting facilities without compromising too much on the speed of implementation.

UNDP’s inclusive approach turned out to be an important comparative advantage in this programme since its BBT approach contributed a lot to achieving true local ownership of the education facilities.

Programme design and relevance of the intervention logic to achieve the intended objectives.

The Theory of Change and the value chain of the programme is relatively straight forward: To reconstruct education facilities to a better standard than before and in a durable manner in order to enhance the quality of education for Albanian children. See figure 3.

Figure 3. Simplified result chain of the EU4schools programme.



The programme has in its design successfully integrated the Build Back Better and Built Back Together concepts. This resulted, within the Albanian context, in an innovative approach to reconstruction that however remained close to the Albanian reality to be effective and have fast and high-quality results especially, because it was managed by an external entity which could add additional standards and procedures to the minimal ones as defined by the GoA.

**The translation of the objectives into results and activities follows the crucial steps in the reconstruction process and is comprehensive. It integrates the consultation moments in a logical way in the overall process.** Interesting in the design of the consultation process is the development and presentation of two design concept by the designing company to the local stakeholders to choose from. This process facilitates real involvement in actual decision-making and enhances ownership but prevents unrealistic demands or vague discussions. Also, the “place check” concept is highly relevant and introduces a practical accountability moment.

The Log Frame is supported by a monitoring frame in which the Building Back Better concept is translated in 5 categories with measurable indicators. These are: General improvements, accessibility,



Energy Efficiency, IT and Smart solutions, Seismic, and Health and Safety. These indicators have been integrated into the programmes M&E system as well.

A lot of attention has been given to the drafting of a comprehensive risk analysis, which, as we will see further on, assisted the programme to manage risks properly and respond fast to changing circumstances.

**In the conceptualisation of the programme, more attention could have been given to the challenges and measures relating to the sustainability of programme outcomes after the education facilities have been handed over to the respective municipalities.** The Description of the Action does mention sustainability of the renovated facilities but only refers to the responsibilities of the respective municipalities to take care of operational and maintenance costs as agreed upon in a MoU signed between each municipality and UNDP, which stipulates that: “The Municipality of .... is responsible for the regular maintenance of the educational facilities after the handover”.<sup>14</sup> It does however not reflect on the limited abilities and capacities of the municipalities (both in terms of qualified staff and budget) to do so in practice, which constitutes a serious risk regarding the long-term sustainability of these investments. The deplorable state of most education facilities (certainly in the rural areas) even before the earthquake is an indication that regular maintenance and upkeep of the facilities does not receive enough attention by the Government in general. The risks related to sustainability should have been addressed in the risk analysis as well.

## 5.2. Performance

The evaluation used 30 November 2022 as reference date for assessing progress made by the EU4Schools programme, which is seven months before the end date of 30 June 2023.

Since Phase I of the programme had a fixed budget of €15,115,000, and no detailed costings were available for each of the facilities at the start of the programme, the programme used an open list of number of facilities to be included in the programme based on indicative m<sup>2</sup> costings. The number of facilities to be included could be adjusted once more detailed costings would be available.

The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the programme therefore targeted 22 educational facilities in 5 out of the 11 municipalities that were affected by the earthquake. The schools were selected based on the list approved by the Reconstruction Committee through the proposal of the Minister of State for Reconstruction. Out of that list, UNDP selected only the ones that were indeed affected by the earthquake. The original list included 11 facilities for renovation/repair and 11 facilities for complete reconstruction and contained a mix of kindergartens, 9-year schools, and high schools.

After the initial more detailed assessment of the damage by the engineers from the team in close consultation with the Institute of Construction (IoC), one kindergarten (Ballfeni in Kruja) intended for repair was replaced by another kindergarten in Kruja (Derede) which required full reconstruction. In addition, from the detailed assessment it became clear that the repair costs for five other schools would be higher than 80% of the estimated reconstruction costs, which meant that in accordance with the regulations as defined by the IoC, they changed from repair to reconstruction. Therefore, in the end 11 education facilities were reconstructed while 11 were repaired under Phase I of the EU4Schools programme (see for details Annex 3).

---

<sup>14</sup> Delegation of the European Union in Albania (2020); EU4Schools Annex I Description of the Action. Page 21







Before and after photos of "Dhosi Liperi" High school, Durrës. Visited by the evaluators in January 2023



Source: EU4Schools programme

At the end of November 2022, the civil works in 21 out of 22 education facilities had been completed or 95% of the target (see figure 4). One facility, “Dhosi Liperi” in Durrës, was still waiting to be connected to the electricity network, which was rather complicated due to technical issues. Only after connection, the Testing and Commissioning of the facility can take place. The actual construction of the last facility, “Ramazan Karaj” in Kruja, has not started yet even though the old building has already been demolished. Initially, the Kruje municipality could not provide a construction permit for eight months due to unclarity about the title deeds of the property, while afterwards, the contractor delayed the start of works waiting for a response on price increase claim due to impact of Ukraine War and challenges encountered on the ground to start works. In close consultation with the MoES and the local government of Kruja it has been decided to replace the Ramazan Karaj school with other education facilities in Kruja, while the Ramzan Karaj reconstruction will be resolved by the MoES.

Figure 4. Status of the 22 education facilities in Phase I of the EU4Schools as per 30-11-2022

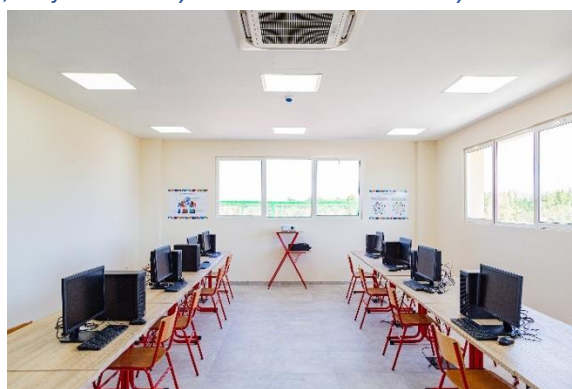
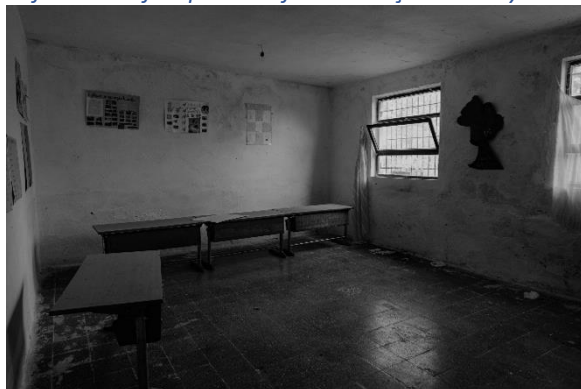
Defect Liability Period completed		<b>12</b>
Facility handed over		<b>8</b>
Civil Works completed		<b>1</b>
Pending		<b>1</b>

Source: Data provide by EU4Schools programme.

At the moment, the total number of pupils in all facilities combined has gone down from 7,856 to 5,962. This is partly caused by the fact that not all children have returned to their former school facilities after completion and partly because the number of pupils, especially in the rural areas, is decreasing due to migration and a reduction in average family size. The total m<sup>2</sup> of all facilities combined has however increased from 42,376 to 44,288 m<sup>2</sup>. This means that the average space per pupil has increased from 5.6 to 7.4 m<sup>2</sup>, which is an increase of 32%.

In terms of the improved quality of the education facilities as defined by the Build Back Better criteria, all facilities meet the Eurocode 8 standards for buildings in seismic areas, all facilities are now accessible for people in wheelchairs, all 16 9-year schools and high schools have sport facilities (compared to only 8 before), each has on average 3 laboratories (compared to 1.3 before), all facilities have an energy efficient heating and cooling system (compare to only 4 before) and meet basic health and safety standards like emergency exits and stairs, which were almost completely missing in the former buildings. All schools and kindergartens have been equipped with high quality and durable furniture, internet facilities and at least 10 computers for teaching purposes in the ICT laboratories. In most schools that were visited, the teaching materials in the science and biology laboratories and books for the library were not supplied yet, but this is a responsibility of the MoES.

*Before and after photos of "Korb Muça" Primary School, Krujë. Visited by the evaluators in January 2023*



*Before and after photos of Skënderbeu" High school, Krujë. Visited by the evaluators in January 2023*



Source: EU4Schools programme

As a result of these expansions, it is not anymore necessary to provide two shifts of teaching in most of the 9-year schools that were reconstructed, which improves the quality of teaching since the total number of contact hours between teachers and pupils increases effectively.

**Regarding the Build Back Together concept, as reflected in result 3 of the programme, the EU4Schools programme has completed during Phase I almost all its intended consultation meetings both during the initial design stage of the facility to select a preferred design option as well as the "place check" meetings that are organized after 80% of the construction work is completed during**

which the beneficiaries meet with the designer and contractor to check whether the agreed upon alterations have indeed been implemented. Note that due to the COVID-19 restrictions, it was not always possible to organise face-to-face meetings while the number of participants might have been affected as well, but on average between 15 and 20 people attended the gatherings.

In addition, UNDP has signed MoUs with all the municipalities included in the programme in which the responsibilities of each partner are clearly defined. In general, the municipality is responsible for:

- Completing all legal requirements to issue a construction permit,
- Demolish the old buildings if necessary and clear the building site,
- Ensuring that the new buildings are connected to the public utilities (mainly, water, electricity, and sewerage),
- Ensuring adequate maintenance and sustainability of the facilities after the handover (i.e., after the Defect Liability Period).

During interviews with all five municipalities, they confirmed their responsibilities in this regard, and they reconfirmed that they feel obliged to fulfil their functions as good as possible given their staffing and budget constraints.

**While the consultations contributed to enhance local ownership of the respective facility, they were also important as an instrument to increase the transparency and accountability of the programme at community and local level. At a higher level, the portal and the implementation of the communication strategy played on the one hand an important role in increasing the visibility of the programme, its reconstruction projects and the role of the EU and UNDP in the reconstruction process while they supported on the other hand the transparency and accountability of the programme.** Partners interviewed had often difficulties recalling the projects of the ADF or those implemented by the municipalities with support from the reconstruction funds, but they could easily provide details on the EU4Schools projects.

In addition to the completion of these activities and the realisation of the related results the team developed several products that enhanced the efficiency and effectivity of the programme as described in the relevant paragraphs below. Worth to mention are:

- The EU4Schools Procurement Strategy, and the related training modules that were provided online and onsite<sup>15</sup>,
- The EU4Schools Operational Manual with details on protocols, reporting, forms, etc. to be used by the contractors on site<sup>16</sup>,
- The Framework for Monitoring and Reporting Data (FMRD) for the EU4Schools Programme<sup>17</sup>,
- The Operational Manuals (and practical training) that were tailor made for each school for the operation and maintenance of all equipment (89 staff members were trained)
- An Occupational Health and Safety Manual and related training for all on site workforce of each contractor in which the COVID-19 safety regulations are integrated (86% of the workforce received the training)<sup>18</sup>.
- A Health and Safety leaflet and training I for teachers (in which 75% of the teachers participated),
- Active monitoring of UNDP H&S regulations by the onsite safety officer appointed by the contractor as well as the onsite supervising engineer and the H&S consultant who visited regularly as well as good communication between the actors especially on the implementation (and sometimes interpretation) of COVID-19 related health precautions

---

<sup>15</sup> UNDP (2021) EU4Schools Procurement Strategy

<sup>16</sup> UNDP (2020) EU4Schools Operational Manual

<sup>17</sup> UNDP (2020) EU4Schools The Framework for Monitoring and Reporting Data (FMRD)

<sup>18</sup> UNDP (2020) EU4Schools Occupational Health and Safety Manual

resulted in no health and safety incidents were recorded during the construction of the Phase I projects.

- The EU4Schools programme developed a basic online ICT training for teachers, which is open to all teachers in Albania. So far 700 teachers have completed the basic ICT training of 7 modules.<sup>19</sup>

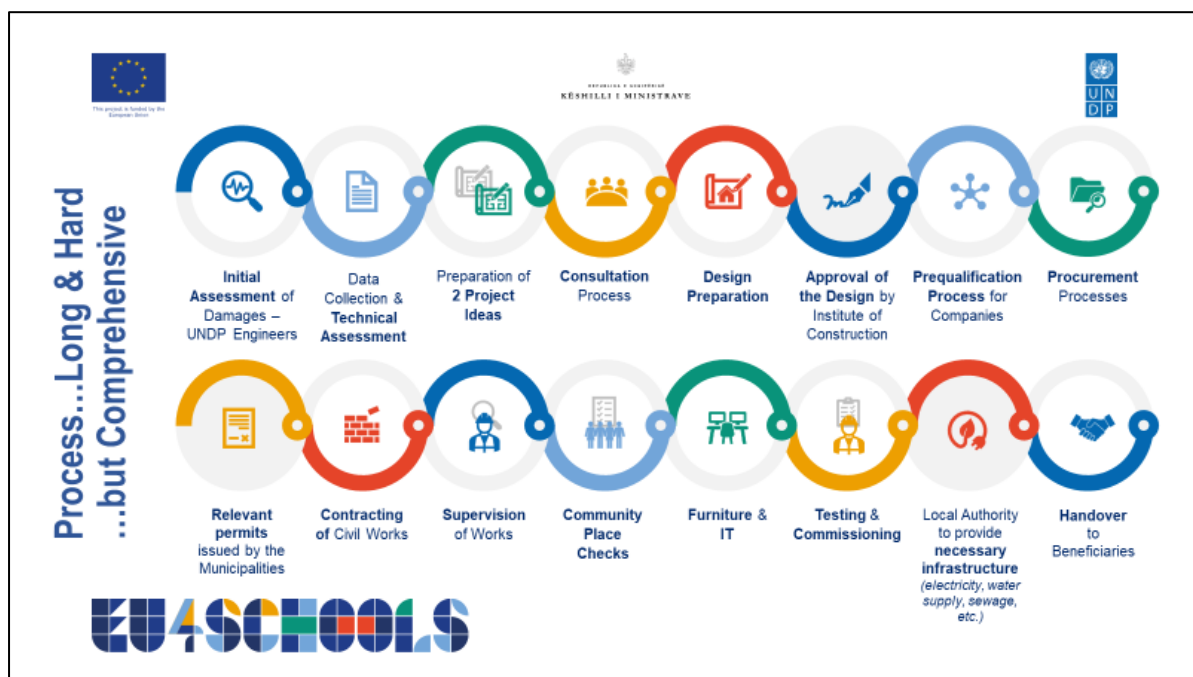
The performance of the EU4Schools programme on the result related to transparency and accountability is discussed in the next paragraphs.

### 5.3. Efficiency

The evaluation team used the following contextualized definition for efficiency: To deliver high quality education facilities in the shortest period possible ensuring that the programme achieves optimal value for money and is fully transparent and accountable.

In order to deliver the initial 22 and later on the 63 reconstruction and repair projects as efficient as possible, the EU4Schools programme has developed a comprehensive project management process consisting of 16 steps (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Project management process of the EU4Schools programme.



Source: EU4Schools programme

For each of the more critical steps in the process detailed guidelines and procedures have been developed regarding implementation and monitoring of progress. Based on SharePoint a specific and cheap data monitoring system has been developed by the programme in which all data provided by the various team members are integrated into one system that is accessible to all team members and contains links to important source documents. All changes made in the data are traceable. It keeps track of important deadlines or deliverables and notifies team members accordingly. Various dash boards have been developed which makes both programme and project management

<sup>19</sup> Based on data provided by Akademi.al.



as well as internal and external reporting much easier. **The system is linked to the external portal, which means that the portal is on a regular base updated and stays tuned with the internal data. Social media reports can easily be generated using the automatically generated data. As a result, the M&E system of the EU4Schools programme is the backbone of the programme and ensures optimal efficiency and transparency.**

Several of the above steps are discussed in the following paragraphs under the most relevant heading.

#### Tender process

**The EU4Schools team has developed, based on the very general guidelines from UNDP, a detailed tender strategy and related procedures that is regularly updated to integrate actual experiences.** E.g., in order to deal with the consequences of delays in obtaining the construction permit, the tendering guaranty was lowered from the normal 2% to 0.25% of the total contract sum, to reduce the burden on the shoulders of the contractors. Also in Phase II, several timelines for both designers and contractors were extended to further enhance the quality of the work done.

Since UNDP was not confined to use the GoA manual of construction of 2015 and related reference of costs estimates for materials as is required in building projects commissioned by the GoA, it could request the designers to prepare very detailed Bills of Quantities and use actual market prices as per the date of the actual tender notice. This helped to obtain realistic and competitive tender bids. As a result, even in several cases in which the construction permit issued by the respective municipality to the contractor to start with the actual construction was delayed, UNDP did not need to adjust the contract values for inflation.

In order to ensure that enough companies would participate in the tenders, especially during a period in which there was a sudden boom in demand for construction work, the programme decided to include a prequalification of companies in the process, which increased their interest to apply and speed up the actual tender evaluation process since all the basic requirements were already dealt with. In addition, the team decided to limit the number of calls to a maximum of two per 2 weeks. This might have caused minor delays, but these delays are compensated for by the increased number of competitive tenders that were received.

**The tender process applied by the programme was transparent, impartial and fair according to both design and construction companies who participated in various tenders and both won and lost tenders.** The financial proposal was the main criteria of the qualification. As mentioned by one of the contractors: "At the end of the tender process, if we were not selected, we would receive information on the scoring and values of the winner". This also helped them to draw lessons learned for the next phase.

#### Project implementation

The average construction time (i.e. from the start of construction to the completion of the actual construction both for reconstruction and repair combined) was 8 months (see Annex 3). The average time for the whole process from the start of the programme to the handing over to the municipality was 22 months, excluding the two projects that have not been handed over yet.

In several cases there were delays in the approval of the design by the IoC (which has been resolved over time) or delays between the approval of the design and the issuing of the construction permit by the respective municipality. These delays were outside the control of the programme and mainly due to problems related to the confirmation of the title deeds of the property or due to delays in the demolition of the old facilities. Additional delays were experienced at the end of the process as well when the testing and commissioning of the facility and therefore the actual handing over had to be

postponed due to the fact that the completed facilities were not yet connected to the electricity network. Compared to the average time that it takes for a similar school construction process in Europe, which is roughly 36 months, the average of 22 months is rather good certainly if one takes into consideration that the implementation was hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic from the start of the programme in April 2020 to almost the end of most construction works late 2021, as well as the shortage (and price increase) of building materials due to the war in Ukraine (although that has affected the Phase II projects more than the Phase I projects).

**The programme team assisted and enabled critical partners in the programme to implement their roles and functions as good and speedy as possible.** E.g., the IoC was supported by providing it with a standard template to assess designs, and they have adopted the process and operational procedures that were introduced by the programme which reduced the assessment process from one month to three days. Municipalities were assisted to sort out issues related to the formal ownership of the property or buildings as fast as possible to enable them to issue the construction permit.

The programme was granted two budget neutral extensions. An initial extension of 12 months extending the programme from 18 to 30 months to include the Defect Liability Period (DLP) of 12 months into the programme duration since the final payments to the contractors only take place at the end of the DLP. A second extension of nine months was granted to cover for the delays described above which were mostly caused by factors outside the control of the programme. The pending project in Kruje will therefore not be completed within the existing timeframe, which means that the UNDP and the EU need to take a decision on how to deal with this project.

#### Financial performance

Due to the fact that part of the budget of the second phase has been allocated to cover several extra costs of Phase I, instead of allocating extra budget to Phase I, which is technically not possible with emergency funding from the EU, it is difficult to assess the financial efficiency of Phase I separately from Phase II. In addition, the salaries of the UNDP staff members employed during both Phase I and Phase II (i.e., excluding the extra staff engaged during Phase II) have been covered by the budget of Phase II after the initial 18 months, while they continued to work part-time for projects included in Phase I. This of course blurs the overhead costs of Phase I.

Regarding the cost of construction of the individual projects, one may conclude that based on an assessment of a random sample of six tender evaluation reports for construction works, the most competitive qualified bid, which was in the end selected by the evaluation team remained in general 10-15% below the estimated costs based on the Bill of Quantities. **This is an indication that the tendering processes were indeed competitive, and that UNDP obtained the best value for money.** In addition, when assessing the list of design and supervision companies and contractors engaged by the programme, there is no dominance of any company neither in number of projects nor in the total contracted amount to a certain company. The contractor with the largest number and value of contracts, implemented only 2 projects with a total value of 17% of the total value of all contracts combined.

**The various detailed manuals and related procedures, the effective M&E system, quality assurance and contract management ensured that the EU4Schools programme met and even surpassed most UNDP quality standards both in process management as well as quality of results.**

Regarding the financial performance of the programme, the team was not able to come to a final opinion due to the fact the budgets for Phase I and Phase II have effectively been merged into one. It will therefore be important to assess the performance of the total programme as part of the evaluation at the end of Phase II.

## 5.4. Effectiveness

The evaluation team used the following contextualized definition for effectiveness: To construct education facilities that meet all quality criteria as defined by the GoA and the EU and that facilitate optimal learning conditions and generate maximum local ownership.

### Quality of the reconstructed or repaired facilities.

The EU4schools programme did not use any of the preliminary designs prepared by national or local partners for the 22 educational facilities. The programme decided to do so based on previous UNDP experiences implementing construction and rehabilitation works.

**This joint EUD/UNDP decision did cause some delays during the initial part of Phase I, estimated to be maximum one month, since it lengthened the design stage, but such delays were most likely compensated during the construction phase in which there were only a few problems with the approved designs.** The fact that the design company that was selected for each project was also responsible for the technical supervision of the construction and partly because each design was well scrutinized by the team and external agents, including an architect who checked whether the designs met all engineering and architectural standards and laws in Albania. During the interview, she mentioned that the pre-implementation work was of high quality, which was key for ensuring a smooth and almost uncomplicated construction process in most projects.

In addition, it became clear during the initial consultations between the team and school management that the MoES and therefore the IoC did not always have the right figures regarding the number of pupils in each school, which of course affects the size and design of the facility as well.

Also, in four of the facilities that were originally earmarked for repair it became clear during the detailed design process that due to structural damages to the buildings a complete reconstruction of the facility was necessary. If the original designs would have been used this would only have become clear during the actual construction process which would have caused a lot of extra costs and delays.

Whenever multiple options were available, the programme and designers choose for higher quality and durability above possible savings especially when higher quality equipment would contribute to lower the operational and maintenance costs in future, like for example with the selection of the heating and cooling systems.

**Interviews with school management, municipal staff, IoC, MoES and design and supervision companies and contractors confirmed that the EU4Schools Programme has managed to realise its objective to Build Back Better in practice.** This was confirmed by the site visits made by the evaluation team to eight of the facilities that have been completed. Most people interviewed compared the quality of the facilities built under the EU4schools to those built by the ADF. While the ADF focused on reconstructing the facilities as fast as possible, while adhering to the minimum existing national quality standards including the Eurocode 8 standards for the design of structures for earthquake resistance, and did not provide for furniture, **the EU4schools programme strived to achieve maximum quality standards, a high level of durability and optimum functionally without going overboard in fancy facades and unnecessary extravagances.**

Laws and standards for public construction works are defined in Albania, but in practice often not adhered to by construction companies since they are either too vague and ambiguous, leaving too much room for interpretation and therefore for practical savings while at the same time the quality or independence of the supervision is often questionable. **The programme tackled this successfully by defining (or requesting the designers to define) detailed quality standards and monitor the**

**adherence to these standards meticulously.** As confirmed by the director of IoC and several designers:

*“We see that the same companies are involved in other construction works but have not delivered the same quality of work, which is clearly the reflection of the management approach; the programme management has made the real difference.”*

**Having the design and supervision done by the same company turned out to be an effective approach in the given context, contributing to the quality of the end results and to both increased efficiency and effectiveness.** It also helped to tackle or clarify issues in the design that would come up during the actual construction process. The municipalities interviewed confirmed that by combining the design and supervision into one contract has worked very well, especially in this setting where an additional layer of in-house engineers supervised the entire process actively.

**Having two layers of supervision (designer and UNDP engineer) generated of course some extra costs but guaranteed that there was no compromise on the high standards especially regarding the quality of materials used.**

Active monitoring of the UNDP Health and Safety regulations by the onsite safety officer appointed by the contractor as well as the onsite supervising engineer and the Health and Safety consultant who visited each project regularly as well as good communication between the actors especially on the implementation (and sometimes interpretation) of COVID-19 related health precautions resulted in the remarkable feat that **no health and safety incidents were recorded during the construction of the 21 completed Phase I projects.**



*“Sherif Dervishi” 9-year school and Kindergarten*

### Consultation process

One of the innovative concepts developed and used by the EU4Schools programme is its stakeholder consultation process. The evaluation team randomly selected six schools for a more detailed assessment and site visit. Reports from the initial consultation process in these schools show that on average of 40 people participated in the each of the consultation exercises, usually a mix of teachers, parent, and pupils. They discussed two design options and selected one of them. In addition, relevant issues were discussed on which the UNDP engineers and designers provided feedback and if feasible they were integrated into the more detailed design. Examples were the separation of the kindergarten in a separate building or as a separate part of the building with a detached yard and entrance, the number of classrooms or storeys of the building, and the heating system to be used. Based on the consultations, the programme decided to opt for the Variable Refrigerant Volume or Variable Refrigerant Flow heating and cooling system in all facilities.



*“14 Nëntori” 9-year school*



**Working with two design ideas worked well. It prevented unrealistic or costly requests on the one hand while it offered a real opportunity for involvement in actual decision-making for the participants thus enhancing their ownership of the facility.**

School managers, teachers, and municipal staff were all positive about the process and its results. 226 or 90% of the 253 people who participated in the place check exercises that have been organised by the programme in the 21 facilities that have been completed in Phase I were “very happy” with the way in which their design suggestions were integrated in the actual construction of the building while 25 (or 9%) were “happy”.

While the above consultation process takes extra time to organise and it takes time to integrate the results in the design of the facility or to make alterations to the almost finished buildings, they do have huge benefits:

- The integrated suggestions increase the practical effectiveness of the design of the facility,
- They enhance local ownership of the facility and make it an asset of the community that can contribute to community building,
- They enhance proper use and maximum care of all the equipment installed, thus reducing maintenance and repair costs,
- They contribute to (re)establishing trust between the community and the Municipality and GoA.

**In all eight schools visited, the school management and the teachers present confirmed that they were consulted, that they discussed two school layout ideas, that their preferred option was adopted by the EU4schools programme, that additional request were discussed and integrated (where possible) and that they were involved in the place check exercise.** Where relevant they played an active role in checking the buildings on emerging defects during the DLP and reported these to the contractor and UNDP. In almost all cases the merging issues were resolved speedily and adequately.

Similarly, government officials in the five municipalities that were visited confirmed that the above consultations were held in their presence, that the request were seriously considered, and if financially and technical possible, the requests were integrated in the design and actual construction.

Municipalities are considering institutionalising the consultation process in future public building construction projects. Kamza municipality is already doing so for the schools it is building with funds from the national recovery fund. This could be related to the fact that Kamza municipality established a special Directory of Reconstruction and hired seven new staff members, mainly to cover the needs in the housing sector.

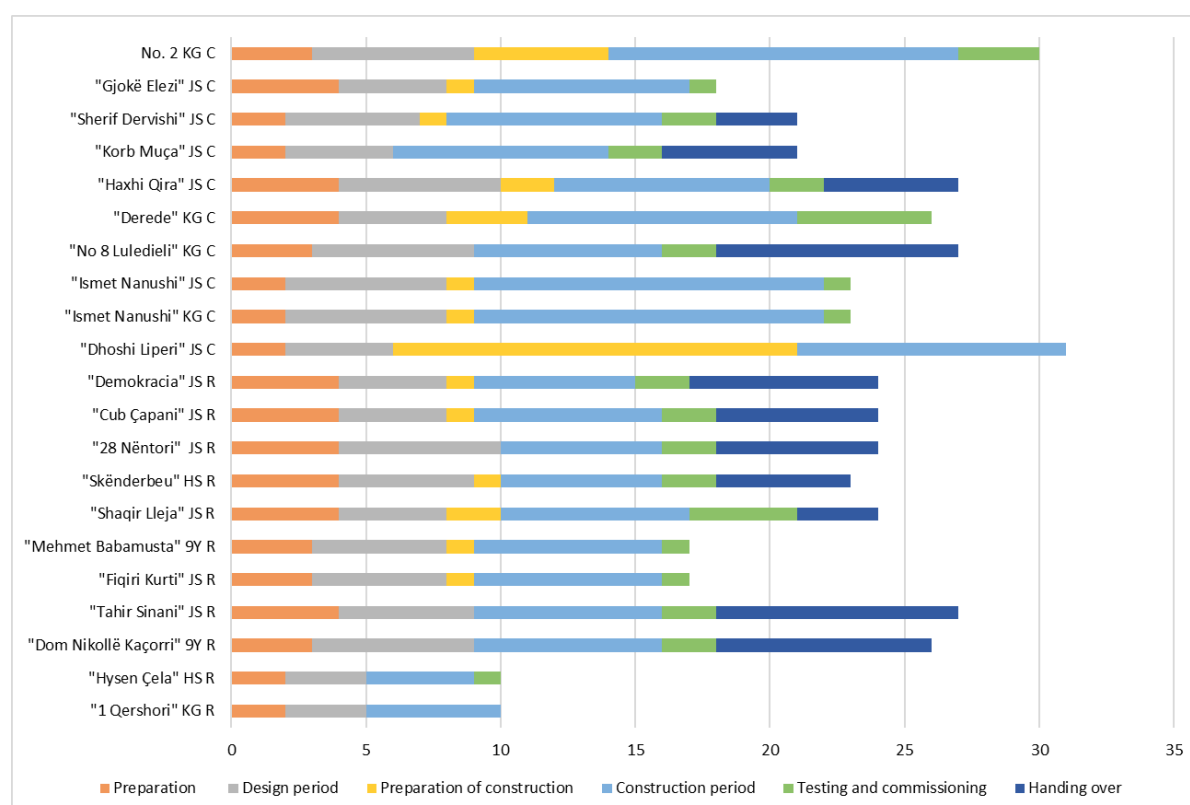
Other instruments used by the EU4Schools team to promote ownership of the facilities are the “I love my school, because...” exercise which encouraged children to express their appreciation for their new school and the “Name my school” initiative to name existing schools without a name after women national and local figures.

**In general, the team has done an excellent job at maintaining good and open communication lines with all stakeholders and it displayed a high level of responsiveness to concerns raised as confirmed by almost all stakeholders during the interviews.** Having such open attitude underpins full transparency but is in the Albanian context still rather exceptional. This openness helped to tackle potential problems during the construction process before they escalated and contributed to increased efficiency and effectiveness.

## 5.5. Impact

The EU4Schools programme has handed over 20 out of 22 intended education facilities in accordance with its BBB and BBT principles and it has done so within a reasonable time frame. One facility is awaiting testing and commissioning and one facility will be replaced by others in phase II. For the ones that are handed over, the average period from the start of the programme until the handing over of the facility was 22 months, (20,5 months for the facilities that were repaired and 24 months for the facilities that were reconstructed) (See figure 6 and annex 8.3).

Figure 6. Construction time of the education facilities built by the EU4Schools in phase 1 (in number of rounded off months starting from 1 April 2020).



Source EU4Schools programme.

Notes: KG = Kindergarten, HS = High School, JS = Joint School, 9Y = 9-year school, C = Construction, R = Repair  
 "Preparation" is the time from the start of programme to the signing of the design and supervision contract. The "design period" is the period between the start of the design and the signing of the construction contract. "Preparation of construction" is the period between the signing of the construction contract and the actual start of the construction (release of permit). "Construction" is the actual construction period until the building is ready for testing and commissioning. "Testing and commissioning" is the period between completion of the construction and the issuing of the final testing and commissioning report. "Handing over" is the time between the T&C report and the actual handing over to the municipality.

So far, 7,586 pupils have benefited from Phase I of the programme. All 37 external stakeholders that were interviewed by the evaluation team were very satisfied both with the technical and esthetical quality of the facilities as well as with the interaction process with the UE4Schools team, especially related to responsiveness and transparency. As one school manager mentioned:

*"It is the first time we are able to teach in such high-quality education facilities".*

Several professionals in the field of design/architecture mentioned that the EU4Schools programme has lifted the standard for the construction of education facilities to a higher level in Albania and that these standards and certain procedures used by the programme should be institutionalized.

An indication that the community appreciates the new facilities is the fact that several schools see an increase in applications from parents even outside their direct community to enroll their children in the school reconstructed by the EU4schools programme.

*“The way how design and functionality are implemented by the EU4Schools programme complements and helps a lot with the implementation of innovative programmes that we have integrated in the curriculum, such as green competence, arts, and crafts etc. Beyond functionality there are also the other elements integrated that help increase the competences and the awareness of pupils and communities. I. e. the EU4schools are ready to facilitate the future changes in education content and the ways in which education is delivered in Albania”.*

**Representatives of MoES**

A few unintended outcomes are worth to mention as well. As a result of the earthquake and the cooperation with the EU4Schools programme and possibly the ADF as well, **municipalities are more aware of their role in the management of education facilities**, the need to clarify title deed issues regarding public buildings, the need for a regular maintenance budget and for qualified staff to carry out certain maintenance works.

With assistance from the EU4Schools team, **the IoC has streamlined its assessment procedures of public building construction plans**, which enhances its capacities and limits the duration of the application process.

**The action contributed to building sustainable infrastructure and putting the guiding principles of recovery and reconstruction into action.** The intervention managed to integrate **Build Back Better (BBB) standards**, including multi-hazard disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems; rebuilding in line with international standards, with a focus on Eurocode 8; promoting a culture of resilience in development and maintenance of the infrastructure; and rebuilding stronger and safer in full consideration of the environmental standards. Other principles integrated into the programme are community participation, referred to as **Build Back Together (BBT)**, **human rights, environment and energy efficiency, health and safety and accessibility**.

*“EU4Schools is the programme with the best quality we have ever seen, not just in our municipality, but across the country. It is not just about the quality of infrastructure, as quality is reflected in every step of the processes implemented. We see that the same companies are involved in other construction works, but have not delivered the same quality of work, which reflects the management approach; **the programme management has made a real difference. We believe that the programme was able to strike a balance between speed and quality integrating all the required standards.** Politics may tend to rush processes, but this is not the way how it should be, we should not accept compromises over quality.”* **Local government official.**

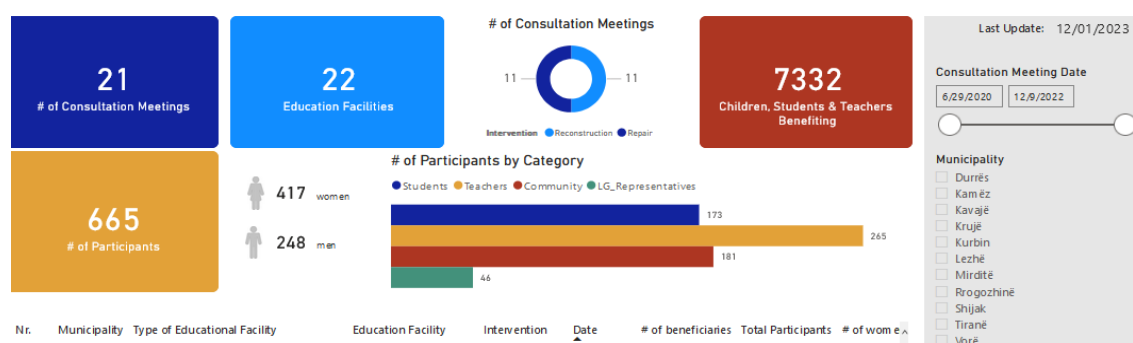
#### Crosscutting elements

The EU4Schools programme integrates the following cross-cutting elements:

- i. Gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities.
- ii. Accessibility and vulnerable groups.
- iii. Human rights and equal opportunities.
- iv. Environment and waste management.

**i. The programme paid careful attention to promoting gender equality and mainstreaming it across various activities.** The action targets women teachers, parents and girls attending education in the targeted facilities as stakeholders and end-users. Consultative processes have been part of each phase of the intervention, from the design to the implementation and finalisation of the infrastructural work, providing opportunities to identify and reflect the needs of women, girls and men and boys in the infrastructural interventions. Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men is one of the guiding principles of the programme and equal participation of both genders has been encouraged in every step and activity of the programme, both in consultations or the infrastructure workforce (though minor in representation), as well as among the programme team (staff composed by 4 women and 4 men). The programme implementation and interventions have been designed to be gender-sensitive, thus promoting social inclusion from a gender perspective. Programme reporting include also partially gender segregated data, see figure 7 below. During the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, 665 people were consulted where 63% were women and girls. Specifically, the share of women and girls was distributed across the various groups, such as 199 women teachers, 107 pupils (girls), 66 women from the community and 24 women local officials.

Figure 7. Gender distribution by category of participants in the consultation meetings.



Source: EU4School programme data

**ii. Accessibility was a key (mandatory) element introduced in every project both for reconstruction and repaired facilities,** designed to serve better pupils with special needs, but also to school staff, parents, and visitors. As mentioned, several times by the local officials, teachers and engineers met during the field mission, the reconstruction of the education facilities, was the momentum to properly introduce the infrastructural elements of accessibility, which was viewed as limited to ramps at the entrance of the education facilities (existing or newly built before the earthquake). As described also in the programme document, EU4Schools is committed to ensuring that the facilities are used by all, by adopting the “universal design” approach ensuring that the school is accessed and used: i) to the greatest possible extent, ii) in the most independent and natural manner possible, and iii) in the widest range of situations, without the need for adaptation, modification, or specialised solutions.

Moreover, the design and implementation took into consideration the unique requirements of the various groups of persons with disabilities, and addressed the various infrastructural barriers such as steps, heavy doors, desk space if they use a wheelchair, or additional storage space for a walking frame or crutches, improved lighting and clear visual contrasts on doorframes and support columns to address the needs of pupils with visual impairments. Whereas the calming environment with appropriate use of light and colour schemes to help the wellbeing of the pupils with emotional, psychological, or mental health difficulties. All the reconstructed schools have dedicated spaces for psychosocial support (missing in most of the existing schools) serving the wellbeing of all pupils.

Finally, the EU4Schools programme is in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (adopted by Albania in 2012), contributes to the implementation of the Law on Inclusion of and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (93/2014) which defines the responsibilities of to reduce/remove, the barriers faced by persons with disabilities to enable their equal participation in society; the Law on Pre-university Education (69/2012) providing for the education of children with disabilities in mainstream school and for the provision of an accessible environment; the measures related to the Accessibility area as part of the National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020. The implementation of action infrastructure projects is guided by the accessibility standards as defined in the existing rules and regulations, namely, the “Regulation on the Use of Spaces by People with Disabilities” approved by the Decision of the Council of Ministers, No.1503, dated 19.11.2008.

iii. The design and implementation of the Action **mainstreamed a human rights-based approach that struggles to eradicate discrimination and bring dignity and entitlement to excluded communities by prioritizing criteria in the selection of targeted education facilities.** The organised consultation meetings have been serving the infrastructure planning, development and implementation, by not only gathering the needs of the communities but also identifying and addressing potential negative human rights impacts early in the process. Particular attention was given to including these groups part of consultation meetings, while bringing the voice and presenting the interest of their community such as in the case “Ismet Nanushi” which is joint school and kindergarten serving Roma and Egyptian communities. Aiming to accommodate the needs of the communities and encourage the participation of Roma and Egyptian children in the early education, this new kindergarten is expanded its capacity and offers services to 120 children.

iv. **The EU4Schools programme ensured that all projects and designs are consistent with the national development plan and EU environmental standards.** Importance was paid to meet the environmental and greenhouse gas emissions standards, based on quality preliminary studies (strategic and regulatory impact assessments, cost-benefit analysis) referring to the international environmental and human rights framework as well as domestic law.

The Action promoted investment in **“sustainable, accessible, affordable and resilient quality infrastructure” and standardized environmental responsibility in infrastructure.** The implementation approach involved both “doing no harm” (or risk management) and “doing good” (or enhancing the economic, environmental, and social co-benefits) in infrastructure implementation. UNDP engaged in implementing the EU Construction & Demolition Waste Management Protocol in the post-earthquake reconstruction process, based on four main pillars<sup>20</sup> safety, space, sorting and segregating and recovering and repairing reusable items. Although the demolition of damaged buildings and clearance of construction sites remained the responsibility of the local governments, as part of the repairing and reconstruction process, attention was paid to waste segregation and transportation, as well as inert waste, hazardous waste and special waste treated and disposed of separately and according to their hazard potential. The detailed engineering designs have **integrated Energy Efficiency measures**, within the construction cost restrictions and local parameters.

---

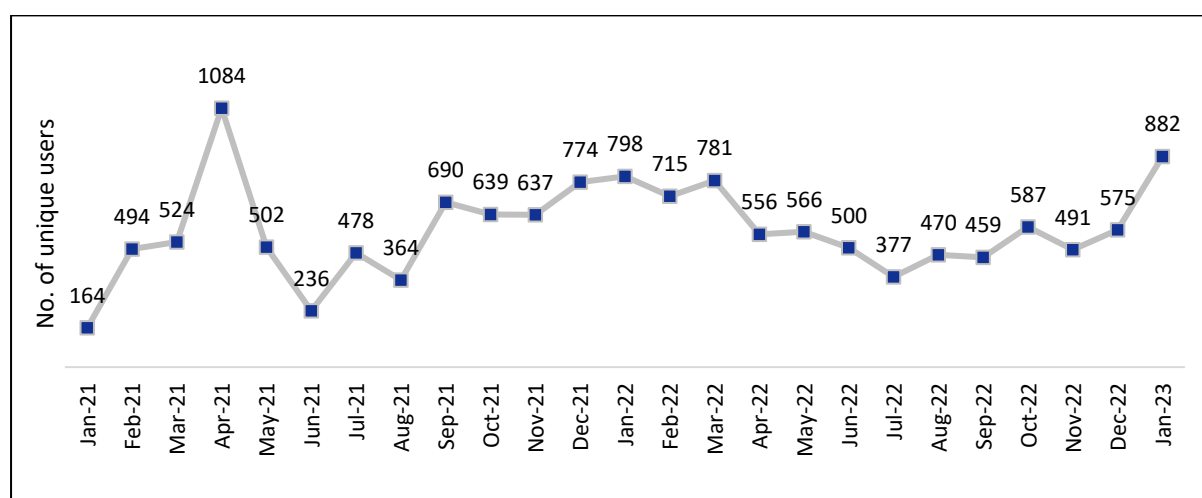
<sup>20</sup> As outlined also in the project document, the four pillars are: (1) safety: ruins and piles of C&D Waste constitute a health and safety risk for school children, students and teachers that needs to be eliminated; (2) space: C&D Waste on site occupies space needed for construction activities, either for the construction itself or for construction infrastructure; (3) sorting and segregating: while some components of C&D Waste have a certain value, either in the form of scrap metals or for re-use, other materials mixed into the piles may consist of hazardous materials (asbestos, cleaners, disinfectants) or specific waste types (electronic waste, white wares including air conditioners); and (4) recovering and repairing reusable items, e.g. furniture, blackboards, sports equipment, equipment from chemistry and physics laboratories, etc.

Visibility and communication

All communication and visibility activities organised by the EU4Schools programme are focused on the Phase I and Phase II activities of the programme combined. **The EU4Schools programme generated a very high level of visibility of both the programme’s activities as well as the role of the EU in the Albanian reconstruction process using a comprehensive public campaign strategy with a wide variety of communication means.** For many people it was the first time that they saw any result from Albania’s engagement with the EU.

The EU4Schools programme created a transparency portal (<https://eu4schoolsportal.al>), which is updated every two days to reflect the progress made by the programme. The portal is, on average, visited by roughly 600 unique visitors every month by (see figure 8). The portal has been considered by EU and other partners as an excellent model for transparency and accountability.

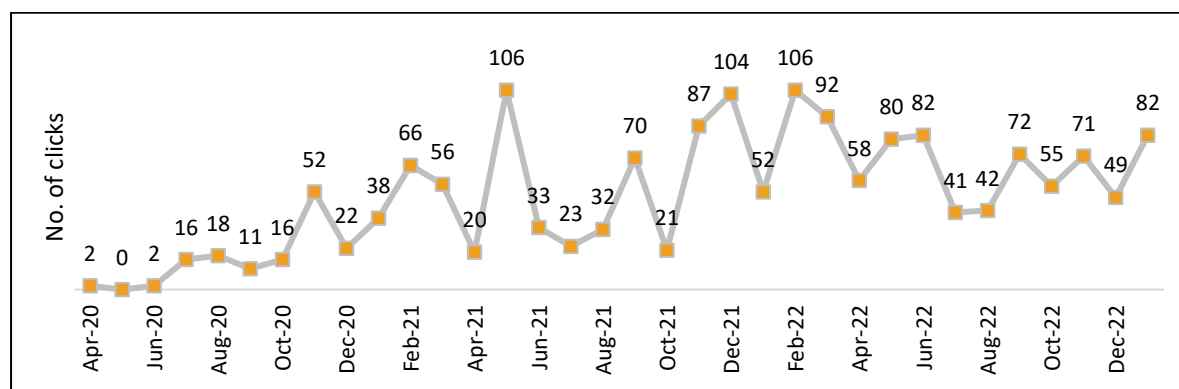
Figure 8. Number of unique visitors of the EU4Schools portal per month



Source: EU4Schools programme M&E system

The programme is very active on social media itself, but it also generates stories from other social media users (see figure 9). The feedback is in general very positive. People express their gratitude for the fact that their children have a far more conducive schooling facility than before, but also the optimism it generates in their communities.

Figure 9. Number of social media postings related to EU4Schools.



Source: EU4Schools programme M&E system



In 2021, the EU4Schools programme organised a travelling exhibition to “bring the construction site to the square of the towns where the programme is active”. The exhibition visited every municipality in the programme for several days and was visited by approximately 5,000 people.

Due to its success and visibility of results, the programme sites were several times visited by EU and Government dignitaries amongst others by the President of the European Commission Ms. Ursula von der Leyen and the Prime Minister of Albania Mr. Edi Rama in September 2021.

While the programme is of course easy to “sell” because of its apparent physical results, the communication strategy of the programme was effective in engaging actively with local journalists by offering them to visit and collect first-hand information (seeing is believing) as well as the use of real live stories told by the beneficiaries themselves.

## 5.6. Sustainability

The evaluation team used the following contextualized definition for sustainability: Are the programme outcomes institutionally, organisationally, and financially sustainable beyond the duration of the programme?

[Processes to ensure the sustainability of the programme intervention and results.](#)

**The EU4Schools programme integrated various measures to increase the sustainability of the reconstructed education facilities.**

The implementation of the first phase of the EU4Schools was initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic and the **work plan was carefully assessed to ensure that it reflected the measures approved by the GoA<sup>21</sup>**. Moreover, the programme team prepared online procurement processes, adopted virtual communication and consultation methodologies, as well as ensured that the information on Covid-19 prevention measures was visible and well-known by all actors involved in the process (including stakeholders and contractors). **UNDP was agile in adopting strategies to address significant challenges efficiently and effectively to better respond to emerging needs**, such as the post-earthquake impact and pressure to deliver, the pandemic, the general/local elections, and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

**The intervention design builds on the prior work of UNDP with vulnerable communities.** Through existing partnerships with local stakeholders and the accumulated knowledge of context and needs, ensured that the most suitable and sustainable solutions were found for each education facility.

Interviews and various programme documents revealed that **UNDP succeeded in its mitigation efforts acting as a facilitator and engaging with stakeholders to address the different needs related to the implementation of the action<sup>22</sup>**. These needs varied at different phases of the work, starting with property ownership and construction permits required before initiation of work. During the execution of construction works other needs emerged such as the finding of architectural sites, connection of the education facility to the water and sewage system, or to the energy grid and the required supply voltage for the newly installed equipment. More issues unfolded during the implementation, on top of those foreseen under this category of risks. UNDP remained fully engaged throughout Phase I following up and coordinating closely with the responsible institutions and agencies at the central and local level for addressing these issues in the shortest time possible.

---

<sup>21</sup> Risk no 2 (project document)

<sup>22</sup> Risk no. 1 Low level of coordination of local and central actors to share information and expedite the processes for the implementation of the intervention (Project document)

*“EU4Schools introduced a new spirit in the reconstruction of schools; elements that we have not seen before, having been introduced through the EU support”. Construction company.*

**Local officials and school staff valued the process led by UNDP for the EU4Schools programme, thanks to the significant involvement of the communities, including pupils and parents.** These consultation processes helped establish a **sense of belonging and shared responsibility** that would contribute to the sustainability of the investment in the longer run.

*“The process designed and implemented by UNDP is very different from existing practices, even at the level of the municipality or other public institutions. UNDP took the time to build ownership and ensure wide participation and gathering the views of all key actors (municipality, education directory, parents, teaching/educators and even communities). UNDP has reflected almost fully the views of actors consulted in the design and its final version. This approach was specific to this programme”. Local government official.*

*“These facilities are serving the communities and as direct users; they should always be part of such processes”. Local official.*

**UNDP’s approach to working with the public officials as partners**, and its understanding of contextual and institutional challenges, while maintaining a high standard of the implementation (from the design to the handing over of facilities), was highly appreciated by all partners. **Stakeholders highlighted that UNDP contributed to increased ownership and quality of results that should remain for many years to come.**

The approach of **engaging the local communities enhanced the likelihood of sustainability.** Empowering parents and pupils to actively participate in the decisions related to services they benefit directly from, such as education, can play a greater role in holding the key actors accountable for the teaching and learning needs and contribute to the maintenance of these facilities. Indeed, parents’ contributions have been acknowledged at all the visited schools. Though modest in size, these contributions have helped deal with immediate needs and gaps that the public institutions have failed to cover (including contributing to heating needs, payment for the school guard, teaching supplies etc).

Evidence suggests (stakeholder interviews and documents consulted) that **the intervention contributed to promoting good practices of consultative processes which can be implemented by all actors.** At the time of the evaluation of Phase I, these practices have already been adopted by some of the municipalities (i.e., the example of Kamza Municipality) as a new standard, for public consultation and stakeholder engagement during the reconstruction of the facilities under their direct responsibility.

The **Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) helped to outline the roles and obligations of UNDP and municipalities during the reconstruction process.** Moreover, Article II under the “Areas of Cooperation” set the role of UNDP in repairing and reconstructing facilities, as well as equipping them with the most necessary furniture and equipment. The role of municipalities consisted in dealing with land ownership and property related issues; following the procedures and issue of construction permits; and making the objects available to the UNDP contractor to start works according to the agreed timeline. **Moreover, MoU also outlines the role of the municipality as the responsible actor for the regular maintenance of the educational facilities repaired/reconstructed after the handover.** This instrument (MoUs) resulted to be a key document that clarified the roles and expectations of both parties, UNDP, and municipality.



The delivered trainings (for constructors, for the school staff, etc.) and prepared manuals (Operational and Maintenance Manual and Health and Safety Manual) have contributed to the **upskilling of the involved actors and building the resilience of local communities and thus the sustainability of the programme results**<sup>23</sup>. Various manuals and good practices as well as strategies for solutions contribute indeed to building the capacities of local officials, yet they need to be well documented and capitalised on, so this knowledge is not lost. The **Health and Safety Manual is approved by the MoES and can be further integrated into the mandatory training curricula for the teaching staff. While health has been integrated into the training curricula, safety was a new concept that was introduced after the earthquake.** Trainings on how to act in case of an emergency such as an earthquake have been ad hoc and not integrated as a permanent element of the curricula. This can be complemented with periodic trainings on how to react in times of disaster and schedule periodic drills in each facility. The education system needs to consider sustainable recovery strategies that empower the communities and think beyond just reconstruction emergency needs.

#### Limitations to the sustainability of the intervention.

Findings from the evaluation confirmed that despite all efforts by the programme mentioned above, following the handover of the repaired/reconstructed education facilities, **the sustainability of investment is already facing serious risks due to:**

- (i) **The lack of awareness and capacities to plan and secure the necessary municipal resources,**
- (ii) **Limited financial means to allocate the necessary resources, and**
- (iii) **The lack of capacities both at the school and municipality level to operate and maintain the installed the advanced technology equipment.**

Although all the facilities are thermally insulated and several measures are taken in order to ensure energy efficiency in the long run<sup>24</sup>, yet some local officials stated that they expect an increase in maintenance costs by nearly 200% for the new schools, including those built by the EU4Schools programme as well as by other actors. Only the energy bill has increased by 40% and some also maintained that by January they have already exhausted the fund for covering energy expenses and they can only cover 50% of the operational costs overall. This is also due to the fact that schools did not have a central heating/cooling system before and in most of the schools their capacity has also increased.

***“The work is well done and with materials of good quality. The concerns remain on the maintenance and use of the equipment which requires specialized support. These comments were shared with the LGs and were also made part of the commissioning reports. Another concern is the fluctuations of the energy power – we are referring to equipment that is sensitive to energy fluctuations and might damage them”. Construction company.***

The programme has prepared and delivered the handover of each education facility together with the **operational and maintenance manual including estimates of approximate maintenance costs** to help the municipality in the planning process. **The appointed staff at each education facility have also been trained to operate the equipment.** However, interviews with the school staff, municipalities and programme team confirmed that **there are limited capacities to operate the equipment or ensure its**

<sup>23</sup> The last progress report (November 2022) indicated that 358 teachers and students have participated in 19 Informative and awareness sessions organized on issues related to health and safety in the facility environment.

<sup>24</sup> All the facilities are thermally insulated to reduce heat loss from the facade, the roof/terrace and ground floor and windows are double glazed with low heat transmission. The installed lightings are led, and energy efficient and the heating and cooling systems are energy efficient as well. With regards to kindergartens and creche, solar panels for the hot water are installed to reduce the energy consumption.

**regular maintenance.** The interviewed municipal staff are aware of these issues, but not yet prepared to mobilize the resources needed. If these resources, both financial and technical, will not be allocated shortly, the costs of maintenance and repair will significantly increase over time and impact the longer-term operation of the equipment and upkeep of education facilities.

***“Maintenance is a major problem yet is not sufficiently discussed. Many issues have unfolded with the reconstruction processes which are linked to the decentralization and unfunded mandates. These become more painful for the LGs that have expanded as a result of internal migration. The unconditional transfer does not reflect the real needs. Even big municipalities have financing gaps for education. There is an issue with the planning of resources also, which could be linked to the governance culture. The decisions for budget planning end often with the approval of infrastructural investments, but with very little attention to maintenance. This is behavioural and a mentality that is visible across the public sector, not specific to a particular municipality. There is a big need to have informed discussions on maintenance costs with the help of the EU and UNDP”. Local official***

In one of the municipalities, a maintenance team is in place for the last 2 years, but only 2 out of 6 staff members have some relevant qualifications. Some other municipalities have more staff, yet all agree that for certain services such as the maintenance of the elevators, they would need to outsource such services. It is concerning that the municipalities visited are not fully prepared to cover either the maintenance needs or costs of the new facilities. For the moment they rely on the fact that the equipment is new and would not need immediate maintenance service. This is again an illustration of the (lack of) planning.

Moreover, the investment and quality of education services provided through the reconstructed education facilities (and the system overall) are also hindered by the lack of support staff appointed at each facility, including cleaning and security staff. In some facilities, especially in rural areas, they have not been hired yet. In some schools, the management and education staff together with the children clean and maintain the school together.

Some of the major factors which influence the sustainability of the EU4Schools programme are:

- **Adequate financing for fully covering the maintenance costs of the education facilities:** to be negotiated with the central level to provide adequate education services and ensure sufficient resources for properly maintaining facilities and installed equipment. Interviews revealed that there is a lack of accurate information on the maintenance costs for the new facilities, which can feed into the discussions with the MoFE and MoES on the size of support to LGs.
- **Adequate human resources appointed to each facility.** As the ownership of the new schools is being transferred to the respective LGs, adequate financial allocations should also be planned for hiring support staff in line with the size and capacity of the reconstructed facility. This is key to ensuring the sustainability of the investments, which the country would not have been able to accomplish without support. There are schools with no cleaning staff at all or insufficient staff for the increased capacities of these facilities. In addition, not all schools have security guards, which is another task that falls under the mandate of the local governments.

There is also another type of human resources needed – namely **specialised technicians to support the maintenance of specialised equipment installed.** All municipalities met during the evaluation stated that their existing inhouse maintenance team lacked this type of capabilities and knowledge. Some of the knowledge required is very specific to the type of equipment (i.e., heating/cooling systems) and it is unlikely that training the existing staff of the municipal team would address the needs. However, most of them still prefer to have inhouse specialised staff as outsourcing maintenance would increase the costs.

***“Financing maintenance is one aspect, but capacities of staff to help in maintenance is also key and needs training. We were facing problems when the works were completed, and companies were calling us to send over someone so that they could explain how the equipment should be used. We had no one to send it. Schools also did not have an administrator. This can also be done through outsourcing, as private companies have more chances to have staff with the knowledge to ensure proper maintenance. There are many needs for ensuring good maintenance, including funds, HR and capacitating the staff”.*** **Local official.**

***“The maintenance team in the municipality needs further training. For more specific tasks specialized technicians are needed. Each school has different brands of elevators or heating/cooling, and it is challenging to maintain”.*** **Local official.**

**Supplying the necessary materials for the daily operation of the education facilities.** The school management is not actively involved in the planning process of either at local or central level (MoES) regarding the supply needs. Some school staff shared that they lack cleaning materials for the entire year. In some cases, these materials are supplied at the beginning of the year and no longer provided if finished or replacement is needed. Schools do not have any budget of their own and these have been covered through their own (personal contributions) or parents ‘contributions. While we also noticed that though the schools visited have now labs and libraries, those labs and libraries have not yet been equipped with the materials needed to serve their purpose. Providing the didactic materials to schools and other supplies for the teachers is the responsibility of the MoES. At the time of the field visit (January 2023), only one school had received some materials for the physics lab, and another one had received some books for the library.

**The capacities at the central and local level,** to adequately plan and budget for covering the maintenance needs.

***“A deeper analysis of the schools’ maintenance is very much welcomed and needed. However, the methodology should be carefully drafted, and sampling could be much wider and perhaps including the schools built by ADF or TM also. In addition, the analysis should take into consideration the distribution of schools by different geographical areas which have different climacteric conditions as their maintenance costs would also defer and should be considered”.***

**Public official**

**Interest and commitment** from the central level and Mayors, to prioritise the sustainability of earthquake related investments, but also of the existing facilities, as they are elements that contribute to the access and quality of education.

***“Mayors plan as politicians, not as local administrators; they plan budgets and Investments that do not correspond to the resources. The electricity costs planned for the schools in one year were exhausted in 4 months”.*** **Local Official**

## 6. Lessons learned and the potential for scaling up

**The EU4Schools phase I used approaches and mechanisms that have generated experience and knowledge and lessons learned.** They were consolidated and integrated in the second phase of the programme and can be further strengthened and scaled up. The development of various strategies, manuals and trainings can be reviewed at the end of the programme. The experience generated through the consolidation of various processes of repair and reconstruction of education facilities has helped the programme **reflect and capitalise on each key step**. Hence contributing to a better assessment of the risks involved in such complex contexts, greater agility, and adequate strategies regarding enabling factors that could lead to a positive outcome.

All stakeholders agreed that the standard of the repaired/reconstructed education facilities through the EU4Schools programme is the highest witnessed in Albania, not only in terms of designs, but also because of functionality details making a significant contribution to the teaching and learning outcomes.

*“The designs of the schools from EU4schools are more detailed than the usual standard; The projects have been of higher quality than those of other entities. All decisions were agreed upon and reasoned in close communication with the technical staff. What I liked in the EU4S designs is the use of communal spaces; the hall is viewed as a space that unites pupils; all spaces are very well used and functional, responding to how teaching and learning should nowadays be. Integrated courtyard to engage with the communities (including supported access to the school space after school hours)”. **Institute of Construction***

**The programme periodically documents the lessons learned** (progress reports, filed visit monitoring reports, activity reports, a consolidated and updated periodically M&E electronic system) and there are good internal coordination mechanisms in place for enhancing knowledge sharing and capitalisation. Yet, **there is no reflection and capitalisation on the recovery and reconstruction process overall from the GoA**, on the education sector at large, this programme in particular or interventions from other actors engaged in the recovery of the education sector.

**The EU4Schools programme is implementing a comprehensive and effective communication strategy**, which has contributed towards its greater transparency and accountability. The portal that has been developed and regularly updated is easy to access and provides all relevant key information in a consumer friendly manner and therefore contributes to the programme objective of maximizing transparency and accountability. It has also led to good documentation and dissemination of the process, and in particular its human dimension, through various collected testimonies and human stories which are all available online having been disseminated through various communication channels.

**The main lessons learned linked to the programme delivery were, understandably for such an intervention, mainly operational. A reflection process to document and analyse the main consolidated processes, can be initiated prior to finalisation of the phase II.** The results of such reflection will be key to supporting the institutionalisation and potential scaling up of such processes, both in the immediate period (EU4School II) and over the medium-term measures of government.

**Following the available evidence and the feedback from key stakeholders, evaluators assess that overall, the results are highly satisfactory.** Some of the actions’ scaling up would involve the policy dialogue with the GoA to promote awareness and interventions in support of education facilities’ maintenance. It is also very relevant to share and support the transfer of good practices between the LGs and identify various approaches employed to address the challenges they are facing in the management of education facilities.

A summary of the key lessons learned identified is presented below:

*Lesson 1:*

**Reconstruction cannot be separated from recovery and the resilience building of key actors and communities.**

*Lesson 2:*

**Taking the time necessary to implement fully the guiding principles of reconstruction, BBB and BBT are essential for ownership and sustainability.**

*Lesson 3:*

**Building resilience and ownership through local partnerships at the municipal and community level.** Some of the most effective mechanisms for ensuring that the needs are reflected are based on community mobilization which can also result in very effective longer-term maintenance of the education facilities.

*Lesson 4:*

**A programme design that is constantly informed by information on relevant developments within its context and constant reflection is better able to include advanced risk management strategies.**

*Lesson 5:*

**Investing in M&E systems that are systematically updated has multiple positive effects**, in terms of increased transparency and improved communication but also in terms of improved internal management.

*Lesson 6:*

Having a communication strategy in place, especially for such a programme of high public interest was key. **Seeing is believing** – with journalists was a new positive approach to engagement and communication. **Featuring stories of beneficiaries and how engagement contributed to building trust in the process** is very important.

*Lesson 7:*

**The reality of reconstruction and recovery is more complex than initially anticipated. Local processes can be unpredictable and might require more time than foreseen.**

*Lesson 8:*

Some elements are identified as key for the planning process: 1) **ensure data accuracy**; 2) **consideration of various process features** linked to the investment (whether the site has archaeological value, clearing the site etc) as well as ensure a common understanding of roles and responsibilities of various actors.

*Lesson 9:*

Before the end of Phase II, **there is a need to engage in policy discussion about the maintenance costs for these schools.** Discussions with various actors confirmed that **LGs continue to be in denial of the magnitude and importance of this issue.** Sustainability is challenged by the lack of funds or resources of the LGs to maintain the new schools.

*Lesson 10:*

**GoA did not engage in a wider coordinated and structured reflection to capitalise on the processes and the lessons learned, but instead tended to focus on quick fixes and solutions linked to immediate needs and goals.** This approach affected the public's trust levels.

*Lessons 11:*

The reconstruction of the education facilities **highlighted the existing deep issues related to decentralisation such as clarity of roles and unfunded mandates.**

*Lesson 12:*

The programme has contributed towards the **transparency of the reconstruction process.** This has been an issue repeatedly addressed in media reports. Yet it has not been adequately addressed by the GoA and as such, it jeopardised the efforts to coordinate and address the post-disaster needs.

**Lessons learned from this programme could contribute to improving the relevant legal framework for the reconstruction of education facilities.** These lessons are valuable for producing concrete recommendations for the government to reflect on and take action to address. The programme which is composed of a multidisciplinary team can help summarise the gaps and issues identified in the legal framework that can be addressed by the policymakers.

From our meetings with the public institutions, experts and contractors involved in the programme, the following aspects have been identified. They can be further elaborated in a specific document with issues and recommendations for the GoA:

- ***The standards for the school infrastructure need to be revised to better reflect all elements that impact learning outcomes.***
- ***The current legal framework addresses the main needs of the functionality, but misses important elements, such as specifications of the materials to be used, their quality and performance.***
- ***There is a need to standardise the process of how the design for schools should be detailed. Maintenance is an element overlooked and it is important to prepare instructions on how it should be done.***
- ***The issue of green building and efficiency is addressed in the legal framework, yet efficiency could be more emphasised.***
- ***All projects implemented under this programme have benefited from the international standards transposed. These elements transposed could be summarized and presented to the GoA.***
- ***The reference costs in the manual for construction date back to 2015 and need to be updated. The team can share their assessment which has shaped the financial planning of this intervention with the responsible institution, MoEI. The document can also feed into the initial reflections which hopefully will inspire a market assessment and update the manual.***
- ***The current reference costs do not have an impact on the programme, but the planning and quality of works of processes led by the GoA, and the economy overall.***
- ***Elements addressing accessibility need to be specified, beyond the ramps at the entrance of each facility. There is room for more detailed instructions either in the legal framework or through specific instructions.***
- ***It is important to continue educating the school communities –academic staff and pupils on how to maintain the facility and take care of the space and equipment.***



## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

### Programme design and relevance

Given the limited financial and management capacities of the Government of Albania to address all the needs that emerged from the earthquake in 2019, **the EU4schools was and is highly relevant to complement the efforts by the GoA to ensure a speedy rehabilitation of the educational facilities that were damaged by the earthquake of 2019.** The EU4Schools Programme added additional management and intervention capacity to the process and lifted the design and functionality of education facilities in Albania in general to a higher level. In addition, through its BBB and BBT approach the programme operationalised European standards and values that supports Albania's ascension process and the internalisation of democratic practices in Albanian society.

### Programme progress to results achievement

**The Programme has been successful in delivering the planned activities and outputs, despite a very challenging crisis context.**

The EU4Schools programme managed to strike the right balance between speed of delivery of the education infrastructure on the one hand and considerations regarding stakeholder involvement, beneficiary participation and adherence to high quality standards in the design and delivery process on the other hand.

By adhering to promises made, by being transparent and inclusive in all its processes, and by observing in practice the highest possible standards, the EU4Schools programme has proven that even within a complex setting and troubled by multiple external crises, it is possible to deliver education facilities in a cost-efficient manner that are in practice becoming the new standard for school construction in Albania.

### Programme management and adaptation

**The EU4Schools programme Phase I has delivered its planned activities and results as described in the Description of the Action of the EU4Schools programme and in accordance with its work plan and budget.** It is, except for one project, on track meeting its targets by the end date of the extended programme.

The programme did experience several externally caused delays that are inevitable in this kind of programmes. These delays were easily detected and adequately addressed mainly through hands on support to its partners by the various team members. Any deviations or delays to the work plans are all well documented.

A few major changes were made with regard to the original designs of several projects mainly due to the fact that a more detailed assessment of the damage caused by the earthquake to several of the education facilities included in Phase I necessitated a full reconstruction of the facilities instead of a repair process. The programme, in close consultation with the IoC, the EUD and the Reconstruction Committee of the GoA, decided to complete all 22 projects on its original list including these necessary changes instead of reducing the number of projects to remain within the original budget ceiling. The additional budget of €5.6 million is covered by Phase II of the programme.

**The effectiveness of the programme was strongly supported by a high level of flexibility and agility and a fast-learning ability of the team.**



The automated M&E system of the EU4Schools programme and its related portal are exemplary for these types of programmes which manage many individual projects and a huge volume of data. It has the potential to become the standard for the next generation of M&E systems in UNDP.

#### Sustainability and ownership of the programme results

Overall, **the progress to date of the EU4Schools programme to ensure the sustainability of the results after the end of the programme is satisfactory.** Moreover, it is fully aligned not only with the priorities set by the government on the post-earthquake reconstruction and recovery efforts in the education sector, but the results have fully integrated the needs of the communities (users of the service) through well designed consultative processes.

The EU4Schools programme has succeeded in **delivering sustainable results (building sustainable infrastructure) and integrating the guiding principles of recovery and reconstruction into action,** particularly BBB, multi-hazard disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems in line with international standards, with a focus on Eurocode 8 and rebuilding stronger and safer in consideration of the environmental standards, energy efficiency, and health and safety. The high-quality education facilities reconstructed by EU4Schools, are also contributing as examples of the adequacy of education service standards and will be putting pressure, through the increased awareness of the service users (school staff and communities), that such results are replicated in future investments in the sector.

The EU4Schools programme was singled out for **promoting a culture of resilience in the development and maintenance of the infrastructure** by integrating into the programme a strong component of community participation (BBT), human rights and accessibility. Through the implementation of the BBT approach the programme ensured reflective planning and implementation, that is responsive to the needs of the service users and empowers them to become more resilient.

Approaches and instruments used in the programme, such as MoUs and working in close partnership with the key stakeholders, **contributed to strengthening the capacities and accountability of relevant actors in the public actors at the central and local level in the recovery processes in line with international standards.**

**The various tools and manuals prepared by the programme are an important contribution to the sustainability of the results.** The example of the Municipality of Kamza in integrating the consultation approach into their process, underlines the potential for further consolidation and integration of various good practices and lessons learned deriving from the implementation of this programme. The programme has provided valuable technical support/ advice to the government linked to the planning and development of education infrastructure. In addition, the tailored support that has been provided to key LGs and agencies through the various technical steps of the process and the outcomes are integral to building national/local capacity and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the programme results.

#### Recommendations for integration into Phase II of the EU4Schools programme.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation team has drafted the following recommendations for further consideration by UNDP management.

1. **Regarding all operational matters, including process management, procedures, M&E practices, quality assurance, partnership management and external communications, the EU4Schools programme has performed exemplary, and no major adjustments are necessary for the successful completion of Phase II.** The programme has so far managed to strike the right balance between speed of delivery and ensuring high quality standards in its processes and in the completion of the education facilities. The programme should continue to maintain its learning by doing mentality, its active risk management and agility and continue to make adjustments to its processes and procedures in a gradual manner when internal reflection on the existing ones shows that further improvements in efficiency and effectivity can be made.

2. **The data management system developed by EU4Schools programme** that is used for internal M&E and management as well as for external reporting and sharing reduces reporting time, generates automatic reports, and improves transparency and therefore **has a huge potential for UNDP world wide and could easily be integrated in every large project**. It is recommended that UNDP Albania shares its experiences in this regard, together with lessons learned, protocols, tender procedures, and other templates developed by the EU4Schools programme with other countries with similar infrastructure support programmes, the UNDP Crises Management Bureau and infrastructure academy.
3. Given the weak planning and financial management of the Municipalities involved in the programme and the lack of existing provisions to ensure that the operational and maintenance costs of the educational facilities will be guaranteed, but also to reduce the electricity bills of the schools, **it is advised that any budget space available in the programme will be used to install solar power systems in all facilities that have been excluded if this is technically possible**.
4. In several education facilities some of the equipment installed was already damaged due to unauthorized use or vandalism. E.g. in one school the fans of a heat pump were damaged by pupils. **It is recommended that the team engineers together with school management check whether the equipment installed in the facilities are vandalism proof and if necessary, implement additional damage prevention measures**.
5. Regarding the financial performance of the programme, the team was not able to come to a final opinion due to the fact the budgets for Phase I and Phase II have effectively been merged into one. **It will therefore be important to assess the financial performance of the total programme as part of the end evaluation after the completion of Phase II**.
6. The EU4Schools programme managed to combine different profiles and technical skills implementing an intervention that goes beyond purely an infrastructure investment by blending well all the multisectoral technical expertise and support. Even though the core focus of the programme is to address the post-earthquake infrastructure needs in the education sector, the programme successfully managed to integrate some soft components that carry the long experience of the UNDP in the country adding complementary knowledge and value to the results and longer sustainability.

**The EU4schools programme is very well designed combining a range of interventions, mechanisms, and instruments, to generate a rich experience and knowledge that can be further disseminated and scaled up.** Indeed, the lessons learned, and their dissemination are essential to building longer-term sustainability and the potential for scaling up the results. To contribute further to the sustainability of this important intervention in the sector, and before the end of the second phase of the programme, **it will be important to support wider reflective processes with the central and local government to promote the institutionalisation of key processes and approaches. The evaluation recommends that towards the end of Phase II the UNDP and the EUD support the GoA through its Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and Ministry of Education and Sports to organise a national workshop focussing on lessons learned from the reconstruction process.** The scope of such a workshop could be the education sector in particular, or the whole reconstruction process in general including lessons learned for future disaster management and institutional response. Thus, making an extra effort forward looking, jointly with EUD, would be beneficial

for the sustainability aiming to consolidate some of the results that would contribute to the institutionalisation of best practices, processes, capacities and encouraging lessons learned across municipalities and with the central government.

7. **The major recommendation of this evaluation focuses on the development and implementation of additional activities to further enhance the long-term sustainability of the investment, such as the adequacy of resources and capacities to ensure smooth operation and maintenance of the facilities.** Timing is of the essence for addressing this main risk, as some of the facilities are already transferred to the LGs and others are in the process. Findings from the evaluation confirmed that despite all efforts, following the handover of the repaired/reconstructed education facilities the sustainability of the investments are already facing serious challenges due to (i) the lack of awareness and capacities to plan the necessary municipal resources; (ii) limited of financial means to allocate the necessary resources; and (iii) lack of capacities both at the school level and municipalities to operate and maintain the advanced technology and equipment installed.

These issues go beyond the direct influence of the EU4Schools programme, however, the education facilities constructed by the EU4Schools programme are affected and thus the reputation of all the partners might be damaged if the facilities are not functioning properly anymore after a few years. Both UNDP and EU are well positioned to introduce potential Public Finance Management improvements in the policy dialogue with the government. The programme could provide arguments and well documented evidence which can contribute to a more effective policy dialogue. **A good starting point would be the implementation of a study commissioned by the EU4Schools programme before the end of phase II on the key elements impacting the sustainability of education facilities, based on a carefully designed methodology agreed upon with the MoES and EUD.**

**The objective of the study would be to support the government in clarifying the roles and strengthen the delivery operations of the education services through transparent financing mechanisms that reflect the needs and capacities of each LG.** It would be ideal if such a study could be implemented before the end of Phase II, and it should reflect on the ongoing decentralisation process and the role and task division between central and local government in the education sector and their capacities (both in funding and staffing) to implement their functions adequately. It should address related institutional arrangements, clarity on functional task divisions, existing public finance mechanisms and planning and budgeting capacities.

The study should start by calculating in a selected number of municipalities with different profiles the combined future annual operational and maintenance costs of all education facilities combined falling under the mandate of the municipality. This should include an overview of staffing costs related to operations and maintenance. Next it should establish the expected gap between the required budget for operational and maintenance costs and the actual (or projected) budget, as the basis to start a dialogue of how the gap should be addressed and which government institution is responsible for financing certain functions. The study could present various options (and assess practical solutions applied by various municipalities) with advantages and disadvantages as to how the gap could be bridged e.g. through a conditional intergovernmental fiscal transfer or through own source revenues of municipalities.

## 8. Annexes

## Annex 8.1 Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Key dimensions of analysis/ sub-questions	Data Sources and collection methods	Success standards
RELEVANCE	<i>To what extent is the intervention and design of the EU4Schools programme relevant to the needs and priorities? and adequate to address the identified problems?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the objectives of the EU4Schools programme relevant to address the needs of the beneficiaries at various levels?</li> <li>• Was the implementation modality of the programme relevant in view of the Covid-19 pandemic?</li> <li>• Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?</li> <li>• Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?</li> <li>• How was the process of identifying the local needs to be addressed through this programme?</li> <li>• In what ways does the “Build Back Better” and “Build Back Together” approach of UNDP distinguish itself from other approaches and has this been relevant in the specific Albanian context?</li> <li>• How have the critical principles of transparency, accountability and inclusiveness been integrated into the programme design?</li> <li>• Have the objectives of the programme been translated into SMART outputs and outcomes?</li> <li>• Did the EU4Schools programme in its design pay sufficient attention to gender mainstreaming, to addressing the interests of marginalised groups in society and to social and environmental sustainability?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PDNA</li> <li>- Programme documents and progress reports, including the ToC and the LF.</li> </ul> <p><b>Methods:</b></p> <p>Key informant interviews, group interviews, focus group discussions with programme managers and key stakeholders like the EUD, MoES, IoC, ADF and LGs.</p>	Needs highlighted in the PDNA. GoA education facilities infrastructure standards. EU and UNDP standards.
COHERENCE	<i>To what extent has UNDP coordinated effectively with the key stakeholders (national and local) and other partners and created synergies in the delivery of assistance?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What coordination mechanism exist (to ensure inter-connectivity among activities within the programme)? Is a partnership strategy in place, especially regarding the involvement of beneficiaries at various stages of design and implementation of the programme?</li> <li>• Is the current coordination set up producing the intended results and objectives?</li> <li>• How have the nine principles of engagement foreseen in the Statement of Intent at the occasion of the International Donor Conference, namely: consistency, clarity, participation, transparency, accountability, equity, efficiency, resilience, and sustainability been operationalized and integrated into the programme, and have they been realized?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and coordination documents.</li> <li>• KIIs/GIs, FGDs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Methods:</b></p> <p>Interviews with UNDP Team other partners</p>	EU and UNDP standards.
EFFICIENCY	<i>Have the activities of the EU4Schools programme been implemented in accordance with the approved Description of the Action and have they been completed in the most efficient way? If so, why, or if not so, why not?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the programme activities been delivered as described in the logical framework of the programme and in accordance with the work plan and budget? Is the programme on track meeting its targets as measured by programme indicators? If any deviations have taken place, have these been properly documented, justified, and approved by the appropriate authorities?</li> <li>• Were the activities of the EU4Schools programme implemented in accordance with UNDP quality standards?</li> <li>• Did the EU4Schools programme strike the right balance between the speed of delivery of the education infrastructure on the one hand and considerations regarding stakeholder involvement, beneficiary participation, and adherence to high-quality standards in the design and delivery process on the other hand?</li> <li>• What was the quality of the interaction between the various partners and stakeholders in the programme, did every partner fulfil its expected role and functions, and did they have the required capacities to fulfil their role?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources:</b></p> <p>Existing progress and financial reports and programme management information system.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KIIs/GIs, FGDs with key stakeholders at the national level (EUD, MoES, IoC), targeted municipalities as well as technical implementing actors (design and supervising</li> </ul>	GoA education facilities infrastructure standards. EU and UNDP standards.

Independent Evaluation EU4School programme (Phase I)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How has UNDP's Quality Assurance been operationalised and how did this affect the performance of the programme?</li> <li>•Did the governance, management and financial arrangements of the programme prove appropriate? To what extent does the management structure support efficiency of the implementation?</li> <li>•To what extent funding allocation is responsive to the degree of needs and expectations?</li> <li>•How the covid-19 restrictions and protective measures affected implementation?</li> </ul>	companies/engineers, construction companies, school management)	
EFFECTIVENESS	<i>Did the activities that were implemented by the EU4schools programme achieve the intended outputs and results?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Has progress towards achieving the specific outputs and results been monitored and has the programme taken adequate action in case of delays or deviations?</li> <li>•Did the implemented activities lead to the intended outputs/results and were there any unintended negative or positive results?</li> <li>•Has there been a proper balance between the provision of hands-on assistance (direct implementation by UNDP) and the creation of local ownership?</li> <li>•Where there any external factors that affected the implementation of the activities? If so, have these been monitored and have adequate remedial actions been taken in order to achieve the results?</li> <li>•Have potential risks and assumptions that potentially affect the link between activities, outputs and outcomes been defined at the start of the implementation and have they been monitored, and were corrective measures taken when necessary? Was in hindsight the risk analysis adequate?</li> <li>•Has the communication strategy been implemented as planned and has this achieved the intended results?</li> <li>•What was the value added of UNDP in implementing the recovery efforts in the education sector?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources:</b> Programme documents. MoUs. Information shared by the LGs.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> KIIs with UNDP, UNRCO, EUD, IoC, MoES, LGs, schools (management and teachers)</p>	GoA education facilities infrastructure standards. EU and UNDP standards.
IMPACT	<i>Has, or is it likely that, the programme will achieve its specific objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Has the programme Phase1 achieved its objectives to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Repair, retrofitting and reconstruct, including basic furnishing, of education facilities in municipalities affected by the earthquake according to international standards?</li> <li>ii. Provide increased transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness to the recovery process?</li> </ul> </li> <li>•What positive or negative, intended, or unintended changes were brought about by the programme related to the renovation or reconstruction of education facilities in the five participating municipalities?</li> <li>•Is there evidence to claim that the programme had a catalytic impact?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources:</b> - Programme documents and progress reports, including the ToC and the LF.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> KIIs/GIIs with programme managers and technical staff, key stakeholders like the EUD, MoES, IoC, ADF, LGs, schools (teachers, parents, pupils).</p>	GoA education facilities infrastructure standards. EU and UNDP standards.
SUSTAINABILITY	<i>Are the programme outcomes institutionally, organisationally, and financially sustainable beyond the duration of the programme?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In any evaluation these are the most difficult questions to answer, partly because the full effect and impact of a programme takes time to materialise. The evaluation will focus on the following leading questions:</li> <li>•Did the programme contribute to any institutional changes at national or local level regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the design and implementation of the of public infrastructure construction projects, especially related to improved transparency and accountability?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources:</b> - Programme documents and progress reports.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b></p>	EU and UNDP standards. Legal framework on the role of LGs regarding



Independent Evaluation EU4School programme (Phase I)



		<p>b. Active citizen participation in public infrastructure construction projects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Have sufficient measures been taken to ensure that the participating municipalities will be able to manage and maintain the renovated/reconstructed educational facilities?</li> <li>•Did the additional activities implemented by the programme, like informative and awareness raising sessions and the production of sustainability and maintenance manuals contribute to increased health and safety behaviour in the educational facilities?</li> <li>•Are the LGs well informed about the maintenance costs of these education facilities and have planned adequate resources in their MTBP?</li> </ul>	<p>KIIs/GIIs with programme managers and technical staff, key stakeholders like the EUD, MoES, LGs and schools.</p>	<p>maintenance of education facilities.</p>
<p>CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</p>	<p><b><i>To what extent did the programme support the engagement of different groups, integrated gender mainstreaming, accessibility and contributed to address gender inequality and human rights? To what extent did the programme integrated environmental protection?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To what extent has the programme been able to integrate cross cutting issues in all its processes and address them successfully?</li> <li>•How did the programme perform on the implementation of activities related to these cross-cutting issues?</li> <li>•What has been the outcome of these activities?</li> <li>• Were resources (financial, time, people) sufficiently allocated to integrate human rights, accessibility and gender equality in the design, implementation, monitoring of the programme?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources:</b> - Programme documents and progress reports.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> KIIs/GIIs with programme managers, LGs, schools, local CSOs engaged in HR issues and GE</p>	<p>National standards and EU, UNDP standards.</p>

## Annex 8.2. Workplan and deliverables

Activities	Dec 22					Jan 23				Feb 23			Mar 23		Deliverables
week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
1. Desk review	█	█	█	█	█										Delivery 1: Inception report that includes the evaluation matrix
2. Organizing the field mission						█									Delivery 2: Debriefing meeting to present the key findings from the field mission
3. Evaluation and data collection mission							█	█							
4. Debriefing meeting								█							Delivery 3: Draft Evaluation Report
5. Draft the evaluation report									█	█	█				
6. Validation workshop & receiving comments on the report												█	█		Delivery 4: Presentation of key findings
7. Submission of the final report													█	█	Delivery 5: Final Evaluation Report

A detailed itinerary for the field mission will be made available early January, as follows.



## Annex 8.4. Itinerary and list of people met during the EU4Schools Programme Phase I evaluation

**International External Evaluator:** Mr. Paul van Hoof **National External Evaluator:** Ms. Elira Jorgoni

### Week 1

Day	Time	Activity
<b>Monday, January 16, 2023</b>	10:00 – 11:45	Entela Lako – UNDP Programme Specialist Eglantina Gollaj – EU4Schools Programme Manager
	12:00 – 13:00	Meeting with Nora Kushti, Communications Specialist, UNDP Albania
	14:00 – 15:30	EU4 Schools team meeting
	15:30 – 16:45	Meeting with Senior Civil Engineer, Sokol Muçogllava
<b>Tuesday, January 17, 2023</b>	9:30 – 10:30	Meeting with Bernard Segarra, EUD
	11:15 - 13:00	EU4Schools’ Quality Assurance and Data Management Officer, Diola Sula
	14:15 – 15:30	EU4Schools’ Community coordinator, Anila Shehu
<b>Wednesday, January 18, 2023</b>	09:00 – 10:30	EU4Schools’ Civil Engineer, NAzmi Shushku EU4Schools’ Civil Engineer, Ardi Arkaxhiu
	10:30 – 11:30	Meeting with UNDP Gender Focal Point, Entela Lako
	11:30 – 12:30	EU4Schools’ s Admin/Finance Assistant Elda Koçilja
	15:00 – 15:30	health and safety expert Gentjan Allkja
	15:30 – 16:00	Consultant evaluating the detailed architectural designs in compliance with Albanian Law, Etleva Bushati
<b>Thursday, January 19, 2023</b>	09:30 – 10:30	Meeting with design/supervising companies Arkimade (va Mëzezi) – Dhosi Liperi Atelier 4 (Alert Metaj) – Dom Nikolle Kacorri and Mehmet Babamusta
	11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with Monica Merino, UNDP Resident Representative and Entela Lako, Programme Specialist
	12:00 – 13:00	Meeting with testing and commissioning company Rexhep Tarba, Zenit Sh.p.k
	13:00 – 14:00	Deputy Prime Minister Office and Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure Ilira Halilaj, Head of Development, Transport and Infrastructure Sector and assistants
	15:00 – 16:00	Meeting with Artan Shkreli, Director, Institute of Construction
	16:30 – 17:30	Meeting with Contractors Aurora Sh.p.k – Repair of Mehmet Babamusta school (Astrit Jaupaj) Bahas Sh.p.k – Repair and retrofitting of Skenderbeu school (Bashkim Hasmuca)
	10:00 – 11:00	Ministry of Education Sports, and Youth Zamira Gjini, General Director for Development of Education and Sports Ministry of Education and Sports and senior staff
	14:30	Entela Lako, Programme Specialist Eglantina Gollaj, EU4Schools Programme Manager

## Week 2

Day	Time	Activity
<b>Monday, January 23, 2023</b>	09:15 – 09:45	Meeting with Director of High School “Dhosi Liperi”, Durrës Ms. Anisa Shehu and a group of teachers
	10:00 – 11:00	Meeting with Director of Education Services, Ms. Nikoleta Rusha, and Head of Territory Development Sector, Mr. Ermal Lama, Durrës
	11:10 – 11:30	Meeting with Director of Kindergarten “1 Qershori”, Kavaja Ms. Violeta Farruku
	12:20 – 12:50	Meeting with Director of 9-year School “Mehmet Babamusta”, Kavaja Ms. Suela Gjoni and a group of teachers
	14:00 – 15:00	Meeting with Deputy Mayor of Kavaja Municipality, Mr. Guxim Kola,
<b>Tuesday, January 24, 2023</b>	10:00 – 10:50	Meeting with General Director of Public Works, Mr. Elvis Gjika
	11:00 – 11:40	Meeting with Director of 9-year School “Dom Nikollë Kaçorri”, Kamez Mr. Viktor Gjini and a group of teachers
	12:00 – 12:20	Meeting with Director of Kindergarten No. 8 “Luledielli” (f.k.a. Kindergarten “Dom Nikollë Kaçorri”), Kamez Ms. Irena Koka and a group of teachers
	13:00 – 14:00	Meeting with Albanian Development Fund
<b>Wednesday, January 25, 2023</b>	10:40 – 11:10	Meeting with Director of “Evropa” Kindergarten and 9-year School “Korb Muça”, Kruja Mr. Sazan Shira
	12:20 – 12:50	Meeting with Director of High School “Skënderbeu”, Kruja Ms. Besa Sheta and a group of teachers
	14:00 – 15:00	Meeting with Secretary General of Kruja Municipality, Mr. Florind Cerhozi and senior staff
<b>Thursday, January 26, 2023</b>	10:00 – 11:00	Meeting with Chief of Cabinet, Ms. Nertila Ndreka and Head of Education department and Engineer Kurbin municipality
	11:10 – 12:00	Meeting with Director of Kindergarten and 9 – year School “Gjokë Elezi”, Kurbin Ms. Liljana Andri and a group of teachers
<b>Friday, January 27, 2023</b>	9:00 – 13:00	Prepare debriefing Time for evaluation team meeting
	10:00 – 11:00	Meeting Senior Advisor Mr. Sinan Karbalaee
	14:00 – 15:00	Debriefing meeting with UNDP Res Rep, EUD and senior programme staff members

## Annex 8.5. Documents Reviewed

1. European Committee for Standardization (2004) Eurocode 8: Design of structures for earthquake resistance Part 1: General rules, seismic actions, and rules for buildings
2. European Union (2020) Contribution Agreement Contract IPA 2020/415-91
3. European Union (2020) EU4Schools Annex 1 to the Contribution Agreement Contract IPA 2020/415-91; Description of the Action
4. European Union (2021) Addendum no 1 to Contribution Agreement Contract IPA 2020/415-91
5. European Union (2022) Addendum no 2 to Contribution Agreement Contract IPA 2020/415-91
6. European Union Delegation (2021) Technical Support to the Post Earthquake Recovery in Albania; Final Monitoring Report March 2021
7. Government of Albania, Council of Ministers (2020); Post Disaster Needs Assessment, volume A; Report February 2020.
8. UNDP EU4Schools (2020) EU4Schools Memoranda of Understanding with Durrës, Krujë, Kamëz, Kurbin and Kavaja municipalities
9. UNDP EU4Schools (2020) EU4Schools Consultation Strategy
10. UNDP EU4Schools (2020) EU4Schools Communication and Visibility Action Plan
11. UNDP EU4Schools (2020) EU4Schools Operational Manual
12. UNDP EU4Schools (2020) EU4Schools The Framework for Monitoring and Reporting Data (FMRD)
13. UNDP EU4Schools (2020) EU4Schools Occupational Health and Safety Manual
14. UNDP EU4Schools (2020-22) Minutes of Programme Steering Committee meetings 1-4
15. UNDP EU4Schools (2021) EU4Schools Procurement Strategy
16. UNDP EU4Schools (2021) The Annual Report April 1 2020 to March 31 2021
17. UNDP EU4Schools (2022) The Annual Report April 1 2021 to March 31 2022
18. UNDP EU4Schools (2023) Progress update April 1 2022 to November 30 2022
19. UNDP EU4Schools for the following Schools: Dhosi Liperi; Durrës, Mehmet Babamusta; Kavaje, Dom Nikolie Kacorri; Kamez, Gjoke Elezi; Kurbin, Skenderbeu; Kruje the following reports:
  - Tender evaluation reports
  - Site visit reports
  - Consultation reports
  - Place Check reports
  - Operational manuals
  - Testing and Commissioning reports



## Annex 8.6. Ethical/Safeguarding considerations

best standards on data and information management, safeguarding and gender and conflict sensitivity. The evaluation paid attention to safeguarding the rights and confidentiality of information providers and partners/stakeholders interviewed and ensured the security of collected information to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information and data gathered during the evaluation process will not be shared beyond the scope of this evaluation.

During the visits to the education facilities, only general questions were asked to pupils and in the presence of the teachers seeking feedback on their satisfaction with the school facilities and with the permission of the school management. The questions were appropriate and adapted to age.

## Annex 8.7. Limitations and mitigations

KEY RISKS IDENTIFIED	MITIGATIONS
<p>Timeframe for carrying out the evaluation included end of the year holidays and a slower start of the new year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the availability of the stakeholders and allow time to organise and confirm the meetings, following the proposal from the evaluation team, the team following the agreement by UNDP, adjusted the calendar to a more feasible timeframe.</li> </ul>
<p>Limited availability of key informant persons during the planned field mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evaluation team remained flexible and mobilised quickly. Starting the mission in mid-January, allowed the UNDP to facilitate the mission agenda and give time to the team, to review the documents shared.</li> </ul>
<p>Lack of interest to participate in the meetings from the contractors that have ended/completed their contractual agreement with UNDP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP engaged efficiently in identifying the right representatives to discuss from each institution at the central and local levels. Thanks to this coordination all meetings were agreed upon within the time available.</li> </ul>
<p>Changes in key partner institutions. Given the dismissal of the Minister of State for Reconstruction and designation of this role to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MoIE), it could be challenging to identify the representative to meet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection tools were prepared for each different category of stakeholders to ensure relevance.</li> <li>• Interviews were organised face-to-face during the field visits, which resulted to be more efficient given the diversity of stakeholders to be interviewed.</li> </ul>
<p>The new/ad hoc directory for reconstruction within the MoIE might not be operational yet at the time of the field work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP contracted interpretation services from the start of the mission, which helped both making the stakeholders feel comfortable to express their views in Albanian, if they wished to do so.</li> </ul>
<p>Stakeholders would feel more comfortable sharing their views in Albanian.</p>	

## Annex 8.8. Terms of Reference

## Identification of the Position of Evaluation Consultant

<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>International/National Evaluation Consultant for the Programme Evaluation</b>
<b>Project:</b>	EU4Schools Phase I
<b>Supervisor:</b>	UNDP's Albania Programme Specialist
<b>Location:</b>	Albania
<b>Travel requirement:</b>	Yes
<b>Practice Area:</b>	Crisis Response
<b>Application deadline:</b>	9/12/2022
<b>Type of Contract:</b>	International
<b>Duration:</b>	October –November 2022 (up to 20 expert days, ca. 7 days in the field)
<b>Presence in the UNDP premises</b>	Partial presence

The “EU4Schools” Programme Phase I’s Programme Evaluation is to provide an impartial assessment of the Programme, its relevance, quality performance, management, and achievements. For this purpose, two Evaluation Consultants will be engaged, one international and one national.

The International Consultant will work with the National Consultant, and jointly are responsible to work on the below listed deliverables and successfully complete the assignment. In that respect, throughout the assignment, the two consultants are expected to coordinate, and fulfil the tasks as efficiently as possible.

## 1 Background and context

On November 26, 2019, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit Albania: it left 51 people dead and injured at least 913 others. Eleven municipalities situated in three prefectures (Tirana, Durrës and Lezha), with an approximate population of 1,185,286 persons, have suffered to varying degrees from the earthquake with 202,291 people affected directly or indirectly. According to government sources, around 17,090 affected inhabitants had to vacate their homes. For the first time in recent history, the Government of Albania announced a State of Natural Emergency in the three prefectures. According to the findings of the PDNA, the total effect of the disaster in the 11 municipalities amounts to 985.1 million EUR (121.21 billion ALL). Most of the damages are recorded in the Housing sector (78.5%), followed by the Productive sector (8.4%) and the Education (7.5%) sector.

According to the PDNA, damages were reported to 321 educational institutions (including crèches, pre-schools, basic schools, secondary schools, vocational and education training schools, high education schools and dormitories) in the 11 affected municipalities, representing 24% of all educational establishments in the country of Albania. About 90% of damaged institutions are in the public sector. The municipalities of Tirana and Durrës have the highest share of damage, with 55% and 21%, respectively. Schools were also damaged in smaller municipalities such as Vora, where half of all education facilities were either fully or partially destroyed. Furthermore, 60% of destroyed and damaged schools are in rural areas. In addition to infrastructure, the earthquake also damaged physical assets such as furniture, labs, ICT equipment, libraries, textbooks, and other learning materials. The physical infrastructure of education facilities, especially in rural areas, do not meet current regulations on safety and accessibility.

“EU4Schools” Programme is part of the European Union’s financial commitment during the International Donor’s Conference, organized in Brussels on February 17, 2020, to support the post-earthquake reconstruction efforts.

The overall objective is to further support local and national governments in reducing social and economic losses, and to accelerate the recovery process through educational facility repairs and reconstruction. The programme has two phases: the scope of Phase I extended to five municipalities, namely: Durrës, Kruja, Kurbin, Kavaja and Kamza. It targets 22 damaged education facilities as coordinated with the relevant national authorities. More information is provided on the [EU4Schools \(eu4schoolsportal.al\)](http://eu4schoolsportal.al).

#### Summarized information on EU4Schools

<b>Project title</b>	<b>EU4Schools Phase I</b>	
<b>Atlas ID</b>	00126861	
<b>Corporate outcome and output</b>	UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025; Outcome 2, Output 2.2: Education	
<b>Country</b>	Albania	
<b>Region</b>	Europe and Central Asia/Western Balkans	
<b>Date project document signed</b>	15 April 2020	
<b>Project dates</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Planned end</b>
	April 2020	November 2022
<b>Project budget</b>	<b>EUR 15,115,000</b>	
<b>Project expenditure at the time of evaluation</b>	<b>EUR 12,441,282.11</b>	
<b>Funding source</b>	<b>EU, UNDP Albania</b>	
<b>Implementing party</b>	<b>UNDP Albania</b>	

The overall objective of the action is to support national and local governments in reducing further social and economic losses, and to accelerate the recovery process through educational facility repairs and reconstruction.

The specific objective/outcome are:

- (i) To support repairing and reconstruction, including basic furnishing, of education facilities in municipalities affected by the earthquake according to international standards.
- (ii) To provide increased transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness to the recovery process.

The Programme expected results are as follows:

Result 1: Education facilities repaired and furnished

Result 2: Education facilities reconstructed and furnished

Result 3: Strengthened transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in this process of recovery

Partnership: The partnership is exercised in three forms:

(i) in the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) which brings together representatives of EU Delegation in Albania, UNDP Albania, as well as representatives of the central and local government. The PSC is responsible for providing strategic guidance and overseeing the EU4schools implementation. EU4Schools Phase I partners with 5 Municipalities impacted by the earthquake, namely Durrës, Krujë, Kamëz, Kurbin and Kavaja.

(ii) In addition, there is a Joint Coordination Team (JCT) with members from the core partners of the programme; the EU Delegation in Albania, the Government of Albania represented by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Reconstruction and Reforms' Program (DPMSRP), and

UNDP Albania's EU4Schools team. JCT gathers periodically (preferably every month), to discuss matters at hand and provide reliable solutions and prompt decision-making.

(iii) The Memorandum of Understanding signed with the five respective municipalities.

Target groups and beneficiaries: The EU4Schools Phase I Programme has direct and indirect beneficiaries. Direct beneficiaries are teachers, children and students of the education facilities being repaired or reconstructed; in total there are 8060 direct beneficiaries. Indirect beneficiaries are considered family and community members being impacted positively by the EU4Schools programme: in total there are 253 000 persons.

Main outputs: During the programme implementation, 22 education facilities in five Municipalities, were either repaired or reconstructed and retrofitted as per construction permits issued following approved technical projects' design.

The implementation of the programme is based on two important principles, *Build Back Better* (BBB) and *Build Back Together* (BBT).

BBB guarantees that education facilities are repaired/reconstructed and retrofitted using the best possible standards in terms of: (i) general improvements, (ii) accessibility, (iii) energy efficiency, (iv) IT and smart solutions, (v) seismic resilience, and (vi) health and safety. A set of parameters are determined for each of the above standards.

BBT enables a framework for community participation during the reconstruction process. The first step is to assess the needs of the community and education facility users, afterwards present designs and consult the technical design with the beneficiaries and impacted community. In the end, during Place Checks, the beneficiaries and the community observes its contribution to the process by looking at the changes occurring in the design and reconstruction process.

Programme relevance and alignment: The programme was aligned with 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and 2018 -2021 UNDP's Strategic Plan: Development Setting C. Build resilience to shocks, crisis, and Signature Solution 3: Enhance prevention and recovery for resilient societies.

By delivering its objectives, the Programme is contributing to the achievement of the targets set within the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, more specifically:

- SDG 4 "Quality education",
- SDG 9 "Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure",
- SDG 10 "Reduced Inequalities",
- SDG 16 "Peace, justice and strong institutions" and
- SDG 17 "Partnership for the Goals".

## 2 Final Evaluation purpose, objectives, and scope

### a) Purpose

The Final EU4Schools Phase I Programme Evaluation aims to review and assess: (i) the relevance, (ii) effectiveness, (iii) efficiency, (iv) impact, (v) lessons learned and (vi) sustainability of the Programme.

### b) Objective

The objective of this independent evaluation is to examine the overall performance of the EU4Schools Phase I programme including its results, inputs, activities, and how the outputs contributed to the reduction of the social and economic losses from the earthquake, and to the acceleration of the recovery as the main outcome of the programme. The evaluation should include an analysis of the

effectiveness of the EU4Schools Phase I methodology, approach and communication with stakeholders and beneficiaries and their feedback.

The evaluation should also assess the impact created by COVID-19 in the programme implementation and identify the extent to which the observed changes caused by the pandemic, influenced the EU4Schools Programme Phase I implementation. In addition, the Programme Evaluation is expected to identify a concept and/or recommendations for any potential improvement in the Phase II of EU4Schools or any spin-off the Programme.

### c) Scope

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the planned specific objective/outcome and results/outputs have been achieved since the beginning of the programme and the likelihood for their full achievement by the end of the programme in November 2022 (based on the Programme Document/Description of the Action and its results' framework). The evaluation will look into the overall programme performance and results, covering all education facilities being repaired/reconstructed and retrofitted in five Municipalities so far.

Specifically, the evaluation will review, evaluate, and make recommendation regarding the implementation of EU4Schools Programme Phase I and all its activities. It will look into critical programme's aspects, such as:

- Partnership between the programme and impacted Municipalities, and other local/central authorities, and the agreed implementation framework.
- The methodology used for BBB and BBT and its relevance and benefits for the programme.
- The methodology for transparent and real time information of the public.
- The impact of the programme in improving education quality in implementation.

Finally, the evaluation will examine the programme processes, innovations, and strategic partnerships, that proved critical in producing the intended results/outputs and the factors that facilitated and/or hindered the progress in achieving the results/outputs, both in terms of the external environment and risks, as well as internal, including weaknesses in programme design, management, human resource skills, and resources.

### Evaluation criteria and key questions

The EU4Schools Programme Phase I's evaluation must answer the following questions, to determine the programme's relevance, performance, results, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, including lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations. Suggested evaluation questions are summarized below:

#### Relevance

- Were the programme's objectives relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries?
- To what extent is the programme aligned with the relevant national development priorities of the post-recovery process, the education sector priorities, and UNDP strategic objectives and Sustainable Development Goals?
- To what extent does the programme contribute to respecting gender equality and human rights of the beneficiaries?

#### Effectiveness



- To what extent were the programme activities implemented, intended results and the specific objective/outcome achieved? What are the main programme accomplishments?
- What are the positive or negative, intended, or unintended, changes brought about by the programme's interventions?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended specific objective/outcome and outputs/results?
- To what extent has the programme managed to provide a new standard for designing and implementing the reconstruction process for education facilities?
- To what extent and through what mechanisms has the programme managed to promote participatory decision making and inclusiveness of communities during the reconstruction process?
- To what extent has the programme outreached marginalized groups (i.e., youth, persons with disabilities, returnees, internally displaced, minorities...).
- How has the programme mainstreamed gender considerations in the programme development and implementation?
- How effective was the programme's interaction with other local and central authorities in maximizing results?

### Efficiency

- Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically to achieve the programme results?
- Are there any weaknesses in programme design, management, human resource skills, and resources?
- What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
- Have programme funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? If not, what were the bottlenecks encountered?
- 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?

### Impact

- What are the programme's impacts in terms of reducing social and economic losses from the earthquake?
- What are the programme's impacts in terms of accelerating the recovery process through educational facility being repaired/reconstructed and retrofitted?
- What are the main benefits for direct and indirect beneficiaries?
- To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the programme implementation, specifically regarding the partnership created and what are specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance?
- What are the overall programme effects and impacts in relation to local and central governments' capacities being improved in accelerating the recovery processes according to the highest EU and International standards?
- What innovative practices has the programme introduced and how have they been transferred to programme partners?
- To what extent the programme has provided increased transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness to the recovery process?

## Sustainability

- To what extent are the programme outputs/results sustainable?
- To what extent has the programme approach (intervention strategy) managed to create ownership of the key national stakeholders?
- To what extent have the capacities of local and central governments improved in accelerating the recovery processes according to the highest EU International standards?
- What would be future priority interventions to ensure long-term sustainability of the programme's achievements?

## Lessons learned

- Provide a list of lessons learned captured for future programming and planning with the aim to ensure accountability and efficiency of similar programmes.
- Based on lessons learned, come up with potential improvements which can be used during the implementation of the EU4Schools programme Phase II.

The evaluation needs to assess the degree to which the programme initiatives have supported or promoted gender equality, a rights-based approach, and human development.

The final evaluation report should also include:

- Joint Programme contribution to SDGs.** – assess whether the programme's goal and outcomes and progress so far are contributing to SDGs progress.
- Communication and visibility** – assess and review whether the communications and visibility actions undertaken by the programme have provided insights into the implementation of the programme activities and outcomes according to the Joint Visibility Guidelines for the EC-UN actions in the field.
- Annexes** - At a minimum these should include a. TOR for the evaluation, b. Evaluation matrix and data collection instruments, c. List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted, and sites visited, d. List of supporting documents reviewed.

## Methodology

Based on the [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#), [UNEG Norms and Stand for Evaluations \(2016\)](#) and in consultations with UNDP Country Office, the evaluation will be participatory, involving relevant stakeholders.

The International Evaluation Consultant and the National Evaluation Consultant (thereafter referred to as **the Consultants**) will propose an evaluation methodology and agree on a detailed plan for the assignment as a part of the evaluation Inception Report. The proposed methodology may employ any relevant and appropriate quantitative, qualitative, or combined methods to conduct the EU4Schools Programme Phase I Evaluation, exploring specific data collected and analytical methods and tools applicable. The Consultants are expected to creatively combine the standard and other evaluation tools and technics to ensure maximum reliability of data and validity of the evaluation findings.

Standard UNDP evaluation methodology would suggest the following data collecting methods:

- **Desk review:** The Consultants will conduct a detailed review of the programmatic materials and deliverables including the Programme Document/Description of the Action and results framework programme periodic reports, annual workplans, consolidated progress reports etc. *An indicative list of documents for desk review will be provided.*
- **Key informant interviews:** The Consultants will interview representatives of main institutional partners, EU and UNDP, other relevant stakeholders (e.g., Programme Steering Committee) and stakeholders in the five impacted Municipalities. For the interviews, the Consultants are expected to design evaluation questions around relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability criteria, according to different stakeholders to be interviewed. *An indicative list of main stakeholders that may be considered for meetings will be provided.*
- **Meetings / focus group discussions with beneficiaries:** Site visits will be arranged to meet with local beneficiaries and stakeholders and review results of the programme.
- Other methodologies, as appropriate, such as case studies, statistical analysis, observational visits, group discussions etc.<sup>25</sup>

As an integral part of the evaluation report and specifically under the impact criteria, the Consultants will review the programme effects and impact on its target groups. In this context an online survey can be created and distributed so that consultants gain insights from beneficiaries.

**Stakeholders' involvement:** During the evaluation process, the Consultants are expected to meet senior representatives of the UNDP Albania, EU Delegation in Albania and the EU4Schools programme team, key partners, and stakeholders in all five impacted Municipalities.

Initial and evaluation briefing to obtain the critical feedback on the evaluation report, are envisaged.

To assess programme performance, approach and modalities, the Consultants will meet with key programme partners and stakeholders, members of respective ministries involved, local governments, Institute of Construction, and education facilities management teams. During these meetings, it would be important to record and accumulate inputs necessary not only for the programme evaluation, but also to highlight recommendations and advise on potential programme follow-up phase.

The expected duration of the assignment is up to 20 workdays, with approximately 7 days in field visits per each consultant.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed between parties.

#### Evaluation tasks / deliverables

Following the initial briefing and a detailed desk review, the International and the National Consultant will work together for delivering of the following tasks:

1. **Inception Report (10-15 pages)** will be presented before the evaluation starts, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by proposing methods, sources of data and data collection procedures. The Inception Report should elaborate an **evaluation matrix** for the EU4Schools programme Phase I and propose a schedule of tasks, activities, and evaluation deliverables as well as the draft report structure for the final evaluation report; both must follow the structure as per the [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#).

---

<sup>25</sup> [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, Annex 2. Summary of common data-collection methods/sources used in UNDP evaluations](#)

2. **Evaluation and data collection mission:** Upon the approval of the Inception Report and the evaluation work plan by the UNDP, the Consultants are expected to carry out the full programme evaluation. To collect data and insights on the programme, the Consultants will undertake field missions to each impacted Municipality and some of the education facilities being repaired/reconstructed respectively, and have meetings and interviews with relevant stakeholders, including local government, beneficiaries, and community members. In addition, stakeholders' meetings with the partnering central government institutions will be organised in Tirana, Albania. The UNDP will provide support in organization of meetings and logistical arrangements as necessary.
3. **Evaluation debriefings:** will be held with UNDP Albania and EU4Schools Programme Phase I team, and other key stakeholders as agreed, to present main findings and recommendations either face-to-face or via other online forms as agreed.
4. **Draft Evaluation Report:** Based on the findings generated through desk review and data collection missions, the Consultants will prepare and submit the Draft Evaluation Report to the UNDP Albania and EU4Schools team for review.
5. **Evaluation review process** (and eventual dispute settlement): Comments, questions, suggestions, and requests for clarification on the evaluation draft will be submitted to the Consultants and addressed in the agreed timeframe. The Consultants should reply to the comments through the **evaluation audit trail document**<sup>26</sup>. If there is disagreement in findings, these should be documented through the evaluation audit trail, while effort should be made to come to an agreement.
6. **Final Evaluation Report** (minimum 50 pages of the main body) should be logically structured, containing data and evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons, and recommendations, and be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Finally, based on the evaluation findings and in a distinct report section, the Consultants will provide forward-looking actionable recommendations, outlining key strategic priorities to be addressed in the EU4Schools Programme Phase II which implementation is currently ongoing or any potential spin-offs.<sup>27</sup>

No.	Deliverable	Description	Timing
1.	<b>Inception report</b> that includes the evaluation matrix	Evaluation team clarifies the objectives and methods to be used during the evaluation.	No later than 2 weeks from the final evaluation mission date. <i>4 working days</i>
2.	<b>Draft Evaluation Report</b>	Report as per agreed structure	Within 4 weeks from the field mission <i>4 working days</i>
3.	<b>Final evaluation report completion</b>	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 <i>2 working days</i>

<sup>26</sup> Template available at [http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP\\_Evaluation\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf).

	All evaluation products need to address gender, disability, and human rights issues.
--	--

Table 1: Table of deliverables with respective timeline

To achieve the deliverables, the following tasks should be followed:

No.	Tasks	Description	Timing
1.	<b>Evaluation and data collection mission</b>	Meeting counterparts and stakeholders	8 working days
2.	<b>Debriefing meeting</b>	Presentation of key findings	End of the final evaluation field mission 1 working day
3.	<b>Evaluation review process</b>	UNDP in cooperation with other UN agencies organize a consultation process on the draft report and provide the evaluation team with consolidated feedback.	Within 4 weeks from the submission of the draft report  1 working day

Table 2: Table of indicative tasks with respective timeline

### Evaluation team composition and required competencies

The evaluation will be conducted by an International and national Evaluation Consultant. The Consultants are expected to provide an independent and substantiated review of the programme achievements; capture underperformance; review coherence and inter-connectivity among activities within the programme; assess partnership strategy; capture feedback from beneficiaries of the programme, in light of the programme results; last but not least – recommend improvements that may be undertaken to ensure quality outcome, and provide strategic forward-looking recommendations, outlining pathways for the EU4schools Programme Phase II.

### Competencies, qualification and expected deliverables

#### (i) Core values

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling UN values and ethical standards.
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

#### (ii) Core competencies

- *Demonstrates professional competence* to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines, and achieving results.
- *Results-Orientation*: Plans and produces quality results to meet established goals, generates innovative, practical solutions to challenging situations.
- *Communication*: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations, both orally and in writing, in a clear and persuasive style tailored to match different audiences.
- *Teamwork*: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations with a culturally diverse team.

- *Client orientation:* Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with national partners and stakeholders and pro-activeness in identifying of beneficiaries and partners' needs and matching them to appropriate solutions.
- iii) Required qualifications for the International Consultant
  - Academic Qualifications/Education
    - Post graduate degree in social sciences, economics, education, public administration, regional development/planning, or other areas in sustainable development.
  - Experience
    - At least 8 years of international extensive project/programme evaluation expertise and experience, with evaluations in recovery and reconstruction programmes
    - Sound knowledge of results-based management systems as well as monitoring and evaluation methodologies.
    - International expertise in education as well as in the area of recovery and reconstruction programmes from natural or man-made disasters.
    - Documented previous experience in international evaluations in the UN system.
    - General understanding and knowledge of the political/administrative and development context of Albania is an asset.
    - Previous working experience in Albania is an asset.
    - Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualize and write concisely and clearly.
  - Languages Requirements
    - Fluency in English language.
  - Other
    - Excellent computer skills (MS Office applications) and ability to use information technologies as a tool and resource.

### **Evaluation deliverables and timelines**

Refer to table 1 and table 2 above.

### **Evaluation ethics**

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines<sup>28</sup>. 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 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. The Consultant should be free from any conflict of interest related to this evaluation as per UNDP evaluation guidelines.

### **Implementation arrangements and reporting relations**

The Consultant will report to the UNDP Specialist. A UNDP Evaluation Focal Point will be assigned to oversee and support the overall evaluation process.

### **Application and selection**

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

- Is deemed technically responsive / compliant / acceptable (only technically responsive applications / candidates will be considered for the financial evaluation)

---

<sup>28</sup> [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines.pdf](#)



- And has obtained the highest combined technical and financial scores.

Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation – maximum points: 700

**Criteria A:** Professional-level experience (at least 10 years) related to international monitoring and evaluation of development programmes.

- maximum points: 350.

**Criteria B:** Relevance of prior working experience (international) in recovery and reconstruction programmes from natural or man-made disasters, preferably within UN system.

- maximum points: 200.

**Criteria C:** Educational background- post-graduate degree social sciences, economics, education, public administration, regional development/planning, or other areas in sustainable development.

- maximum points: 150.

Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation

- maximum points: 300.

Candidates obtaining a minimum of 70% (490 points) of the maximum obtainable points for the technical criteria (700 points) shall be considered for the financial evaluation.

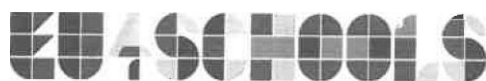
#### **Contract Award**

Candidate obtaining the highest combined scores in the combined score of Technical and Financial evaluation will be considered technically qualified and will be offered to enter into contract with UNDP.

Annex 8.9. Additional construction works phase I

This project is funded by the  
European Union

REPUBLIKA E SHqipërisë  
KËSHILLI I MINISTRAVE  
MINISTERI SHTETI PËR  
RINDËRTKIMIN



Note to File

This note is prepared in reference to discussions and decisions taken in the meetings of 02 September 2020 and 22 September 2020 among EU4S key partners as mentioned below:

- Minister of State for Reconstruction, represented by Minister Arben Ahmetaj and advisor Alba Caroshi
- European Union Delegation in Albania represented by Mario Mariani, Head of Cooperation, Andrea Vera, Head of Section, Mrs. Alessandra Frontoni, Program Manager
- UNDP, represented by Limya Eltayeb, Resident Representative, Nuno Queirös, Deputy Resident Representative, Entela Lako, Programme Officer.

During the two meetings the partners discussed on progress of EU4Schools programme and some changes that need to be agreed among the partners as mentioned below:

1. Changes in the list of approved schools

Ballfeni kindergarten in Kruja to be removed from the list of educational facilities targeted by EU4Schools programme. Initial technical assessment revealed that this kindergarten cannot be repaired according to agreed standards. Agreement was reached with Kruja municipality to not intervene in this kindergarten. A new kindergarten (Derede) will be constructed by EU4Schools programme nearby and it can fulfil all the community needs.

Decision 1: Ballfeni kindergarten in Kruia to be removed from the list of objects of EU4Schools programme.

The list of objects, remains the same, as a new kindergarten "Dom Nikollë Kacorri" will be reconstructed next to Dom Nikole Kacori school. This object will be added in the list leading to no change in the number and type of education facilities targeted by EU4Schools programme. The list of schools to be made publicly available in UNDP and Government of Albania website will show this replacement,

2. Changes in the type of interventions for several objects in EU4Schools programme.

The process of detailed technical designs and calculations of costs for several schools concluded with recommendations for changing the type of school interventions from repair into reconstruction. These proposals were technically assessed and approved by the Institute of Reconstruction. The four objects are described below:

Municipality	Name of educational facility	Type of facility	Type of intervention a reed	Comments
Durrës	Ismet Nanushi	Joint School	Reconstruction	Project changed from repair to reconstruction. Discussed and a reed in 25 August meeting
Durrës	Ismet Nanushi	Kindergarten	Reconstruction	Project changed from repair to reconstruction. Discussed and a reed in 25 August meeting
Kamez	Dom Nikolle Kacorri	Kindergarten	Reconstruction	Project changed from repair to reconstruction. New kindergarten in the territory of the same school. Discussed and agreed in 25 August meeting

<b>Kruje</b>	Ramazan Karaj	Kindergarten + Joint School	Reconstruction	Project changed from repair to reconstruction. The new school complex to accommodate kindergarten, 9-year school and high school. Indoor gym and outdoor sports ground to be added to comply to national standards. Discussed and agreed in 25 August meeting.
<b>Total 4 objects from Phase I with agreed change in works from repair to reconstruction. Estimated additional cost are 2,900,000 Euro.</b>				

Decision 2: Four objects presented above are changed from repair into reconstruction.

The increased costs of 2.900.000 Euro from the above changes to be included in EU4S Phase II budget.

3. The EU4Schools partners discussed on increased costs in a number of schools of Phase I. Though the design phase is not fully complete, and the real costs will be found after the completion of the bidding process, it was noted that a number of the schools assessed by EU4Schools engineers and the design and supervision companies were not applying the national standards, had more students than recorded, the number of students in some schools was larger than their capacity and hence multiple shifts were being applied. Some objects had bigger surface areas than initially reported. In other cases, changes in the school plot have led to bigger construction surface area and increased construction costs. The below mentioned objects are discussed in the meeting:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Name of educational facility</b>	<b>Type of facility</b>	<b>Type of intervention</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Kurbin</b>	Gjok Elezi	Kindergarten + 9 -Year School	Reconstruction	The old school formerly accommodated in two buildings which were severely damaged, and both assessed in need for reconstruction. The new school to be built should accommodate students studying in the two buildings including significantly higher number of students attending the 9-year school and the kindergarten attached to the school.
<b>Kruje</b>	Skenderbeu	High School	Repair	In addition to the repair works necessary to improve and rehabilitate the school from the damages, the technical design, after the detailed investigation has concluded that the 3-rd floor (upper floor) has to be fully demolished as it cannot be repaired. The new construction is foreseen to be constructed by a lighter metallic structure, so the intervention is partially repair and partially reconstruction.
<b>Kruje</b>	Sherif Dervishi	Kindergarten + 9 -Year School	Reconstruction	The request for a gym from the school came from the students and the community during the consultation process. The municipality has recently provided information for additional land plot which is property of the municipality and has requested the construction of a new gym in the additional land made available to the school, causing changes in the design and increased costs.

<b>Kruje</b>	Korb Muca	Kindergarten + Joint School	Reconstruction	Korb Muca 9-year school was accommodated in a former military compound that was adapted in a school with kindergarten situated in three small buildings far from the centre of the village. The municipality did not have property titles on the building or the land. The municipality proposed to move the new school in another parcel closer to the village inhabited area that could be accessed by the students on foot. The identified plot of land, after technical design requires also land improvement by raising the elevation to 1.5 m to protect it from the floods.
<b>Total 4 objects from Phase I with additional costs due to various changes described above. Estimated additional cost are 2,900 000 Euro.</b>				

Decision 3: The increased costs of 2,700.000 Euro for the four above mentioned objects to be included in EU4Schools Phase II budget.

4. The meeting participants also discussed on a proposal from Kamza Municipality to change Tahir Sinani school from repair to reconstruction and built the school in a new location. Detailed report on Tahir Sinani school is attached as Annex 1.

<b>Kamza</b>	<b>Tahir Sinani</b>	<b>Kindergarten and 9-Year School</b>	<b>Reconstruction</b>	<b>The municipality has requested to move the school in new public land site, provided by the Municipality to build a new school with increased capacity to accommodate the students in one shift and related facilities according to the national standards.</b>
<b>Estimated additional costs are 1,200,000 Euro.</b>				

Decision 4: No changes are approved for Tahir Sinani school.

Nuno Queirós Deputy Resident Representative  
 Entela Lako, Programme Officer  
 Eglantina Gollaj, EU4Schools Programme Manager  
 26 September 2020

Annexes:

1. Report on Tahir Sinani school
2. Report on Ballfeni kindergarten
3. List of schools publicized in UNDP Albania website and Government of Albania website.
4. Email and attachments related to 25 August 2020 meeting
5. Email and attachments related to 22 2020 September meeting.

Annex 8.10. Photos of the targeted facilities Phase I

Photos before and after the reconstruction and repair works. Source EU4Schools programme.

(1) "1 Qershori" Kindergarten, Durrës (repair)



(2) "Dhosi Liperi" High school, Durrës (reconstructed)





(3) "Hysen Çela" Professional high school, Durrës (repair)



(4) "Ismet Nanushi" Joint School, Durrës (repair)



(5) "Ismet Nanushi" Kindergarten, Durrës (repair)



(6) "Ramazan Karaj" Joint School, Krujë – not started yet. Photos not available.

(7) "Korb Muça" 9-year school and "Evropa" Kindergarten, Krujë (reconstructed)







(8) "Sherif Dervishi" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Krujë (reconstructed)



(9) Kindergarten No. 2, Kurbin (reconstructed)



(10) "Mehmet Babamusta" 9-year school, Kavajë (repair)





(11) "Fiqiri Kurti" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Kavajë (repair)



(12) "Dom Nikollë Kaçorri" 9-year school, Kamëz (repair)



(13) Kindergarten No. 8, Luledielli, Kamëz (f.k.a. Dom Nikollë Kaçorri) (new construction, only after photos)



(14) "Çub Çapani" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Kurbin (repair)





(15) "28 Nëntori" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Kurbin (repair)



(16) "Gjokë Elezi" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Kurbin (reconstructed)



(17) "Demokracia" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Kurbin (repair)



(18) Kindergarten Derede, Krujë (reconstructed)



(19) "Haxhi Qira" Joint School, Krujë (reconstructed)



(20) "Skënderbeu" High school, Krujë (repair)





(21) "Shaqir Lleja" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Krujë (repair)



(22) "Tahir Sinani" 9-year school and Kindergarten, Kamëz (repair)

