



Independent  
Evaluation  
Office

United Nations Development Programme

# INDEPENDENT UNDP PROGRAMME EVALUATION KOSOVO



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responsiveness MANAGING FOR RESULTS relevance COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
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### INDEPENDENT UNDP PROGRAMME EVALUATION: KOSOVO

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## IEO TEAM

**Directorate:** Isabelle Mercier (Director) and Richard Jones (Deputy Director)

**Lead evaluator:** Yogesh Kumar Bhatt

**Research analysts:** Cheayoon Cho and Sarah Bashir

**Internal peer reviewers:** Eduardo Gomez Rivero, Richard Jones, Frederick Appiah-Kusi and Julia McCall

**External peer reviewer:** Florian Bieber

**Evaluation consultants:** Zehra Kačapor-Džihic and Jasna Žarković

**Publishing and outreach:** Flora Jimenez and Iben Hjorth

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## STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

**UNDP Kosovo staff:** Nuno Queiros (Resident Representative), Dudley Tarlton (Deputy Resident Representative), Valbona Bogujevci (Assistant Resident Representative), Mustafa Murturi (Operations Manager) and UNDP Kosovo staff.

**Other stakeholders and partners:** Kosovo Authorities, representatives of United Nations agencies, civil society, and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

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# ACRONYMS

<b>ADA</b>	Austrian Development Agency
<b>ALMP</b>	Active Labour Market Programmes
<b>CMIS</b>	Court Management Information System
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CSW</b>	Centre for Social Work
<b>CTS</b>	Centralized Translation System
<b>DIM</b>	Direct Implementation Modality
<b>DPC</b>	Direct Project Costs
<b>DV</b>	Domestic violence
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>ERA</b>	European Reform Agenda
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FFP</b>	Firearms Focal Point
<b>FIU</b>	Financial Investigation Unit
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality Women's Empowerment
<b>GFT</b>	Gender Focal Team
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GIZ</b>	German International Cooperation Society
<b>GLOC</b>	Government Contribution to Local Office Costs
<b>ICH</b>	Intangible Cultural Heritage
<b>IPE</b>	Independent Programme Evaluation
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communication technology
<b>IEO</b>	Independent Evaluation Office
<b>IFI</b>	International Financial Institution
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>KJC</b>	Kosovo Judicial Council
<b>KO</b>	Kosovo Office

<b>LNOB</b>	Leave no one behind
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MPTF</b>	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
<b>MRV</b>	Measurement, reporting and verification
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
<b>NDCs</b>	Nationally Determined Contributions
<b>NDI</b>	National Democratic Institute
<b>NEET</b>	Not in employment nor in education or training
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>PBF</b>	Peacebuilding Fund
<b>POPP</b>	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
<b>RBEC</b>	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>ReLOaD</b>	Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans
<b>ROAR</b>	Results Oriented Annual Report
<b>RRF</b>	Results and resources framework
<b>SALW</b>	Small Arms and Light Weapons
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SEAK</b>	Support to Anti-Corruption Efforts in Kosovo
<b>SEESAC</b>	South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation
<b>SME</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprise
<b>STEM</b>	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TRAC</b>	Target for resources assignment from the core
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UNV</b>	United Nations Volunteers
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# Evaluation Insights: KOSOVO

Kosovo<sup>1</sup> is an upper-middle-income economy, with a population of 1.77 million and the lowest GDP per capita among the economies in the Western Balkan region. Kosovo's integration into the European Union (EU) serves as a key driver for reforms and development, advancing progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EU-facilitated Dialogue on normalizing relations with Serbia remains a critical milestone on Kosovo's European path. Kosovo's reform priorities include strengthening good governance, advancing rule of law, expanding opportunities for youth and women, and fostering environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

## Relevance and Strategic Positioning

UNDP's work in Kosovo is firmly aligned with its development priorities, sectoral strategies and EU integration goals. By prioritizing key areas such as public administration reform, digital transformation, anti-corruption and environmental sustainability, UNDP has established itself as a trusted and impartial partner. Its interventions, ranging from legislative reforms to community-driven initiatives, effectively address Kosovo's post-conflict challenges, fostering social cohesion, stability and institutional resilience. UNDP's conflict-sensitive approach, particularly through inter-ethnic dialogue and cultural heritage initiatives, has proven highly relevant in Kosovo's unique context. UNDP has added significant value by systematically integrating principles of inclusivity and gender mainstreaming across all its areas of support, ensuring that development efforts are equitable and responsive to diverse community needs.

## Partnerships

UNDP's success in Kosovo is rooted in its ability to build strong, strategic partnerships. UNDP's ability to bring together diverse actors, ranging from Kosovo central institutions, authorities, municipalities, civil society and communities, continues to drive meaningful progress in Kosovo's development journey. As a reliable partner to central and local institutions, UNDP has advanced policy reforms, strengthened institutional capacities, and delivered tangible results in key reform areas. Partnerships with municipalities have fostered innovative solutions, such as inclusive service delivery models and green governance initiatives. Through its engagement with religious bodies, civil society and communities, UNDP has successfully supported the restoration of cultural and religious heritage sites, promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and social cohesion. Its collaboration with academic institutions and the private sector remains underutilized, limiting the full potential of such cooperation. UNDP is recognized for its convening role among UN agencies and donors, particularly in navigating sensitive issues, though joint UN initiatives have faced coordination and communication challenges.

## Evolution and Adaptation

UNDP has demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness in addressing Kosovo's evolving challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP acted swiftly to support Kosovo's socio-economic recovery by strengthening social protection systems, deploying mobile clinics, and enhancing digital service delivery for vulnerable groups.

<sup>1</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).



UNDP also adapted its programming to test innovative solutions, such as the Green Growth Centres that promote local sustainable development, and digital tools to improve employment services. These efforts reflect UNDP's ability to respond to emerging needs while maintaining alignment with Kosovo's long-term development priorities. However, some interventions remain limited in scale, and additional investment is needed to ensure their sustainability and long-term impact.

## Effectiveness

UNDP's work in Kosovo has produced tangible results across critical sectors, supporting institutional reforms, inclusive growth, and sustainable development in a post-conflict context. In the *governance and anti-corruption field*, UNDP contributed to strengthening institutions such as the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and the Financial Investigation Unit through the introduction of digital tools, including asset declaration systems and digital corruption reporting platforms. These efforts enhanced transparency and accountability, and advanced legislative reforms to improve the management of corruption cases.

To promote *public safety and security*, UNDP's support contributed to the modernization of law enforcement tools and the alignment of legal frameworks with international standards. This enabled Kosovo to improve its ability to detect, monitor and combat the illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons, thereby strengthening both regional cooperation and security.

In the area of *justice and social inclusion*, UNDP contributed to improving access to justice for vulnerable groups through court digitalization, offering multilingual services and mobile legal clinics. Targeted measures to address gender-based violence helped strengthen legal processes, though further investment is needed to ensure institutionalization and sustainability. To promote *social cohesion*, UNDP's cultural heritage initiatives contributed to the restoration of religious and cultural landmarks, fostering inter-ethnic dialogue, preserving shared heritage, and creating economic opportunities through tourism and skills development.

On *employment and inclusive growth*, UNDP contributed to modernizing labour market systems and delivering targeted skills training in ICT and green technologies. These efforts created pathways to employment for youth, women and non-majority communities, though scaling these interventions to achieve broader systemic results remains a priority.

In *environment and climate action*, UNDP contributed to Kosovo's first Climate Change Law and strengthened institutional capacity for climate governance. Local initiatives, such as energy efficiency projects and urban greening, showcased innovative approaches to sustainable development, though financing constraints limited their scalability.

## Challenges and Opportunities Moving Forward

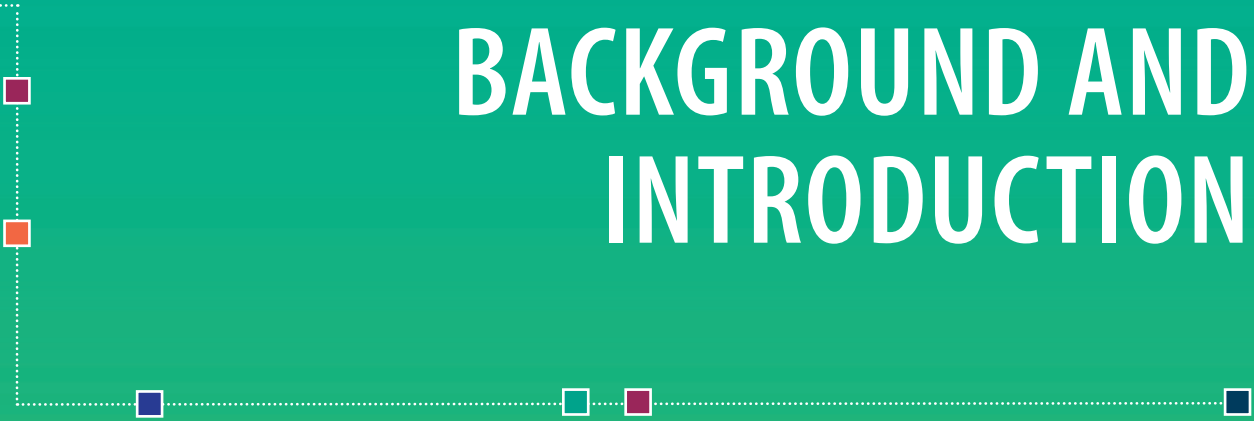
Kosovo today faces significant challenges, but these are matched by clear opportunities for progress. Limited institutional capacity, resource constraints, and the limited ability to scale pilot initiatives have constrained broader systemic change. Many efforts remain localized and require stronger follow-up to ensure long-term impact. UNDP's contributions have shown that progress is achievable when solutions are anchored in innovation, local ownership and long-term vision. Building on this foundation offers an opportunity to move from incremental gains to transformative, sustainable change. In the field of *governance and anti-corruption*, UNDP is well positioned to support central institutions to expand their digital capacities and integrate innovative technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to enhance efficiency and transparency. Targeted support for the implementation of newly approved money laundering legislation will further

strengthen Kosovo's anti-corruption and integrity efforts. UNDP can also play a key role in addressing emerging cybersecurity challenges, strengthening public safety and protecting the integrity of institutions. Ensuring *access to justice* will require scaling up multilingual services, institutionalizing digital tools for greater efficiency, and embedding gender-responsive practices into judicial processes.

To promote *inclusive growth*, continued investment in labour market access for vulnerable groups is essential. UNDP can further support the Employment Agency of Kosovo by advancing the digitalization of its services and institutionalizing successful practices to expand employment opportunities, particularly for youth, women and non-majority communities. *Green transition* remains a priority for Kosovo, and UNDP is well-positioned to provide advisory and financial support in line with Kosovo's priorities and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. By focusing on climate action, energy efficiency, depollution, circular economy and sustainable agriculture, UNDP can help maximize the impact of limited resources while driving sustainable development. *Mainstreaming gender equality and equity* across all development efforts will be critical to ensuring inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

# CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



This chapter presents the purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation, as well as the methodology applied. It lays out the development context of Kosovo,<sup>2</sup> and introduces the UNDP Kosovo programme.

## 1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an evaluation of the UNDP programme in Kosovo, in line with the UNDP Evaluation Policy.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this Independent Programme Evaluation (IPE) is to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contribution to Kosovo's development priorities, as well as effectiveness of UNDP's strategy in facilitating and leveraging Kosovo efforts for achieving development results. The IPE intends to: i) support the development of the next UNDP Kosovo programme/Results and resources framework (RRF); ii) strengthen the accountability of UNDP to Kosovo stakeholders; iii) strengthen the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board; and iv) contribute to institutional learning, knowledge generation and sharing.

The IEO undertook an Independent Evaluation of the UNDP Kosovo Programme, which examined UNDP's work during the ongoing programme cycle 2021-2025, building on the previous evaluation that was conducted in 2018/2019.<sup>4</sup> The scope of the evaluation includes the entirety of UNDP activities in Kosovo, covering interventions funded by all sources, including UNDP core resources and donor funds. It also includes any projects and activities from the previous programme cycle that continued or concluded in the current cycle, in accordance with the evaluation Terms of Reference (Annex 1). The evaluation was guided by four main evaluation questions (Box 1) and conducted in close collaboration with UNDP Kosovo, Kosovo authorities and UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC). The evaluation aims to provide a set of forward-looking recommendations as inputs to the new RRF development process.

The primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Kosovo office, the RBEC office, the UNDP Executive Board, and Kosovo authorities.

### BOX 1. Evaluation questions

1. To what extent has the UNDP Kosovo programme strategically addressed key domestic development priorities and the needs of its main stakeholders, including those at risk of being left behind?
2. To what extent was UNDP able to adapt its positioning and programmatic response to shifts in context and other changes in the operating environment, leveraging comparative strengths?
3. To what extent were UNDP approaches and interventions successful in achieving the intended objectives of the Kosovo programme and contributing to broader, longer-term local development goals?
4. To what extent did internal and external factors influence UNDP's ability to deliver its programme efficiently and maximize contributions?

## 1.2 Evaluation methodology

The IPE was conducted in accordance with the approved IEO process and adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards.<sup>5</sup> The evaluation utilized a theory-based methodology by reconstructing a Theory of Change (ToC) based on the RRF to accurately capture the programme interventions, adaptations and logic. This reconstructed ToC then served as the foundation for the subsequent assessment, providing a clear and comprehensive basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions in achieving the intended outcomes (Figure 1).

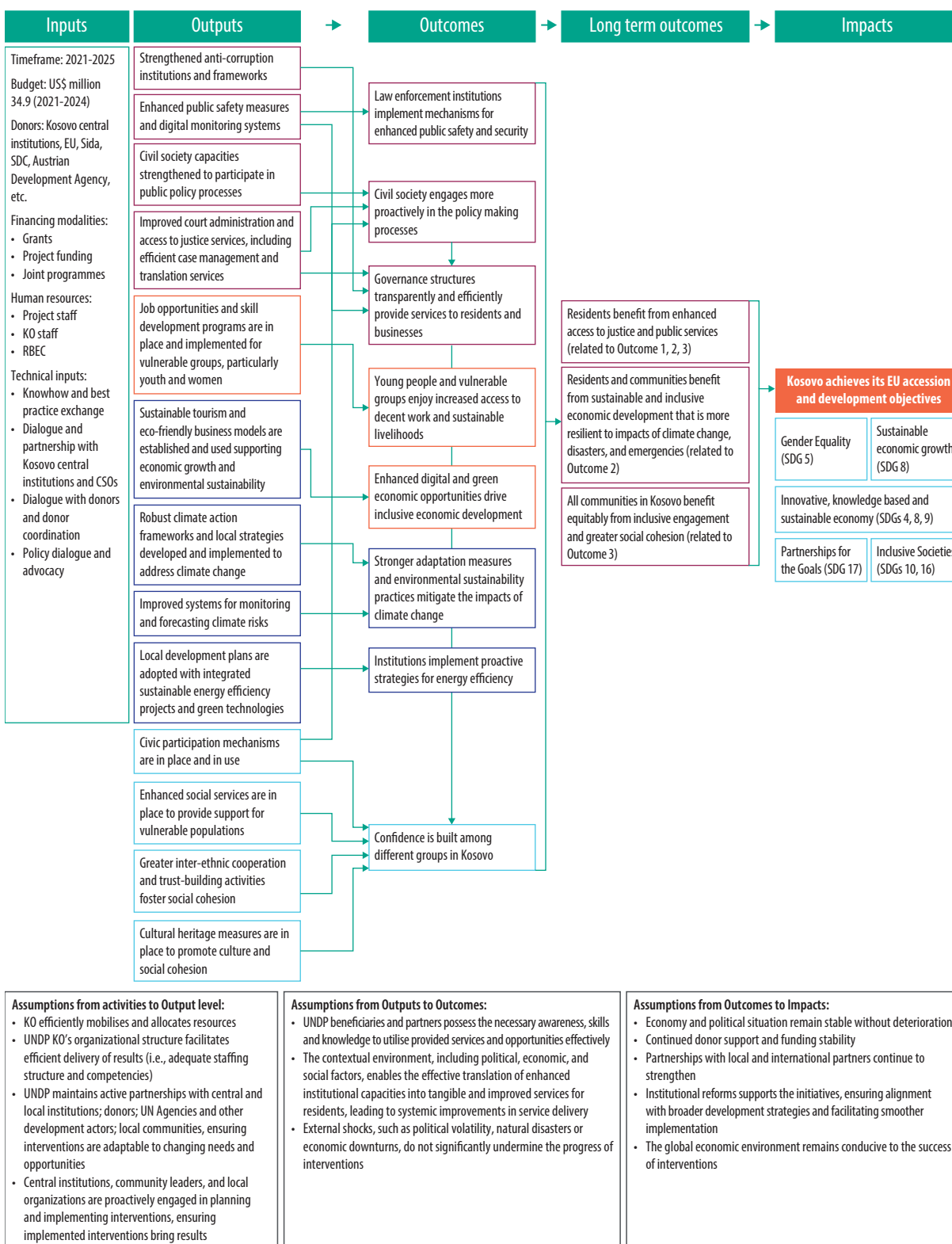
<sup>2</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

<sup>3</sup> <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/evaluation-policy.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/assessment-of-development-results.shtml>

<sup>5</sup> See UNEG website: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

**FIGURE 1. Reconstructed ToC of the UNDP Kosovo Programme/RRF 2021-2025**



The evaluation team collected and analysed qualitative data from primary and secondary sources to inform, triangulate and cross-examine findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation team conducted a document review (Annex 5), semi-structured interviews online and in-person, and a focus group discussion in Prizren with women engaged in UNDP activities. A total of 63 (35 male and 28 female) internal and external stakeholders from different sectors and institutions were consulted. These included UNDP personnel, representatives of Kosovo authorities, public institutions and civil servants at central and local level, UN Kosovo team representatives, development partners, donors, civil society organizations, private sector and academia and final beneficiaries. Field visits were conducted in the municipalities of Prizren and Suharekë/ Suva Reka.

The evaluation assessed UNDP's performance using the reconstructed ToC (Figure 1) and the RRF output and outcome framework, while considering two key parameters: 1) Kosovo's EU accession aspirations and the SDGs; and 2) exogenous factors (i.e., contextual issues, COVID-19 pandemic, global socio-economic and political circumstances). The performance of the UNDP Kosovo Office was scored for each indicator included in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2) using a four-point scale (presented in Annex 8).

**Evaluation Limitations:** A lack of time to visit all field sites and interview final beneficiaries during the field mission challenged the evaluation team's efforts to assess changes in SMEs' operations and vulnerable groups' access to the labour market resulting from UNDP's support. The evaluation team mitigated this risk by reviewing project evaluations, monitoring indicators and information obtained from interviews with different stakeholders (donors, implementing partners and UNDP) and those in the two field sites visited by the evaluation team.

### 1.3 Kosovo context

Located in the Western Balkans, Kosovo belongs to the upper-middle-income category and has a population of 1.77 million.<sup>6</sup> The number of inhabitants in Kosovo is decreasing, inter alia, due to decline in the birth rate and an increase in emigration. It is estimated that 8.85 percent of the population emigrated in the period 2018-2022, while net migration was approximately 24,500 inhabitants per year. The number of residents from Kosovo obtaining their first residence permits in EU member states and the Schengen area has risen throughout this period, most of them obtaining these permits due to family reunification and employment. As a result of emigration, income from migrant remittances increased in this period, with the highest amount reached in 2022 (13.66 percent of GDP).<sup>7</sup>

Integration into the EU is a strategic priority of Kosovo and driver of its development and reforms. Kosovo adopted a revised 2023-2027 programme for EU integration and applied for EU membership in December 2022. This was followed by the European Council and Parliament adoption of regulation paving the way for visa liberalization to start on 1 January 2024.<sup>8</sup> Kosovo also has been committed to accelerated progress towards achieving the SDGs and the global Agenda 2030 since 2018, albeit there is no local monitoring system in place to measure progress towards SDGs and their targets and indicators.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Estimation Population of Kosovo in 2021. Kosovo Agency for Statistics. June 2022. Available at <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/1b49ac85-a166-4c0d-b6e2-a79c32a825ae.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> EC (2024), EU factograph on the status of implementation in Kosovo. Available at <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/document/download/466234d5-0f60-4148-a04a-31736df75b34>.

<sup>9</sup> UNTK (2021); Rapid Integrated Assessment: Policy alignment and data availability for the SDGs in Kosovo.

The European Commission 2023 report noted outstanding needs to ensure public administration reform, a well-functioning judicial system, the fight against corruption, and the fight against organized crime.<sup>10</sup> Challenges also remain with the EU-facilitated Dialogue on the normalization of relations with Serbia.<sup>11</sup> Internal political instability has been reflected in several repeated elections, including the continued lack of cross-party cooperation and disagreements within the majority.<sup>12</sup>

Kosovo's GDP per capita has risen from \$4,416 in 2019 to \$5,340 in 2022, with a decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Annex 3).<sup>13</sup> Kosovo's per capita GDP has been the lowest in the Western Balkan region, standing at 27 percent of the EU average in 2022.<sup>14</sup> Economic growth relies on remittances, diaspora-driven service exports (e.g., tourism) and FDI (e.g., construction).<sup>15</sup> Kosovo is between an early stage and some level of preparation of developing a functioning market economy.<sup>16</sup>

Kosovo's labour market has suffered from very low participation, and large gender gaps.<sup>17</sup> The unemployment declined from 20.7 percent in 2021 to 10.9 percent in 2023, due to a rebound of economic activity.<sup>18</sup> The unemployment is more severe among the Roma and Ashkali communities whose members usually work in the informal sector<sup>19</sup> and among youth.<sup>20</sup> Participation of 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET) in the youth population was 32.6 percent in the same period, with to some extent higher rates for females than males.<sup>21</sup> Factors affecting youth participation are demographic pressures, joblessness growth patterns, emigration trends and poor education.<sup>22</sup> To deal with this issue of youth unemployment, Kosovo has been working on piloting the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, as well as on implementation of the Education Strategy.<sup>23</sup>

Poverty has been declining in Kosovo. The estimated poverty rate was 23.5 percent in 2023,<sup>24</sup> which was a decrease from 32.4 percent in 2020, driven by growth and higher employment. The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the employment and livelihood of households in Kosovo in 2020.<sup>25</sup> Inflation, which peaked in 2022 at 11.6 percent,<sup>26</sup> increased household poverty from 14.5 percent in 2021 to 16 percent in 2023.<sup>27</sup> Kosovo's social protection system is largely unbalanced and ineffective, with very little public spending on social assistance targeting the poorest.<sup>28</sup> To support needed reforms in the social protection system, Kosovo's Assembly has ratified an agreement with the World Bank.<sup>29</sup> There are concerns regarding

<sup>10</sup> EC (2023); EU 2023 Kosovo report.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> WB, GDP per capita (current US\$), Kosovo. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=XK>.

<sup>14</sup> EC, Kosovo 2023 Report, page 59.

<sup>15</sup> WB, Macro Poverty Outlook for Kosovo: April 2023. Available at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099641204102337632/pdf/IDU03ef583e406ab90440e08d890e4ac8562043e.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> EC, Kosovo 2023 Report, page 61.

<sup>17</sup> EC, Kosovo 2023 Report, page 66.

<sup>18</sup> ASK, Labour Force Survey database, Unemployment and unemployment rate by sex, age group 15 - 64 by Kosovo, Age group, Year and Sex.

<sup>19</sup> Unemployment is over 90% in the Roma and Ashkali communities. EC, Kosovo 2023 Report, page 100.

<sup>20</sup> Youth unemployment 17.2%, and overall, 11.5% in Q1 2023. Source: ASK (2024); Results of the Labour Force Survey (LFS), Q1 2023. Available at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/Releases/Details/7830>.

<sup>21</sup> ASK, Results of the Labour Force Survey (LFS), Q1 2023.

<sup>22</sup> EC, Kosovo 2023 Report, page 101.

<sup>23</sup> Kosovo, The State Strategy for Youth 2024-2032, page, [https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA\\_SHTETERORE\\_PER\\_RINI\\_2024-2032\\_EN.pdf](https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA_SHTETERORE_PER_RINI_2024-2032_EN.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> WB, Macro Poverty Outlook for Kosovo: April 2023. Poverty rate is measured using the upper-middle-income poverty line (US\$6.85/ person/day in 2017 PPP).

<sup>25</sup> UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNKT (2021), Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Kosovo, Round 3, May 2021, page 7.

<sup>26</sup> WB, database, Inflation, consumer prices (annual %) – Kosovo, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=XK>

<sup>27</sup> Percentage of families living below 1.85 EUR/day. Source: UNDP (2023), Exploring the dynamics of households poverty in the face of inflation: evidence from survey, page 57.

<sup>28</sup> 0.45% of GDP, or 7% of total cash transfer. Source: WB (2022), Western Balkans Social Protection Situational Analyses: Kosovo, page 9.

<sup>29</sup> EC (2023) EU 2023 Kosovo report.



the sustainability of financing for social services, care for the elderly and children with disabilities, access to health and education services for children from poor households, and the regulatory framework for disability inclusion is weak.<sup>30</sup> UNICEF's data shows that 9.3 percent of children are involved in work, of whom 5.6 percent are working under hazardous conditions.<sup>31</sup>

Kosovo's environmental challenges, among others, include environmental pollution, climate change, natural hazards, and unsustainable use of natural resources, which pose obstacles for economic development and well-being. The most critical issues are air pollution, unreliable access to clean energy and unsustainable environmental practices.<sup>32</sup> Kosovo power production has been heavily dependent on coal, with a low level of share of energy consumption from renewable sources. The waste management system is under-developed, with many illegal landfills. Kosovo made progress in adoption of several laws and strategic documents, such as the Law on Climate Change, and Climate Change Strategy 2019 - 2028,<sup>33</sup> albeit further efforts are needed. There is a lack of sufficient funding along with weak administrative and technical capacities for implementation of these frameworks, which lead to reliance on donors.<sup>34</sup> Kosovo is not a party to international environmental conventions; hence it has limited access to vertical funding mechanisms.

Gender inequality is still present in the public administration, access to finance, labour market, ownership of property and in access to the justice system.<sup>35</sup> Female inactivity in the labour market is significantly higher compared to male.<sup>36</sup> Women comprise 65 percent of persons engaged in informal activities, with women living in rural settlements and women ages 46-64 more likely than others to work informally.<sup>37</sup> Gender based violence (GBV) is prevalent in Kosovo, with a high number of unreported cases,<sup>38</sup> although some progress is visible in alignment of legislative and institutional mechanisms on gender equality in line with EU and international standards.<sup>39</sup> Kosovo has been committed to supporting progress towards SDGs, with 89 percent of SDG targets on gender reflected in policy documents.<sup>40</sup> When it comes to gender equality in political participation, women's representation in the Assembly of Kosovo reached its peak in 2021 at 35.8 percent (43 women representatives), with 79 percent of them gaining their seats without the quota.<sup>41</sup> However, women's political engagement remains challenged by "the absence of clear and formalized processes for candidate selection, unequal access to finance, persistent social and political gender bias, and contradictory legislation."<sup>42</sup>

<sup>30</sup> WB (2023), Kosovo Disability Inclusion Profile, page 2. Only 30.7% of international norms and standards concerning persons with disabilities that has been fully translated into legislation.

<sup>31</sup> This issue is particularly evident among male (13.1%), and the Roma and Ashkali communities, and children living in rural settlements. UNICEF (2020), Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and 2019–2020 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019–2020.

<sup>32</sup> OECD (2022); Multi-dimensional Review of the Western Balkans: From Analysis to Action.

<sup>33</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=29356>

<sup>34</sup> EC (2023); EU 2023 Kosovo report, p. 114.

<sup>35</sup> EC (2023) EU 2023 Kosovo report.

<sup>36</sup> 77.2% for female, 43.2% for male, in Q1 2023. Source: ASK, Results of the Labour Force Survey (LFS), Q1 2023. Available at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/Releases/Details/7830>.

<sup>37</sup> Kosovo Women's Network (2024), In the Shadows A Gender Analysis of Informal Work in Kosovo.

<sup>38</sup> Kosovar Center for Security Studies (2024), Women's Security Concerns in Kosovo. [https://qkss.org/images/uploads/files/Shqet%C3%ABsimet\\_lidhur\\_me\\_sigurin%C3%AB\\_e\\_grave\\_n%C3%AB\\_Kosov%C3%AB\\_ENG.pdf](https://qkss.org/images/uploads/files/Shqet%C3%ABsimet_lidhur_me_sigurin%C3%AB_e_grave_n%C3%AB_Kosov%C3%AB_ENG.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Kosovo has adopted Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024, Strategy on the Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (2022-2026), incorporated the Istanbul Convention into Constitution (in 2020), adopted the Law on prevention and protection from domestic violence, violence against women and gender-based violence and other relevant legal documents.

<sup>40</sup> UNTK (2021), Rapid Integrated Assessment: Policy alignment and data availability for the SDGs in Kosovo, page. 6.

<sup>41</sup> NDI (2021), Kosovo's Vibrant Democracy: Closing the deficit in woman's full participation. A quota of the women seats in the Assembly of Kosovo is 30%.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



## 1.4 UNDP programme under review

UNDP began providing development assistance to Kosovo in 1999, following the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999), which provides the mandate for its operations.<sup>43</sup> The UNDP programme for Kosovo has been developed as a Results and Resources Framework (RRF) addendum to the country programme document for Serbia, which also applies for the period 2021-2025. Kosovo RRF 2021-2025 aligns with the priority of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Kosovo 2021-2025, Beyond Recovery UNDP COVID Offer 2.0, RBEC strategy 2021, and UNKT Socio-Economic Response Plan to COVID-19. The RRF has specific focus on priorities of UNSDCF for Kosovo 2021-2025 such as accountable governance (priority area 1); resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic development (priority area 3); and social cohesion (priority area 4). It also considers the cross-cutting theme of UNSDCF<sup>44</sup> related to increased gender equality, right holders' participation, empowerment, and civic engagement.

The programme focuses on contributing to Kosovo's strategic priorities within its 'Development Strategy 2021-2030,' which is aligned with the SDGs, as well to assisting local reforms driven by the EU accession process, such as the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The indicative budget for the RRF 2021-2025 was \$48.6 million, with 39.3 percent intended for Outcome area 1, 38.5 percent for Outcome area 2 and 22.2 percent for Outcome area 3 (Table 1).

**TABLE 1: RRF 2021-2025 OUTCOMES AND RESOURCES (IN MILLION US\$)**

UNSDCF Priority Area	Programme Outcome (SDG goal)	Estimated Budget (2021-2025)	Budget (2021-2024)	Expenditure (2021-2024)	Delivery Rate (2021-2024)
Priority Area 1. Accountable governance	Outcome 1: By 2025, all men and women in Kosovo enjoy from more accountable, effective, transparent, and gender responsive institutions at all levels ensuring access to justice, equality and participation for all. (SDG: 5, 16)	19.1	8.9	7.0	79%
Priority Area 3. Resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic development	Outcome #2: By 2025, women and men in Kosovo, particularly youth and vulnerable groups, have increased access to decent work and benefit from sustainable and inclusive economic development that is more resilient to impacts of climate change, disasters and emergencies. (SDG: 1, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16)	18.7	17.3	14.4	83%

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.undp.org/kosovo>

<sup>44</sup> Outcome 5. By 2025, all women and men in Kosovo, particularly young people, vulnerable groups, and displaced persons increasingly achieve gender equality and claim their rights and fulfil civic responsibilities.

Priority Area 4. Social cohesion	Outcome 3: By 2025, all communities in Kosovo benefit equitably from inclusive engagement and greater social cohesion. (SDG: 5, 11, 16)	10.8	8.7	6.2	71%
<b>TOTAL RFF</b>		<b>48.6</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>REGIONAL PROJECTS</b>			<b>11.8</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>46.7</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>68%</b>

Source: UNDP Quantum & Atlas, extracted on July 31, 2024

The RRF 2021-2025 portfolio includes a total of 44 projects under three outcomes, including some projects that started during the previous programme cycle. Most projects were delivered using Direct Implementation Modality (DIM),<sup>45</sup> and 80 percent were implemented across Kosovo. Almost all projects are gender responsive, with 50 percent classified as GEN-2<sup>46</sup> with 53 percent expenditure, and 13 percent classified as GEN-3.<sup>47</sup>

In accordance with the reconstructed Theory of Change (Figure 1), UNDP's intervention logic for **Accountable governance** priority area (Outcome 1) centres on strengthening anti-corruption institutions, enhancing public safety and accessibility of the justice system. These outputs aim to foster more transparent and efficient governance structures that better serve people and businesses. UNDP's rule of law interventions were directed to support the law enforcement institutions to implement enhanced public safety mechanisms, transparency and accountability. These efforts cumulatively contribute to long-term outcomes where people benefit from improved access to justice and public services, ultimately promoting governance reforms aligned with Kosovo's development objectives.

UNDP's **Resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic development** priority area (Outcome 2) emphasizes the promotion of sustainable economic opportunities, climate adaptation, and eco-friendly business models. Efforts focused on creating job opportunities and skill development programmes, particularly for vulnerable groups such as youth and women, to drive inclusive growth. UNDP supported the establishment of sustainable tourism and green business practices, alongside developing robust climate action frameworks and local strategies for resilience against climate change. Enhanced systems for monitoring climate risks and proactive energy efficiency strategies contributed to environmental sustainability and community resilience. These combined efforts aimed to ensure that people and communities benefited equitably from sustainable economic development that is resilient to the impacts of climate change, disasters, and other emergencies, to foster inclusive growth in Kosovo.

Within the **Social cohesion** priority area (Outcome 3), UNDP focused on fostering inter-ethnic cooperation and trust-building through cultural heritage initiatives and civic participation mechanisms, aimed to enhance social cohesion in Kosovo. This includes UNDP's work with youth on trust building, cohesion among youth with different ethnic backgrounds, and on addressing misinformation and disinformation. UNDP's

<sup>45</sup> Only two projects related to Outcome 2 are implemented through other modalities.

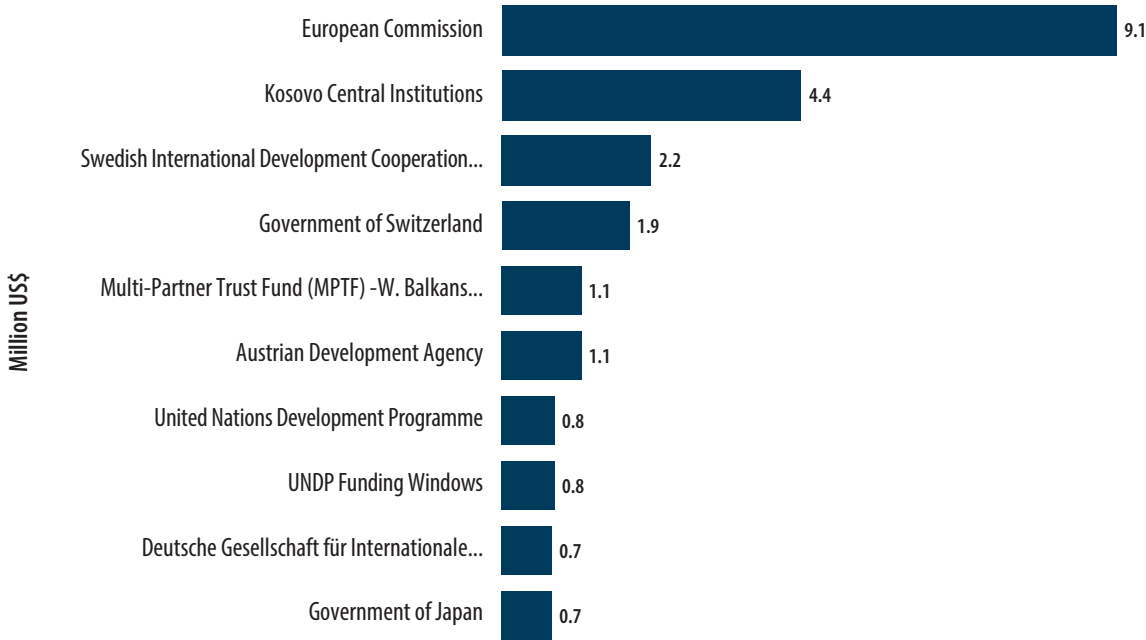
<sup>46</sup> Gender equality is not the main objective of the expected output, but the output promotes gender equality in a significant and consistent way. Source: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/tr/Annex-9.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> The achievement of gender equality and/or the empowerment of women are an explicit objective of the output and the main reason that this output was planned. Narrowing gender inequalities or empower women is the main reason this initiative is being undertaken. Source: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/tr/Annex-9.pdf>.

work aims to deliver outcomes where confidence is built among diverse groups, contributing to inclusive development and stronger social bonds, thereby supporting Kosovo’s broader goals of peacebuilding and societal stability in a post-conflict context.

Analysis of the programme expenditure by fund source shows that 80 percent (\$21.8 million) was funded by bilateral and multilateral donors from 2021 to 2024. Cost sharing by central institutions funded 16 percent of the UNDP portfolio, while 3 percent of funds came from regular resources. Vertical Trust Funds contributed to less than 1 percent of the portfolio, coming from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) stream that relates to cross boundary waters and convention.<sup>48</sup> The European Commission was the largest donor, contributing 42 percent of total funds, followed by the Kosovo central institutions, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Government of Switzerland (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. Top Programme contributors (2021-2024)



Source: UNDP Quantum & Atlas, extracted on July 31, 2024

<sup>48</sup> Kosovo is not signatory to environmental conventions, hence has no access to vertical funds.

# CHAPTER 2

# FINDINGS



This chapter presents the results of UNDP Kosovo programme and contribution analysis, along with the assessment of operational and cross-cutting issues. The findings are organized in three sections, in line with the key evaluation questions and criteria<sup>49</sup> focusing on: (1) UNDP's strategic and programme responsiveness and coherence; (2) UNDP's contributions to programme objectives and sustainable development results; and (3) main factors, including strategies, approaches and cross-cutting aspects that influenced UNDP's performance and results. The analysis is guided by the reconstructed Theory of Change for the Kosovo programme and aggregates results achieved under different outcomes listed in the RRF.

## 2.1 Programme responsiveness and coherence

**Finding 1. UNDP's strategic efforts are closely aligned with Kosovo's priorities and sectoral strategies, particularly in public administration reform, digital transformation, anti-corruption, and environmental sustainability.** These efforts position UNDP as a key partner in supporting Kosovo's developmental and EU integration aspirations. UNDP's downstream interventions were responsive to community needs, enhancing social cohesion and local development, and were considered highly relevant in the post-conflict context.

UNDP support to Kosovo has been aligned with Kosovo's priorities,<sup>50</sup> institutional needs, and community development goals, particularly in the context of Kosovo's EU integration aspirations.<sup>51</sup> UNDP is seen by all interviewed stakeholders as a credible and discrete partner offering a comprehensive approach to address legislative and policy reforms, strategic planning and institution building through technical advisory and capacity building support.

UNDP's institution building efforts spanned all sectors of engagement. Its close relations and consultations with key Kosovo counterparts were considered by central institutions as helpful to align UNDP's strategic efforts with the domestic priorities,<sup>52</sup> and sectoral strategies across sectors of PAR<sup>53</sup> and digital transformation, anti-corruption,<sup>54,55</sup> environmental sustainability, safety and security,<sup>56</sup> design of many of which was supported by UNDP. UNDP successfully contributed to the operationalization of Kosovo's commitments to the SDGs<sup>57</sup> and supported the Kosovo Assembly to maintain dialogue around the integration of the SDGs into domestic strategies. Technical support to the Kosovo Assembly's Sustainable Development Council has facilitated the adoption of a work plan for SDG integration. Across policy engagement, UNDP positioned itself as a strong partner of the institutions and donors, offering upstream support in building the regulatory environment and shaping Kosovo's policies and systems, which was praised by all interviewed stakeholders.

<sup>49</sup> The criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability – are addressed within the four KEQ and the sub-questions, in accordance with the Performance Rating System. Details and results of the Performance Rating are presented in Annex 8.

<sup>50</sup> Kosovo authorities, Concept for drafting the Development Plan Strategy 2030, <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Concept-on-preparation-of-the-National-Development-Strategy-2030.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.kuvendikosoves.org/eng/european-union-integration-process/>

<sup>52</sup> Kosovo authorities, Concept for drafting the Development Plan Strategy 2030, <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Concept-on-preparation-of-the-National-Development-Strategy-2030.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Public Administration Strategy (2022-2027); <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/public-administration-reform-strategy-2022-2027/>.

<sup>54</sup> The second phase of political priorities (ERA II) was launched on 8 October 2020, jointly by the Prime Minister and the EU Commissioner for Enlargement Negotiations. <https://integrimievropian.rks-gov.net/en/saa/political-priorities-for-the-implementation-of-the-saa-european-reform-agenda-era/>.

<sup>55</sup> Kosovo's anticorruption strategy (2021-2023); <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ANG-Strategjia-Kunder-Korrupsionit-2021-2023.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> Western Balkans Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Control Roadmap; <https://www.seesac.org/SALW-Control-Roadmap/>.

<sup>57</sup> Through the Assembly's resolution endorsing the SDGs in 2018 and the establishment of the Assembly's Sustainable Development Council.

UNDP's downstream interventions during the review period were relevant and responsive to community needs, enhancing social cohesion through various programmes and partnerships. Collaborating with municipalities, UNDP focused on green growth, urban development, and social services—areas deemed relevant by stakeholders. Interviewed stakeholders confirmed that UNDP's value proposition in Kosovo lies in its trusted partnership and reliable support that integrates the principles of inclusivity (Leaving No One Behind) and gender mainstreaming across all outcomes. Its conflict-sensitive approach to development further enhances its role in promoting social cohesion through initiatives such as inter-ethnic dialogue on cultural heritage, combating misinformation, and addressing transitional justice and issues of missing persons. Its neutral facilitator role added value to inter-ethnic dialogue and cultural heritage initiatives, aligning with Kosovo's efforts to ensure peace and stability, which stakeholders considered crucial in a post-conflict context.

UNDP's strategic position as a reliable partner is reflected in funding by Kosovo central Institutions, making it the second-largest donor after the EU (Figure 2). Much of this funding supported interventions where UNDP could facilitate timely procurement of goods and services, bypassing the more bureaucratic institutional procedures. Stakeholders confirmed that this capability, along with UNDP's assistance in outsourcing experts and services, helped ensure the prompt delivery of needed assistance. UNDP's ability to bring in expertise, uphold international standards, and maintain a neutral position was deemed crucial by all stakeholders, especially in the Kosovo context. UNDP's efforts to promote 'Integrated Financing Frameworks,' train Ministry of Finance staff on SDG financing modalities and support local initiatives, such as the SDG Investor Mapping in Prizren, successfully mobilized resources, including €5 million in loans from the EBRD and €1 million in EU grants for energy efficiency projects.<sup>58</sup> This alignment of local actions with global sustainability goals was widely acknowledged by stakeholders.

## 2.2 Contributions to programme objectives and sustainable development results

### Governance and Access to Justice – linked to Outcomes 1 and 3

#### Anti-corruption

**Finding 2. UNDP has significantly strengthened Kosovo's anti-corruption and financial investigation institutions and legal frameworks promoting Kosovo's anti-corruption and integrity efforts. The sustainability of these achievements remains fragile, with ongoing challenges in institutional capacity and dependence on external financing.**

UNDP's governance and rule of law initiatives have been closely aligned with the priorities of key Kosovo institutions, especially considering their EU aspirations and institution-building needs. UNDP's strength lies in its expertise and its ability to engage with institutions both openly and discreetly, providing tailor made solutions and new ideas, as emphasized by interviewed stakeholders. UNDP engagement is also provided through regional outreach and programmes, which brings in essential international and regional expertise and networks, combined with customized solutions for Kosovo's context and capacity. Within Kosovo's complex political and policy environment, with varying levels of institutional absorption capacity, UNDP has been instrumental in supporting legislative development, including the adoption of more than 20 laws

<sup>58</sup> UNDP Kosovo (2024); ROAR 2023.

across its anti-corruption efforts.<sup>59</sup> UNDP also supported the drafting of the Anti-corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2028, support that interviewed stakeholders see as critical for the establishment of strong foundations for Kosovo's anti-corruption efforts.

Building on the positive support from the previous RRF cycle, UNDP continued its institutional strengthening support to the Kosovo Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Financial Investigation Unit (FIU), which was considered by stakeholders as UNDP's added value in serving as a discrete and reliable partner over a long period of time. UNDP support to the Agency was not only directed towards the development of staff and institutional structures, but also to development of an E-System to underpin the Agency's work and its transparency and outreach to the people. As per UNDP records, the digital solutions resulted in the transitioning of 5,000 paper-based asset declarations to an online registry with more than 11,800 submissions, establishing an internal case management system, and developing a 24/7 corruption reporting application.<sup>60</sup> These advancements have improved efficiency, reduced human error, and increased transparency of the work of the Agency, as confirmed by interviewed stakeholders. These contributions have led to increased effectiveness in processing corruption cases, with more than 10 big cases opened in the courts for corruption, resulting in sanctions,<sup>61</sup> and 67 percent of reported cases to kallxo.com<sup>62</sup> being addressed in 2023. The kallxo.com e-database for political parties to file finance reports and e-platform for asset declarations resulted in more than 4,000 public officials declaring assets,<sup>63</sup> as corroborated by Kosovo data and interviews.

UNDP's continued assistance for the further institutional development of the FIU and the Asset Recovery Unit, which were set up with UNDP's aid, was greatly appreciated by the local counterparts. This continued technical assistance and mentorship support has been critical for the FIU to publish a comprehensive typologies report, a pioneering effort and first of its kind in Kosovo, the Balkans, and Europe. Stakeholders indicate this report addressed political expropriation cases and proposed sector-specific solutions, which were taken as examples by other countries in the region. This collaboration led to the further restructuring of the FIU, upgrading the FIU's Strategic Analysis unit into the Division for Strategic Analysis in 2024. As a result of the newly established department, the focus on strategic analysis has been strengthened, leading to a significant increase in the number of strategic analyses conducted annually, now reaching six to eight reports on topics such as cryptocurrency, cross-boundary cash movement, exchange bureaus, and real estate, which are classified and shared with law enforcement. Interviewed stakeholders corroborated the findings of the final Evaluation of the Support to Anticorruption Efforts in Kosovo (SAEK) III project, which noted that SAEK's support boosted money laundering investigations, including Politically Exposed Persons (PEP) cases, by enabling proactive investigations without relying on Suspicious Transaction Reports, reducing political interference.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>59</sup> These include legislation such as the Law on Agency for Prevention of Corruption, the Law on Declaration, Origin, and Control of Assets draft Law on the State Bureau for Verification and Confiscation of Unjustified Assets; and the Law on Financing of Political Entities; Concept Document on Law on Court Appointed Experts. See also UNDP (2023); Final Evaluation of the Project "Support to Anticorruption Efforts in Kosovo III", <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/23562>.

<sup>60</sup> UNDP (2024); Results Oriented Annual Report 2023.

<sup>61</sup> According to Mid-term Project Evaluation of the Support to Anti-Corruption Efforts in Kosovo, phase III (2022), one mayor, one medical doctor, 15 police officers, and one businessman were sentenced with prison during July 2020 – June 2022.

<sup>62</sup> The online platform [www.kallxo.com](http://www.kallxo.com) is a tool for residents to report on corruption, fraud, conflict of interest, and other related cases of misuse of official position, negligence, endanger of human rights of Kosovo residents or endanger of general interest. It is a joint project of the organizations Internews Kosova, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, NGO "LENS" and Agency for Prevention of Corruption, funded by UNDP.

<sup>63</sup> UNDP (2024); Results Oriented Annual Report 2023.

<sup>64</sup> UNDP (2023); Final Evaluation of the Project "Support to Anticorruption Efforts in Kosovo III", p. 36; <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/23562>.



The analysis of the Corruption Perception Index over the reference period shows a five point increase since 2020,<sup>65</sup> which is an indicator of the overall changing perception across the Kosovo population. The latest National Integrity Assessment report for Kosovo by Transparency International and KDI noted that the improving index was “attributed to enhancements in the legal framework governing political party financing, along with the package of laws aimed at reforming the justice system,”<sup>66</sup> to which UNDP contributed, along with other ongoing efforts by the Kosovo authorities.

The sustainability of achieved results to the most extent is still fragile. The evaluation found multiple remaining challenges, particularly in ensuring the inclusive and transparent development of the Anti-Corruption Strategy, which has been delayed due to the slow adoption of necessary laws. While digital tools have been widely promoted, their sustained usage and effectiveness require further investments. The evaluation notes that while both the FIU and the Agency for Prevention of Corruption have succeeded in building their institutional capacity and credibility over the reference period, there are outstanding institutional needs and capacity gaps that require external support going forward, which makes the institutional development efforts still dependent on external financing. This is considered by interviewed stakeholders as a significant challenge.

## Public Safety and Security

**Finding 3. UNDP’s initiatives have brought transformative results in Kosovo’s public safety and security by enhancing the legal framework, modernizing law enforcement capacities, and significantly reducing the illegal possession and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Efforts in cybersecurity and cybercrime are still in early stages, providing promising new entry points for UNDP going forward.**

UNDP’s efforts in enhancing public safety and security have contributed to transformational results for security in Kosovo and regionally. The UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) effort and related interventions have significantly improved the strategic framework on SALW, with laws and bylaws now in place in alignment with the Regional Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024.<sup>67</sup> For instance, UNDP supported Kosovo authorities to amend the Law on Weapons<sup>68</sup> and the Administrative Instruction on technical procedures of deactivation of firearms<sup>69</sup> in line with the latest EU regulatory framework.<sup>70</sup> The upgrades in the legislative framework have resulted in Kosovo ensuring the highest level of harmonization in the region with the provisions of the UN Firearms Protocol,<sup>71</sup> an achievement accomplished inter alia with UNDP and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)<sup>72</sup> support.

UNDP supported the capacities of law enforcement agencies across different sectors to address and deal with SALW. For instance, over the reference period, UNDP supported the Firearms Focal Point and Forensics Agency with equipment, training and systems integration. UNDP provided stereoscopes, borescopes,

<sup>65</sup> Kosovo CPI score was 36 in 2020, 39 in 2021, and at 41 in 2022 and 2023. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/ksv>

<sup>66</sup> Transparency International and KDI Kosovo (2024); Integrity Report; p. 15; <https://kdi-kosova.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/01-NIS-Report-Eng-Draft-06.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.seesac.org/SALW-Control-Roadmap/>.

<sup>68</sup> Ministry of Internal Affairs (2022); Decision No: 527/2022, dated: 04.04.2022 for creating the working group to draft/amend the Law on Weapons.

<sup>69</sup> Ministry of Internal Affairs (2022); Decision: 1187/2022, dated: 28.07.2022 for revising/amending the Administrative Instruction on technical procedures of deactivation of firearms.

<sup>70</sup> e.g., Firearms Regulation (EU) No 258/2012: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012R0258>.

<sup>71</sup> European Commission (2023); Kosovo 2023 Report: [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/760aacca-4e88-4667-8792-3ed08cdd65c3\\_en?filename=SWD\\_2023\\_692%20Kosovo%20report\\_0.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/760aacca-4e88-4667-8792-3ed08cdd65c3_en?filename=SWD_2023_692%20Kosovo%20report_0.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> SEESAC is a joint initiative of UNDP and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) funded by the EU. See more on <https://www.seesac.org/About/>.



ground-penetrating radar, and the I-Base system, which improved firearm status searches. UNDP also provided Tableau, CARTWIN Pro licenses and Trigger Scan systems, and supported the Electronic Weapon Registration system, enhancing investigative efficiency and firearm management. These investments have been transformative for Kosovo institutions, reinforcing their ability to combat illicit arms trafficking in Kosovo and strengthen its cooperation with other countries in the region. Document review and stakeholder interviews confirm that UNDP support interventions brought significant results, as exemplified by the confiscation of more than 1,393 small arms and light weapons (SALW), 37,215 rounds of ammunition<sup>73</sup> and destruction of more than 1,500 SALW<sup>74</sup> over the reference period. Public perception of safety has improved, with 83 percent of respondents feeling secure in 2023, up from 80 percent in 2022, according to UNDP data.<sup>75</sup> UNDP's support to Kosovo's Firearms Focal Point has also been recognized in the latest EU Kosovo report for 2023, which noted that "Kosovo's firearms focal point continues to function as a good practice in the region."<sup>76</sup>

Sustainability prospects are promising when it comes to SALW, with systems already showing resilience and responsiveness—a result to which UNDP has significantly contributed, as corroborated by interviewed stakeholders. However, interviewees highlighted the need for continued capacity strengthening to upgrade and modernize these processes to address evolving criminal methodologies. While institutions have a solid foundation, further support from UNDP is expected to sustain progress. UNDP also invested in supporting cybersecurity and cybercrime measures. However, the evaluation found that such efforts are still in initial phases. According to interviewed stakeholders, UNDP has an opportunity to work in this area based on its contributions to digital transformation in law enforcement and its strong strategic and neutral position.

## Access to Justice

**Finding 4. UNDP's initiatives have considerably contributed to the enhancement of mechanisms for better access to justice for Kosovo's non-majority communities by strengthening court administration, digitalizing the court system, and providing multilingual services.** The sustainability of these improvements remains uncertain due to high caseloads, capacity gaps, and political complexities. Continued external support and investment are necessary to fully institutionalize these advancements and address ongoing challenges.

UNDP's interventions have significantly contributed to the improved access to justice for Kosovo's non-majority communities,<sup>77</sup> with a particular focus on addressing barriers related to language and trust issues.<sup>78</sup> Strengthening court administration, case management and translation services has been critical in making the justice system more accessible and trustworthy for these communities. Over the review period, a key contribution was the establishment of a Centralized Translation System (CTS) enhancing translation and interpretation capacities and expediting court proceedings. The CTS, which addressed the

<sup>73</sup> Kosovo Police annual report 2023.

<sup>74</sup> UNDP (2024); UNDP outcome monitoring data.

<sup>75</sup> UNDP Kosovo (2024); ROAR 2023.

<sup>76</sup> European Commission (2023); Kosovo 2023 Report: [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/760aacca-4e88-4667-8792-3ed08cdd65c3\\_en?filename=SWD\\_2023\\_692%20Kosovo%20report\\_0.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/760aacca-4e88-4667-8792-3ed08cdd65c3_en?filename=SWD_2023_692%20Kosovo%20report_0.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> Kosovo Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo, Article 1.4 defines communities as "national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious groups traditionally present in Kosovo that are not in the majority". These groups are Serb, Turkish, Bosnian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani and other communities. <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2531>.

<sup>78</sup> [https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/WJP%20Graphical%20Report-Rule%20of%20Law%20in%20Kosovo\\_FINAL%20110320.pdf](https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/WJP%20Graphical%20Report-Rule%20of%20Law%20in%20Kosovo_FINAL%20110320.pdf).

high demand for translation services, is now fully operational, with several translators hired or expected to be recruited,<sup>79</sup> signalling sustainability. Stakeholders confirmed that these efforts have helped enhance access to justice and the implementation of language rights<sup>80</sup> in judicial proceedings.

Digitalization efforts, such as the creation of court archive systems and the integration of thousands of minor offense cases into the Court Management Information System (CMIS), have improved record-keeping and transparency. These efforts were particularly praised by stakeholders for promoting inclusion, such as through the provision of Braille Display equipment for visually impaired legal professionals. Stakeholders view these digital initiatives as crucial for boosting the efficiency and accountability of the judiciary.

In the realm of domestic and gender-based violence (GBV) cases, UNDP's introduction of tools such as Lexdoks<sup>81</sup> and its review of judicial practices have filled critical gaps, improving the understanding and application of judicial procedures. This has also facilitated the sharing of best practices among women judges and prosecutors across the region, which stakeholders consider valuable in improving the handling of GBV cases.<sup>82</sup> For illustration, the Ministry of Justice now shares open data statistics regarding domestic violence cases,<sup>83</sup> which are updated every three months.<sup>84</sup> While these efforts have strengthened judicial capacity and promoted a more gender-sensitive system, stakeholders note that GBV remains a complex issue requiring further UN coordination.

UNDP also supported the introduction of mobile legal clinics, providing legal aid to underserved remote areas, to promote inclusive justice.<sup>85</sup> However, the sustainability of this mobile clinic remains in question after the end of UNDP support,<sup>86</sup> as there are no governance measures to sustain them after expiry of assistance.

Interventions under Outcome 3 contributing to equal access of justice included the advancement in addressing issues of missing persons in Kosovo due to the conflict. As per reports, 1,621 persons are still missing.<sup>87</sup> UNDP's work focused on digitalizing archives and enhancing outreach efforts,<sup>88</sup> contributing to more efficient investigations and dialogue on depoliticizing the process. According to stakeholder feedback, maintaining this topic on the agenda and providing continued support has been a result in itself, contributing to both access to justice and social cohesion. However, the advancements in these areas are affected by the political complexities and other regional issues that are beyond UNDP's control.

UNDP's integrated approaches in justice sector support interventions have laid strong foundations for sustainability through digitization of case files, which are now fully accessible to all; modernizing of archives; and the establishment of the central translation unit. UNDP's efforts have contributed to digitalization of nearly 700,000 minor office court case files from all seven Basic Courts and translation of more than

<sup>79</sup> To support the use of CTS, 61 court translators (35 women, 26 men) and administrators were trained to use it. In the Basic Court of Pristina and the Kosovo Judicial Council, 278 case files (1,233 pages) were translated, and interpretation was provided for 216 court hearings.

<sup>80</sup> Kosovo Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo, Article 4.5 defines that "persons belonging to communities shall have the right to defend themselves in court in their language; if necessary, the authorities shall provide them with free assistance of an interpreter."

<sup>81</sup> Lexdoks is an advanced legal research AI tool that is used by 500 judges and legal associates. <https://lexdoks.com/>.

<sup>82</sup> UNDP facilitated the sharing of best practices among women judges and prosecutors from Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia

<sup>83</sup> Data base is available at <https://md.rks-gov.net/page.aspx?id=1,184>.

<sup>84</sup> Ministry of Justice (2024), Summary report of the campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2023. <https://md.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/14CC1CA7-0CB5-4F7A-80A1-2F6D4CBD716E.pdf>.

<sup>85</sup> UNDP supported the opening of one mobile clinic focused on providing legal aid in remote areas, operated by the Agency for Free Legal Aid. As a result of this investment, 200 cases (168 male, 32 female) from Obiliq/Obilić, Dragash/Dragaš and Vitine/Vitina benefited from legal assistance.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> EC (2023); EU 2023 Kosovo report.

<sup>88</sup> UNDP invested efforts to support the Kosovo's Commission on Missing Persons primarily through the digitalization of archives of the Institute for Forensic Medicine and Kosovo Police and enhancing their communication and outreach approaches. UNDP also supported the establishment of a Board of the Missing Persons Resource Centre and dialogue organized by Persons Family Associations in Kosovo on depoliticizing the missing persons' process.

200 case files. However, Kosovo's justice system still encounters challenges stemming from low trust in the justice system. Analysis of studies related to the justice system overall shows that the percentage of people satisfied with the performance of the justice system decreased slightly from 31 percent in 2022 to 29 percent in 2023, though this was higher than in 2019 (13.6 percent),<sup>89</sup> indicating areas for ongoing investment. Interviewed stakeholders indicate that in the north of Kosovo, where fragile developments have hindered progress in the Basic Court of Mitrovica due to political complexities, demand continues for further efforts and support by UNDP. According to stakeholder feedback, this is exacerbated by limited outreach of UNDP in the court system in the north of Kosovo. Stakeholders noted that the advancements across the justice system that were promoted with the help of UNDP are still not in a position to function on their own without external support and there is a need for further investment to ensure the practices and mechanisms are institutionalized and there is sufficient willingness and capacity to provide rights-based services to the most vulnerable.

## **Inclusive Growth and Resilience – linked to Outcome 2**

### **Access to decent work and sustainable livelihoods**

**Finding 5. UNDP's longstanding partnership with labour-market institutions has boosted their ability to deliver employment services and contributed to providing decent work opportunities for the most vulnerable groups. The sustainability prospects of the results achieved thus far remain mixed.**

UNDP has continued supporting the strengthening of institutional capacity of the Employment Agency of Kosovo and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW)<sup>90</sup> (currently the Ministry of Finance, Labour, and Transfers) to design employment policies and improve service delivery for jobseekers over the reference period. This partnership, based on UNDP's understanding of market needs, focused on institutional capacity building, expanding job opportunities, and developing skills (through various labour market measures and green and digital skill-building) for vulnerable groups, including Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) youth, women, non-majority communities, and repatriated individuals.

A key area of support was the digitalization of employment services by directly supporting the enhancement of the Labour Market Information System and Employment Management Information System.<sup>91</sup> These interventions have helped upgrade the interoperability and data exchange between the Employment Agency and the Department of Social Policy Family, strengthening institutional coordination. As a result, the System is now more conducive for jobseeker registration and employee performance tracking, as corroborated by interviewed stakeholders.<sup>92</sup>

In terms of labour market integration, UNDP's active labour market measures<sup>93</sup> benefited 1,889 vulnerable individuals (44 percent women) during the period 2021-2023, enhancing their employability.<sup>94</sup> Initiatives such as ICT boot camps contributed to the digital upskilling of 231 young people in 2023,<sup>95</sup> 63 percent of whom are employed after the training, as estimated by implementing partner Rochester Institute

<sup>89</sup> UNDP data on PD outcome and output indicators, January 2024.

<sup>90</sup> UNDP responded to an issue of the limited institutional capacities of the Employment Agency of Kosovo to deliver employment services for all jobseekers.

<sup>91</sup> Labor Market Information System and Employment Management Information System is used for jobseeker registration, profiling and performance measurement of employees working with jobseekers.

<sup>92</sup> This is in line with findings of the final evaluation report ALMP 2, which assessed that "the platform enhances the coordination between offices as well data exchange between institutions, while upgrading the capacities and provides digitalised collaboration." UNDP (2023), Final Evaluation of UNDP Active Labour Market Programmes 2, page 41.

<sup>93</sup> ALMM measures included, but were not limited to, on the job training, wage subsidy, self-employment programme, internship programme, digital skills programme.

<sup>94</sup> As per UNDP PowerBI data on Outcome Output Indicators.

<sup>95</sup> This was achieved with the Digital Skills Project, as a continuation of ICT boot camp piloted under Activate Labour Market Programme 3. Source: UNDP (2023); The Digital Skills Programme, Progress Report 2023.

of Technology (RIT) Kosovo. UNDP's efforts to build job seekers' skills in ICT and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) is a good example of collaboration with the private sector by conducting market needs assessments and providing learning opportunities and internships for target groups. UNDP also invested in building green skills such as solar panel installation training, which have also shown promise, with the inclusion of this training module in Kosovo's Vocational Training Centres.

Through such investments, UNDP contributed to improved employability of targeted beneficiaries. However, these efforts were often fragmented and one-off, limiting their impact on systemic change. The Employment Agency continued to implement labour market measures targeting vulnerable groups such as youth, women and minority communities. However, the labour market measures for repatriated persons, aiming to help their economic reintegration, was discontinued following changes in the agency's management structure. Interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the Employment Agency of Kosovo still requires further capacity strengthening, due to the lack of human resources in public employment services to work with vulnerable groups and to continue with digitalization of employment services. As the Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and the Employment Agency of Kosovo has expired, and new funding has not been ensured by UNDP, it is uncertain how UNDP will continue to support access to the labour market in the upcoming period.

### **Inclusive service delivery**

**Finding 6. UNDP's contribution to social protection systems to support vulnerable individuals has introduced some novel inclusive service delivery practices. These include the involvement of UNV community volunteers and service delivery by municipalities through CSOs.**

UNDP's partnership with academia and CSOs has been effective in delivering social services to vulnerable groups, with notable results in UNDP's EU-funded COVID-19 socio-economic response, in collaboration with UN Women and UN Volunteers, which enhanced social service provision by Centres for Social Work (CSW) and CSOs.<sup>96</sup> This support led to the successful introduction of a digitalized case management system for the CSWs. Additionally, four mobile clinics were established, providing legal aid, health advice for women, and social services for the elderly and people with disabilities. Stakeholders noted that the placement of 40 UNV community volunteers in CSWs across Kosovo helped mitigate the CSWs' capacity limitations during the pandemic. This approach not only helped solve immediate human resources needs to support CSWs, but also offered University of Pristina students<sup>97</sup> practical experience in social work for one year.

In a joint project with UNICEF, UNV volunteers also coordinated 60 doctor volunteers and mental health specialists to manage a 24/7 emergency mental health call centre.<sup>98</sup> The ReLOaD2 project further strengthened inclusive service delivery at the local level by supporting 32 projects led by CSOs co-financed with six municipalities, all aimed at addressing community needs.<sup>99</sup> Key outputs from this collaboration include a four-month internship programme for 75 youth and the selection of 13 youth (3 men, 10 women) under the Self-Employment scheme.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>96</sup> For instance, 8,290 families benefitted with the amount of EUR 2.9 million through the voucher scheme, 2,000 families received utility subsidies, and 30 CSWs and 11 NGO Residential Centres benefitted from the rehabilitation or renovation of their facilities. Source: UNDP (2022), Final evaluation of the project 'Response to COVID-19 Emergency and Early Recovery Support'.

<sup>97</sup> Department of Social Work.

<sup>98</sup> Seven partners municipalities were selected in 2021 (Dragash/š, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Mitrovicë/a South, Podujevë/o, Rahovec/Orahovac Skenderaj/Srbica and Shtërpçë/Štrpce). However, collaboration with Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje was terminated as this municipality was not able to meet its financial obligations for co-financing CSOs under the 1st Public Call for CSOs, as stated in ReLOaD2 Progress Reports.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> UNDP (2024) ReLOaD2 Progress Reports 2023.

The sustainability of these efforts varied. Some student volunteers with one year of experience in social work applied for licenses and were retained in CSWs, but the operation of most mobile clinics still depends on external funding.<sup>101</sup> The sustainability of the ReLOaD2 project is hindered by the lack of local authorities' budget lines for financing CSOs; limited CSO involvement in policy and budget formulation; low CSO capacity to participate in public calls; and changes in decision-makers following local elections, as noted in document reviews and confirmed by stakeholders.

## Environment and climate change

**Finding 7. UNDP's support to the institutions at central level has contributed to the development of the legal and strategic frameworks and enhanced their institutional abilities to address environment and climate change considerations. Restricted financing options limit the potential of these green transformation efforts.**

UNDP's contributions have enhanced Kosovo's regulatory framework for climate action and green growth while strengthening the capacity of key institutions to manage environmental risks. UNDP's advisory support and policy engagement contributed to the adoption of Kosovo's first Law on Climate Change in January 2024, which marked a milestone in building Kosovo's commitment to climate action. The initial draft of this law, supported by UNDP, had articles on monitoring, reporting, verification and accreditation of greenhouse gas emissions (MRVA) and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), but it was excluded by the key institutions from the adopted version of Law to be able to postpone any legal obligations for the private sector, due to the carbon intensive nature of Kosovo economy.<sup>102</sup> However, after the EU reform agenda for growth plan was approved in Kosovo, this law is being amended to integrate MRVA, with support from UNDP.

UNDP has been actively involved in building institutional capacities to address climate change and environmental challenges in Kosovo. The institutionalization of the Climate Change Council, where UNDP serves as the Technical Secretary, has been a crucial step in ensuring a coordinated approach to climate governance, as confirmed by stakeholders. Interviewed institutional stakeholders highlighted UNDP's critical role in positioning Kosovo in the climate agenda at the global level by supporting development of the voluntary NDCs<sup>103</sup> and ensuring the participation of Kosovo in COP 27 and 28.<sup>104</sup>

UNDP's support in strengthening policy frameworks contributed to the adoption of the Circular Economy Roadmap,<sup>105</sup> the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for 2022-2025<sup>106</sup> and public-private dialogue on green recovery for tourism, laying the groundwork for zero-emission pathways. UNDP is also working on legal frameworks to support the expansion of the creative economy, initiating a shift towards a circular economy.<sup>107</sup> In the area of waste management, UNDP supported the Ministry of Health in developing guidelines for the management and treatment of medical waste,<sup>108</sup> aimed at reducing negative health and

<sup>101</sup> UNDP (2022), Final evaluation of the project 'Response to COVID-19 Emergency and Early Recovery Support'.

<sup>102</sup> Climate Change Law does not fully incorporate all climate and energy objectives for 2030 set by the Energy Community or the Kosovo 2050 climate neutrality targets. Source: <https://www.energy-community.org/news/Energy-Community-News/2024/01/11.html>.

<sup>103</sup> The 15 members of KCCC had the opportunity to meet with the counterparts from Montenegro and learn from their experience in establishing the NDCs.

<sup>104</sup> <https://ndcpartnership.org/events/cop28-kosovos-first-inclusive-and-voluntary-ndc>

<sup>105</sup> [https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/MMPHIFolder/DocumentsFiles/2023\\_8171e270-643b-4de3-9387-91794084eb8b.pdf](https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/MMPHIFolder/DocumentsFiles/2023_8171e270-643b-4de3-9387-91794084eb8b.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Tourism-Strategy-2024-2030.pdf>

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/blog/kosovo-step-closer-circular-economy>

<sup>108</sup> UNDP, WHO (2024) Healthier Kosovo 2, Narrative progress report 2023.



environmental impacts. However, stakeholders raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of this work, given the short duration of the project and need for further regulatory improvements and advocacy to ensure lasting results.<sup>109</sup>

UNDP's capacity-building efforts extended to the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure, enabling the Ministry to engage more effectively in climate-related decision-making. Such support was considered by stakeholders as relevant and useful for the Ministry's further leadership on these issues. In the area of climate risk and disaster management, UNDP contributed to strengthening the capacities of the Kosovo Hydrometeorological Institute by developing a digital system for managing real-time data for better modelling and early warning system for floods.<sup>110,111</sup> However, the use of this data for policy making at central and local level in climate risks and disaster risk reduction is still insufficient, as confirmed by interviewed stakeholders. In the field of river basin management, Kosovo authorities have strengthened capacities for the joint process of establishing an integrated transboundary river basin management of the Drin River Basin, with adequate management and knowledge tools supported by UNDP, mostly in the previous RRF period.<sup>112</sup>

Overall, the evaluation found evident progress in strengthening the strategic framework around environment and climate change; however, there is still a need to further improve the strategic framework through the adoption of a climate change adaptation strategy, the energy and climate plan,<sup>113</sup> the long-term de-carbonization strategy and the roadmap for alignment with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The central institutions and other stakeholders still need significant support in implementation of these strategies to achieve progress in this area, in line with EU integration and international obligations. The transformative potential of these contributions has been constrained by Kosovo's ineligibility to access vertical funds, and temporary suspension of IPA funding since June 2023.<sup>114</sup>

**Finding 8. UNDP's support to the local level authorities has yielded positive outcomes in promoting green governance and climate-related policies and interventions. The scale of these achievements is restricted by the limited scope, short duration and fragmentation of interventions.**

UNDP's support for green governance in Kosovo has been focused on reducing GHG emissions through cross-sectoral planning and initiative in two municipalities,<sup>115</sup> with contributions in inclusive local decision-making on climate change. UNDP's efforts included the establishment of the Green Growth Centre as a platform for integrating various actors in green decision-making and interventions.<sup>116</sup> Through this

<sup>109</sup> <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/23104>

<sup>110</sup> <https://medium.com/@undp.innovation/accelerating-digital-transformation-in-kosovo-adb5b64e6eb0>

<sup>111</sup> Progress is evident in the expansion of the weather station network with three new automatic stations, which is a prerequisite for better informed political decisions on climate adaptation and preparedness.

<sup>112</sup> UNDP (2021); Final evaluation report of Enabling transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management in the extended Drin River Basin (PIMS 4482) and enabling transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management in the White Drin and the extended Drin Basin (PIMS 5510).

<sup>113</sup> A draft version of the Energy and Climate Plan for Kosovo was developed with support of GIZ.

<sup>114</sup> Kosovo is ineligible to access vertical funds as it is not a signatory to the Paris Agreement. European Union adopted measures against Kosovo for not taking action to de-escalate the situation in the north of Kosovo on 28 June 2023, which include temporary suspension of IPA funding.

<sup>115</sup> The partnership between UNDP and the municipality of Prizren resulted in the established Green Growth Centre in this municipality, that needed further support. The municipality of Suharekë/Suva Reka was interested in replicating this result with the support of UNDP. Both municipalities have already established collaboration with ADA, which is also a donor of the Green Growth Centre initiatives.

<sup>116</sup> This platform ensures cross-sectoral strategic planning, articulates climate-related priorities, identifies, and prioritizes mitigation actions and boosts collaboration among different actors (local authorities, private sector, academia, NGOs), which enables better implementation and ensured ownership.

platform, UNDP supported development of various climate change cross-sectoral documents,<sup>117</sup> which resulted in implementation of some priority interventions, such as energy efficiency investments, solar panel installations, smart public transport solutions, urban greening, and sharing food surplus.<sup>118,119</sup> While these interventions were innovative, the evaluation findings indicate that they were dispersed and small scale, but useful for boosting joint decision-making through the Green Growth Centre. Despite strong municipal ownership of the Green Growth Centre and strategic plans, UNDP's interventions were limited to two municipalities, reducing the potential for broader replication across Kosovo, as noted by stakeholders.

UNDP's support in areas such as energy efficiency for public buildings increased awareness on the need for Energy Management Information Systems in Kosovo. UNDP's efforts also helped secure an EBRD loan for energy efficiency in 100 public buildings owned by the municipality of Prizren,<sup>120</sup> demonstrating a novel approach to attract international investment based on the municipality Concept Note on Investment Opportunity Areas for Strengthening Local Climate Action and Financing Mechanisms. However, these contributions remained scattered across different municipalities and were not part of a larger, integrated strategy. Challenges such as limited public-private partnerships and constrained financial resources further hindered progress. Nevertheless, in the context of limited available financial resources, UNDP resource mobilization through local authorities cost-sharing showcases a good practice of investments in enhancing climate change and environmental development.

Within urban areas, UNDP's climate adaptation work through the City Experiment Fund led to small-scale improvements, such as greening urban spaces and creating social areas in Pristina.<sup>121</sup> The evaluation found a good example of repurposing of a public building, such as the former-Hivzi Sulejmani Library, which was first used by the Centre for Narrative Practice, and lately by the Department of Culture of the Municipality Pristina as a public space. Evaluation findings suggest that these efforts helped build partnerships and opportunities but remained limited in scope, such as a study on bus priority routes, which stakeholders mentioned is under consideration by the municipality.

UNDP's contributions to air protection,<sup>122</sup> climate risk monitoring, and early warning systems were considered important but fragmented. Initiatives such as the digital reporting system for environmental malpractices (<https://sr.popravi.org>) had positive results,<sup>123</sup> but broader climate adaptation efforts, including flood response,<sup>124</sup> were partial and short-term, covering only some affected municipalities.

<sup>117</sup> Climate Change Gender Baseline Study in the Municipality of Suharekë/Suva Reka, Climate Change Baseline Study of the rural development sector in the Municipality of Prizren, GHG Emissions Inventory and MRV System Report (2016-2019) for Suharekë/Suva Reka and for Prizren, Climate Change Cross-Sectoral Intervention Plan of Suharekë/Suva Reka (2023 – 2028), Intervention Plan for Rural Development to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change of Municipality of Prizren (2023 – 2028), and Roadmap on Sustainable Food Systems for both municipalities.

<sup>118</sup> The Municipal Administrative Building of Prizren through a PV power system saved 80 to 90% of energy by May 2024, and the surpluses produced could be utilized until December 2024, as confirmed by stakeholder interviews.

<sup>119</sup> This also includes interventions in building knowledge and expertise on environment and climate change in collaboration with academia and secondary schools. The University of Prizren reaccredited study programmes to introduce new subjects on pollution and environmental protection, ecology in agriculture, and the monitoring of the environment, while the municipality of Suharekë/Suva Reka organized a solar panel installer workshop for vocational school students.

<sup>120</sup> [https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/project-information/board-documents/1395306706946/Prizren\\_Public\\_Buildings\\_Energy\\_Board\\_Report.pdf?blobnocache=true](https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/project-information/board-documents/1395306706946/Prizren_Public_Buildings_Energy_Board_Report.pdf?blobnocache=true)

<sup>121</sup> This was a result of several UNDP activities related to process of placemaking, and rethinking and redesigning parts of Pristina together with public participation. As per UN-Habitat definition, placemaking is 'the term that refers to the design process by which we can enrich people's surroundings and make them enjoy 'places' to be in rather than just 'spaces' to pass through.' [https://unhabitat-kosovo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Turning\\_Spaces\\_ENG\\_web1\\_164105.pdf](https://unhabitat-kosovo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Turning_Spaces_ENG_web1_164105.pdf).

<sup>122</sup> UNDP's efforts to decrease people's exposure to air pollution have resulted in development of draft Local Action Plans for Air Quality in the municipalities of Gjiilan/Gnjilane, Graçanica/Gračanica, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Obiliq/Obilić, and Hani i Elezit/Elez Han.

<sup>123</sup> This solution was integrated into the Ministry of Local Government's e-komuna system, leading to the reporting of 249 cases with a response rate of 30% from the municipalities by March 2023.

<sup>124</sup> UNDP made contributions in responding to consequence of flooding that impacted 11 out of 38 municipalities in January 2023.

Overall, the evaluation found that UNDP's contributions to green governance and climate action in Kosovo were helpful for individual institutions or communities, but the fragmented nature of these efforts and the lack of scale limit their ability to achieve significant, long-term systemic change.

### Transition toward green economic growth

**Finding 9. UNDP's support has contributed to promotion of green economic growth and increased the interest of the SME beneficiaries in greening their business operations.** However, this has not led to a transformational change in attitudes within the private sector, due to limited budget and scope of interventions.

UNDP's support to sustainable and green SMEs practice through the Boost x Kosovo Accelerator and the Green Hub Accelerator have made a positive contribution towards promoting green transition in Kosovo, although the scale for broader systemic impact has been very limited. Through these two accelerators, UNDP trained 131 SMEs<sup>125,126</sup> and granted funds to 63 SMEs<sup>127</sup> for transitioning to green solutions and green recovery. Interviewed stakeholders indicate that UNDP's support has increased the interest, knowledge and practice of the SME beneficiaries towards green solutions.<sup>128</sup> Feedback from stakeholders highlighted a mixed reaction to this kind of support, especially regarding the Boost x Kosovo Accelerator. Concerns range from the short duration of the support to alterations in the eligible funding criteria for the planned target group (shifting from established SMEs to startups). There were also issues of miscommunication with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) that reduced initial planned funding<sup>129</sup> and adversely impacted the achievement of anticipated outcomes.

UNDP has also started to work on the enhancement of SMEs' business performance through new tools such as 'In Motion',<sup>130</sup> 'Growing with Your Business'<sup>131</sup> and 'Suppliers' Development'<sup>132</sup> as part of the Economic Resilience Programme.<sup>133</sup> The evaluation could not assess the results of this type of support, as it is in the early stage of implementation. However, in 2024, UNDP Kosovo started training consultants on these tools and methodologies to empower them with the skills to assist micro-business owners and SMEs. It is expected that supported businesses will strengthen value chains, improve their commercial conditions, broaden their markets, and improve their productive capacity, enabling them to increase productivity and competitiveness for sustainable and inclusive growth over the coming years.

<sup>125</sup> Through the Boost x Kosovo Accelerator 80 SMEs in 2022-23 were trained, and 51 tourism-focused SMEs through the Green Hub Accelerator.

<sup>126</sup> It also resulted in the establishment of 24 eco-tourism startups, Source: UNDP (2022); Final report of the project 'Accelerating Green Recovery in Kosovo through ecotourism and inclusive governance'.

<sup>127</sup> Through the Boost x Kosovo Accelerator, 27 SMEs were granted support for transitioning to green solutions, while through the Green Hub Accelerator UNDP granted support to 28 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and 8 startups involved in eco-friendly tourism activities. Source: UNDP (2022); Final report of the project 'Accelerating Green Recovery in Kosovo through ecotourism and inclusive governance'.

<sup>128</sup> Document review shows that 72% of training participants (out of 55 SMEs in 2022) have gained a better understanding of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while 89% of organizations refined their business models.

<sup>129</sup> This led to a reduction of the value of the grant for most of the SME beneficiaries from planned US\$20,000 to US\$10,000.

<sup>130</sup> In motion is a tool aimed to update business models for micro-and small businesses by providing comprehensive business assistance to improve their productive capacity and relationship with the market. More information is available at <https://www.undp.org/sdgvaluechains/motion>.

<sup>131</sup> Growing with your Business is a tool aimed to improve SMEs' financial, administrative, and productive conditions upgrading them to have the capacities to establish long-term supply relationships, thus ensuring their sustainability, market expansion and profitability. More info is available at <https://www.undp.org/sdgvaluechains/growing-your-business>.

<sup>132</sup> The Supplier Development Program is a tool that transforms business relationships in the productive chain between a lead company (large or medium) and its suppliers (micro, small and medium enterprises). More info is available at <https://www.undp.org/sdgvaluechains/suppliers-development>.

<sup>133</sup> <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/press-releases/undp-launches-new-programme-help-micro-small-and-medium-businesses-kosovo>



## Social Cohesion – linked to Outcome 3

### Cultural heritage as common good

**Finding 10. UNDP’s cultural heritage initiatives have contributed to enhancing social cohesion in targeted communities, though political sensitivities and fragmented efforts have posed challenges.**

UNDP’s partnerships with the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports and religious communities, including the Serbian Orthodox Church, have been important in supporting social cohesion efforts to navigate persistent political sensitivities, which continue to pose challenges. UNDP has focused on bringing together different community groups, including youth, CSOs, and local volunteers, in dialogue around themes such as youth empowerment and cultural heritage, fostering unity and shared purpose. Specifically, the efforts over a seven-year span to elevate cultural heritage as a unifying topic and promote monuments as common heritage have helped build bridges and fostered a shared identity among diverse communities. Interviewed stakeholders confirm that projects such as restoring religious sites and promoting cultural heritage as shared assets have provided common ground for different communities to connect and collaborate. Tangible outputs include the restoration of more than 60 cultural and/or religious sites across Kosovo<sup>134</sup> and active youth involvement in preservation efforts. Such support has helped revitalize the area, a result that was praised by interviewed stakeholders. UNDP also supported drafting a strategy for the development of cultural tourism in Janjevë/Janjevo and a management plan for the historic centre and Father Shtjefën Gjeçovi House Museum. This project also had a profound influence on the Croatian diaspora, marked by an increased interest in Janjevë/Janjevo’s potential and possibly their return.

Efforts to bring together religious leaders and communities around cultural heritage sites have also been notable in the rehabilitation and archaeological research of a cathedral in Prizren, which brought together leaders from various religious communities, fostering shared heritage and mutual respect. Using digital tools, UNDP also supported the documentation of rural heritage in the municipalities of Prizren, Dragash/Dragaš, Malishevë/Mališevo, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Rahovec/Orahovac and Mamusha/Mamuša. Nearly 200 unique cultural and natural assets in these locations were documented.<sup>135</sup> UNDP supported the creation of a similar digital platform for Janjevë/Janjevo, where 60 cultural and natural assets and unique services such as culinary riches and old crafts were showcased.<sup>136</sup> The evaluation noted that the restoration activities encountered challenges such as construction delays, COVID-19, and politicization of some reconstruction sites. According to stakeholder feedback, UNDP was successful in navigating most of those challenges.

To promote linkages between cultural heritage and tourism, UNDP invested in skills development programmes on handicrafts, sewing, embroidery, carpentry, and candle making, among others, and the provision of grants to support employment and self-employment opportunities for the local population. UNDP also contributed to the joint promotion of rural tourism in six municipalities in southern Kosovo; facilitated training for tourist guides;<sup>137</sup> and promoted cultural heritage through the Challenge Prize Competition initiative.<sup>138</sup> According to the stakeholder feedback, these were welcome investments in the region with a potential to boost tourism and economic activity. Training programmes for women in craft production and the promotion of cultural tourism have been notable successes, though their sustainability depends on continued entrepreneurship skill development and marketing support. This is in line with findings of the Final External Evaluation of the

<sup>134</sup> As per UNDP data.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/projects/cultural-heritage-driver-economic-revival-janjeve/janjevo>

<sup>137</sup> i.e. 12 residents representing diverse ethnicities including Albanian, Roma, Croat, and Turk

<sup>138</sup> This initiative aimed to provide an opportunity to young talented individuals to use innovative and creative approaches to promote, interpret or re-interpret and preserve intangible cultural heritage of Kosovo and its multi-ethnic character. See more at <https://www2.fundsforngos.org/agriculture-food-nutrition/challenge-prize-competition-in-kosovo/>.

project 'Cultural Heritage as a Driver for Inter-Community Dialogue and Social Cohesion,' which found that that the activities focused on showcasing potential value rather than ensuring sustainability, as they concluded before businesses and initiatives reached the critical mass needed for long-term success.<sup>139</sup>

The sustainability of the results and of the initiative as such have been boosted by the institutionalization of the 'Beautification of Kosovo' programme into an ongoing initiative of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, which also demonstrates the effective coordination among the central institutions and UNDP. According to official statistics, 47 percent of people were satisfied with cultural heritage protection in 2023, an increase from 43 percent in 2022.<sup>140</sup> However, more qualitative community engagement remains essential to enhance inter-community dialogue and participatory decision-making based on local needs, ensuring that cultural heritage projects continue to serve as a foundation for social cohesion.

## Youth empowerment

**Finding 11. UNDP's youth empowerment initiatives have contributed to enhancing social cohesion by fostering a sense of belonging and active residency among young people from diverse backgrounds. Sustainability of results has been challenged by several fragmented, small sized, one-off activities without proper follow-up.**

The Strategy for Youth (2024-2032) in Kosovo,<sup>141</sup> developed and implemented through collaboration between the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and UNDP, represents a transformative approach to engaging youth. By facilitating public consultations, providing technical expertise, and leveraging successful models from countries such as North Macedonia, UNDP's support to the process led to a strategy which represents a comprehensive framework for youth involvement. The strategy development process, inter alia with UNDP support, successfully involved young people beyond conventional civil society organizations. This included university students who participated in peace and security initiatives, offering valuable insights and viewpoints on challenges in local governance. It also provided an opportunity for the youth to comprehend the processes, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and mutual support.

UNDP also invested in other types of activities under this outcome, such as environmental initiatives and efforts to address misinformation and disinformation, involving diverse youth communities. An example is the report 'Unsocial Media – Tracing and Exposing Gendered Disinformation in Kosovo,'<sup>142</sup> published in partnership with NDI in December 2023. However, these initiatives were ad-hoc, small in scale, and lacked follow-up, with limited evidence of lasting results beyond one-off engagements. Broader community and social cohesion initiatives faced systemic limitations, such as poor service delivery and language barriers, which are beyond UNDP's influence. The evaluation concurs with the finding of the final evaluation report of the project 'Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Future in Kosovo 2019-2021' that UNDP-supported local initiatives were insufficient to promote sustainable practices of working together due to their limited scale, duration, and lack of clear linkage to the broader objectives of addressing divisive narratives and promoting social cohesion.<sup>143</sup>

Interviewed stakeholders noted that these initiatives, while small and dispersed, still provided valuable opportunities for inter-ethnic dialogue, highlighting the potential for collaborative and inclusive approaches to address social issues if UNDP support was more strategic and coherent. The evaluation found that UNDP's investments under this outcome, though impactful in specific areas, lacked a cohesive strategy to ensure that individual interventions cumulatively contributed to broader social cohesion goals.

<sup>139</sup> UNDP (2023), Final External Evaluation of the "Cultural Heritage as a Driver for Inter-Community Dialogue and Social Cohesion", <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/detail/22550>.

<sup>140</sup> UNDP data on KPD outcome and output indicators, January 2024.

<sup>141</sup> [https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA\\_SHTETERORE\\_PER\\_RINI\\_2024-2032\\_EN.pdf](https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA_SHTETERORE_PER_RINI_2024-2032_EN.pdf)

<sup>142</sup> <https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/01-Gender-Disinformation-ENG10.pdf>

<sup>143</sup> UNDP (2021), Final evaluation of the project 'Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Future in Kosovo 2019-2021'.

## 2.3 Factors influencing programme performance and cross-cutting issues

### Resource mobilization and operational efficiency

**Finding 12. Resource mobilization challenges, coupled with management changes, have affected UNDP Kosovo's funding and programme implementation.** Recent trends indicate stabilization and strategic repositioning with a positive trajectory moving forward.

The review of financial allocations and expenditures presents a varied picture of UNDP's resource mobilization and expenditure across outcomes. Overall, UNDP's budget has declined over the reference period, except for outcome 2, which is linked to EU-funded project for response to COVID-19 (\$6.2 million, or 43 percent of outcome 2 total budget).<sup>144</sup> One of the challenges for UNDP's resource mobilization was the lack of clear guidance by the office management on how to calculate Direct Project Costs (DPC) when it comes to calculation of non-project staff costs (i.e., operations), especially with EU projects, where these were initially charged but later on excluded. With the arrival of new management, it is expected that this will be standardized.

The decline in bilateral donor funding in Kosovo has also limited the funding possibilities of the RRF. For example, Finland withdrew its funding to the Western Balkans in 2017 and Norway closed its Kosovo-specific programmes in 2021. UNDP's portfolio in environment and climate change is hindered by Kosovo's ineligibility to access vertical funds, as Kosovo is not a signatory to the Paris Agreement. Cost sharing by central institutions has been lower in the period 2021-2024 (16 percent)<sup>145</sup> compared to the previous period (2016-2019, 30 percent).<sup>146</sup> Another challenge is the changing donor landscape, with focus increasingly shifting towards a regional approach by working directly with NGOs and EU member states as implementer of IPA funds in line with the 'Team Europe' approach.<sup>147</sup> The situation has been further exacerbated by the temporary suspension of IPA funding since June 2023.<sup>148</sup>

At the local level, UNDP is viewed by municipalities as a strategic partner when it comes to procurement, with added value for faster, more transparent, and efficient procedures than the municipal ones. The tender procedures at municipality level are very complicated, so agreements with UNDP make it possible for a municipality to transfer funds. However, interviewed stakeholders noted that challenges with a lack of UNDP proactive engagement with Kosovo institutions on cost-sharing and legal issues led to the halting of funds (for example, €5 million from the Pristina municipality in 2021), but these challenges have been overcome by recent renewed efforts to engage in dialogue and solve issues. This renewed engagement and dialogue has played a crucial role in unlocking funding and securing financing agreements with multiple ministries, demonstrating the importance of strong leadership and relationship-building in resource mobilization.

UNDP's resource mobilization challenges were further complicated by management turnover, leading to divergent views from management on the organization's focus and direction. Staff cuts and restructuring<sup>149</sup> in 2018 continued to have a spillover effect on staff morale, which is particularly critical for a small office, resulting in increased workload and impacting operational efficiency. Recent trends following the review of office structure in 2022 show improvements, with the reduction of management costs to 9.37 percent,<sup>150</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> UNDP Quantum & Atlas, extracted on July 31, 2024.

<sup>146</sup> IEO UNDP (2019) Independent UNDP Kosovo Programme Evaluation.

<sup>147</sup> [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/team-europe-initiatives\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/team-europe-initiatives_en)

<sup>148</sup> European Union adopted measures against Kosovo for not taking action to de-escalate the situation in the north of Kosovo on 28 June 2023. See more at <https://www.legalpoliticalstudies.org/the-one-year-anniversary-of-eu-measures-against-kosova/>.

<sup>149</sup> Within this process, one post was abolished from the programme team, while the operations team underwent a more significant restructuring, with a reduction of four positions. Additionally, all operations positions were downgraded and re-advertised, for example, from G7 to G6 and NOC to NOB, which significantly affected staff morale and delivery.

<sup>150</sup> UNDP Internal management data.

reflecting a stabilization of the office after initial internal shocks. Interviews highlighted the ongoing challenge with the team's small size and programme delivery, which necessitates innovative thinking and ambitious ideas to overcome these resource limitations.

UNDP's new ERP system Quantum has also posed operational challenges, requiring language translations and additional guidance for its effective use, which is reported as an obstacle for bidders to participate in calls.<sup>151</sup> This is problematic in the Kosovo context, where procurement is hindered by a small pool of bidders, as emphasized by stakeholders. Despite efforts to improve the process through translations of tendering documentation and leveraging social media, challenges persist, which is also evidenced by a low number of applications to UNDP tenders. With regard to cost sharing, the upcoming move to a new UN building in 2024 is anticipated to reduce some operational costs and enhance efficiency by sharing costs with more UN agencies.<sup>152</sup>

## Partnerships and collaboration

**Finding 13. Strong and consistent collaborations with Kosovo authorities and civil society organizations have provided a strong foundation for delivery of results, while partnerships with UN agencies indicate areas of strategic divergence.** Engagement with the private sector is still in a nascent stage, suggesting potential, but also highlighting internal procedural bottlenecks which prevent full capitalization of these avenues.

UNDP's long-standing relationships with central institutions have been a cornerstone of its work in Kosovo. Its ability to act as a neutral facilitator, particularly in the politically sensitive domains (e.g., cultural and religious heritage), confirms its strategic role in aligning divergent priorities and reducing tensions, and providing relevant support to address Kosovo's priorities and needs.

UNDP's partnerships with civil society have been instrumental in strengthening local capacities and fostering social cohesion, particularly in the context of cultural heritage preservation and local development. These collaborations have enhanced service delivery at the municipal level but have also contributed to building the operational capacities of CSOs. The limited engagement with academic institutions stands out as a significant gap. Given the potential of academia to contribute to evidence-based policymaking and innovative solutions, UNDP's underutilization of this sector is considered a missed opportunity to deepen the analytical rigor and impact of its interventions. It also prevents UNDP from maximizing its potential to further build capacity of academia to proactively engage in evidence generation and policy advisory.

UNDP's collaborative efforts within the UN system have yielded mixed results. UNDP's role within the UN system is generally well-regarded by UN actors, who recognize it as a catalyst in sensitive situations or topics that require mediation and strategic intervention. UNDP's ability to provide a neutral stance and space for dialogue is recognized by stakeholders, allowing it to effectively engage with a wide range of political and development stakeholders. While there have been some successful partnerships, such as the joint 'Healthier Kosovo II' project with WHO, which illustrate the potential for synergistic outcomes, there have also been some systemic challenges in joint projects with some agencies in terms of delays in reporting and communication, as well as general issues with operational coordination. Other projects with joint UN efforts include the joint UNDP-UNFPA PBSO funded project, now in its second phase, and the 2023-2024 Environmental Justice (EJ) project. UNDP also closely cooperates with UNV on a regular basis. The evaluation noted a certain level of tensions in gender-related initiatives, mainly due to UNDP's dominant position, which has, at times, overshadowed the contributions of other UN agencies. Some positive examples of cooperation included the inter-office gender study on EJ

<sup>151</sup> As per UNDP's Results Oriented Annual Reports, and stakeholder interviews.

<sup>152</sup> According to UNDP data, the current UN house costs approximately US\$380,000 annually, and the new building will cost US\$405,000. However, with the inclusion of another agency contributing US\$70,000, the costs for UNDP will decrease by US\$20,000, providing more space and reducing operational expenses.

between UNDP Kosovo and UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Youth Development, Gender Norms and Human Security in Kosovo: Supporting youth as drivers of gender equality, development and positive peace, where UN Women and UNFPA were consulted. However, stakeholders emphasized that there have been missed opportunities for comprehensive, multi-agency approaches, particularly in areas where specialized expertise is crucial, such as gender-sensitive transitional justice.

UNDP's engagement with the private sector has improved over the review period. For illustration, UNDP collaborated with RIT Kosovo and Limak Airport to enhance ICT skills<sup>153</sup> and empower women in STEM fields.<sup>154</sup> It also partnered with the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research and Innovation Centre Kosovo to address food waste in the restaurant sector.<sup>155</sup> The Boost x Kosovo programme supported SMEs in fostering innovation for a green transition, while public-private dialogues explored green schemes, tourism, and cultural development, showcasing UNDP's ability to leverage private sector expertise for development outcomes. Broader engagement has been constrained by internal UNDP policies that limit the scope of collaboration. UNDP's internal regulatory framework and due diligence process is considered by interviewed stakeholders as too time consuming and cumbersome, limiting the opportunities to better harness private sector potential, particularly in areas such as green innovation and sustainable development.

UNDP has effectively promoted South-South cooperation, particularly in areas such as economic development and law enforcement, illustrating its potential to contribute to regional and global development initiatives. UNDP utilized its South-South and Triangular cooperation modality to transfer economic development tools and methodologies from Albania and the Panama Regional Hub. Its capacity building role is visible in collaboration on increased effectiveness of law enforcement bodies towards combating illicit arms trafficking (North Macedonia). These efforts appear to be somewhat peripheral to the core activities in Kosovo, suggesting room for better integration of such initiatives into the broader programmatic framework. This will enhance the coherence and impact of UNDP's work, ensuring that knowledge exchange translates into tangible benefits for the local context.

## Gender mainstreaming

**Finding 14. Despite challenges in implementing its Gender Strategy and Action Plan, gender mainstreaming remains integral to UNDP operations.** This has led to positive influences on public policy and substantial engagement in initiatives promoting gender equality, ranging from socio-economic integration to supporting women in STEM and rural economic empowerment, albeit to a lesser extent targeting people with disabilities and those affected by natural disasters.

UNDP's efforts to mainstream gender equality in its programming and operation are guided by its Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025.<sup>156</sup> During the review period, UNDP Kosovo Office faced significant challenges in its capacity to manage its gender portfolio, which included the departure of the dedicated gender officer. This transition strained the capacity to effectively manage the gender portfolio, which encompasses a comprehensive Gender Strategy and Action Plan, including Gender Silver Seal and related initiatives. There is a gap in expertise within the gender focal team to mainstream gender effectively in project design and implementation. Support from the gender teams in Montenegro and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) has been valuable in developing strategies and promoting networks, but resource mobilization remains a challenge.

<sup>153</sup> RIT Kosovo is private institution of higher education that offers a Bachelor of Science in Applied Arts and Sciences degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology. <https://www.rit.edu/kosovo/DS4A>.

<sup>154</sup> <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/projects/global-engineer-girls-kosovo>

<sup>155</sup> <https://kosovoteam.un.org/en/140268-next-kosovo%E2%80%99s-gastronomy-food-waste-reduction>

<sup>156</sup> [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-09/UNDP\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_Strategy\\_2022-2025\\_EN.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-09/UNDP_Gender_Equality_Strategy_2022-2025_EN.pdf)



In 2021, a Gender Focal Team (GFT) was established to ensure that an effective gender mainstreaming mechanism is in place, with a well-developed ToR and an annual work plan. The team is led by the Resident Representative, in charge of providing strategic guidance and overseeing the work of the GFT. Despite the limited gender-specific projects at the moment,<sup>157</sup> gender mainstreaming remains integral to UNDP's operations. UNDP continuously utilizes Istanbul Regional Hub expertise in review of gender related inputs in the design of new projects.<sup>158</sup> Internally, gender equality is mainstreamed in recruitment, operations, communications and staff capacities. Women represent 61 percent of UNDP Kosovo workforce (out of 93 staff), though this percentage is higher in NO staff category (75 percent) (Annex 4).

Examples of UNDP's advisory support in integration and promotion of gender equality and women's involvement were found across its economic development portfolio. UNDP supported gender mainstreaming in employment policies and measures, while also supporting efforts on the Gender Equal Seal implementation in the Employment Agency of Kosovo, initiatives which have a potential to contribute to transformative gender results. Likewise, support for young women in the IT sector has opened new opportunities in a traditionally male-dominated field, through initiatives such as the Girls Engineering Project<sup>159</sup> and the informal establishment of a Women in STEM Network.<sup>160</sup>

UNDP also contributed to integration of gender perspectives into climate change policies and programmes in two municipalities.<sup>161</sup> UNDP produced various research products and policy papers to support gender mainstreaming and equality in various areas such as corruption prevention,<sup>162</sup> domestic violence,<sup>163</sup> social development<sup>164</sup> and media.<sup>165</sup> The Public Pulse survey, which measures public perceptions, ensures that women's voices are included, providing gender-disaggregated data critical for public attention and policy advocacy. UNDP has focused on visibility and advocacy for gender equality, with targeted events such as the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day. However, some issues were raised by other UN agencies when it comes to UNDP's unilateral action during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, which was dominated by UNDP without proper coordination.

When it comes to other vulnerable groups, the evaluation noted that the focus on people with disabilities and people directly affected by natural disasters has not been strong, as only a small percentage of expenditure targeted those groups. Interviewed stakeholders point out that UNDP has only increased its focus on integration of people with disabilities since 2023. For illustration, UNDP helped the University of Pristina to establish a resource centre for students with visual difficulties, providing equipment (such as zooming tools, audiobooks) to improve their access to learning.<sup>166</sup> A human rights-based approach was included through strengthening the rule of law institutions, access to justice, and empowering individuals to exercise their rights (e.g., environmental justice project, social cohesion initiatives). Measures to incorporate environmental sustainability in the design were seen in projects across all three outcomes.

<sup>157</sup> UNDP Kosovo portfolio has 9 GEN 3 projects (or 12 projects outputs) with 22% of earmarked expenditure.

<sup>158</sup> For example, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub provided gender inputs in the design of the 'Strengthening Information Integrity through Youth Empowerment' project implemented during 2023 – 2024, funded by UNDP Funding Windows.

<sup>159</sup> This initiative has strived to involve girls in engineering by training 100 women in digital skills.

<sup>160</sup> However, the initiative faced setbacks due to the Ministry of Education's weak capacity. <https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-in-stem-kosovo/>.

<sup>161</sup> The Climate Change Gender Baseline Study in the Municipality of Suharekë/Suva Reka. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-05/Climate%20Change%20Baseline%20Study.pdf>.

<sup>162</sup> 'Gender and Corruption related Vulnerabilities in the Public and Private Sector', <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/publications/gender-specific-corruption-risk-and-vulnerabilities#>.

<sup>163</sup> 'Socio-demographic factors of domestic violence cases in Pristina region during 2018-2020'.

<sup>164</sup> 'Youth Attitudes towards Gender and Social Norms, Development and Human Security in Kosovo' <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-12/Youth%20Attitudes%20Towards%20Gender%20And%20Social%20Norms%2C%20Development%20And%20Human%20Security%20in%20Kosovo%20-%20EN.pdf>.

<sup>165</sup> 'Unsocial Media– Tracing and Exposing Gendered Disinformation in Kosovo', <https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/01-Gender-Disinformation-ENG10.pdf>.

<sup>166</sup> UNDP Kosovo, Overview of Digital Transformation Portfolio 2023, internal document.

# CHAPTER 3

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



## 3.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1. UNDP's value proposition in Kosovo lies in its role as a neutral convener, fostering collaboration between central institutions, communities, local and international actors while strengthening key institutions and supporting policy development in line with Kosovo's long-term goals. However, its broad engagement across multiple sectors risks diluting effectiveness and sustainability of its interventions.**

UNDP has strategically positioned itself as a credible and neutral partner in Kosovo by bringing together central institutions, communities, and other local and international actors to foster dialogue and collaboration. In a politically sensitive and complex development landscape, UNDP's focus on inclusivity and social cohesion through justice reforms, labour market programmes, and environmental sustainability has ensured that development benefits all communities. This approach is particularly crucial in a context where building trust and promoting cooperation across diverse groups is essential. UNDP has been instrumental in strengthening Kosovo's institutions, supporting policy development that aligns with its development and EU accession trajectory. Its capacity-building efforts in areas such as justice and security sector reforms and green governance demonstrates UNDP's role in enhancing the sustainability of undertaken reforms. By integrating international best practices and embedding technical expertise, UNDP has successfully empowered local institutions to independently manage complex challenges over time.

However, UNDP's engagement across a wide range of sectors risks diluting its overall impact. The tendency to spread resources too thinly and limited core resources have contributed to fragmented, one-off, short-term initiatives, thereby limiting the effectiveness and sustainability of its interventions, even though they help keep UNDP engaged in important areas of work and provide a platform for dialogue. Given the changing donor landscape in Kosovo and limited human and financial resources within the office, this may undermine the continuity of ongoing initiatives and limit the transformative effects of results achieved thus far.

**Conclusion 2. UNDP's efforts in Kosovo have contributed to strengthening legislative and regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity with a potential to boost good governance and public safety, highlighting the effectiveness of long-term and stable support in promoting systemic change and fostering local ownership of reforms.**

The added value of UNDP's engagement and strategic partnerships is evident in its support to Kosovo's anti-corruption, financial investigation and security institutions. By fostering long-term collaboration with key Kosovo stakeholders, UNDP has contributed to the development of robust legislative frameworks and institutional capacities aimed at enhancing public accountability and safety. UNDP's efforts, such as the establishment of digital platforms for reporting corruption, SALW or declaring assets, have strengthened oversight mechanisms and improved public trust in the accountability of institutions, laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability by empowering local institutions to independently manage complex issues. UNDP's interventions in this area exemplify the effectiveness of stable, long-term support in fostering systemic change and advancing Kosovo's trajectory toward good governance and strengthened rule of law.

**Conclusion 3. UNDP has made important contributions in improving public trust in an inclusive, equitable and efficient justice system, especially for non-majority communities. Ongoing support and investment are needed to scale up and sustain these advancements.**

UNDP has contributed to the improved access to justice, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable groups in non-majority communities, through initiatives such as the digitalization of court systems, the establishment of multilingual translation services, and the provision of mobile legal aid clinics. These efforts have reduced case backlogs, making the justice system more accessible by ensuring that all communities,



regardless of language or background, can access and engage with the legal system on equal terms. This has contributed to increased public trust in an inclusive and equitable justice system. However, the sustainability of these advancements is still fragile, with ongoing challenges such as high caseloads in the courts, capacity limitations in the justice sector, and complex political dynamics threatening to undermine these gains. To ensure the long-term sustainability and further institutionalization of these achievements, continued external support and targeted investments are necessary. This includes expanding the digitalization and interoperability of the court system, securing reliable funding for translation services, and embedding gender-sensitive practices within the justice system. Without such sustained efforts, the progress toward a more inclusive and equitable justice system could be jeopardized given the fragile context of Kosovo and persisting capacity gaps.

**Conclusion 4. UNDP's social cohesion and civil society initiatives have yielded localized successes; however, their broader transformative potential is limited by the short-term, small, and one-off nature of those interventions.**

UNDP's efforts in social cohesion, youth, and civil society empowerment highlight both the opportunities and limitations of fragmented investments. On the positive side, engaging with diverse social actors has led to meaningful local results, such as the rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites, improved tourism offerings, and other community-driven initiatives. Such efforts empower individual community leaders and foster localized successes. However, the overall transformative potential is weakened by the proliferation of smaller, one-off interventions and the fragmentation of financial resources, which often benefit individual institutions rather than driving broader societal change. In an upper middle income country (UMIC) context such as Kosovo, UNDP's focus on micro-level interventions has constrained its potential to deliver significant added value. Greater impact could have been achieved by prioritizing more cohesive, larger-scale initiatives that align with UNDP's strategic position, foster long-lasting results and drive broader societal change.

**Conclusion 5. UNDP has effectively strengthened access to the labour market for vulnerable groups through long-term partnerships with the Employment Agency of Kosovo, improving its operational capacities and implementing labour market measures, although more efforts are still needed to ensure sustainability of achieved improvements in the inclusive service delivery for vulnerable groups.**

UNDP's long-term support to the Employment Agency of Kosovo has been critical in strengthening its operational capacities, development and implementation of the labour market measures for vulnerable groups. The uptake and sustainability of these results is mostly ensured. However, some challenges remain in ensuring sustainability of actions in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, due to limited human resources within the Employment Agency. The lack of continuation of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and the Employment Agency of Kosovo has been a limiting factor in UNDP's ability to mobilize other resources for labour market activation. Skills building investments in ICT and STEM have been small in scale and benefited only a limited number of beneficiaries. While Kosovo is currently restructuring the Employment Service to fulfil the implementation plan of the Youth Guarantee with the help of the ILO, the lack of human resources and institutional infrastructure within the agency is a major concern and indicates the need to further strengthen Employment Service's institutional capacity to ensure access to decent work for vulnerable groups continues beyond UNDP's involvement. UNDP's support to inclusive service delivery for the vulnerable groups through collaboration with municipalities, CSOs and CSWs provides a good foundation; however, the sustainability of this support is challenged by a lack of budget lines in financing CSOs and CSWs and a lack of capacities within CSOs.

**Conclusion 6. UNDP initiatives have contributed to the establishment of a strong foundation for green governance in Kosovo, albeit efforts in the areas of environment and climate change have been hindered by limited resource mobilization opportunities and scalability of interventions.**

UNDP has provided valuable support in the development of an enabling environment for addressing climate change, resulting in the adoption of first Climate Change Law, establishment of the Climate Change Council and successful implementation of the first two Green Growth Centres, laying a strong foundation for green governance in Kosovo. There is an opportunity for UNDP to position itself more strongly in piloting innovative approaches to promote green business solutions, where some approaches have already been tested. While some results have emerged in the support for air protection, monitoring, forecasting and early warning for climate risks and disasters, and waste management, fragmentation is evident, and the sustainability and scalability of these achievements remains fragile. Kosovo's exclusion from international financing, due to its non-signatory status to the Paris Agreement, presents one of the key obstacles. The lack of a comprehensive Kosovo strategic framework, fragmented monitoring systems, and the narrow reach of successful local initiatives further undermine the potential for long-term, large-scale results. Addressing these challenges is essential to achieving sustainable and transformative outcomes at scale.

**Conclusion 7. UNDP has considerably advanced gender mainstreaming and equity initiatives, but to sustain and maximize the potential of its efforts, it must address challenges in its capacity, funding and inter-agency coordination to promote gender equality and social cohesion.**

UNDP has made notable strides in gender mainstreaming, significantly shaping public policy and empowering women through investments in socio-economic integration, women in STEM, and rural economic empowerment. The attainment of the Gender Silver Seal and efforts to implement the Gender Seal in Public Institutions underscore UNDP's institutional commitment to gender equality. However, UNDP's gender initiatives have faced challenges due to human resource shortages, resource mobilization difficulties and coordination with other UN agencies. Integration of equity concerns, particularly for people with disabilities and those affected by natural disasters, remains a concern. These challenges present important lessons for UNDP's gender and equity integration efforts moving forward. To effectively 'walk the talk,' there is space for UNDP to strengthen its internal capacity, securing more consistent funding and establishing robust collaborative frameworks to ensure more effective and sustainable gender and equity mainstreaming efforts. Strengthening these areas will be crucial for UNDP to continue its role as a leader in promoting equity and gender equality and ensuring that its mainstreaming efforts achieve their full potential.

## **3.2 Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1. UNDP should support the Agency for Prevention of Corruption in advancing its digital infrastructure and communication tools, including implementing a public digital archive, integrating new technologies for corruption reporting and case management, and maintaining the strong, dynamic relationship to enhance the Agency's efficiency, transparency and capacity to address public concerns about corruption.**

Building on the successful foundation laid by previous support, UNDP should assist the Agency for Prevention of Corruption in further developing its digital infrastructure, including implementing a comprehensive digital archive system accessible to the public, and provide expertise in leveraging advanced communication tools and applications, such as social media and specialized software to improve the Agency's efficiency and outreach. Support should include further capacity-building initiatives on integrating new technologies and best practices for corruption reporting and case management. Maintaining an open and dynamic relationship with the Agency will be crucial during its transition period, especially as it adapts

the new legislation and expands its staff. This approach will help sustain and build upon the Agency's achievements, enhance its transparency, and better address public concerns about corruption. To ensure successful institutionalization, UNDP should establish a comprehensive handover strategy that outlines a clear sustainability and exit plan.

**Recommendation 2. UNDP should deepen its efforts by helping the Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) implement new money laundering legislation through stakeholder education and collaboration with other relevant institutions, while also assisting in integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and enhancing risk-based supervision to improve operational efficiency and prepare for the Moneyval assessment in 2026.**

Building on its support in the establishment and functioning of the FIU, UNDP should deepen its capacity-building efforts in two key areas:

**Implementation of legislation:** UNDP should focus on assisting the FIU to boost the implementation of the newly approved money laundering legislation by supporting the FIU to raise awareness among stakeholders about the legal provisions. This includes sharing best practices and providing expertise on translating legal frameworks into actionable guidance for the private sector and other relevant parties. UNDP should help facilitate collaboration between the FIU and the Bureau for Investigation and the Asset Recovery Office to enhance efforts in asset confiscation and freezing, addressing broader gaps and supporting Kosovo's progress in combating money laundering.

**AI integration and risk-based supervision:** UNDP should assist the FIU in integrating artificial intelligence and strengthening its capacity for risk-based supervision. This involves providing technical support and training to improve the FIU's ability to analyse emerging trends, such as cryptocurrencies, and to implement effective strategic analysis. Investing in AI and advanced supervision capabilities will help the FIU enhance its operational efficiency and stay ahead of evolving financial crimes, which is crucial for the upcoming Moneyval assessment in 2026 and for addressing current challenges while advancing the FIU's overall effectiveness.

To ensure successful institutionalization, UNDP should establish a comprehensive handover strategy that outlines a clear sustainability and exit plan.

**Recommendation 3. UNDP should focus on enhancing the sustainability and inclusivity of justice initiatives by supporting the expansion and institutionalization of multilingual services, leveraging digital tools for efficiency, and promoting gender-responsive practices.**

UNDP should prioritize the sustainability and expansion of its initiatives to enhance access to justice, especially for non-majority and vulnerable populations. A key area for improvement is the expansion of multilingual and accessible services throughout the judicial system. This entails continuing to offer robust translation and interpretation services to ensure effective justice access for non-majority communities and individuals with disabilities. Investing in digital tools to support these services will further promote inclusivity in the justice system. By developing technology to streamline case management and enhance record-keeping, UNDP can assist the judicial process to be more efficient and transparent. Integrating remote legal services should be considered another area of support which can further improve accessibility. UNDP should establish a comprehensive handover strategy that outlines clear sustainability and exit plans for both the institutions involved and UNDP itself to ensure the successful institutionalization of these practices.

UNDP should continue to advance gender-responsive approaches within the justice system. This involves incorporating gender-sensitive practices into judicial training and improving the management of domestic and gender-based violence cases. Collaboration with local and international organizations to exchange best practices and provide specialized support will be essential in promoting gender equality and delivering justice for all.

**Recommendation 4. To further its efforts on digital transformation of public services, UNDP should explore opportunities to support Kosovo institutions in addressing issues of cybersecurity.**

Investing in cybersecurity is a crucial segment of the digital transformation of public services, as these systems are increasingly exposed to potential cyber threats. Building on results achieved in cooperation with public institutions and law enforcement agencies, and evident needs in the sector of cyber security, UNDP should explore opportunities and methods to support Kosovo institutions in addressing cybersecurity challenges, recognizing the increasing importance of digital security in maintaining public safety and the integrity of public institutions. UNDP should consider engaging in comprehensive consultations with its partners in central institutions to assess specific vulnerabilities and desired UNDP support in the sector. Based on these consultations and leveraging UNDP's experience with digitalization efforts both in Kosovo and internationally, UNDP should devise targeted interventions that can strengthen Kosovo's cybersecurity systems by integrating lessons learned from different countries.

**Recommendation 5. UNDP should invest further in access to labour market and inclusive service delivery and promote collaborative mechanisms among municipalities, civil society and academia for their successful institutionalization.**

UNDP's long-term labour market support to build institutional capacities and direct measures towards end users has been crucial for improving access to the labour market and inclusive provision of services. However, the lack of human resources within the Employment Agency of Kosovo hinders its efforts to ensure effective inclusive service delivery. UNDP should explore ways to further support access to labour market for vulnerable groups and support the Employment Agency of Kosovo. UNDP should explore collaboration on further digitalization of the agency's services and collaborate with ILO and other UN agencies in the implementation of the EU Youth Guarantee scheme. UNDP should also focus on shifting skills for the green and digital transition to support the development of green jobs in different sectors. To ensure the successful institutionalization of inclusive service delivery, UNDP should promote further mechanisms of collaboration among municipalities, CSWs, CSOs and academia across Kosovo.

**Recommendation 6. UNDP should focus on enhancing Kosovo's green transformation in line with Kosovo's priorities and the goals of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.**

UNDP should develop a clear Theory of Change around its support for Kosovo's green transition in line with Kosovo's priorities and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and focus its work on a few key areas, such as climate action, energy efficiency, depollution, circular economy, and sustainable agriculture, to maximize its effectiveness and strategic use of limited resources. This should be translated into the development of larger and long-term programmes, or a smaller but interconnected set of interventions to overcome fragmentation of support. UNDP should support the implementation of the legal and strategic frameworks by providing the necessary advisory support and building human and technical capacities. UNDP should expand its support to green growth opportunities for SMEs and further strengthen its collaboration with local and international academia, institutes, business associations, banks and the IFIs for the provision of targeted support in the development of innovative green solutions.

**Recommendation 7. UNDP should further invest in enhancing its human resource and financial capacity to advance gender mainstreaming and equality.**

To boost its gender and equity mainstreaming efforts, UNDP should:

- Reinforce its internal human resource capacity by recruiting a gender specialist to ensure there is adequate expertise within the gender focal team. It should develop appropriate support mechanisms for existing staff to manage workload around efforts in substantial integration of gender and equity issues in programmes to ensure their consistent and effective implementation.
- Mobilize financial resources to boost the implementation of its Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. This will require developing a comprehensive funding strategy that diversifies funding sources, engages with international donors, and leverages partnerships with the private sector. Existence of dedicated specialists and the Task Force will help develop consistently high-quality funding proposals that align with donor priorities and demonstrate the impact of gender and equity initiatives. Regular gender and equity audits should be conducted to assess the inclusiveness of programmes and make necessary adjustments to address gaps and barriers.
- Enhance coordination with UN agencies and other stakeholders on issues of gender and equity by regular and transparent communication, joint planning, and coordinated implementation. Tapping on inter-agency working groups focused on gender equality and social cohesion will allow for the sharing of best practices, alignment of strategies, and identification of opportunities for joint initiatives.

### 3.3 Key Recommendations and Management Response

#### RECOMMENDATION 1.



**UNDP should support the Agency for Prevention of Corruption in advancing its digital infrastructure and communication tools, including implementing a public digital archive, integrating new technologies for corruption reporting and case management, and maintaining the strong, dynamic relationship to enhance the Agency's efficiency, transparency and capacity to address public concerns about corruption.**

Building on the successful foundation laid by previous support, UNDP should assist the Agency for Prevention of Corruption in further developing its digital infrastructure, including implementing a comprehensive digital archive system accessible to the public and provide expertise in leveraging advanced communication tools and applications, such as social media and specialized software, to improve the Agency's efficiency and outreach. Support should include further capacity-building initiatives on integrating new technologies and best practices for corruption reporting and case management. Maintaining an open and dynamic relationship with the Agency will be crucial during its transition period, especially as it adopts the new legislation and expands its staff. This approach will help sustain and build upon the Agency's achievements, enhance its transparency, and better address public concerns about corruption. To ensure successful institutionalization, UNDP should establish a comprehensive handover strategy that outlines a clear sustainability and exit plan.

#### Management response: **Accepted**



Support to AC agency was extended between this evaluation and now that addresses recommendations provided by the IPE team. We also developed the sustainability strategy for all partners of the project, including for Agency for anti-corruption. The CO already initiated discussions with SDC and SIDA and the UK for potential further support to digital capacities of the Agency and will continue the dialogue with development partners to explore their commitment. Between IPE and now, key actions from this recommendation are already carried out with two completed and two ongoing as follows:

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Develop a case management system	December 2024	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The system is integrated with other relevant internal databases	Completed
1.2 Develop a corruption reporting platform	February 2025	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The database has been developed and will be launched by February 2025	Initiated

1.3 Conduct social media campaign on corruption reporting	February 2025	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The media campaign will commence in January and be completed in February	Initiated
1.4 Strengthen the capacity of government M&E managers to evaluate public policies.	December 2024	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The e-declaration platform has been upgraded to allow user friendly public searches of the digital archive	Completed

## RECOMMENDATION 2.



**UNDP should deepen its efforts by helping the Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) implement new money laundering legislation through stakeholder education and collaboration with other relevant institutions, while also assisting in integrating Artificial Intelligence and enhancing risk-based supervision to improve operational efficiency and prepare for the Moneyval assessment in 2026.**

Building on its support in the establishment and functioning of the FIU, UNDP should deepen its capacity-building efforts in two key areas:

- **Implementation of legislation:** UNDP should focus on assisting the FIU to boost the implementation of the newly approved money laundering legislation by supporting the FIU to raise awareness among stakeholders about the legal provisions. This includes sharing best practices and providing expertise on translating legal frameworks into actionable guidance for the private sector and other relevant parties. UNDP should help facilitate collaboration between the FIU and the Bureau for Investigation and the Asset Recovery Office to enhance efforts in asset confiscation and freezing, addressing broader gaps and supporting Kosovo's progress in combating money laundering.
- **AI integration and risk-based supervision:** UNDP should assist the FIU in integrating artificial intelligence and strengthening its capacity for risk-based supervision. This involves providing technical support and training to improve the FIU's ability to analyse emerging trends, such as cryptocurrencies, and to implement effective strategic analysis. Investing in AI and advanced supervision capabilities will help the FIU enhance its operational efficiency and stay ahead of evolving financial crimes, which is crucial for the upcoming Moneyval assessment in 2026 and for addressing current challenges while advancing the FIU's overall effectiveness.

To ensure successful institutionalization, UNDP should establish a comprehensive handover strategy that outlines clear sustainability and exit plan.



**Management response: Accepted**



And addressed already through key actions completed as listed below.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Conduct a banking sector money laundering risk assessment to increase capacities for risk-based supervision	December 2024	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The first ever banking sector risk assessment was completed in cooperation with private banks and identifies risks/threats/vulnerabilities to improve private sector internal compliance measures and capacities for risk-based supervision.	Completed
2.2 Develop standard operating procedures for sharing of information between the FIU and the Asset Recovery Office (ARO)	December 2024	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The adopted SoP defines how information is shared on ongoing cases and the role of the FIU vis-à-vis the ARO on ongoing investigations containing assets hidden in foreign jurisdictions.	Completed

2.3 Conduct a risk assessment of the use of corporate and financial instruments to obfuscate beneficial ownership	December 2024	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The assessment provides guidance to private sector anti-money laundering and compliance officers on how to handle high risk clients who use corporate and financial instruments to structure and hide ownership of assets.	Completed
2.4 Conduct a follow-up Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) Typologies to assess emerging threats and trends used to launder proceeds derived through corruption	December 2024	Support to Anti-corruption Efforts in Kosovo III	The 2024 PEPs II report is a follow-up to the original 2018 report. This report analyses emerging trends and threats (including the use of cryptocurrencies) through illustrating redacted cases investigated in Kosovo.	Completed

### RECOMMENDATION 3.



**UNDP should focus on enhancing the sustainability and inclusivity of justice initiatives by supporting the expansion and institutionalization of multilingual services, leveraging digital tools for efficiency, and promoting gender-responsive practices.**

UNDP should prioritize the sustainability and expansion of its initiatives to enhance access to justice, especially for non-majority and vulnerable populations. A key area for improvement is the expansion of multilingual and accessible services throughout the judicial system. This entails continuing to offer robust translation and interpretation services to ensure effective justice access for non-majority communities and individuals with disabilities. Investing in digital tools to support these services will further promote inclusivity in the justice system. By developing technology to streamline case management and enhance record-keeping, UNDP can assist the judicial process to be more efficient and transparent. Integrating remote legal services should be considered another area of support which can further improve accessibility. UNDP should establish a comprehensive handover strategy that outlines clear sustainability and exit plans for both the institutions involved and UNDP itself to ensure the successful institutionalization of these practices.

UNDP should continue to advance gender-responsive approaches within the justice system. This involves incorporating gender-sensitive practices into judicial training and improving the management of domestic and gender-based violence cases. Collaboration with local and international organizations to exchange best practices and provide specialized support will be essential in promoting gender equality and delivering justice for all.

#### Management response: **Accepted**



Most of the recommendation is completed through actions listed below. The CO will continue to build on these results and expand support to basic courts throughout Kosovo.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Digitalization of translation and interpretation services in Basic Courts	June 2025	GPB/project		Initiated
3.2 Digitalization of archives (civil cases) in 7 Basic Courts and at the Court of Appeals	December 2025	GPB/project		Initiated
3.3 Engagement of 14 qualified women (out of 16 total) legal officers in Basic Courts	November 2024	BPG/project		Completed

#### RECOMMENDATION 4.



**To further its efforts on digital transformation of public services, UNDP should explore opportunities to support Kosovo institutions in addressing issues of cybersecurity.**

Investing in cybersecurity is crucial segment of the digital transformation of public services, as these systems are increasingly exposed to potential cyber threats. Building on results achieved in cooperation with public institutions and law enforcement agencies, and evident needs in the sector of cyber security, UNDP should explore opportunities and methods to support Kosovo institutions in addressing cybersecurity challenges, recognizing the increasing importance of digital security in maintaining public safety and the integrity of public institutions. UNDP should consider engaging in comprehensive consultations with its partners in central institutions to assess specific vulnerabilities and desired UNDP support in the sector. Based on these consultations and leveraging UNDP's experience with digitalization efforts both in Kosovo and internationally, UNDP should devise targeted interventions that can strengthen Kosovo's cybersecurity systems by integrating lessons learned from different countries.

#### **Management response: Accepted subject to funds availability**



Based on the main challenges described in the Kosovo Strategy for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives as well as the Regional Roadmap for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Western Balkans 2025-2030, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, UNDP will explore specific opportunities for strengthening of cybercrime investigations in the context of illegal trafficking of arms, ammunition, explosives and their precursors on the Internet/darknet/dark web. We will explore opportunities for implementation of priorities deriving from the Cyber Security strategy as well. Concretely, the following actions will be undertaken:

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Submit a proposal for GCS on cyber-security and darknet	March 2025	Governance and Peacebuilding		No due date
4.2 Submit a proposal for GCS on cyber-security strategy implementation	March 2026	Governance and Peacebuilding		No due date
4.3 Coordinate with other development partners and explore possibilities for donor funds for this area	March 2027	Governance and Peacebuilding		No due date

## RECOMMENDATION 5.



### **UNDP should invest further in access to labour market and inclusive service delivery and promote collaborative mechanisms among municipalities, civil society and academia for their successful institutionalization.**

UNDP's long-term labour market support to build institutional capacities and direct measures towards end users has been crucial for improving access to the labour market and inclusive provision of services. However, the lack of human resources within the agency hinders its efforts to ensure effective inclusive service delivery. UNDP should explore ways to further support access to labour market for vulnerable groups and support the Employment Agency of Kosovo. UNDP should explore collaboration on further digitalization of the agency's services and collaborate with ILO and other UN agencies in the implementation of the EU Youth Guarantee scheme. UNDP should also focus on shifting skills for the green and digital transition to support the development of green jobs in different sectors. To ensure the successful institutionalization of inclusive service delivery, UNDP should promote further mechanisms of collaboration among municipalities, CSWs, CSOs and academia across Kosovo.

### **Management response: Partially accepted**



Although UNDP has played a significant role in the execution of Active Labor Market Programmes for the past 15 years, the Government has since adopted the programme, which is now being executed by the Ministry of Finance, Labor, and Transfers, alongside efforts to further strengthen the Employment Agency. Nevertheless, the CO will continue to support vulnerable groups through various interventions and innovative methodologies introduced during the programme, particularly by enhancing self-employment opportunities through the Growing with Your Business and In-Motion methodologies. These approaches will be complemented by training and advisory support in collaboration with selected municipalities, with a focus on improving green and digital skills for the beneficiaries.

UNDP will also ensure ongoing coordination and communication with ILO and other UN agencies concerning the Youth Guarantee Fund. The extent of our involvement in its implementation will ultimately depend on the final decision made by the EU, as the donor of the programme, and the agencies it designates as implementing partners. It is our understanding that ILO and UNICEF will serve as the implementing agencies for the Youth Guarantee Fund.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Support MMSEs in target municipalities with Growing with Your Business	December 2027	Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience		Initiated
5.2 Support in target municipalities MMSEs with In-Motion	December 2027	Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience		Initiated

## RECOMMENDATION 6.



### **UNDP should focus on enhancing Kosovo's green transformation in line with Kosovo's priorities and the goals of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.**

UNDP should develop a clear Theory of Change around its support for Kosovo's green transition in line with Kosovo's priorities and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and focus its work on a few key areas like climate action, energy efficiency, depollution, circular economy, and sustainable agriculture to maximize its effectiveness and strategic use of limited resources. This should be translated into the development of larger and long-term programmes, or a smaller but interconnected set of interventions to overcome fragmentation of support. UNDP should support the implementation of the legal and strategic frameworks by providing the necessary advisory support and building human and technical capacities. UNDP should expand its support to green growth opportunities for SMEs and further strengthen its collaboration with local and international academia, institutes, business associations, banks and the IFIs for the provision of targeted support in the development of innovative green solutions.

### **Management response: Partially accepted**



While UNDP already has holistic assistance to the environment and climate agenda, from legislation to capacity building, and pilot interventions, the extent of the transformation is limited, to a large extent due to the very limited funding of the sector. To maximize impact and ensure the efficient use of resources, UNDP will develop a clear Outcome area in the CPD that prioritizes key areas such as climate action, energy efficiency, depollution, circular economy, and sustainable agriculture. This will be operationalized through larger, long-term programmes or interconnected interventions to address fragmentation. Additionally, UNDP will continue supporting the strengthening and implementation of legal and strategic frameworks through advisory support and capacity building, while expanding the existing green growth opportunities for SMEs. Collaboration with academia, research institutes, business associations, and IFIs will be enhanced to foster innovation and mobilize resources. These efforts will ensure a coherent and impactful contribution to Kosovo's green transition, positioning UNDP as a trusted partner in sustainable development.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Define a dedicated outcome area for environment and climate	May 2025	Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience		Initiated
6.2 Expand the collaboration with central and local governance institutions to address gaps in legislation and strategy.	December 2027	Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience		Initiated
6.3 Develop larger and long-term programmes, in spite of the lack of access to vertical funding	December 2027	Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience		Initiated

6.4 Provide technical and financial advisory services to SMEs for green innovation and technology adoption.	December 2027	Inclusive Growth and Climate Resilience		Initiated
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## RECOMMENDATION 7.



### **UNDP should further invest in enhancing its human resource and financial capacity to advance gender mainstreaming and equality.**

To boost its gender and equity mainstreaming efforts, UNDP should:

- Reinforce its internal human resource capacity by recruiting a gender specialist to ensure there is adequate expertise within the gender focal team. It should develop appropriate support mechanisms for existing staff to manage workload around efforts in substantial integration of gender and equity issues in programmes to ensure their consistent and effective implementation.
- Mobilize financial resources to boost the implementation of its Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. This will require developing a comprehensive funding strategy that diversifies funding sources, engages with international donors, and leverages partnerships with the private sector. Existence of dedicated specialists and the task force will help develop consistently high-quality funding proposals that align with donor priorities and demonstrate the impact of gender and equity initiatives. Regular gender and equity audits should be conducted to assess the inclusiveness of programmes and make necessary adjustments to address gaps and barriers.
- Enhance coordination with UN agencies and other stakeholders on issues of gender and equity by regular and transparent communication, joint planning, and coordinated implementation. Tapping on inter-agency working groups focused on gender equality and social cohesion will allow for the sharing of best practices, alignment of strategies, and identification of opportunities for joint initiatives.

### **Management response: Accepted**



The CO has already engaged a designated gender officer that will work closely with programme and project teams to ensure strong gender mainstreaming at all stages of programme and project cycles.

The CO will proactively work with donors and the Government to identify funding for projects working on gender equality and regular discussions among the Gender Focal Team of the CO will take place to identify gaps and develop a more strategic approach in the dialogue with donors and government. We want to acknowledge that funding from the private sector is limited overall, including for gender equality. However, the CO will continue to promote gender equality with all partners, including the private sector and academia.

The CO will proactively explore opportunities to join forces with other sister agencies in gender equality. The UNSDCG results groups will be the main platform for this, also including a bilateral dialogue.



◀ Recommendation 7 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
7.1 Gender officer appointed in the CO	October 2024	UNDP Kosovo		Completed
7.2 Proposal will be submitted for GCS on DV and GBV	February 2025	Governance and Peacebuilding		Initiated
7.3 The CO will coordinate with UN Women and other agencies on specific opportunities for gender equality joint work, or on opportunities where GE takes a significant importance	January 2026	Governance and Peacebuilding		No due date

\* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC).

# ANNEXES

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Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the Evaluation Resource Centre website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/24216>.

**Annex 1.** Terms of Reference

**Annex 2.** Evaluation Matrix

**Annex 3.** Kosovo at a Glance

**Annex 4.** Kosovo Office at a Glance

**Annex 5.** Project List

**Annex 6.** Documents Consulted

**Annex 7.** Status of RRF Programme Outcome & Output Indicators

**Annex 8.** Performance Rating



Independent  
Evaluation  
Office

United Nations Development Programme

Independent Evaluation Office  
United Nations Development Programme  
One UN Plaza, DC1-20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel. +1 (646) 781 4200



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