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Project Document
for a Project promoting Social Inclusion
Leave No One behind

Contents

	Executive Summary	1
1	Context	3
	11 Economy	3
	12 Education	4
	13 Social Context, Social Protection and Social Service Provision at Local Level	5
	14 Regulatory Framework	11
	15 Stakeholders, Drivers and Constrainers of Change	13
	151 Excluded Persons and Groups and their Organisations	14
	152 Authorities	16
2	Results and Lessons Learned	19
	21 Results	19
	22 Lessons Learned	20
3	Objectives	23
	31 Objectives and Intervention Logic	23
	32 Impact Hypotheses / Theory of Change	26
	33 Levels of Intervention	28
	34 Target Groups	28
	35 Geographic Focus	30
	36 Cross-cutting issues	31
4	Implementing Strategy	32
	41 Intervention Approach and Instruments	32
	42 Partners and Cooperation	35
	43 Sustainability	37
	44 Scaling-Up and Exit Strategy	38
5	Organisation, Management and Administration	40
	51 Organisation	40
	52 Management and Administration	41
6	Resources	42
	61 Human Resources	42
	62 Financial Resources	43
	63 Administration of Funds	43
7	Risk Analysis	44
8	Monitoring and Evaluation	48
	81 Monitoring	48
	82 Evaluation	49
	83 Reporting	50
Annexes		
A	Logframe	
B	Detailed Budget	
C	Terms of Reference of Key Project Staff and Expertise	
D	List of Abbreviations	
E	Glossary	
F	Institutional Set-up	
G	Governance Architecture	

Executive Summary

Albania has made important steps towards establishing a democratic state, functioning market economy, maintaining a stable economic growth, and achieving human development. Nevertheless, the implementation of social policies for the inclusion of vulnerable groups, particularly Roma and Egyptian communities and persons with disabilities, remains problematic. In order to support improved social inclusion, the proposed project, during its planned duration of eight years and with a total amount of 16 million CHF will pursue the following goal: **Vulnerable persons and groups are empowered to have equal access to public services and opportunities and to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives.** Concretely, the project's first phase (1.6.2017-31.05.2021) with a total amount of 8 million CHF is designed to i) strengthen the vulnerable population to request and receive adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion, ii) help municipalities to effectively manage the provision of social services and promote social inclusion, and iii) support national institutions to implement their policy framework for providing social services and adequately fund social services. Governance and gender equality will be the project's **cross-cutting issues** that are mainstreamed throughout outcomes under a human rights perspective. The project's **target groups**, their total amounts to 400,000 persons¹ who will indirectly and directly benefit from improved social services, are the marginalised populations of Albania, with children and women often being the most vulnerable, and especially persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians. The improvement of their social inclusion will be supported by interventions at macro level (central authorities and services such as the Albanian Institute of Statistics), at meso level (municipalities and civil society organisations) and at micro level, actively involving the project's target groups into the project's implementation. The project will cover all of Albania, by improving social service provision in all 61 municipalities; specific **geographic foci** will be targeted by reacting to specific needs and challenges in selected municipalities.

Based on an understanding of **social inclusion** as a "process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society"², the project **approaches** include full alignment on Albanian policies and strategies by supporting their implementation, cooperation with all types of stakeholders (public, civil society and private) and support to their cooperation, empowerment of target groups, support to the cooperation, "do no harm", integration into UN and SDC strategies as well as orientation on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The **sustainability** of the project's investments and effects and the **scaling-up** of successful practices and innovations will be a constant concern of the project.

The project will use **instruments** for capacity building and organisational development, and it will fund innovative small local projects that are in line with the endeavour's overall thrust. The project's implementation is the responsibility of the four UN agencies UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA, who will cooperate with state actors from central and local level, with civil society organisations and directly with target groups.

The strategic steering of the endeavour will be assured by a **Steering Committee** in which participate the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, SDC and representatives of the implementing UN organisations and civil society. One of the tasks of the Steering Committee, but also of all other actors participating in the project's implementation, will be the monitoring and assessment of **risks** – regarding the project's achievements, its strategic and fiduciary dimensions as well as the reputation of actors involved – their prevention and the project's adequate reaction to them.

The purpose of the project's **monitoring** and **evaluation** include the provision of evidence for the project's steering, quality assurance, learning and accountability, including reporting. For covering the fields of context, results, efficiency, cooperation, the project's monitoring will be based on the logical framework and annual plans of operation, annual reviews, the budget, field visits, case studies and the monitoring results of other actors. Semi-annual project reports will summarise the

¹ World Bank, 2014, Poverty headcount ratio at national level is 14.3% of the total population (2.876.591 inhabitants)

² World Bank, 2013: Inclusion Matters. The Foundation for Shared Prosperity. The Albanian Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020 endorses the WB definition of social inclusion, and so do the UN and SDC who conceive social inclusion as a means to achieve the SDGs. The proposed project is therefore fully in line with the overall national and international thrust for promoting social inclusion.

monitoring data on behalf of the Steering Committee, and of SDC in particular. An external evaluation may be realised in the second half of the proposed phase, designed to identify the project's successes (and difficulties), and it would contribute to the planning of the next project phase.

1 Context

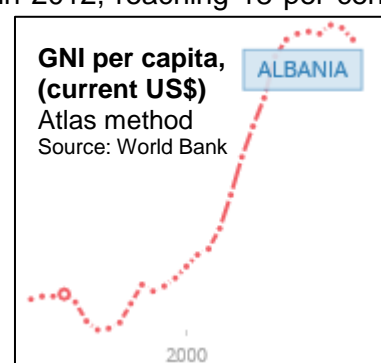
Following the fall of communism 26 years ago, Albania has made important steps towards establishing a democratic state, functioning market economy, maintaining a stable economic growth, and achieving human development. Albania was granted the candidate status for EU membership in June 2014, and a series of reforms are undertaken and partly implemented as important steps in the EU accession process, but first of all, they are to improve Albania's governance, the effectiveness of public administration, and the livelihoods of citizens. They include economic development, social protection and social inclusion, public administration, territorial organisation, local government and decentralisation, regional development, public financial management, territorial administration, local governance and social protection, and the justice system (based on constitutional amendments). In September 2015, Albania adopted the Sustainable Development Goals.

Albania is party to all core human rights treaties and has made significant efforts in improving its human rights records and strengthening the national human rights institutions. Yet, human rights bodies have raised concerns about issues such as gender inequality and domestic violence, human trafficking, and child labour and exploitation. The inadequate implementation of social policies for the inclusion of vulnerable groups, particularly Roma and Egyptian communities and persons with disabilities, remains problematic³. While during the country's communist phase the integration of one of the proposed project's target group's, Roma and Egyptians, was "compulsory", persons with disabilities did not usually benefit from specialised state services, or in only very limited form and in insufficient quality. The transition years following the end of the previous regime did only hesitantly bring about improvements, in some respect also deterioration: Marginalisation certainly increased for Roma and Egyptians, many children of these groups dropped out of school, their social inclusion, their access to the labour market, for instance, therefore worsened. Thanks to international support, the situation in specialised institutions for persons with disabilities, the training of specialised staff, efforts to enrol children with disabilities, etc. improved punctually. Albania therefore has a heavy heritage of marginalised and vulnerable persons who are in dire need of support, but whom continue to receive no or often inadequate services.

11 Economy

Steady economic growth over the past decade has not been associated with the same level of human progress and it has not benefitting different segments of society equally.⁴ Poverty headcount increased from 12.4 percent in 2008 to 14.3 percent in 2012, reaching 18 per cent among women⁵ and 20.1 per cent – among children⁶. UNICEF-supported in-depth analysis of child poverty (in 2013⁷ and 2015) highlighted different dimensions of child deprivation rooted in poverty. The level of poverty among Roma and Egyptian population is twice as high as the majority population⁸.

The Albanian economy, with an employment rate of just 50%, is extremely weak at creating sufficient jobs for the population. The Labour Force Survey 2015 sets the unemployment rate at 17,3% (17,7% for men and 16,8% for women). The same source of information reveals that young people from 15 to 29 years old are the most disadvantaged in the market, with a 33,9% overall



³ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Albania, second cycle, July 2014; CEDAW Concluding Observations, 2016, Committee on the Rights of Child Concluding Observations, 2012, Compilation of UN information for the UPR review of Albania, second cycle, 2014, etc.

⁴ Human Development Report, Albania, 2016, UNDP

⁵ INSTAT, 2015

⁶ Living Conditions Measurement Survey – LSMS, 2012.

⁷ Child Poverty in Albania. A Report Card. Child Rights Observatory, Tirana, 2013. The report can be accessed at: <http://www.unicef.org/albania/ChildPovertyInAlbania-En13.pdf>

⁸ The income for about 48% of Roma families is less than ALL 10,000/month (approximately EUR 70), while 35 per cent of households reported a monthly income of less than ALL 20,000

unemployment rate (35.6% for males and 27.4% for females). Inclusion in the economic sphere is especially unsatisfactory as regards the project target groups: the poor, and especially Roma and Egyptians and persons with disabilities (see below, paragraph 151). Roma people experience extremely high levels of unemployment, estimated at around 71% compared to around 20% for the population as a whole⁹. Less than a quarter of Roma and Egyptians are employed, and the gender inequality is impressive: only 15% of the Roma women and 13% of the Egyptian women have paid jobs.¹⁰ Most of them work in the informal economy, consequently, they are not officially registered in the employment scheme and lose entitlements to social benefits (health insurance coverage, pension fund). Roma children often begin work at a very early age in order to contribute to the survival of their families.

People with disabilities are much less likely to participate in the labour market than their non-disabled peers. The labour force of 8 in 10 disabled working-age adults remains untapped, i.e. they are neither working nor looking for work. Consequently, disabled adults are five times less likely to be working than the non-disabled population¹¹, despite the quota for the employment of disabled people by public and private employers as provided in the Law "On employment promotion" which stipulates that *every company or public institution with over 24 employees must employ a person with disabilities for every 25 employees*. The barriers these disadvantaged groups face, are mainly linked to their low level of education to meet the requirements of market economy and discriminatory attitudes of employers.

12 Education

Access to pre-university education in Albania is relatively low compared to OECD countries. Enrolment of children in pre-university education about 60%, while the European countries average is 75%.¹² There is a large problem of access to education for some social groups, especially children with disabilities and Roma children. While 3% of Albanians have never attended school, this figure is 15% for Egyptians and 49% for Roma - a clear deterioration as compared to the country's communist phase.¹³ Albania has approximately 5,000 Roma children aged from 3 to 16 years old and less than half of them attend school. On average Roma, have attended 3.4 years of schooling, while the non-Roma population have attended 8.6 years of schooling.

In Albania, children with disability are overrepresented in the category of primary-school-aged children not attending school, especially when having hearing and mobility difficulties. While 96 percent of children aged 6-14 in the non-disabled population attend school, only 75 percent of children with some disabilities are enrolled. The numbers are slightly higher for girls compared to boys – respectively 7 and 4 percent.¹⁴ One adult with a disability in four was not able to attend school, the vast majority of which remains illiterate. The education gap between non-disabled and disabled individuals is thus huge: individuals with disabilities are much more likely to stay out of the school system, and when they do attend, they are more likely to drop out of the education system after primary school. 2011 Census data show that only 55.6 per cent of persons with disabilities over 15 years of age have completed basic education. Only 3.3 per cent of persons with disabilities have completed (post)university studies and almost a quarter (24.3 per cent) never attended education.

While in the past communist period PWDs attended specialized schools for primary education, Albania has not yet started the process of reforming specialised schools for children with disabilities; however, the framework legislation promoting inclusive education in mainstream schools has already been put in place.

School dropout is a worrying phenomenon and it has evolved negatively since the system change in the 1990s. One in two Roma children of school age has dropped out of school, particularly

⁹ Republic of Albania, The Decade of Roma Inclusion: National Action Plan 2010-2015

¹⁰ Census 2011: Roma and Egyptians in Albania, April 2015

¹¹ Census 2011: Profiles of Disabled Population, January 2015

¹² Pre-University Education Strategy 2016-2020

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Census 2011: Profiles of Disabled Population, January 2015

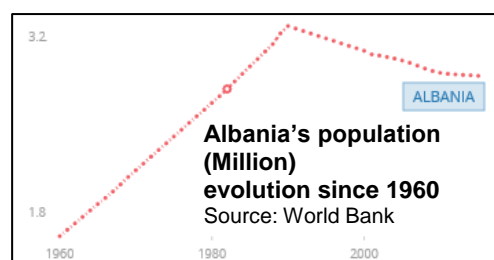
Roma girls. The same applies for girls from rural areas or families with social problems. According to the Census 2011 data, most of the Albanian (97%) and Egyptian (93%) children aged 6 to 9 years old are attending primary schools, but this is the case for only 55% of Roma children. Drop out is rather rare before 10 years of age (less than 3 %, and mainly affecting girls rather than for boys), but it is more significant at the beginning of lower secondary school. Drop out of enrolled Roma pupils between 10 and 16 years old reach 30% for boys and 44.6% for girls. At 16 years, 96% of the girls and only 68% of the boys have dropped out from school. The school enrolment of more Roma children and their continuing education until age 16 are obviously a serious concern for Albania's social inclusion agenda.

The main barriers for school attendance for Roma children are the extreme poverty as children quite often support families for survival, some Roma parents who have not experienced the benefits of education may have a tendency not to send their children to school, valuing children's participation in their economic basis higher than formal education, and ineffective implementation of policies to support Roma children's access to the education system and their remaining in the system. Discriminatory attitudes of schools and non-Roma parents towards Roma children's enrolment are an additional obstacle for Roma children's school attendance.

The main barriers for children with disabilities are the inaccessibility of education facilities, the lack of support teachers in basic education¹⁵, textbooks for mainstream education are not available in accessible formats (Braille, or digital for children with hearing problems), the lack of multidisciplinary teams to establish child's needs for assistance and support.

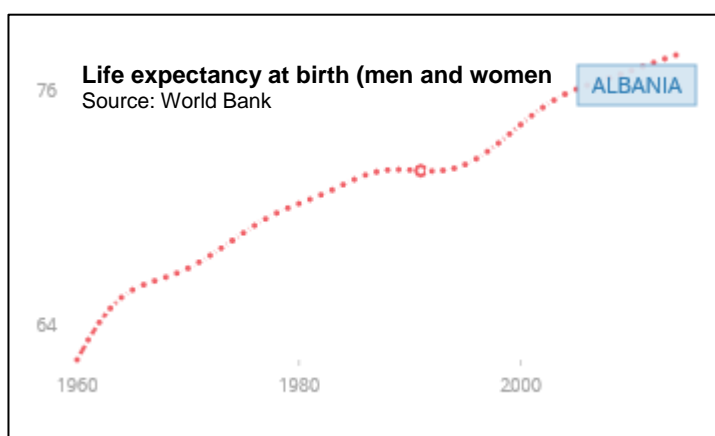
13 Social Context, Social Protection and Social Service Provision at Local Level

Albania's population (2.876.591 according to INSTAT; it is to be noted that the country experiences a loss in population since 1991) is divided in many respects: Wealth, education, urban and rural habitat, sex, age, family-based solidarity groups, political affiliations, ethnicity and other criteria differentiate Albanians. Social inclusion is therefore an important topic for Albanian society. The access of individuals and groups to economic, social and political resources is by far not equal. The inclusion of specific groups therefore requires specific attention and support: the marginalised and vulnerable, the poor, and, as important parts of these groups, the Roma and Egyptians and the persons with disabilities.



Health

The healthcare service in Albania is one of the most criticised public services delivered to Albanian citizens with weak capacities to prevent, diagnose, treat and rehabilitate. While citizens are entitled to free health care services, vulnerable groups such as Roma and Egyptians face barriers to access health care services due to lack of official registration and health cards. 42% of the Roma and 24% of the Egyptian population do not have health cards¹⁶, as most of them work exclusively in informal employment and cannot benefit from the health insurance coverage contributions. The physical distance to health services tends to be higher for Roma, due to the location and the lack of services of the neighbourhoods where they are concentrated.



¹⁵ Instruction of Ministry of Education and Sports, 2014

¹⁶ Census 2011: Roma and Egyptians in Albania, April 2015

According to the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (IGME), in 2015, Albania's Infant Mortality Rate and Under 5 Mortality Rate declined to, respectively, 13 and 14 per 1,000 live births – which is still the highest level in South East Europe (SEE)¹⁷. There is a considerable discrepancy with the nationally-generated data, including, due to widespread undercounting of child deaths in national vital statistics¹⁸. In the underserved areas of mountainous Albania the infant and child mortality rates are twice the national average¹⁹. The total burden of disease for children aged 1-4 has reduced significantly but also remains the highest in the SEE region²⁰. The health status of Roma children raises concerns, while 70% of the Roma do not take their children to Women and Child Consulting Centres for regular medical check-ups, as prescribed by the national public health standard²¹. Albania's Government spending on health care is about 2.6% of GDP, which is substantially lower than what other countries with comparable levels of income spend and, again, the lowest in the SEE²². Infant mortality rates tend to be higher among Roma and Egyptian communities compared to the rest of the population due to poor accessibility and quality of perinatal care: 19% of Roma and 10% of Egyptians declared they have lost a child after birth.

Persons with disabilities are entitled to free health care services, but they face difficulties to access the healthcare centres and hospitals. Rehabilitation and treatment services for persons with disabilities are limited in number, range and quality, inaccessible to the majority of people with a disability and/or not functional, particularly those intended for children with disabilities.

Social Housing

The 2011 census shows that almost one in five (18.9%) of poor households still live in overcrowded conditions and 15% of the Roma households live in a non-conventional housing (shelters, tents, shacks, barracks, or any type of precarious constructions) lacking basic infrastructure and services. UNDP research shows that only a small share (14.34% of applicants) of the Albanian population in need of housing has benefited from social housing programmes. The highest portion of beneficiaries (40%) belongs to the group of young couples, whereas the lowest portion of beneficiaries belongs to the groups of orphans, Roma and Egyptian families, female-headed families, victims of domestic violence, despite the fact that these are of the groups with the highest number of applications.²³ In addition, there are no housing blocks or units available where persons with disabilities can live independently with the personalised assistance services.²⁴

While social housing policy in Albania aims to respond to the needs of the most socially excluded people who cannot afford to buy or rent accommodation of a minimum standard, research data shows that most of the resources allocated for social housing programmes are directed to the middle-income group, despite established criteria for the selection of beneficiaries.²⁵

¹⁷ UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (IGME) data can be accessed at:

http://www.childmortality.org/files_v20/download/IGME%20report%202015%20child%20mortality%20final.pdf

¹⁸ More information can be found in the recent National Health Report (2015) and the INSTAT publication on Albania's population dynamics: <http://www.ishp.gov.al/ishp03/wp-content/uploads/2015/materiale/Health-report-English-version.pdf> and (http://www.instat.gov.al/media/242042/population_and_population_dynamics_-_new_demographic_horizons.pdf)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ A Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian Communities in Albania. UNDP. Tirana, 2012. The report can be accessed at: (<http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Roma%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>)

²² According to the World Bank analysis:

<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2015/10/628841445980891015/Albania-Snapshot.pdf>

²³ Assessment of housing needs at the local/municipal level, UNDP 2014

²⁴ NAPWD

²⁵ Assessment of housing needs at the local/municipal level, UNDP 2014

Research provides evidence that social housing programs have proven to be ineffective to reach impoverished individuals due to a number of factors:

- (i) lack of systematic data²⁶ and analyses at central and local level to understand the demand and supply sides of social housing i.e. data focusing on social housing needs, registration of applicants' data, housing situation of excluded groups and assets inventory in possession of LGUs to be mobilized for social housing purposes. The lack of such data hinders analyses at local and national level for the identification of housing needs, develop appropriate programs based on available resources for meeting identified needs as well as allow for timely monitoring and assessment of the social housing programs. In addition the lack of data management systems hinders transparency and access to information;
- (ii) inadequate institutional and regulatory framework for a supportive environment for the development of the social housing programs. While the legislation provides that social housing is a shared responsibility between central and local government where the roles and responsibilities are defined, yet the division of roles of management, coordination and information dissemination about available social housing programs is not clear among several governmental institutions (MSY, MUD and LGUs) as often times information fails to reach excluded groups. Research studies recommend the review of the legal framework regarding cooperation among actors at the central and local levels, strengthening of public-private partnerships, cooperation between government, banks as well as steps to improve the current social housing situation, such as: inclusion of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the scoring system, average income review – ceiling and baseline – that households need to meet to apply for eligibility for social housing programs, acknowledgement and handling cases, introducing a monitoring system in order to guarantee good quality information, specification of program delivery for establishing capacities to assist local employees in addressing information needs of groups at disadvantage;
- (iii) limited capacities and experience at local level to understand, analyse and review the situation, to design and implement social housing programs, to develop long-term housing plan/programs²⁷ and plan funds for social housing, set up an inventory of LGU's assets at local level that includes information on urban and rural areas which is of paramount importance with the new configuration of LGUs under the TAR; lack of capacities at central and local level to manage and coordinate social housing programmes and establish minimum standards for the needs of vulnerable groups;
- (iv) limited funding at local level for social housing programmes which do not exceed 2.5% of total budget of municipalities and 1% of own revenues of local governments²⁸ explained by the weak fiscal base at local level and inadequate analyses and planning;
- (v) limited number of affordable financial instruments for the people who live in the poverty margin or even below due to their insufficient access to them and financial vulnerability and therefore housing programmes need to be tailored to their specific needs;
- (vi) lack of political will to support the vulnerable groups through allocation of resources at central and local level,
- (vii) lack of public-private partnerships for innovative housing solutions,
- (viii) need for restructuring existing programmes along with financial arrangements for improving their accessibility.

Social Protection / Social Care Services Provision

Social protection for vulnerable groups consists mainly of two schemes:

- i) Ndihma Ekonomike-NE (cash assistance scheme). The average NE amounts to 3,500 ALL (32 USD) per month and is less than 20% of minimum wage. It therefore has a very limited impact on

²⁶ 27 LGUs that were interviewed about the data collection system in 2014, 12 reported not to use any program/software for the registration of applicants data, and 15 others were using excel. Assessment of housing needs at the local/municipal level, UNDP 2014

²⁷ Only 36% of LGUs have a ten year housing program in place. Assessment of housing needs at the local/municipal level, UNDP 2014

²⁸ Ibid

reducing income poverty, and it fails to take into account the multiple and intersecting dimensions of poverty and deprivation (education, health care, housing conditions).

ii) disability allowance (DA) for people with mental and physical disability, amounting to 9,900 ALL/month (90 USD). Households that have a member with disability depend on **social protection cash payments**: 79% of them receive some form of social protection cash transfers, which is nearly double the number of households that do not have a member with disability²⁹. Social protection transfers include: disability allowance, social assistance benefits, and help with energy bill payments. Even though disability allowance payments have increased year on year, it is still evident that persons with disabilities find it difficult to cover their expenses with the money they receive"³⁰.

Both schemes (NE and DA) are being supported by the World Bank through pilot projects to improve the efficiency and improved targeting those persons and groups most in need. The Social Funds that are to be established as provided by new Law on Social Services, (adopted in November 2016, as part of the UNICEF/SDC-supported national reform of social care services), will be managed by municipalities, they are to be filled by contributions of central treasury, by municipalities themselves, and by humanitarian and development partners. While they are intended to make available additional financial resources for social services, they are, at the same time, a means for central authorities to delegate, at least partly, the responsibility for funding social protection and social care services. Such responsibilities have been delineated, for the first time in Albania, in the Law on Local Self-Governance (2015) and the Law on Social Care Services (2016) – both informed by the SDC-supported technical expertise, mobilised by UNICEF. As part of the above-mentioned reform, building of municipal capacities to manage their newly acquired responsibilities in social care service provision started in 2016, with multiple capacity gaps still to be filled in the years to come.

At present, publicly-funded non-financial social care services (other than limited institutional services) are very limited in Albania. Most social care services are provided by civil society organisations (CSOs) funded on a voluntary basis or by development partners. Specialised services are mainly to be found in larger urban areas (where 90% of service providers are active), and 75% are offered in the western and central areas of the country, the mountain regions being underserved.³¹ At present, there are 28 service providers, including 12 residential centres (six public and six non-public), 14 day care centres (seven public and seven non-public) and two non-public community centres.³² Residential centres (also known as development centres) are operational in Tirana, Durrës, Shkodër, Berat, Vlorë, Korçë and Poliçan.³³ They offer services like rehabilitation, self-care skills and education, with a particular focus on the integration of persons with disabilities under 25 years of age in the community. A new model needs to be in place, especially for persons with disabilities over 25, so that these centres can promote independent living by helping enhance their life and employment skills. The largest shortfall in service delivery in Albania is that of community-based services, the provision of which would allow persons with disabilities to live independently in their communities. At present, the lack of community-based services causes persons with disabilities to turn to private providers (if they can afford their services) which invariably means institutionalisation and separation of people with disabilities from their families.

CSOs are active in the area of service provision particularly for child rights protection and services for people with disabilities, yet the sustainability of their operation has been a challenge. Still they are often the most technically advanced service providers, offering examples of innovative techniques and models of family outreach, community-based day care, empowerment of parents, daily "case management" and follow up, coordination between various actors and services,

²⁹ LSMS survey, 2012.

³⁰Albanian Centre for Economic Research, Albania's National Inter-Sectoral Strategy on Social Inclusion, 2007-2013: An Evaluation Report, published in 2012, p. 59.

³¹ UNICEF study on mapping social care services.

³² All statistics on social care services are sourced from the Government of Albania's First Progress Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, May 2015, p. 51.

³³ The Poliçan multi-functional centre is run by the State Social Service while the remaining centres are under the responsibility of the relevant local government authorities. At present, no disabled people are accommodated at the Poliçan centre, it is only functioning as a centre for the elderly.

promoting inter-sectoral action, etc.

Social care services constitute a very small proportion (less than 5%) of overall spending of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MSWY) on social protection with the vast bulk of annual expenditure being on NE and DA.³⁴ Although MSWY spending on social care has almost doubled in nominal terms since 2005, there has been no increase in spending on social care as a percentage of overall expenditure; and the latter is, in fact, slightly lower now than it was a decade ago.³⁵

Consequently, the level of aid and inclusion to social care services offered to the persons and communities most in need remains low. In general, the Roma and Egyptian communities do not fully benefit from social services due to the barriers they face in fulfilling the administrative requirements and the relevant documentation.³⁶

As the Albanian authorities are moving from the strategy and legislation development phase to the implementation process, a number of challenges need to be addressed. These include:

- Until recently: **lack of political interest in social care services.** Historically social care services have not been ranking high among the political priorities of both national and local representative bodies, reflected in low budget allocations for these services, despite the fact that the total allocation of financial resources to social protection has been the largest single line in Albania's State Budget for years. Thus, creating space for more scrutiny, building pressure as well as advocacy from constituents, vulnerable communities and civil society is key to increase political accountability at central and local level for i) making monetary instruments of social protection better targeted and more efficient, and ii) complement the existing forms of cash-based aid with an appropriate "basket" of social care services. Outcomes 2 and 3 of the proposed project react to this challenge. In the last years, the social protection budget has made up for 25 to 30% of the overall government budget, but only 1.6% of GDP; it is thus lower than the OECD recommendation, and lower than respective figures in other countries of the Western Balkans. The budget line for social protection includes disability allowance, cash assistance and services, it also includes all pensions and employment benefits which account for 80% of the budget line. The budget intended for implementing the social protection strategy, in 2013-2014, has allocated only small portions to social care services (mainly residential institutions). The reform on social care services supported by UNICEF has created the legal and administrative framework to ensure that proper financial resources are allocated to community care services (to be established by LGUs). The law on social care calls for establishment of the Social Fund (which is a designated budgetary line) to plan, budget and finance social care services. The Social Fund will be established through a Decision of Council of Ministers (DCM) which is being finalized now between MSWY and MoF. The DCM is based on a very clear technical proposal developed in the framework of social care services reform which outlines the steps: The LGUs will assess the needs of vulnerable families and children and will develop a social care plan outlining the services to be established. The plan will be costed and budgeted and will go to SSS and then for approval to MSWY. MSWY will decide what portion of the plan will be centrally supported basing such decision mainly on the basket of services which is the minimum package of services which should be established in the community. On the other hand, according to the law, the social fund needs to be "filled" with own LGU resources which will be used to finance the rest of the plan. There is yet no clear indication of what will be the amount of budget that will be saved from NE; it is meant to do better at targeting poor families and avoiding wrongful inclusion, but it is also proposing higher cash allowances for the poor families. The expansion of MIS in all 61 municipalities will help to understand what will be the flux in (the families being included) and the flux out (the families being excluded) and therefore calculate savings. The disability reform, on the other hand is expected to create a space for the development of community care services to serve children and adults with disability and their families. Money will also be

³⁴ Local authorities spend some additional amount on social care services although a total national figure was not readily available. In addition, NGOs also provide a range of services often funded by development partners. Again an estimate of the expenditure at a national level is not available.

³⁵ Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020

³⁶ National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptian Communities (2016-2020).

better reallocated by the closure or transformation of residential institutions to community care services.

- **Low levels of civil engagement and political participation.** Civil society organisations are generally perceived as incapable of improving the quality of governance and people are more likely to discuss with each other about politics rather than participate in public hearings or council meetings where they have the opportunity to contact directly with officials and hold them accountable. Children and young people have little opportunities to raise their voices and be heard on issues concerning their rights, in spite of the various NGO-driven initiatives to boost young citizens' participation in decision making at central and particularly local levels. In this context, it is important that more emphasis is placed on supporting community mobilisation initiatives. In particular, individuals from groups such as Roma and Egyptian communities, persons with disabilities, women in rural areas and lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (LGBTI) are less likely to mobilise, voice their concerns and influence public policy. The proposed project's outcomes 1 and 2 react to this challenge.
- **Weak governance systems at the local level to respond to new and broader responsibilities as the result of decentralisation and social care reforms.** Capacities of local governments to deliver on their new responsibilities in planning, implementing and monitoring social care services need to be strengthened. Furthermore, an effective application of the law on civil servants would help to increase the professionalism of the public administration through a transparent and merit-based recruitment and dismissal of civil servants. Outcome 2 of the proposed project reacts to this challenge.
- **The need to consolidate financial mechanisms at the local level.** The law on social care services provides for setting up the Social Fund at local level with diversified sources of funding: (i) funds allocated by state funding including Social Fund, (ii) funds allocated by LGUs, (iii) funds allocated by LGUs as result of incomes from their own assets and activities, (iv) fees from provided social services and (v) other sources such as donations from organisations, businesses and individuals. The Local Government Units (LGUs) need to become familiar with the new financial mechanisms of the social care services (e.g. the various financing sources, the Social Fund, etc.) and increase their capacities with regards to financial planning, effective allocation of resources, fundraising and establishment of partnerships. Outcome 1 of the proposed project reacts to this challenge.
- **Gaps in availability of detailed operational procedures describing the action of state institutions in charge of planning, administering and monitoring social care services.** The new Law on Social Care Services requires the adoption of a wide array of secondary legislation and normative guidelines to give full effect to its provisions. Thus, it is key that national authorities have the necessary capacities and support to ensure the development and adoption of the legal basis that would enable in practice the implementation of the social care reform. Outcomes 2 and 3 react to this challenge.
- **The limited financial and human resources of the Government of Albania** to mobilise actors to promote and support social welfare and inclusion, quality of public sector services and, therefore, cohesion of society. The proposed project's outcomes 1, 2 and 3 react to this challenge.
- **Limited evidence-based policy making and enforcement** hamper implementation. Serious bottlenecks exist in terms of data availability and reporting in the country at both national and local level, for vulnerable groups of the population, hampering the identification of inequities, evidence-based planning and monitoring of national programmes and international development assistance. Nationwide surveys capture important impact-level results but have been infrequent, donor-driven and lately introducing methodological shifts in measuring indicators. Sectorial Management Information Systems (MIS) are under development, and information on specific population groups and/or types of vulnerabilities is not captured. National and local planning documents are absent of indicators measuring outcome results, hampering the monitoring and reporting on the situation of vulnerable groups. Whilst on the one side that there are many gaps in the supply of data, on the other, the demand for evidence in policy-making remains mostly untapped. The Social Inclusion Policy Document sets the standard for the indicators of different sectors, however, efforts need to be invested in terms

of building the data systems and coordination mechanism to improve data availability and their utilization for effective policy making. Outcome 3 reacts to this challenge.

- **The decentralisation process and the amalgamation of municipalities is not accompanied by capacity building strategies** to ensure as much as possible the realisation and implementation of the national and local strategies. While it will take time to reorganise LGUs – develop data systems, define competencies and responsibilities – the emphasis can be placed on increasing the capacities of central-level officials and preparing their interventions at the local level. The proposed project's outcome 2 reacts to this challenge.
- **Intersectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation between central and local governments and intra-governmental cooperation** along with political willingness to implement policies and allocate resources at central and local level remains a challenge. It is exacerbated by the weak capacity of LGUs and Administrative Units to absorb and deliver social services with dispersed geographic coverage, particularly in rural areas, and ensure equal treatment of citizens. Outcomes 2 and 3 of the proposed project react to these challenges.
- **Capacities of Central Government and LGUs to sustain the models of social services over time** are limited. The underfunding of Albania's social services system is a continuous challenge for which solutions are to be found as quickly as possible. Outcome 3 of the proposed project reacts to this challenge.

14 Regulatory Framework

Poverty alleviation and social cohesion have been part of the national priorities since the first national strategy (National Strategy on Social and Economic Development, 2000), and they, at least formally, continue to remain priorities in the development agenda and reforms in Albania.

Social inclusion is a crosscutting theme in a number of policy documents, targeting social protection, skills and employability, youth, gender and LGBTI, Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities, etc. A wide array of policies and strategies reflect the country's concern with social protection and social inclusion. They are briefly sketched below. It is also to be noted that following the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2012, Albania has made efforts to bring its legislation in conformity with the CRPD's provision³⁷. The definition of policies and strategies for the targeted improvement of the situation of specific groups of Albanian society is an important improvement compared with the situation under communism and of the first decade of the economic and social liberalisation. Yet, the implementation process, as for all policies and strategies presented below, is slow, and persons with disabilities continue to face discrimination, multiple barriers to social inclusion and limited participation in the conduct of public affairs, despite being a considerable community in the country³⁸.

The **National Strategy for Development and Integration 2016-2020 (NSDI)** is aligned by global commitments to SDGs and offers a vision for Albania's national social, democratic and economic development over the period 2016-2020, and its aspirations for European integration. Out of six established priorities, the fourth focuses on *"investing in people and social cohesion with objectives related to a modern educational system, a universal and quality health care system, expanded employment opportunities, a stronger social protection system, gender equality and social inclusion"*. It states the need to pay more attention to the protection of the rights of women, children as well as of people with disability, minorities, Roma, youth and prisoners; it further mentions that the elderly face difficult living conditions and often are subject to limited access for health care, education and other services.

The **Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020 (SIPD)** (supported by UN, with Swiss funding) addresses key social inclusion policy areas in accordance with the established EU conceptual frameworks and statistical standards including the following six domains: 1) poverty reduction and social protection; 2) employment and skills; 3) education and training; 4) health; 5)

³⁷ The most important legislation includes Law on "Inclusion of and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities" (July 2014), and its by-laws on the National Council on Disabilities, on the collection and reporting of disability data and statistics, on the removal of barriers in infrastructure and communication, or the Decision of the Council of Ministers on the Recognition of Albanian Sign Language.

³⁸ 6.2 percent of the adult population suffers from some sort of disability (2011 Census) and around 10% of children experience various developmental impairments (Study on the prevalence of disability among children in Albania, World Vision and Save the Children, 2016).

basic needs; and 6) social participation and human rights. Such policies are directed towards all people and with special regard to vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptians. It aims to establish a balanced and sustainable framework for ensuring that social inclusion is measured, monitored and reported in Albania through a robust set of indicators thereby improving ways in which social inclusion is linked to improving government policies and Albania's progress towards EU accession.

The **National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020 (NAPRE)**. The main strategic objectives targeting these communities focus at facilitating opportunities for the equal use of civil registration services and justice; improve eligibility to full access and inclusion in qualitative education; provide equal opportunities for formal employment; ensure accessible, affordable and equitable healthcare; improve housing conditions and increase access to social protection programmes for them.

The **National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 (NAPWD)** (supported by UN, with Swiss funding) aims at improving accessibility of public information and services, facilitate inclusive education, introduce disability assessment based on the bio-psycho-social model, and expand community-based social services, rehabilitation services and employment promotion measures.

The **Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020 (SPS)** (supported by UN, with Swiss funding) defines a system of social protection composed of policies and mechanisms to protect all those excluded or in need of protection through preventative and social reintegration programmes at local and national level. It aims at mitigating the impact of poverty for Albanian families, ensuring that social protection measures reach those most at risk by: i) increasing the effectiveness and transparency of the Cash Assistance Scheme (NE) to better target and cover poor families and children in need; ii) improving the position of people with disabilities through cash benefits and proper social services; and iii) developing social care services through a functional system – planning, managing and delivering integrated social care services at the newly established LGUs.

The **National Strategy for Social Housing 2015-2025 (NSSH)** (supported by UN, with Swiss funding) aims at providing low and middle income households who cannot afford a house in the open market, and in particular, vulnerable households suffering from housing exclusion, with available, accessible, affordable and quality housing solutions.

The **Plan of Measures for Non-discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity 2012-2014**. The plan has a multi-dimensional approach and starts by looking into the improvement of Albanian legislation to prevent discrimination in accordance with the Law on Protection from Discrimination, international laws as well as the EU's "acquis communautaire".

The **National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020** foresees interventions towards economic empowerment of women and men; ensuring actual participation and engagement in political and public decision-making processes; reducing gender-based violence and domestic violence; and strengthening the coordination and monitoring role of the national mechanism of gender equality. The strategy states that gender will be mainstreamed in all sectoral policies ensuring equal participation and opportunities for women and girls, and men and boys in the social, economic, and political life of the country.

The **Nation Strategy on Pre-University Education 2014-2020** aims at supporting and promoting quality education for all. This is to be achieved through implementation of effective policy activities, providing cooperation between society stakeholders, consistency between actions and budget planning and other development frameworks, as well as monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the strategy, thus serving the establishment of an inclusive society where everyone has the possibility to meet and express his or her personal capacity to provide services to society.

The **National Strategy for Employment and Skills (2014-2020) (NSES)** aims at integrating economic, education, vocational and entrepreneurship policies together through an action plan that boosts employment in the country matching employment and vocational education and training with labour market demands.

The **National Action Plan on Youth 2014-2020 (NAPY)** promotes creativity and innovation capacities of young people by encouraging personal development for better employment opportunities in the future. Furthermore, related to employment, particular reference is made to the promotion of entrepreneurship whereas in terms of education emphasis is being placed on

equal access to youth in all levels of education together with the recognition of non-formal learning.

The **Crosscutting Strategy for Decentralization and Local Governance 2015-2020 (NSDLG)** presents a comprehensive approach to decentralisation and strengthening of local government in accordance with the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, as well as those of the European Administrative Space for local government, aiming at providing political, administrative and fiscal decentralization. According to the Albanian Government's NSDLG, local governance will play a more active role in the promotion of EU principles at the local level and will embrace a more dynamic approach regarding local governance obligations stemming from the implementation of EU acquis and standards

In this new context, the **Law no. 139 / 2015 "On Local Self – Government"** was adopted in December 2015. It regulates the organisation and functioning of local government by recognising the functions and powers that are decentralised to local government units.

The **Law 115/2014 "On the territorial and administrative division of local government units in the Republic of Albania"** enables the Albanian Government to implement the Administrative-Territorial Reform by organising local government into 61 municipalities.

The **Law on Social Care Services** (2016) (supported by UN, with Swiss funding) establishes an integrated system of services offered by public and non-public service providers to individuals and families in need. These include pre-social care, community-based, residential, family-based, specialized and online services. According to the new law, local government units (LGUs) become the main actors in charge of planning and managing the public social care services with financing mechanisms involving a combination of local and central budget resources –a major difference from the previous system.

The law provides for setting up the Needs Assessment and Referral Units (NARUs), a separate unit in a local government administration as the key entry point enabling a prompt needs assessment and case referral. They are first-level service points with the functions of case identification, initial needs and risk assessment, information and basic counselling, care and support planning, support coordination and referral (to social care service providers) as well as case follow-up, monitoring and evaluation. NARUs are defined as core public service delivered by qualified social workers and case managers.

The law on social care services explicitly articulates that services can and should be outsourced to third parties. The final decision of the Government is that the procurement of social care services need to be regulated by the main law on public procurement through a specific DCM to be developed and signed by MSWY and Ministry of Economy to clarify the procedure. The law on social care services explicitly provides that procurement of social care services needs to consider the nationally approved standards of care and quality for the services, and only to third parties who are licensed and do provide proof of expertise and capacities.

In addition to the regulatory framework mentioned above, a new law was approved in late February 2017 "**On Child Rights and Protection**" (**Law 18/2017**) recognizing the child as a rights-holder and determines that parents, the government and the society have a shared responsibility to care for and protect the child. Every affirmed right of the child, now corresponds to specific obligations of the public authorities, which will make the implementation, as well as monitoring and accountability more efficient. The law also describes the structures and the actions that the local government should put in place, with a view to guarantee child rights and coordinate child protection interventions.

15 Stakeholders, Drivers and Constrainers of Change

At least in theory, all parties involved are **drivers of change**, and so are the regulatory framework and the policies and strategies for the coming years, in which social inclusion is a streamlined concern. The proposed project intends to empower the vulnerable groups and the civil society organisations advocating their interests to become, together with the competent Albanian state structures at central and local level, drivers of change for social inclusion themselves. It is the Albanian actors who, in the long run, are to guarantee social inclusion without foreign support. At the same time, it is to be noted that currently, international organisations, together with Albania's intention to make progress in the EU accession process, are to be considered to be the main

drivers of change regarding social inclusion. The Government of Albania is supported by the UN Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017-2021, guided by a rights-based and inclusive approach and fully aligned to country strategic priorities. One of the four outcomes (Outcome 2) focuses on social cohesion: Health, education, social protection, child protection, and gender-based Violence. Other donors, such as the EU, WB, GIZ, Italian Cooperation, Austrian Cooperation, USAID and, last not least, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). SDC, in its Albania Cooperation Strategy 2014-2017, puts emphasis on better provision of socially inclusive services through an advanced decentralisation reform and strengthened local democracy. SDC is currently one of the major players in supporting social inclusion, the decentralisation and local/regional governance in Albania.

Regarding the **constraints**, they are not to be identified in single actors. Lacking financial capacities and otherwise defined priorities, municipalities might not actively promote social inclusion. While the legal framework for social cohesion and inclusion as well as local governance and decentralisation are in place and efforts at central and local level are being made to absorb and implement social protection and social inclusion, this implementation is slow. It is hindered by: i) the capacities of organisational units and of individual staff, including the understanding of the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups; ii) the lack of services offered (regarding quantity, quality, and specialisation); and iii) as an underlying problem, the lack of funding for social protection and social inclusion. Besides these **structural issues**, they are also comprised of the fact that the central priority of the country is economic development (and, for political parties, the control of the state apparatus), there are **social dimension** who constrain social inclusion. The partly negative perception of the proposed project’s target groups by the society at large is the problem that authorities, service providers and the project are faced with. Such perceptions do not prevent actors involved in social inclusion to be active, but they are a frame condition that is to be taken into consideration – and that is to be worked on whenever possible.

151 Excluded Persons and Groups and their Organisations

Marginalised communities and vulnerable individuals are the key stakeholders of this project. They include different individuals and groups, such as persons and families who are recipients of economic aid, persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian communities, children particularly in vulnerable situations (living in poverty, with disability, in street situations, working children, abused and/or neglected), elderly persons, women living in rural and remote areas, victims of domestic violence, LGBTI communities. The number of persons living under the national poverty line is 400,000 persons, among them the largest part of the 200,000 persons with disabilities (adults and children).³⁹ Roma and Egyptians – in 2011, approximately 12,000 self-identified as such⁴⁰, but estimates on their number amount to over 100,000 – are also to be considered to a large extent part of Albania’s poor population, and thus of the project’s target group.

Excluded Persons and Groups

The majority of individuals from all target groups have been traditionally excluded from policy and decision-making processes both at central and local levels. However, as these groups are the primary beneficiaries of the social care services, their effective participation in the implementation of the reform is crucial to its success.

Efforts to advance social inclusion and the social care reform should in particular focus on the empowerment of representatives of these groups and community-based organisations to increase their lobbying, advocacy and monitoring role in this process. In addition, the project’s support is expected to stimulate community mobilisation, increase local activism and increase demand for their rights and ensuing social care services.

Roma and Egyptian communities and persons with disabilities in particular are the main focus of the project. The systematic de jure and de facto discrimination these groups have traditionally endured have made them face the most serious risks of social exclusion. The EU Progress Report 2016 states that: i) living conditions for Roma and Egyptians need to be improved; ii) social

³⁹ UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania Programme (2015): Profile of the Disabled Population in Albania. Céline Ferré with Emira Galanxhi and Olgeta Dhono.

⁴⁰ UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania Programme (2015): Roma and Egyptians in Albania: A socio-demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 census. Patrick Simon, with Emira Galanxhi and Olgeta Dhono..

exclusion and discrimination need to be tackled through better policy implementation and better inter-institutional cooperation; iii) additional efforts are needed to develop a track record of anti-discrimination cases; iv) institutional mechanisms to protect the rights of the child and to tackle gender-based and domestic violence remain poor; and v) services for victims of domestic violence need to improve in quality, quantity, accessibility and geographical coverage.

Specialised Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Currently, civil society organisations are the primary providers of social services.⁴¹ While under the social care reform, the local government is expected to play a key role in managing these services, the involvement of civil society in the provision of services will continue to be central for years to come. Thus, under the guidance of national authorities, local governments need to foster and formalise partnerships and modalities of collaboration with civil society.

Civil society organisations are also expected to be important partners of this project, in particular for the capacity support offered to local and national government. The project will also draw on lessons learned from civil society organisations to provide quick fix solution and address extreme marginalization. Successful models will be replicated in other municipalities with the purpose of systematically addressing marginalization and exclusion.

A certain resistance may be expected from some organisations as the social care reform may result on donation shifts, reorganisations of services, as well as greater control from government authorities on the standards of service delivery.

Overall, civil society organisations are donor dependent and donor driven in their activities and access to government funds has been negligible. However, this situation is slowly changing since the establishment of the (state) Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS)⁴² in 2010 and started providing financial assistance through calls for proposals in thematic priority areas including advocacy, human rights, civic engagement in influencing policy-making at central and local level. Annual budget for ASCS in 2015 was 120,500,000 ALL (964,000 USD) with 101,000,000 ALL (808,000 USD) allocated for grants for CSOs⁴³ with transparent, accessible and accountable procedures in place, but in need of capacity strengthening for the grant monitoring and evaluation.

Organisations of persons with disabilities

The community of persons with disabilities and the organisations of persons with disabilities are well placed to raise awareness about the reform processes, explain the relevance of interventions to potential participants, inform about any problems in implementation, record lessons learned from policy implementation and monitor and evaluate the impact of implemented measures.

Organisations of persons with disabilities have made efforts to influence relevant policy and legislative processes, but in general they lack expertise in strategic planning, advocacy, internal organisation and leadership skills. These organisations face difficulties with resource mobilisation and financial sustainability, though some do receive state funding. In general, their members have limited ability to pay fees and they mainly rely on donor funding, which is temporary and project-based. In addition, organisations of persons with disabilities suffer from fragmentation and lack of networks to ensure better coordination of their activities. Persons with mental and intellectual impairments are less likely to be organised and represented by existing organisations, and associations of youth with disabilities are almost inexistent.

Roma and Egyptian Civil Society Organisations

Roma and Egyptian civil society organisations and those representing their interests have been identified as a key partner in ensuring that public services reach the most vulnerable communities. The Roma and Egyptian Civil Society Organisations – they represent Roma and Egyptians separately – are mainly based in Tirana. Most of their activities are in support of the protection of the rights of Roma and Egyptians and increased participation in decision-making, lobbying and

⁴¹ It is estimated that 80 percent of the social assistance, such as guidance, counselling, and protection or referral to specialized assistance is offered by NGOs, Social Care Reform, 2013 – 2016.

⁴² ASCS was set up in compliance with law No 10093 "On organization and Functioning of Agency for the Support of Civil Society" aiming the encouragement through financial assistance of a sustainable development of civil society and the creation of favourable conditions for civil initiatives to the benefit of the public.

⁴³ ASCS Annual Report 2015

advocacy about the minority rights with international institutions, central and local governments. Very few of them focus on activities that address priority needs for Roma and Egyptian communities such as social, healthcare and education services, facilitation of civil registration, identification of emergency housing situations and employment opportunities. Studies show that around 60% of the Roma and Egyptian CSOs does not have any permanent staff, 12.5% have declared one person as permanent staff and only 5% inform to employ 2 persons. About 80% of the CSOs are not currently implementing any project or running any activity.⁴⁴

CSOs specialised in supporting children and families

CSOs specialised in supporting children and families are active in the area of child rights protection and are identified as key partners to provide advocacy, family outreach services, community-based day care service, capacity building for empowerment of parents, daily "case management" and follow up, coordination between various actors and services, promoting inter-sectoral action, etc.

152 Authorities

Albanian authorities are the second major type of stakeholders. They are to define the framework for social protection and service provision (currently, mainly central government units), and they are to provide respective services (local government units mainly, although the funding of social services is still chiefly controlled by central government).

Local Government Units

LGUs of the 61 Albanian municipalities will be the main partners of the project on the side of authorities, alongside central government units, though. The LGUs' increased responsibilities under the decentralisation and social care reforms will make them more receptive to collaboration with the international organisations, donors, central government and national government. The improvement of their capacities to deliver adequate (social) services is a main requirement for improving social inclusion in Albania. At the same time, it is to be noted that LGUs are still to find their role as service providers for the local population, to develop an understanding of their ways of working and functions that is not limited to be executive organs of the central government – as they were under communism.

Central Government Units

The Ministries involved in the definition of the respective regulatory framework understand themselves as the main owners of the social inclusion processes in Albania. Their cooperation is to improve, their capacity to innovate is to be developed – regarding concepts and mechanisms, including the participation of target groups and civil society organisations in the planning, decision making and provision of services supporting social inclusion – and the provision of adequate funding is to be guaranteed.

Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MSWY)

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth has the leading role in social inclusion, primarily through departments of Social Policies, of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, and Social Care and Integrated Services and is the key partner during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this project. The new Law on Social Services grants the MSWY the responsibility to organize and administer social care services in accordance with legal requirements and relevant standards.

State Social Services and the Inspectorate for Social Care Services

State Social Services (SSS), and the Inspectorate for Social Care Services (ISCS) are responsible for the monitoring of implementation of the legislation on social care and social care standards. SSS also serves as a key intermediary between national and local government authorities. The SSS is also expected to play a crucial role in the development of capacities of local government staff in charge of providing social care services.

The faculty of Social Work, Social Care Practitioners and respective Orders of Professionals of Social Care Services

⁴⁴ UNDP/HDPC, Capacity Assessment of Roma and Egyptian CSOS, 2016

Departments of Social Work in Tirana, Korça, Elbasan and Shkodra prepare and train social workers. In the framework of the implementation of social care reform, it is important to update curricula on the expected standards and ethics of social workers. The new Law on Social Care Services⁴⁵ places a great importance on the professional development of practitioners who provide social care services, offered from both public and non-public providers. A new system for accreditation, certification, and continuous education of professionals is expected to be established under the auspices of the MSWY – which will need support as the governing and administrative tool for the proper functioning. The Orders of Social Workers and Psychologists – two independent, public entities – are being established based on previously adopted legislation. These bodies are expected to guarantee the fulfilment of criteria by social workers and psychologists involved in the provision of social care services.

Institute of Statistics – INSTAT

The Institute of Statistics will play a critical role in measuring and monitoring the evolution of social exclusion over time. (The Social Inclusion Policy Document specifies the methodology of monitoring the policy domains of financial poverty and social protection, employment and skills, health, education, housing and deprivation of basic needs, and social participation and human rights as those where progress has to be made). The new social inclusion policy framework requires also shifting towards the current measurement of poverty based on consumption (Living Standards Measurement Study, LSMS). INSTAT, has already piloted an income approach to measuring deprivation based on the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) that is the commonly used statistical tool in EU. The Institute of Statistics is one of the co-chairs of the Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group (SIIG). SIIG is co-chaired by the Director of the Department for Social Inclusion and Gender Equity (DSIGE) in the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and Head of INSTAT. SIIG will draw on high-level participation from the main government institutions with responsibilities for social protection, employment and enterprise development, health, education, housing, justice and human rights plus representatives from academia and think tanks. The project will focus on strengthening the capacities of government officials who will be involved in the process of measuring and monitoring social inclusion.

Ministry of Urban Development (MUD)

Over the last three years, the MUD has been supported by UNDP to conduct research, develop the social housing strategy, build capacities of municipal staff, establish an online system for recording and collecting social housing data, and revise the social housing law. In 2016, the Department of Urban Services and Housing, with the support of UNDP, implemented a capacity-building program in all municipalities with the purpose of informing housing specialists about the social housing strategy as well as offering support to building an online system for recording information on social housing. This experience will continue to assure that the information collected through the online system is reflected on policies and programs.

State Agency for Children's Right Protection (SACHRP)

SACHRP is the national agency in charge of monitoring the implementation of national legislation and policies on protection of children's rights in partnership with relevant national and local authorities as well as CSOs and other service providers ensuring child's protection. It cooperates and coordinates work with Child Protection Units (CPUs) set up in LGUs for collecting and sharing data to monitor child's protection at local level.

Ministry of Education and Sports (MES)

MES is the key policy-making authority for education policies and will be supported to implement the Pre-University Education Strategy 2016-2020 with a focus on early child development and inclusive education.

Ministry of Health (MoH)

The MoH is the key policy-making authority regarding health and its regional departments will be supported by UNFPA for improving implementation of policies related to social inclusion with a focus on service delivery in primary health care, reaching out to women and girls, Roma and

⁴⁵ The Board for Continuous Education set up at MSWY comprised of representatives of National Center for Lifelong Education, State Social Services, MSWY, National Center for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Order of Nurses, Order of Social Workers, Order of Psychologists.

Egyptian, elderly, adolescents and youth through collecting and generating data for evidence-based policy advice at local and national level.

People's Advocate (PA)

PA is an independent constitutional body to protect the rights, freedoms and interests of individuals from any illegal or irregular action or omission to act by public administration bodies, or by third parties acting on their behalf. The People's Advocate promotes the observation of the highest human rights standards in the country. The unit carries out inspections of social care facilities to check and assess observation of service users' legal rights. Using the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, the People's Advocate monitors compliance with rights and standards in mental health hospitals, prisons and detention centres. The People's Advocate can also issue recommendations for government bodies. One of the commissioners working at the People's Advocate office is a person with a disability.

Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD)

The Office of CPD is an independent state body in charge of examining and deliberating on individual discrimination-related claims submitted by the public. The Commissioner can also be involved in *ex officio* investigations in cases of alleged discriminatory treatment, and impose sanctions for violations.

2 Results and Lessons Learned

21 Results

The project is a new endeavour, but it has inscribed into account the history of both Swiss and UN provision of support to social inclusion and decentralisation in Albania – some of them still ongoing. Major results (and planned results) of these endeavours are briefly presented below. Coordination and synergies with ongoing efforts will be actively sought by the proposed project.

- SDC is supporting the programme “**UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania (UNSSIA) 2015-2017**” (expected to end mid 2017) with a budget of 3.5 million CHF implemented under the management of UNDP. The project contributed to: (i) the development of the Policy Paper for Social Inclusion 2014 – 2020, including a set of national indicators on social inclusion based on qualitative analysis on the most vulnerable categories of the population; (ii) the Social Housing Strategy (2015-25) and Social Protection Strategy 2015–2020 with a costed action plan articulating the need to harmonise the different instruments of social protection, recognizing that cash alone cannot address the complex needs of vulnerable families and children; (iii) support for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) along with the National Action Plan for PWD and support to local government for the establishment and functioning of services for PWD and strengthened the network and capacities of the Albanian Disability Youth Forum (210 young people with disabilities in three localities attended forums on disability rights, including independent voting); (iv) development of vulnerability profiling and mapping as per the different administrative divisions for use as a social protection planning tool by the central and local administrations; v) Inclusive local plans for persons with disabilities (PWD) in four municipalities (Lezha, Lushnja, Pogradec and Saranda); (vi) participatory budgeting processes, which were supported by UN Women in three municipalities (Tirana, Fier and Berat) to render social services at the local level more responsive to women.
- SDC has supported the programme “**Social Care Service Reform in Albania (2013-2016) to address vulnerability and marginalization of children, women and Roma communities**” implemented by UNICEF in the amount of 3.2 Million CHF, which ended in December 2016. The programme helped develop for the first time the architecture and all the legal, administrative and financial instruments for the system of social care services in Albania. The efforts culminated with the approval in November 2016, of a new Law on Social Care Services, which obliges the LGUs to establish the directories of Social Protection responsible for both cash and care components of social protection along with the elaboration of social care plans based on the work of the Needs Assessment and Referral Units (NARUs). In 2016, UNICEF provided mentoring and direct technical support to pilot the social care planning processes in 7 municipalities (Durrës, Shkodra, Tirana, Elbasan, Berat, Korça and Kukës) with a standard format of the plan developed and the initial skills of the respective staff built. The implementation of the Law on Social Care Services will benefit from the extensive long-term experience of UNICEF in institutionalising and promoting Child Protection Unit/Child Protection Worker’s function retained and reinforced by the new Law on Child Rights and Protection (adopted in February 2017), as currently the most experienced “case management category of civil servants.” In addition, working towards social inclusion from various angles in education, UNICEF and its partners advocated on the benefits of investing in early childhood development, pre-school education and inclusive education with respective targets adopted in Albania’s National Strategy for Development and Integration until 2020 and already achieved tangible results in doubling the number of young Roma children enrolled in preschool education in 2013-2016. In health, UNICEF technically supported the adoption and enforcement of the new standards of Mother and Child Health (MCH) care, with mandatory family outreach and protection roles of health care professionals stipulated there
- SDC has supported the project “**Alternated Education and Training**”, (1996 – 2016, known as CEFA project) implemented by “Help for Children” (NPF) with 11 Million CHF (2.25 Million for in the last phase). Starting early in 1996, CEFA provided substantial contribution to the sustainable change in the social integration and economic development of the Roma and Egyptian communities in Korça, Berat, Elbasan and Tirana, through developing and rendering a unique transformational set of social services. The project helped in setting the foundations

of the professional profile of the "social work" and "social workers" along with the early and ongoing endeavours of the school of social work.

The longstanding intervention has been in full line with the local and national development strategies as it aimed at complementing Albania's efforts to increase the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian. The project provided support for children' education and delivered simultaneous multidimensional services to individuals, families and communities including facilitation for vocational education and training, (self) employment, family development and economic growth, capacity development for school teachers and municipal social workers, facilitation of interface with local government etc. 1,246 children (of which 45% female) were included into eight compulsory schools, accounting for 30% of Roma children in these regions. 40 were able to attend high school and about 25 went to University. About 500 youth acquired a profession from which 240 are (self) employed, others are on their way. About 700 families have increased incomes sustainably as a result of income generation initiatives. Municipal social workers have gained knowledge on effective provision of social services. Lately, CEFA project has mirrored the Swiss supported social services reform in Albania, aiming at the institutionalisation of this integrative model.

- The SDC project "**The Decentralisation and Local Development Programme (DLDP)**" works on improving inclusive quality service delivery to citizens through strengthened capacities of local governments in Northern Albania. It is funded with 9.62 Million CHF and, amongst other, has successfully introduced new models for local government functioning in areas such as waste management, public finance management, and e-governance.
- SDC is supporting the programme "**Skills Development for Employment**" 2015-2018 (3 Million CHF), implemented by UNDP, with the overall goal that "more young women and men in urban and rural areas in Albania are employed or self-employed" and focusing on three main outcomes: i) improving and diversifying employment promotion measures, and advancing their governance; ii) improved environment and regulatory framework for up-scaling work-based learning schemes (elements of dual system), iii) quality assurance and accreditation of VET/VSD providers; and iii) anticipating skills needs in the short and medium term.
- With the project "**Skills for Job**" 2016-2019 (6 Million CHF), SDC additionally supports Albania's social inclusion, and at the same time the competitiveness of the country, by improving skills development offers for unemployed and underemployed, especially youth.
- SDC has launched the project "**Strong Municipalities 2017-2022**" (currently in tendering process)_continuing the Swiss government support for 61 municipalities in Albania. This intervention will focus on: i) supporting the capacities of Municipal administrations to fulfil their functions and duties in an efficient, effective and inclusive manner based on improved data collection and analysis according to Eurostat standards; ii) strengthening the representation and oversight function of Municipal councils over local administrations and fulfil their role as key institutions of local democracy; and iii) enhancing the role of citizens from urban and rural areas to co-determine, to use and to contribute to more and better municipal services.
- SDC is currently supporting the project "**Regional Development Programme in Albania**" phase 3 and phase 4 (2016-2018 and 2018-2022) aiming to reduce regional disparities in Albania by supporting the development of strong regions which advance their potentials and provide better social and economic conditions for their citizens.

22 Lessons Learned

The most important lessons learned from previous support to social inclusion and cooperating with local authorities and civil society organisation to be taken into consideration when planning and implementing the proposed project include the following:

- **Cross-sectoral collaboration is still weak** and bringing different ministries to the same discussion table requires special efforts.
 - ⇒ UN is key undertaking a facilitator role in engaging different Ministries such as Social Welfare and Youth, Urban Development, Health, Education, and Local Government to plan, coordinate and take action in improving the situation regarding the vulnerable population. The future project is to actively promote inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation. The newly established inter-ministerial thematic working groups are a main entry point for promoting coordination and cooperation. Among them is the Integrated Planning and

Management Group in Employment and Social Sector (IPMG – ESS) set up in 2015 that advises, guides and coordinates the institutions to develop and implement the Social Policy Document and its Action Plan, secure agreement on key issues affecting the sector, endorse the outputs of work undertaken by the different actors and make recommendations for high level decision makers. IPMG-EES incorporates the Thematic Working Groups on employment and skills, pensions and social insurance, various social assistance programmes, disability and social care services, and social inclusion, which can serve as a main entry point for promotion, coordination and cooperation of social inclusion. The working group on Social Inclusion, Gender and Equity and its sub-thematic group of Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group (SIIG) is certainly the most obvious one for the project to be targeted. Along the course of implementation, additional working groups might be of interest for the project to promote coordination and to improve the frame conditions for its own success.

- The **new territorial configuration** amalgamates previous LGUs into bigger ones, and municipal administrations are still to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. This comprises the risk of marginalised and vulnerable groups not being priority topics.
 - ⇒ Stronger advocacy is to ensure that the needs of the vulnerable groups are prioritised in the new municipalities' agenda.
 - ⇒ Institutional support and capacity building is to help LGUs to set up and operationalise the Directories of Social Protection and capacitate them to design social care plans, collect data, prepare budgets and manage service delivery.
 - ⇒ Coordination with other donors and players is imperative to avoid overlapping and maximise support. The establishment of a well-developed government support programme for LGUs in cooperation with development partners and civil society is crucial.
- There is a lack of **disaggregated and comparative statistical data** regarding the effectiveness of specific inclusion measures and programmes for vulnerable groups. This limits the formulation as well as the implementation and evaluation of appropriate government policies and programmes.
 - ⇒ Immediate concerted and coordinated action to strengthen the country's capacity to generate, analyse and manage reliable social qualitative and quantitative information for evidence-based policy making is required. With its third outcome (see below, chapter 3 of the present document) the proposed documents will be active exactly in this field.
- The **Social Housing Strategy** recommends changes to the existing institutional structure that supports the social housing sector.
 - ⇒ Further work is needed to model the institutional set-up and potential cooperation among actors in this area. Public-private partnerships should be explored as potential options of a renewed institutional framework for social housing delivery.
- The **cooperation with civil society** is not yet an essential part of central Government's strategy and of LGUs for creating a sustainable welfare society today and tomorrow.
 - ⇒ The proposed project will promote cooperation between central government and LGUs with civil society.
- The main learning of the Youth Disability Forum is that **new actors and alliances of groups** can unlock long-standing interest monopolies and open up space for policies that are inclusive.
 - ⇒ The proposed project will attempt to strengthen civil society organisations and facilitate their effective participation in increasing social inclusion.
- The **use and leverage of technology**, alongside assistive devices and personal assistance, is an effective way to remove certain barriers for persons with disabilities, and consequently to contribute at ensuring their independence, dignity and inclusion.
 - ⇒ The project will most probably not be able to massively provide technological means for facilitating inclusion of persons with disabilities, for instance. But it can show the advantages of such means, and it is possible that projects funded in the framework of the foreseen grant scheme (see below, chapters 4 and 5) do provide such means.
- **Needs Assessment and Referral Units** at the local level are the gatekeeping mechanism to ensure that appropriate preventive social care services are provided to vulnerable groups of

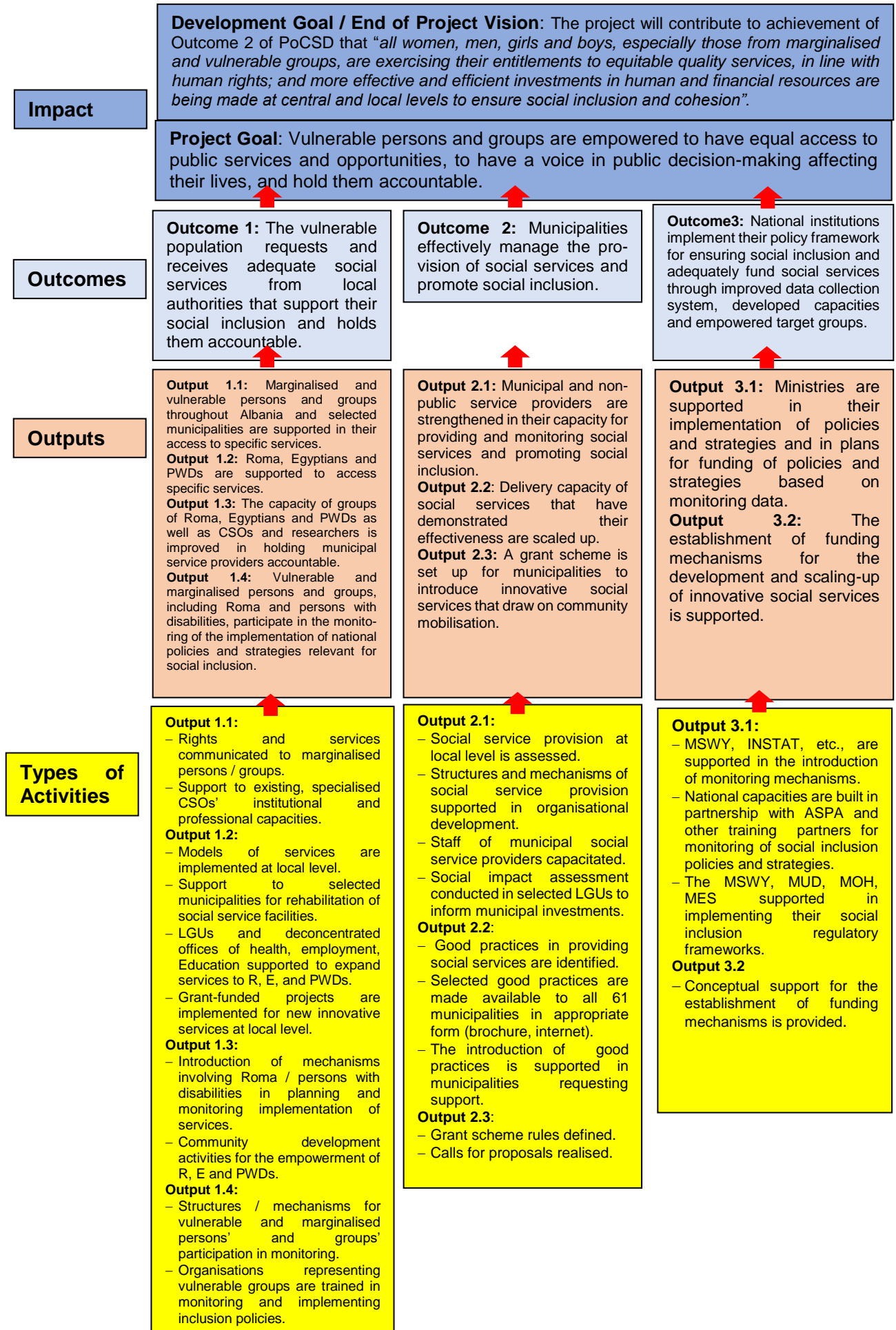
the community. Such mechanism has been introduced by the new Law on Social Care Services, with NARUs becoming fully functional being a priority requirement for Albania.

- ⇒ Especially with its support to LGUs, but also by facilitating contacts between civil society and municipalities, the project can contribute to the introduction and improvement of needs assessments and referrals.
- A **comprehensive and standardised curriculum to train current and future social workers** is instrumental to ensure that effective social services are delivered and better service outcomes are achieved. Professional training must capacitate social workers to actively and directly engage with and in the interest of their clients. It must therefore focus on the practical application of social work values, principles and techniques;
 - ⇒ By developing human capacities at local level, the proposed project can contribute to the provision of improved social services.
- **Learning by doing**, but also **showcasing successful pilot models of social services/social care plans** is key in operationalising the “abstract” legal framework.
 - ⇒ By supporting the strengthening of human capacities, but also the identification and diffusion of good practices, the project will contribute to the general improvement of social services, and thus to the implementation of national strategies. It is important that the project’s interventions do not introduce additional inequalities. Dissemination of pilot models is therefore to be planned and prepared from the start.
- The explicit positioning of activities within the **Delivering-as-One** Programme of Cooperation benefits by supporting priorities already agreed by Government and the UN and minimizes stand-alone activities requiring special procedures.
 - ⇒ The use of the UN Coherence Fund – in support of the Delivering-as-One approach – further incentivizes UN cooperation and strengthens its policy and advocacy voice vis-à-vis partners. It is important, however, that programming remains result-oriented to ensure that engaged UN agencies have a clear value-added contribution to activities.

3 Objectives

31 Objectives and Intervention Logic

The project’s goal – system change for the improvement of social services and the participation of persons in need in public decision-making – supports the vision of an overall inclusive Albania. This, in turn, is in line with the SDGs, and with Albania’s aspiration for EU accession.



Since service delivery is realised mostly at local level, the project's intervention focuses on the local level. Two of the three outcomes reflect this thrust – by empowering the beneficiaries in need of measures for their social protection to access and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion (outcome 1), and by capacitating municipalities the service providers to provide services and to promote social inclusion (outcome 2). The third outcome reflects the project's concern with anchoring its interventions at system level; it is to contribute to the further development and implementation of policies relevant for social inclusion, including its funding.

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

The empowerment of target groups, especially persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians and vulnerable women, for their capacity to request social inclusion and access social services is a precondition for improving their social situation and their livelihoods. The achievement of the planned outcome then depends on the supported persons' and groups' preparedness to demand adequate services and to equally access these. This willingness will be supported by contributing to the improvement of a constructive dialogue and culture of participatory decision-making between municipal structures and target groups, the capacity of service providers and beneficiaries to interact effectively and efficiently and establish a culture of mutual dialogue and decision-making.

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

The improvement of management of social services at local level will be supported by the development of human resources and of organisations, including their processes, as well as by the divulging, across Albania, good practices for providing social services and promoting social inclusion and social protection. A grant scheme will provide the opportunity to support social inclusion of persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians not only through training of staff and organisational development, but also by realising innovative small projects to be realised in selected municipalities and as cooperation of authorities and beneficiaries possibly also civil society organisations. Innovative service delivery is an approach municipalities should explore to ensure better and efficient services and non-traditional ways to address vulnerability and exclusion. Elements of good governance such as public transparency and accountability, participatory decision-making will serve to bring municipalities closer to citizens, including vulnerable groups, and render effective services.

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

National policies and strategies for the provision of social and for the promotion inclusion exist. The project will support their implementation not only at municipal level, but also by cooperating with Ministries and other central government bodies, including INSTAT, research and think tank organisations, the latter ones being responsible for providing data on the effects of the policies' and strategies' implementation and on the evolution of social inclusion. The monitoring of the policy framework's implementation, and, if need be, its adaptation, is to be an endeavour in which the beneficiaries, vulnerable, elderly, youth, women and men, persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, will participate.

The Logical Framework in Annex A of the present document provides a comprehensive presentation of the planned project's hierarchy of objectives, including indicators and types of activities foreseen.

32 Impact Hypothesis / Theory of Change

The project's intention is to bring about system change in the field of social protection and the provision of social services that gradually ensures the realisation of basic human rights for all and thus social inclusion. So far, the main achievements regarding change, under the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2016-2020, consist of a policy framework including specialised policies and the streamlining of social protection and social inclusion in a series of policies, strategies, action plans and laws: Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020, National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020, National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020, Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020, National Strategy for Social Housing 2015-2025, Law on Social Care Service (2016), Law on Social Enterprises (2016). (For a comprehensive and commented list of relevant documents and laws, see chapter 1 of the present document.) The efforts of establishing these documents show that Albanian authorities are well aware that the current system is not fit for providing social services in sufficient quality and quantity and that social protection and social inclusion require systemic improvement, especially regarding the actual implementation of the strategies and policies and the regulatory framework. This awareness, and obviously the needs of the target groups, will be the project's main entry point. The project will use different instruments (see below) in order to address issues from different angles, providing both immediate improvements and supporting the development of conditions for social inclusion.

By supporting the implementation of national policies, strategies, and laws that mark the historic change in the efforts for social inclusion, an implementation that is of national interest, but that is slow and certainly incomplete (see chapter 1 of the present document), it can be assumed that the project can achieve the foreseen impact and the planned results. The strengthening of relevant actors and mechanisms, and the implementation of a rights-based approach are the project's main means for contributing to the improvement of service provision in the field of social protection and social inclusion. Such strengthening signals the important innovation that is being undertaken by Albania: social inclusion is not, as it was in communist times, imposed by central authorities as an obligation, and it is not forgotten, as in the first decade after communism, when priorities concerned almost exclusively the economic sphere. The strengthening of actors and mechanisms will concern conceptual as well as operational aspects, and it will concern state actors at central and at local level, civil society actors, active in advocating and lobbying for improved social inclusion as well as in service provision, and the project's target groups themselves. The improvement of the system is to reflect the fact that the services provided are a right the Albanian population is entitled to, it is to produce improved and appropriate social services for the target groups, i.e. vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups in general, and persons with disabilities, Egyptians and Roma specifically, thus enhancing their social inclusion. The project assumes that the improvement of the social services supports social inclusion. Social services alone obviously cannot guarantee social inclusion – the achievement of the latter depends on much larger efforts, efforts not only to be undertaken by state actors, but also by society. Participation in society and improved abilities and opportunities for all for doing so require a common understanding of society, of the reasons why it is in the interest of society at large not to leave any one behind. And they require opportunities for direct interaction between groups of society, regardless of age, wealth, or sex, etc.; they also require possibilities to identify with institutions (a form of government, for instance). But the provision of adequate social services to those who need them is a basic requirement to promote social inclusion. The absence of adequate social services limits the access to the economic, social, and civic opportunities of segments of the population they need for participating fully in society, to be recognised and feel as equal members of society. Without a system of social protection and services granting a decent livelihood, amongst other in the form of financial support, without access to education and to decent housing conditions, marginalised and vulnerable groups see themselves radically excluded from participating in society. Access to food, housing, health, education and legal support are basic prerequisites for social inclusion. An improved social protection system, and of social inclusion in general, besides the strengthening of actors and the improvement of services, requires the development of mechanisms for cooperation between stakeholders and for monitoring the implementation of policies at local and at central level, again involving state organisations as well as civil society and target groups. Improved mechanisms for cooperation

and monitoring are to result in increased accountability of state actors whose decision-taking is to become more transparent and whose information practice towards the public at large is to be based on evidence, including from monitoring data in the domain of social inclusion. The empowerment of target groups is an additional means to implement a right-based approach, and it will permit these groups to request adequate services and to actively participate in the planning and the monitoring of their provision. Such capacitation is certainly a major change in Albanian society, important respective efforts were already made in the last decade, but more is to be done in order to secure innovation, to make social inclusion an unquestioned part of the country's political economy. The project will intervene both at the system level, by leading a policy dialogue with competent authorities, by strengthening the capacities of services in all 61 Albanian municipalities, and by scaling-up good practices, thus contributing to the overall improvement of social inclusion in the whole country, and at the level of specific target groups, including through a grant fund allowing for realising sub-projects for and with Roma and Egyptians in selected municipalities. In order to achieve the project's objectives and to bring about change, continuous policy dialogue is required, especially with the central government representatives, especially the MSWY, but also with authorities at local level. The dialogue is to create awareness about the project, and, in more general terms, the necessity and the interest of all to promote social inclusions and the ways to go about it.

The project proposal cannot provide a proper and costed analysis of costs and benefits of the proposed projects (social services and social inclusion measures in Western Europe and elsewhere are also not able to provide respective analyses including figures). But, although no financial information can be provided, it is obvious that not supporting vulnerable and marginalised groups and not actively promoting social inclusion would entail much higher costs – for health services, for the unemployed, for the judicial apparatus – than those invested in preventing the further impoverishment of persons and groups, in vulnerable and marginalised children's access to education, etc. Not providing social services and not promoting social inclusion would result in costs far above the sums currently invested in social services. But the risks of not promoting social inclusion are not exclusively financial, they not only concern increased costs for rehabilitating what was not prevented, for mending what was not supported in time, the risks are also political. If the divisions in Albanian society further develop, if gaps in access to social, economic and political resources further widen, social cohesion will be at risk, tensions may increase and clashes may appear. What's at stake is Albanian society's integration.

33 Levels of Intervention

Regarding the state structures, the project's interventions target both local and central levels, and is therefore active at macro and at meso level. With this combination, concrete improvement of service delivery at local level can be combined with support to central authorities, especially the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and INSTAT – the Ministry being of highest importance for defining strategies and policies relevant for the project's target groups, and for the financing of services that are delivered at local level, and INSTAT providing data for assessing the improvement of social inclusion and the implementation of policies. At meso level, in addition to municipalities, but also at micro level, CSOs will be crucial partners for the project. They are important in their role as providers of social services and in that of representatives of the project's beneficiaries, advocating their interests. They are interlocutors of authorities at central and at local level for a policy dialogue on social services. As municipal services, the CSO will benefit from the project's activities for increasing the capacities of persons and of organisational development.

macro Level	Ministries INSTAT
meso Level	Municipalities and their structures, including Municipal Councils Civil Society Organisations advocating target groups' interests and providing services
micro Level	Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups, especially persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians CSO advocating target groups' interests and providing services

They are important in their role as providers of social services and in that of representatives of the project's beneficiaries, advocating their interests. They are interlocutors of authorities at central and at local level for a policy dialogue on social services. As municipal services, the CSO will benefit from the project's activities for increasing the capacities of persons and of organisational development.

34 Target Groups

The project will support the inclusion of two types of **target groups**: a) marginalised and vulnerable families, women and men, and b) persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians. These target groups will be reached through municipalities' social services departments and civil society organisations providing social services and representing the interest of marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups. Obviously all three outcomes of the project will have effects on the targeted groups. The exclusion mechanisms affecting these groups' full participation in Albanian society are social (segregation, limited accessibility of public decision-making processes), educational (access to schooling), and economic (limited access to the labour market, difficulties to overcome poverty, afford health services).

All Marginalised and Vulnerable Groups

Because the project will cooperate with all 61 Albanian municipalities for the improvement of social services and of social inclusion, the **total number of beneficiaries**, i.e. Albania's total population of marginalised and vulnerable persons, can be estimated at least at 400,000. The project's target group is comprised of all persons who need targeted support for their inclusion (by state or by private actors), i.e. specialised services allowing them to lead decent lives that do not exclude them from participating as fully as possible and wished for in society. The target group is constituted by the persons requiring facilitated access to services such as education and health, including specialised services where necessary, specific mechanisms for accessing the labour market, and appropriate channels of information and means for participating in Albanian society and public decision making. The number of 400,000 persons is also the figure the World Bank's poverty headcount ratio at national level provides for the year 2014 (14.3% of the total population). This figure reflects the total number of the project's beneficiaries, since it includes the more specific target groups (see below). The National Social Protection Strategy reports that 80,000 families benefit from the main poverty reduction scheme of cash assistance of 3,500 ALL/month (32 USD/month). The figure of 80,000 families fits with the total number of 400,000 persons living below the national poverty line (marginalised and vulnerable).

Persons with Disabilities, Roma and Egyptians

The total number of **persons with disabilities** is not known. Statistics do not provide information on the exact number of children with disabilities. The part of adults with disabilities in Albania's total population (2.8 million), according to the 2011 census, amounts to 6.2%. In absolute figures, their number is therefore about 175,000.⁴⁶ Together with the children with disabilities, the total number of the target group can be estimated at over 200,000.

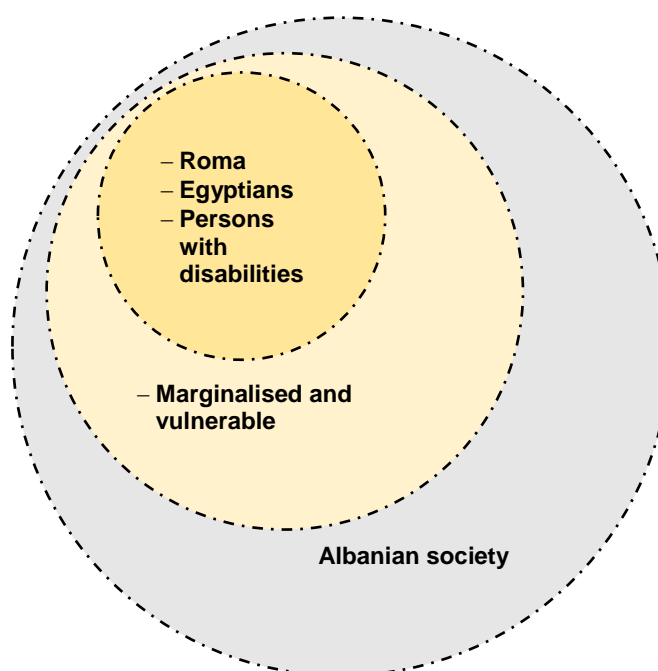
Persons with disabilities continue to face barriers in accessing services and realising their rights, particularly with regard to *accessibility*, including information in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, electronic or audio formats or sign language, physical accessibility of governmental buildings, service centers, public spaces and services such as education, health, employment, and social housing, which hampers independent mobility and independent living. Recent legislation has set out accessibility standards and norms to be applied by the construction industry (particularly in relation to access to buildings, streets and other indoor and outdoor premises and facilities), but which are not consistently observed and their implementation is not monitored. According to a recent survey, only 35 per cent of kindergartens and primary schools buildings meet accessibility requirements⁴⁷.

Persons with disabilities also face barriers in participating in political and public life (including the right to elect and be elected, participation in cultural and sports events), equality, employment and VET, education, social care, health care, as well as institutional collaboration, coordination and monitoring and evaluation. Persons with disabilities face barriers in entering the labour market due to their lower education levels and vocational qualifications, and due to employers' discriminatory attitudes.

These persons will, at least indirectly (through the improvement of municipal social services and other social inclusion measures), some also through direct project interventions (realised in the framework of the grant fund) benefit from the project's contributions to improving social services and social inclusion.

Reliable figures regarding **Roma and Egyptians** do not appear to be available, since estimates and statistical information cover a wide range from more than 100,000 to 11,669 persons who self-identify (in 2011) as Roma or Egyptians (8,301 Roma, 3368 Egyptians).⁴⁸ Not the entire Roma and Egyptian population of Albania is vulnerable and/or marginalised, but the largest part of Roma and Egyptians certainly do belong to this group.

UNDP, UNICEF and WB and other donors' research studies provide evidence that the Roma and Egyptian communities face direct and indirect barriers in accessing public services such as health, education, employment, social housing, social benefits stemming from the eligibility criteria they cannot comply with, lack of information or understanding of administrative procedures, as well as stigma and frequent discriminatory attitude from the majority population. Long-term exclusion has affected the living conditions of Roma and Egyptians, treatment by the majority population and relationship with



⁴⁶ UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania Programme (2015): Profile of the Disabled Population in Albania. Céline Ferré with Emira Galanxhi and Olgeta Dhono.

⁴⁷ Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Albania: An Analytical Study. Project Management Unit, in cooperation with Save the Children and the Ministry of Education and Sports.

⁴⁸ UN Support to Social Inclusion in Albania Programme (2015): Roma and Egyptians in Albania: A socio-demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 census. Patrick Simon, with Emira Galanxhi and Olgeta Dhono.

government institutions. 46% of Roma declare having been discriminated when looking for a job, and 24% at the work place⁴⁹.

A UNDP survey also showed that social benefits (economic aid, disability, unemployment) represented about 13.1 per cent of the budget of Roma family and 24 per cent of the budget of an Egyptian family⁵⁰. Social protection programmes play an important role in improving the status of Roma and Egyptian families by providing financial assistance (economic aid and disability benefit), child protection and community-based services. However, Roma and Egyptians are less likely to meet the eligibility criteria for social services (including social aid) because of the lack of personal documents or a formal residence transfer, illiteracy or inability to complete the application forms, highly complicated procedures, ownership of land that they do not possess de facto and other reasons. At times, they also lose benefits because of the inability to register a transfer of residence within a certain deadline. Roma and Egyptian families who are not registered for social assistance or lack the documents necessary for entering in the system also cannot benefit from a range of other services, including healthcare, social housing and free legal aid.

The project will therefore reach – by contributing to the provision of social services and social protection in general, and through specific measures facilitated by the grant fund – 10,000 Roma and Egyptians. It should be noted that the legal status of Roma and Egyptians has changed recently with the DCM dated 12 April 2017, "On protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", wherein GoA recognizes both communities as minorities enjoying equal rights as citizens of Albania, whereas before Roma were recognized as a cultural-linguistic minority, whereas the Egyptians had no status.

35 Geographic Focus

As the project's target group, its geographic focus is also twofold: While outputs 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2 target all 61 Albanian municipalities and are to benefit all marginalised and vulnerable persons as well as those administrative units and specialised CSOs providing services for them, outputs 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3 specifically target persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians. These outputs will have a narrower spatial focus. This is in line with the project's financial resources, and it reflects the fact that especially the Roma population in majority is concentrated in a limited number of Albanian municipalities. The municipalities to be considered for specific interventions regarding these target groups include Fier, Kruja, Lezha, Lushnja and Pogradec as well as other municipalities that will be targeted with inclusive modelling services based on data provided by vulnerability maps. The selection will be made based on criteria proposed by the implementers and approved by the Project Steering Committee. In the first months of the project's implementation, its geographic focus regarding persons with disabilities and Roma and Egyptians will be defined more precisely. The selection criteria will include statistical data on numbers of vulnerable and marginalised persons, especially persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, the presence of other projects, support already received, and, as competitive elements, status of service delivery, and preparedness of municipalities to cooperate, contribution of own financial and staff resources, quality and innovative character of the proposed project, etc.

The project will support the accessibility of social services by persons living far from the centre of their municipality. Albania's administrative and territorial reform has established municipalities with larger surfaces, accessing municipal services is therefore not always easy. It is to be noted though, that it is uncertain whether the situation has really changed. There is also information stating that the number of service centres has not diminished due to the territorial reform, that geographic access to municipal service is therefore not more difficult than previously. In either situation, the populations living in remote areas are to have equal access to services as those living in the municipalities' urban centres. This can be achieved by various means, including the organisation of transports for recipients of social services and the introduction of mobile social services, i.e. social workers who visit the persons in need rather than receiving them in their offices.

Specific geographic foci will be introduced by the project through measures financed by the grant fund (see below, chapter 4), since the fund will allow for the implementation of projects in selected

⁴⁹ INSTAT, *Census*, 2011

⁵⁰ Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian Communities in Albania, UNDP 2012

municipalities – such municipalities with comparably large numbers of Roma and Egyptians, for instance, or such municipalities where persons with disabilities are in urgent need to see the service provision improved. Such municipalities will be identified along the project's implementation, and based on predefined criteria as well as on the quality of the projects proposed for funding.

36 Cross-cutting Issues

In addition to the hierarchy of objectives, two cross-cutting themes will orient the project: governance and gender equality, they will do so as an articulation of human rights principles and they will be topics recurrently addressed in the policy dialogue in the Steering Committee and in the cooperation with all other partners of the project:

The improvement of **governance** is at the centre of the proposed project, since the development of social service provision and social inclusion are focal dimensions of Albania's governance system. The project will be faced with governance issues at all level of the state and of civil society: slow implementation of policies and strategies, limited availability of funding for social services and social inclusion, limited capacities of actors whose tasks include the planning and the provision of social services, resistance against innovation, representatives of political parties in charge of LGUs neglecting the improvement of service for the sake of party struggle, etc. The proposed project will react to these challenges and promote good governance by establishing and leading policy dialogue and cooperation mechanisms with central, local authorities, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders ensuring that the voice of the most vulnerable men and women is heard, by introducing concept of responsive service delivery and of social inclusion, reflecting good governance principles, and by strengthening the capacity of service providers at individual and at institutional levels. The governance of the project's implementation itself will be a means for promoting ideas and practices of good governance. These can be implemented in introducing transparent institutional procedures, in the management of the grant fund for innovative projects, when involving and consulting target groups and civil society organisations into the project's implementation to better respond to their needs, when supporting the improvement of the interface and the cooperation between authorities and civil society organisations and target groups and involving the latter in monitoring of services provision.

The promotion of **gender equality** will be a regular dimension of the project's implementation. All of the project's interventions will be gender sensitive, promoting social inclusion also from a gender perspective. More than half of the target groups are women, since among the vulnerable and marginalised groups, women make up for the largest part; when supporting the authorities at national and local levels and civil society organisations who will participate in the steering and the implementation of the project, women and their specific perspectives and needs will receive special attention. In addition, the project's specific geographic foci (close cooperation with selected municipalities, for instance for realising innovative projects financed by the grant fund) will make gender equality a selection criteria. The project's progress and achievements will be assessed, at least partly, based on sex-disaggregated data and gender related indicators. The project will cooperate closely with the Directorate of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality at MSWY and specialists of Gender Equality and Domestic Violence at municipality level as well as with women's alliances of municipal councils where they are set up to mainstream gender in social services planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

4 Implementing Strategy

41 Intervention approach and Instruments

Intervention Approach

The proposed project's interventions are all designed to **support the implementation of Albanian policies and strategies** relevant for the social inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups, and especially of persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, thus they are fully aligned on national efforts reacting to challenges identified by Albanian actors. The support for the implementation of national plans concerns the Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020, the National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020, the Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020, the National Strategy for Social Housing 2015-2025, the National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020, the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, and the National Action Plan of Youth 2014-2020. The implementation of these

policies, strategies and action plans will only very marginally be supported with financial contributions (made available by the grants fund, see below); the main forms of support will consist of conceptual inputs and capacity building of individuals and organisations for improved management, service delivery, monitoring of social inclusion, etc. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, for instance, will significantly benefit from the project's support to provide adequate framework conditions for service delivery, coordination with line ministries and local and regional authorities and cross sectoral cooperation. The MSWY will also be the main partner for policy dialogue. This dialogue targets the full support to the further development of the system promoting social inclusion, and it targets the full support to the project's implementation.

Besides this central approach, the project will make use of the following methods for achieving its planned results:

- **Intervention at local and at central level:** By cooperating with actors at central and at local level, the project addresses the challenges Albania's social inclusion is faced with a systemic approach.
- **Supporting drivers of change:** The most capable and effective drivers of change – at ministerial and LGU level as well as coming from civil society – will be identified and supported if required. At the same time, restrainers of change will be involved in the project where possible and efficient, in order to minimise their restraining force, by showing them their interest in the improvement of social services and the role they can have therein.
- **Strengthening participation of authorities, CSOs and target groups:** The involvement of all types of stakeholders (authorities and civil society, service providers and beneficiaries) will additionally allow for addressing social inclusion issues in view of overall systemic improvements. Planning and budgeting of social service provision, the provision of the services itself, monitoring, adaptation of strategies will be main topics of this cooperation. The issue of financing social services will be specifically addressed under Outcome 3. Increasing funding from central government, the testing of the idea of Social Funds at municipal level (to which different sources can contribute, including foreign ones, e.g. donors), the targeted utilisation of funds, etc. are main issues to be addressed.
- **Empowering marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups:** Capacity building for NGOs and individual representatives of the project's target groups is to result in increased possibilities of these to demand rights and services, and to participate in the planning and monitoring of services and of service delivery. Participatory approach on local service planning and budgeting shall lead to inclusive social service decision-making and equally responsive

The Project's Understanding of Social Inclusion

The project adheres to the World Bank's understanding of social inclusion:

Social inclusion is

- the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and
- the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society.

www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/social-inclusion

service delivery. Community-based social service delivery has best chances to address the target groups’ actual needs. The project will ensure that cooperation with individuals from the target groups will be legitimised by their constituencies, and that repeated direct contacts with these constituencies will renew their representatives’ legitimacy. It is crucial that individuals representing target groups do not monopolise contacts with the project, thus preventing the emergence of suspicions by the target groups regarding the transparency and completeness of their communication, and their attempts to benefit individually from the cooperation with the project, etc.

- **Strengthening cooperation between Albanian actors:** Ministries competent in social inclusion issues, ministries, including deconcentrated services, and local authorities, different units of LGUs, authorities and civil society are not always willing to cooperate in view of common goals. By facilitating the cooperation and communication between Albanian actors (ministries, municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, target groups), by introducing mechanisms for consultation and cooperation led by MSWY, including their formalisation in Memorandums of Understanding, by inviting actors to define clear responsibilities within their structures, thus also enhancing ownership, especially at central government level, the project will contribute to more effective and efficient delivery of social services.
- **Policy dialogue and advocacy:** The UN organisations involved in the project’s implementation, supported by implementing organisations, CSOs and target groups, will lead policy dialogues with competent actors at central and at local state levels especially the MSWY. The dialogue is to be led in view of ensuring the achievement of the project’s objectives, and the development of the system and the mechanisms allowing for social inclusion. This includes the necessity to ensure funding for social inclusion mechanisms in the long run. Ministries, LGUs, deconcentrated and municipal services involved in the provision of social services and the promotion of social inclusion will be informed about the social and institutional realities on the ground, the needs of the target groups, the possibilities to further improve mechanisms for planning and delivering services, etc. Target groups, CSOs and UN organisations will understand their role in policy dialogue also as one of advocacy.
- **Learning from making use of previous achievements:** SDC, the United Nations and other international actors have supported social service delivery and the promotion of social inclusions for years. And if not all staff of Albanian authorities involved in the planning and the provision of social services are experienced in all of the area’s dimension, there is most valuable in depth knowledge and know-how available in staff and organisational units. The experience and skills present in Albania are to be used for the benefit of the project. As an example: UNDP, in March 2017 has published a model for integrated community-based social services for Roma and Egyptians that is obviously to be used by the project⁵¹ – as are other documented experiences and good practices from the last decade. Also, UN Women supported Government strategic orientation on social and economic integration through the establishment of legal framework on Social Enterprises, as mechanisms of positive change defined by their social missions that guarantee social and economic reintegration of vulnerable categories, including women and men. Learning from experience will be fed into the policy dialogue with project partners, especially the MSWY.
- **Do no harm:** The project will ensure that its intervention do not have effects contrary to the plan of promoting social inclusion. Especially in neighbourhoods where visible projects financed by the grant fund are implemented, persons and groups of population who do not benefit from the project, but whose social inclusions also needs external support, might feel disadvantaged. This is to be prevented by finding forms for projects that involve direct neighbours and groups that do not belong to the core target group.
- **Integration into the SDC and UN strategies:** The proposed project is fully in line with SDC’s cooperation strategy 2014-2017 and its domain “Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance” with the main goal “better provision of socially inclusive services through an advanced decentralisation reform and strengthened local democracy” as well as with the UN’s pillar 2, addressing social cohesion: “All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from

⁵¹ UNDP (2017): Integrated Community Based Social Services in Albania to Address the Needs of Roma and Egyptian Communities.

marginalized and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights; and more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion." Synergies with other SDC and UN projects evolving in the same domain or in the same localities will be used whenever they can contribute to improved effectiveness and efficiency of interventions.

- **Sustainable Development Goals:** The project will also support Albania's progress in view of achieving SDGs, especially SDGs 1-5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, 10 (reduced inequalities), and 11 (sustainable cities and communities).

Instruments

The future project makes use mainly of the following instruments:

- **Capacity building:** Training for staff of partner organisations, especially of LGUs (in all 61 municipalities) and of CSOs, including social workers and managers, in order to improve individual capacities for legal and policy implementation, service delivery, lobbying and advocacy, service management, etc. will ultimately benefit recipients of social services. Training will be adapted to the needs of the trainees in view of improved performance, it will make use of different techniques, including traditional training courses, peer learning, training of trainers (who will then have a capacitating role themselves). Trainings will be planned in close partnership with MSWY, State Social Services (SSS)⁵² and Albanian School of Public Administration. For the selection of persons included in such capacity building, it is important to assess the willingness of such persons to be trained, and their acceptance in their respective working context – in order to avoid investing in persons who do not enjoy full trust and have lost credibility among the beneficiaries of social services. A gender balance of persons involved in capacity building is to ensure greater involvement of women representing CSOs not only as beneficiaries of social care services, but as well representatives of their communities. A gender sensitive capacity building plan shall ensure and guarantee rendering of equitable services and policy implementation at local level.
- **Organisational development:** A variety of partners will benefit from activities for strengthening their institutional capacities:
 - Local Governments Units of all 61 municipalities, especially those responsible for delivering social services and cooperating with the project's target groups will be supported in their capacities to provide services. The project will in particular seek to strengthen the capacities of municipal administrative units in both urban and rural areas. LGUs will obviously continue to rely to an important degree on central government, for the regulatory framework for social service provision, for programmatic guidance and financial support. Self-financing mechanisms are not yet in place at local level, and they should never be responsible for financing all of the social service provision in municipalities. In this context, political implications need to be considered that may accelerate or slow or hamper the progress on the implementation of the administrative and social care reforms. UNDP will also support LGUs in building capacities for implementing procedures for outsourcing funds to third parties/CSOs.
 - The proposed project will address the limited participation of persons with disabilities and of Roma and Egyptians in the conduct of public affairs by supporting their organisations to strengthen the constituency and become proactive and influential in policy and decision-making processes.
 - Contribution can be made to increase the quality of social care services. To do so, the support is to be well targeted, focusing mainly in the access to good practices.
 - Central government authorities and institutions including INSTAT will be supported in their planning and monitoring capacities in the field of social inclusion. As regards the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, special attention will be given to financial planning, the provision of resources for social services and social inclusion. The Ministry of Urban Development

⁵² MSWY and SSS are members of the Continuous Education Board in charge of accreditation and certification of professionals of social care services.

will be supported for the financial planning and the provision of resources for social housing programmes for the implementation of the Action Plan on Social Housing. **Funding of innovative projects by the operation of a grant fund:** The establishment of a grant fund will take into account SDC and UNDP experiences with such schemes in Albania and elsewhere, and it will allow for financing projects of approximately 15,000 CHF in selected municipalities. The overall financial means reserved for the fund amount to 300,000 CHF. The regulations of the fund will be drafted in the first months of the project's implementation. The fund will be managed by the project team and the final allocation decisions will be endorsed by the Steering Committee. Calls for proposals for proposals will be launched at least twice between 2018 and not later than 2020. They will define the information to be contained in project proposals (e.g. what their contribution to improved social service and to social inclusion in general consists of, what is innovative about the submitted project), and they will inform about the selection criteria and the selection process. It will be made sure that calls – preferably targeting selected municipalities, possibly also organised as open calls for all Albania – reach the potential beneficiaries of the fund. The actors who can submit proposals are those active at local level. Municipal social services, CSOs, informal groups of persons can – individually, but a preference will be given to joint proposals, thus strengthening community based social services – apply for support by the grant fund. Added value criteria will be included in the proposals' evaluation on municipal fund matching and other innovative financing approaches that could expand and make more sustainable the delivery of social services.

The application of these instruments will be supported by continuous policy dialogue with the MSWY especially, but with all other actors participating in the Steering Committee, and with Albanian partners, both at central and at local level, including civil society, in general. The instruments applied by the project will tackle social inclusion issues from different angles, thus allowing for quick improvements (mainly by the innovative projects), and for medium and long term effects (mainly through capacity building and organisational development, the latter also consisting of providing models for inclusive services). The instruments (and the approaches described above) fit together because they all support the project's overall goal; they target the improvement of social services and of social inclusion. If they each address specific issues, they still are still perfectly well combined, and they are coherent means to strengthen the system of social inclusion.

42 Partners, Cooperation and Coordination

Partners and Cooperation

The project will be implemented by a large number of actors; its success depends on the good quality of their cooperation and coordination. It will be the task of the Steering Committee (see below, chapter 5) and of single actors involved in the project to guarantee cooperation and coordination.

UN Organisations

The project will be carried out by the involved UN Organisations through their Delivering as One mechanism (see below, chapter 5), together with actors representing central and local state levels, and with civil society organisation that provide social services and that defend and promote the interests of socially excluded persons and groups.

Albanian Ministries

The main governmental partner at central level is MSWY with the focal point being within the Directorate of Social Policies, of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, and Social Care and Integrated Services and its dependent institutions (State Social Services and its regional directorates, Inspectorate) which will be responsible for coordination with other line ministries (MES, MOH, MUD, MOI, Ministry of Local Government) as well as with local government authorities at regional or municipal level.

Local Government Units

Local Governmental Units responsible for social service provision will be the key partners in implementing activities at local level and in coordinating activities with other local authorities. To

ensure steady participation (regardless of staff changes and independently of election results), MOUs will be signed with respective (pilot) LGUs to define roles and responsibilities in implementation of project activities. (Pilot) LGUs will be the targeted beneficiaries for community-based delivery of social services, mainstreaming social inclusion in local policies, and in developing and implementing innovative delivery of social services; they can also be direct beneficiary of the grant component for innovative social services and social inclusion. Their role as beneficiaries will additionally ensure the active involvement of municipalities in the project's implementation. Active contributions of LGUs will consist of engaging in organisational development in view of efficient and effective service delivery, including accessing target groups, encouraging staff to participate in capacity building events, exchange with other LGUs, possibly planning and implementing service delivery jointly with other municipalities, etc.

Civil society organisations and target groups

CSOs at national and local level representing interests of different vulnerable and marginalised groups (Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities, women, children, LGBTIs, etc.) will be key partners at central and particularly local level. They will have a double role – they will advocate, lobby and network for promoting social inclusion and social services at local level, and they will develop and deliver innovative social services at local level. Not all CSOs will do both, but the experiences of CSOs that deliver social services are certainly to be included in advocacy and lobbying activities – taking into account that service providing CSOs, due to dependency from public funding, might be limited in their faculty to request accountability from authorities, including regarding the quantity and quality of services provided. The CSOs will also be direct beneficiaries of the project's grant component for innovative social services. The potentially multiple role of CSOs – advocacy and paid for service provision – might result in a conflict of interest for these organisations. Their capacity to speak up for the groups they represent or intend to work for may be reduced, and their accountability might suffer due to institutional interests not derived from their organisational purpose. The project's management is very much aware of the issues deriving from CSOs' multiple role; it will address these issues explicitly in the Steering Committee and with CSO partners, and it will contribute to the clarification of roles wherever possible – by facilitating the interface between state authorities and CSOs, a productive dialogue, by presenting examples of NGOs that are paid service providers but that therefore have not lost their capacity to address crucial issues for the groups and persons they represent. Policy dialogue with authorities will be crucial in this respect: they have to learn that CSOs can have a double role, and that this situation can benefit the improvement of service provision. Their knowledge about the situation on the ground, their lobbying for the improvement of this situation is not to result in "punishments" of these organisations by not accepting them as service providers if they critically comment what remains to be improved. Rather, the experiences and insights of CSOs are to be seen as a resource that enriches the further development of social service provision and the system of social inclusion in general.

Among the CSO partners of the project is Ndihmë për Fëmijët (NPF) which has developed and implemented over the years a portfolio/model of integrative social services known as CEFA model in several municipalities with the support of SDC which can be modelled and piloted in selected municipalities. This model was awarded in October 2014 as one of the best practices in Roma social integration in Western Balkans and Turkey by the European Commission in Brussels.

Additional partners

Media and academia (Faculty of Social Work) as well as other actors will be involved in the project as respective needs emerge.

Coordination

Beyond the coordination among partners involved in the implementation of the proposed project, its actors are also to be aware that additional projects are operated in similar fields. With ongoing Swiss and UN projects identified in paragraph 2.1 ("Decentralisation and Local Development Programme", "Skills Development for Employment", "Strong Municipalities", etc.), links will be established in order to define and implement mechanisms for exchange of information and mutual learning: Sharing of documents and regular meetings of project managers are to permit a constant flow of information. Where projects are active in the same municipalities and/or with the same partners at central government level, coordination will be especially close, and synergies will be

actively sought for and used, amongst other by involving Municipal Councils and civil society in the planning and monitoring of interventions. In addition, the proposed project will also coordinate with other actors, among them the following:

- The EU is the biggest contributor, including SDC and other donors, through a trust fund to the UNDP implemented project "**Support to Territorial and Administrative Reform**" (**STAR 2**) project. The overall development objective of STAR 2 is to ensure functionality, recognised by men and women, of the newly established local governments, so that local administrative and service delivery outcomes are effective, of good quality, participatory and inclusive, and correspond to evolving decentralized competencies and responsibilities. The project's main intervention areas are: (i) strengthening institutional and administrative capacities of local administrations; (ii) increasing local service delivery efficiency, quality, coverage, accessibility and inclusiveness for men and women; (iii) enhancing local democracy through fostering citizen-oriented governance and participatory decision-making, leveraging the roles of women as actors of change. Support to selected public services will also be provided at the national level for the one-stop-shop service model and service benchmarking.
- The EU is currently supporting the project "**Economic and Social Empowerment of Roma and Egyptians**" **2016-2018** implemented by UNDP which aims at contributing to the economic and social empowerment of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania through: i) improving and diversifying employment promotion measures developed and provided to Roma and Egyptian women and men aiming at enhancing their skills and employability chances; ii) increasing participation of Roma and Egyptian women and men in local development processes; iii) improving access to basic equitable, inclusive and decentralised services and integration in the Albanian society; and iv) enhancing institutional capacities at the central and local level to address social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian women, men, boys and girls. The project targets four municipalities: Tirana, Durrës, Berat and Shkodra. The project has contributed to date in generating evidence on employment situation of Roma and Egyptians through mapping labour market demand and the target group's employability skills, tailoring and implementing five employment promotion programmes for, piloted community led development projects, capacity assessment of Roma and Egyptian CSOs, provision of pilot integrated social services packages to, support for inclusive education through schools as community centres, and support for monitoring and evaluating the National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020.
- The EU is also supporting a regional initiative that included Albania and that builds on the experiences of the **Reinforcement of Local democracy (LOD) Project** implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina by UNDP. The initiative's specific objective is to strengthen partnerships between local governments and civil society in the Western Balkans by scaling up a successful model for transparent and project based funding of CSOs from local government budgets in order to achieve greater civic engagement in decision making and improvement of local service delivery.
- The EU has also launched the project "**Municipalities for Europe**" (the tender is currently being organised) with the overall objective of strengthening municipal's EU related governance capacities and the reaching out to Albanian citizens and Albanian local administrations with information about the EU, its policies and programs and funds.

43 Sustainability

Sustainability is a constant concern of the proposed project. It is pursued through a series of approaches and mechanisms that all tend to sustainably improve Albania's social service provision and social inclusion overall.

Chapter 3 of the present report has identified the approaches and methods that will contribute to the durability of the project's interventions:

- **Full alignment on national policies and strategies:** By supporting a national system designed to promote social inclusion, amongst other by providing social services, the project includes sustainability in all its activities.
- **Investments in actors, processes and persons:** The strengthening of organisations (for service provision, for monitoring and adapting policies, for funding services, etc.), the introduction and improvement of mechanisms for cooperation between actors (at central and

local level government as well as between these two levels, state and civil society, recipients and providers of social services), and the development of capacities of individuals (service providers, policy makers, beneficiaries of social services, etc.), together with strengthened monitoring capacities and willingness to innovate and adapt the policy framework can be expected to have effects beyond the project's duration.

- **The (non-financial) support for increasing funding of social services:** By supporting Albanian efforts for sound funding of social services and social inclusion activities, the project, with the means of policy dialogue and capacity building makes an important contribution to the targeted services' durability.
- **The financial support for rehabilitation of social services facilities and introduction of innovative social services through the grant scheme** will not only commit LGUs financially to continue to fund and maintain these services over time (during the project life and afterwards), but also will serve as models of scaling up and diversifying these services and using them as examples to lobby and advocate for increased funding from central government, own revenues in municipal councils and donors.
- **Building synergies with other donors supporting social inclusion is of paramount importance to maximize use of financial resources for lasting interventions and avoid duplication.** Donors currently active in social inclusion are quite focused in their interventions: WB is supporting the reform of the (cash-transfer) social protection scheme (NE and DA) to make it more effective and reach out the most vulnerable and in need, and EU is supporting the economic empowerment of Roma and Egyptians in selected LGUs by providing them with integrated social services as well as strengthening the capacities of local governments. The project should partner with the donors to lobby with the central government to reallocate resources from the savings in the social protection scheme to provision of social services, strengthen the capacities of LGUs to plan, budget and develop social care plans responsive to the needs of their communities from better management of their revenues, and lobby with central government and other donors for more resources for social services.
- **The promotion of community-based social services:** By involving beneficiaries of social services and their organisations in the planning and budgeting of social services (in line with gender responsive and social responsive budgeting) and in their delivery and assessment, the provision of appropriate services can become a joint endeavour of all stakeholders, and a requested and appreciated provision of the Albanian state.
- The concern for sustainability is also reflected in the fact that **no parallel systems** will be introduced. No services will be provided by the project itself. Only existing service providers will participate in the project. Their strengthening is the project's main approach. The project will enable existing state structures and civil society organisations to implement strategies and to provide services. The improvement of the interface between state and civil society actors is a major concern for the project, since both types of actors participate in service delivery, and it is a task of respective Albanian actors themselves – a task that will be supported by the project, e.g. by facilitating contacts between them, by proposing forms of cooperation and by supporting such cooperation in view of improved service delivery.
- In all its interventions, **governance** issues will be a major concern – it is articulated, amongst others, through the involvement of target groups in the monitoring of service provision, and in the transparent management of the grant fund. These efforts for improved governance are important means to prepare the sustainability of the project's interventions as well as the sustainability of social services, since they contribute to sound and transparent institutional mechanisms.

44 Scaling-Up and Exit Strategy

Scaling-up will be a major means for the project to cover a large number of municipalities. The means for scaling up include the following:

- Divulcation of already identified good practices among all stakeholders in the provision of social services. This can be initiated with the project's start, since many good practices are already identified. As for the means for scaling up, the persons and organisations are obviously to be targeted specifically with information that is relevant for them and which can contribute to their improved practice.

- Identification and divulgation of additional good practices during the project's implementation is very important. This concerns all dimensions of the project, including the projects financed by the grant fund, which may be of interest for other municipalities, CSOs, etc., possibly for other donors.
- Policy dialogues with central and local authorities can increase their awareness about issues, possible solutions and means of action.

The **end of project vision** reads as follows: An inclusive Albania leaves no one behind. The entire population, also women, vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities are fully recognised members of Albanian society and enjoying the same rights and access to services as the rest of the population. Inclusion is promoted by specific support to those most in need.

The end of project vision also includes Albania's further progress in its way towards EU accession. Improved social conditions clearly are an asset in this process.

Since SDC intends to fund a second project phase (2020-2023), an **exit strategy** will be developed within the four-year phase 2017-2020. This exit strategy, based on the experiences made and the lessons learned during the project's implementation already in the first phase, will include most topics addressed by the project. The following issued must be included in the exit strategy:

- financing of social services;
- capacities for service delivery at local level and standards monitoring;
- capacities for monitoring social inclusion and the implementation of social inclusion strategies;
- capacities of policy makers to gather information for adapting the relevant policy framework.

5 Organisation, Management and Administration

51 Organisation

The proposed intervention is a Joint Project (JP) that will be implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, with the joint participation of four UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA and in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies at central and local level. The implementation modality of the joint project will be affiliated within the overall architecture of the DaO approach, ensuring that activities are coordinated with Outcome 2 strategic deliverables as presented biannually in support of PoCSD. The project logframe provides for the general framework and indicative deliverables that will be further fine-tuned and annualised in relevant annual work plans over a time frame of four years (2017-2021).

UNDP will be the leading UN agency for the overall implementation and coordination of the joint project. Each participating UN agency will implement activities and outputs as defined in the respective joint work plans agreed for the respective roles and responsibilities in line with their mandate and expertise.

UNDP will focus its work on building on the results of previous projects focusing on: i) policy level by providing technical assistance at national level for cross-sector implementation of the policy framework on social inclusion (NAPWD, NAPRE); ii) strengthening the measuring and monitoring of social inclusion through the provision of technical assistance for the effective statistical governance of the sector-specific outcomes for social inclusion (including data collection and analysis); iii) promote and support implementation of the CRPD; iv) technical assistance for implementation of the social housing strategy at central and local level; v) standards setting and monitoring of community social services; vi) institutional strengthening and capacity building of LGUs and CSOs on service delivery, planning and monitoring in the field of social inclusion; vii) innovative approaches and partnerships by LGUs to provide integrated social care services to R & E and people with disabilities; viii) civic engagement, advocacy and networking to promote social inclusion at local level; ix) capacity support and modelling of inclusive social services through implementation of tested comprehensive social services models including rehabilitation of social services facilities; x) strengthening capacity of CSOs representing Roma, Egyptians and most marginalized populations in community mobilization, advocacy and policy dialogue to enable the targeted groups demand for their rights and social services by capitalizing on resources, outputs, expertise, results and experiences of EU funded project ESERE (Economic and Social Empowerment of Roma and Egyptians) currently being implemented by UNDP.

Based on its comparative advantage, the NGO "Ndihmë për fëmijët" (NPF) will be engaged by UNDP as implementing partner under the NGO Implementation Modality. The NPF will enter into a Project Cooperation Agreement with UNDP upon completion of the capacity assessment including the CACHE (Capacity Assessment Checklist) and the CSO Risk Assessment Form. NPF will mainly engage in three LGUs: i) implementing and providing tested models of inclusive services delivery (education, employment, health, vocational training) at local level which will be showcased to other LGUs through exchange visits, sharing of good practices and study tours, and consequently upscaled in more LGUs; ii) capacity building of municipal staff to assess, plan, budget and monitor inclusive services; and iii) awareness raising of Roma and other vulnerable communities on new competencies of municipalities and enhance their ability to interface with local government and advocate for their concerns. NPF will partner with the University of Applied Sciences in Lucerne to adapt the model to new project municipalities in close partnership with the latter to enable them to implement the new regulatory framework and funding mechanisms in place.

UNICEF is committed to follow up on its contribution aiming to provide technical assistance to LGUs to implement Albania's new legal framework on social care services, in full alignment with its child-focussed mandate and in support of the new Law on Child Rights and Protection through: i) capacity building of NARUs and Child Protection Units/Workers in needs assessment, planning and budgeting and monitoring of social services in all of Albania's 61 LGUs, with an explicit focus on the most vulnerable families; ii) standardisation and scaling up of training and orientation

programmes for all social and child protection workers, and social care practitioners; iii) strengthening of mechanisms for early identification of children with disabilities, in need of special protection measures, at risk of or having dropped out of school – based on the newly introduced family outreach and “case management” techniques in health, education and social protection sectors; iv) piloting of new financial mechanisms for supporting out of school children or other excluded groups; v) improving the policy framework for the inclusive education starting from early ages and development of tools and instruments to ensure that Roma, children with disability are included and receive quality education throughout their lifecycle.

UN Women will continue its support at policy level by: (i) assisting MSWY to complete legal framework on social enterprises (SE) enabling social and economic reintegration of vulnerable groups; (ii) establishing participatory budgeting practices for gender responsive budgeting at local level, thus consolidating the practice in 3-5 municipalities; (iii) conduct Social Impact Assessment (SIA) - assisting central and local government consolidate “service performance indicators” and measure the impact of municipal services and investments - implementation of six-step approach of gender statistics and data collection at local level for monitoring and reporting of social impact assessment; (iv) support Government awareness raising campaigns at local level on enabling an environment for development of Social Enterprises.

UNFPA, building on its comparative advantages in data, population dynamics, reducing inequalities in health and education, will contribute towards: i) building capacities at local level to address social determinants of health and reduce health inequities through “health in all” policies, social protection and universal health coverage approaches; ii) strengthening monitoring capacity of Ministry of Health for improving implementation of policies related to social inclusion and supporting INSTAT to improve capacity of LGUs in interpreting and using demographic and socioeconomic data in local planning including financing of social services (this concerns such issues as indicators on mortality and morbidity as well as on health determinants); iii) strengthening the services delivered by CSOs that focus on the most marginalised young key population (IDUs, MSM, sex workers) and vulnerable (including LGBTI, Roma and Egyptians, people with disabilities and elderly). UNFPA in its interventions will coordinate with the SDC funded health portfolio.

The Joint Project will ensure a cohesive coordinated UN approach through internal coordination mechanism in targeting different municipalities to ensure a critical mass of support and increase chances of success. It will ensure a strategic integration and cohesion with other UN agencies as well as with development partners working in Albania in the areas of social inclusion and protection, public administration and local governance. A coordination platform with UN agencies, SDC and EU funded projects targeting local governance and social inclusion will be established to coordinate intervention, avoid overlapping and maximize synergies and results. In this context, higher-level coordination will be facilitated by Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth in its overall efforts to chair and coordinate all partners’ efforts under the Integrated Planning and Management Group (IPMG) on Employment and Social Sector and Outcome 2 of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD).

52 Management Arrangements and Administration

Project Management Structure

A Steering Committee (SC) will be established to oversee and coordinate the operations of this intervention (also see Annex E. Annex F provides an additional view on the project’s structure. It is not in opposition with the one in Annex E, but it reflects UN ways of presenting governance structure). Based on the project’s initial plan and budget as well as on monitoring data, the SC oversees the project’s implementation and takes all necessary strategic decisions. It will provide policy guidance and recommendation regarding the project strategy and objectives, receive and comment semi-annual reports, approve annual plans of operation and reports, and participate in the possible realisation of a mid-term and end of phase evaluation. The SC will unite at least twice a year, and upon necessity. All SC members can request a meeting within a week, if need be.

The SC will be composed of SDC representative, the UNDP Resident Representative/Country Director, senior representatives of the participating UN agencies, senior representative of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, senior representatives from other selected ministries (MUD, MES), selected LGUs representatives benefiting from the project, and at least two representatives of civil society organisations. The SC will invite WB and EU representatives with the status of observers for building synergies of the interventions in the area of social inclusion. The SC will be co-chaired by SDC, MoSWY and UN senior representatives. Every effort will be made to link the SC to both the Government-led coordination structures and the UN DaO structures. Moreover, the Steering Committee will serve as a sub-set of the Outcome 2 Group of the new PoCSD, which aims to align with the work of the IPMG on Employment and Social Sector.

To ensure a coordinated approach in the implementation of the programme a **Technical Committee** will be established. It consists of the technical experts of the four participating agencies and NPF and its main mandate is to guide implementation of the project, coordinate the practical implementation of project interventions by the UN agencies and ensure that results are delivered timely and efficiently. The Technical Committee will meet at least 4 times per year. The meeting of the Technical Committee will be called by the Project Coordinator, who will also be responsible for documenting the proceedings of the meetings. Progress updates will be provided by all UN agencies one week prior to the Technical Committee meeting.

6 Resources

61 Human Resources

The project will be managed by an overall **project team** of three, plus a variety of activity-specific supporting team members. The composition of the management team may evolve along the project's implementation. It is also to be noted that besides the project team, many other human resources outside the UN organisations implementing the project will also importantly contribute to the project. They represent authorities, organised civil society and target groups.

At its start, the project will be composed of the following staff that will coordinate the implementation, monitoring and reporting of all project components:

- A **National Project Coordinator (PC)** will be hired by UNDP as the leading agency in charge of the overall project management, implementation, reporting and coordination with various stakeholders and UN agencies.
- A **Monitoring and NGO Liaison Coordinator** will be in charge of internal monitoring as well monitoring of NPF activities and grants.
- A **Project Information Associate** will be hired for support on public information and visibility of the project.

The National Project Coordinator is in charge of everyday coordination of project activities implemented by participating UN agencies and NPF. In addition to the staff supporting the overall programme implementation, UN agencies will use human resources to deliver and achieve specific components. For example, to support implementation of UNDP activities, two Coordinators for Social Inclusion and Disability will be engaged to offer technical expertise and support the facilitation, coordination and implementation of activities. A Finance/Admin Assistant will provide the administrative, operational and financial support to the project following UNDP rules and regulations.

The recruitment process for hiring the project team staff considers the following requirements for project staff:

- Relevant professional and/or academic background.
- A minimum of three years of relevant experience in areas such as social inclusion, social work, social protection and capacity building (depending on role and function).
- Experience in project and team management as well as in monitoring and evaluation.
- Experience/familiarity with the challenges of social inclusion issues in Albania.

- Maturity and confidence in dealing with senior and high ranking members of national and international institutions, government and non-government.
- Integrity by modelling the UN's and SDC's values and ethical standards (cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability).

UN agencies have significant in-house expertise that can be utilised for the implementation of the project. National technical experts and consultants of different specialisations, especially targeting expertise in access to right and social care services for Roma and Egyptian, PWDs, social housing will be hired as per the project needs to complement the project team.

62 Financial Resources

The overall budget for this project is 8 MIO CHF funded 100% by SDC, receivable in 2017-2021, which will be allocated through Coherence Fund. The project logframe provides for the general framework and indicative deliverables that will be funded only by SDC contribution. An additional funding of 8.7 million USD has been mobilised by the participating UN agencies, through own resources and donor funding (EU, Sweden, etc.) to implement interventions contributing to Outcome 2 of PoCSD, while work is ongoing for additional fundraising from other donors. Partners both at central and at local level of the Albanian state involved in the project's implementation will graciously provide experience, knowledge and know-how as well as working time of staff that is not remunerated.

The Steering Committee will serve as the authority to provide strategic direction and oversight over the project and provide advice to the One UN Joint Executive Committee for the fund allocation decision making. The leading Agency is responsible for coordinating the programmatic aspects. The Administrative Agent, in this case UNDP, is responsible for administering funds received in the Coherence Fund. Each Participating UN Organization has programmatic and financial responsibility on the use of funds allocated from the Coherence Fund

63 Administration of Funds

The funds for the implementation of the project will be allocated through the ONE UN Albania Coherence Fund structure. As the four of participating UN Organisations (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA) have agreed to utilise the ongoing Albania One UN Coherence Fund structure where the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office acts as the Administrative Agent (AA), the funds assigned to these organisations under the Project document will be channelled for the project through One Fund. When making the final decision for allocation JEC would request the signed joint annual work-plans and request for funds.

The Administrative Agent will:

- Prepare and sign Standard Administrative Arrangement with the SDC
- Charge standard administrative agent fee of one per cent (1%) of the total contributions made to the Coherence Fund for this joint project, for its costs of performing the AA's functions.

The participating UN Organisations will:

- Assume full programmatic and financial responsibility and accountability for the funds transferred by the One UN Coherence Fund for this JP.
- Each UN Organization is entitled to deduct their indirect costs on contributions received according to their own regulations and rules, taking into account the size and complexity of the project. Each UN Organization will deduct 7% overhead costs of the total allocation received for the agency.

7 Risk Analysis

The risks the projects may be faced with concern: a) the project's capacity to achieve its objectives and expected results, b) the reputation of SDC, UN and other organisations implementing the project that may be affected by the project, and c) fiduciary risks.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Risk related to the achievement of results, strategic dimensions, socio-political and economic aspects.			
<p>The achievement of objectives may be faced with difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At local level mainly by lacking motivation and capacities of authorities to fully contribute to the project, and by unwillingness to involve civil society organisations in the provision of social services; also, strong political separation makes it difficult to work jointly with local officials appointed by different political parties, e.g. if a municipality is run by a political party other than the one that holds the majority at national level and that appoints staff at deconcentrated offices. - At central level mainly by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth not increasing, possibly even decreasing funding for social services; and capacities to ensure the timely initiation and adoption of the necessary legal amendments (secondary legislation) that enable effective implementation of reforms in the social sector. - The laws and secondary legislation will codify the eligibility criteria and the procedures for social services provision and hence prevent revisions based on statistical evidence and on evidence from the project's monitoring and evaluation. - Both central and local level might suffer from high staff turnover as a result of the 2017 and 2019 election, resulting in a loss of knowledge and know-how and in slow implementation. 	<p>local level: medium</p> <p>central level: high</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At local level, cooperation with municipalities is to be well prepared. The project's approach and what municipalities can expect and what they are to contribute is to be thoroughly communicated. Should there be doubts about a municipality's willingness to actively support and contribute to the implementation of activities for Roma and persons with disabilities, the project management may take the decision not to cooperate with this municipality. Such a decision will only be taken after attempts to convince the partner municipality, in co-operation with central government representatives and with civil society actors have not resulted in the municipality's willingness to engage in the joint endeavour. - At central level, the project has little leverage to convince ministerial partners to contribute to the endeavour's success. Nevertheless, continued dialogue, especially with the MSWY, also in the project's steering committee that will be an important instrument for policy dialogue, should prevent such a risk. The project will make a constant claim and provide evidence of the relevance and benefits of the suggested initiatives. The absence of increased funding for social services, though, are to be considered as a separate risk for which the project does not entirely depend on its ministerial partner. - UN will argue, in front of the MSWY mainly, but not exclusively, in favour of a flexible regulatory solution for codifying the eligibility criteria and procedures for social services, in order to allow improving social services criteria and procedures and take remedial action flexibly. - The risk of staff turnover cannot effectively be addressed by the project. Still, the support to organisational development is a means to anchor innovation at institutional level, thus allowing newcomers to adopt practices introduced by the project.
	medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In order to interest target groups and organisations representing them

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
<p>The achievement of objectives may be faced with difficulties due to inefficient and ineffective cooperation with target groups, e.g. Roma, and NGOs providing services. An even stronger risk may come from the unwillingness of target groups to cooperate. Also, public opinion may be negatively influenced by municipal leaders and key community figures.</p>			<p>and / or providing services for them, communication with them and with municipal opinion leaders is to start early, it is to be diligent, and it is to explain well the purpose and the approach of the project. Whenever possible, successes already obtained in the field of social inclusion, are to be demonstrated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative influence on the public opinion can also be mitigated by the engagement of stakeholders in decision-making and awareness raising activities to establish well informed populations.
<p>A specific risk may concern the cooperation with Egyptians. Unlike the Roma, they are less of a visible group, they often do not live in the same neighbourhood, and their needs may not be the same as those of the Roma. Nevertheless, the need for supporting Egyptian's social inclusion and access to social services remains uncontested. Access to them and the possibility to identify adequate forms of improving social services for them, may not be evident, and there is a risk that no consensual forms can be identified.</p>	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No experiences with the non-participation of Egyptians in projects supporting their participation in society were made yet. Nevertheless, specific communication strategy will be developed targeting Egyptian groups, its goal is to be the explanation of the project's purpose and the direct benefits for the Egyptians.
<p>Sustainability is at risk, if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - authorities do not durably integrate innovations introduced by the project into their operations (e.g. mechanisms for participation of target groups); - projects realised in the framework of the grants fund are not provided with budgets for continued operations (maintenance, etc.) 	Medium	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability is to be prepared – by supporting the durable integration of changes introduced by the project into municipalities' provision of social services (e.g. through well preparing structures and staff for their task, and through information to beneficiaries who are to be able to request services in a certain form), and by requesting viability plans from projects financed by the grants fund (e.g. budgets for maintenance, including the source of their funding). Also, the commitment of partners will be constantly monitored, and the partners are informed that the project might be stopped if they do not provide their foreseen contribution.
<p>Scaling-up of successfully introduced innovations introduced may be at risk, if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local authorities cannot be convinced in the necessity and their interest to improve services - potential beneficiaries do not see their interest in participating in innovating social services. 	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scaling-up is to be realised with the support of central authorities who can contribute to the preparedness of municipalities to replicate good practices identified and tested elsewhere. And scaling-up of projects for specific target groups (Roma, Egyptians) and persons with disabilities) is to be facilitated by a careful selection of municipalities and the beneficiaries – those willing

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
			to introduce the innovation proposed by the project. A means to support preparedness of these actors consist in the demonstration of successes already achieved in the field of social inclusion.
The project may duplicate or overlap with other activities (initiated/implemented by other agencies/donors).	Low	Medium	- Within the rather small donor community active in Albania, coordination must be ensured, including with the support of competent authorities.
Reputational risks			
The promotion of services for specific target groups may affect the Albanian population's perception of the support provided, especially the perception by groups of the population who are not beneficiaries but who consider to be in need of support they do not receive.	Medium	Medium	- The project, especially when making visible interventions (e.g. by activities facilitated by the grant fund) is to communicate well – not only with the target groups and the service providers, but also with the neighbourhoods: Persons and groups not directly targeted by the intervention are to be informed, if possible and suitable also included in the project, e.g. by making a community centre accessible not only to those mainly targeted.
Fiduciary risks			
Fraud and corruption , e.g. regarding the provision of services by mandated parties and the management of the grant scheme for realising innovative projects for Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities.	Low	High	- Strict UN management of financial resources used internally and invested in all activities, including the fund for projects, prevents financial mismanagement. All mandated parties are closely monitored by - Annual audits further ensure the quality of the project's financial management.

Risks are monitored by the implementing partners' observation in the field, by the regular monitoring mechanisms, including the feedbacks from target groups (see chapter 8 of the present project document), and in the framework of the Steering Committee's meeting. These meetings are to make of risk analysis a fix entry in their agendas.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are not activities for their own sake; rather, respective activities are integral parts of project management. The **purpose of the project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** is fourfold. It consists of the following dimensions (that are closely linked one with the other):

- i) the provision of information for **the project's steering**: Data are collected and processed in view of central dimensions of the project's steering – both at strategic and at operational level.
- ii) **quality assurance**: Detail information of the project and its context, on the project's implementation, etc. is to be used for continuous monitoring.
- iii) **learning**: The project uses the data collected and processed as well as the experiences made for its own learning, for the improvement of other actors' intervention, and for the development of capacities of its implementers and target groups. Effective and efficient learning from project data and experiences requires that lessons learned be identified and communicated in appropriate forms.
- iv) **accountability, including reporting**: The processed monitoring data and their interpretation are continuously used.

The project management will make use of structures, processes and tools that allow for collecting reliable data, for processing it into evidence and questions to be answered, and for utilising this evidence and the questions in view of the four M&E purposes.

8.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is a continuous task of project management. It provides both quantitative and qualitative data, and it is based, whenever possible, on predefined indicators. Whenever suitable, beneficiaries will be involved in monitoring activities. This especially applies at the level of local service provision, but CSOs shall also be involved in the monitoring of central government actors' performance.

The fields of observation covered by the project's monitoring:

- **context**: The institutional, social and economic conditions under which the project is being implemented will be observed in order to allow for seizing opportunities (for involving additional actors, for supporting interesting local initiatives, etc.), for reacting to newly emerging risks, for adapting the policy dialogue led with authorities, etc.
- **results**: The regular monitoring of and reporting on achievements is based on evidence provided by monitoring data, mainly the indicators defined in the logical framework.
- **efficiency**: The project's efficiency will mainly be assessed mainly financially, comparing budget with expenditures. Additional dimensions of efficiency (but not only) can be observed by also monitoring the quality of cooperation between involved actors and of processes necessary for implementing the project.
- **cooperation**: The many actors involved in the project at different levels require intense, continued, sometimes punctual cooperation between them. The monitoring of the quality of these types of cooperation (in the field, at the level of the Steering Committee, among the implementing actors (UN organisations, CSOs, municipal services, etc.) can support the understanding of the project also regarding qualitative dimensions.
- **processes**: The quality of processes of the project's implementation, e.g. the introduction of new practices for providing social services at local level, will be monitored in order to have a more complete, and again, also qualitative understanding of the project's implementation.

The main **instruments for monitoring** are:

- the project's **logical framework** will allow for assessing the implementation's progress, the achievement of objectives and foreseen outcomes and the provision of outputs. Indicators and target values defined for the different outcomes and outputs are the main means for assessing the project's effectiveness, including impact.
- the **annual work plans (AWP)** set out the activities to be implemented by each Agency along with associated budgets/resources in line with the results framework. It will describe in detail

the required inputs and the expected results within the given timeframe. In addition, the work plans will provide information on the contributing partners. The project's AWP will be approved by the Steering Committee and will be the basis for project activities throughout the year.

- The **annual review** of the project will be conducted by the Steering Committee and the participating UN agencies, the GoA, SDC and other key partners, and the findings will be used to contribute to annual review of the PoCSD and fine tune the upcoming annual work plan adoption. It will assess the performance of the project focusing on the extent to which progress is being made and that these remain aligned to appropriate outcomes. The annual review meeting will endorse the Annual Project Report (APR) and AWP for the upcoming project period. The annual project reviews may result in changes to the logical framework to adapt it to changing environments, priorities or policies. The mid-year and annual project review will serve to be conducted based on the Annual Project Report. The APR will describe actual outputs delivered against those planned in joint work plans and progress towards the outcome in this PoCSD based on the indicators.
- the project's **budget** (structured in line with the logical framework) and its comparison with **actual expenditures**. This will allow for assessing the utilisation of financial resources, delays in expenditures and shortages of funds if disbursements are made rapidly. The information on the costs of interventions will allow for assessing important aspects of the project's efficiency, including the timeliness of implementation.
- (joint) **field visits** of members of the Steering Committee will allow these for making first hand observations that can contribute to their understanding of the context, of the conditions under which the project is implemented, and of the project itself and that will importantly feed into the steering capacities.
- **case studies** on the situation in selected municipalities or of target groups, on interventions realised in the framework of the project or on other topics relevant for the project will be realised (or mandated). Such studies are to provide in-depth information that allows for improving the project's steering and implementation.
- the **monitoring results of other actors** - directly involved in the project's implementation or not. These actors include Albanian authorities, CSOs, bilateral and multilateral organisations. Their observations of the general context or of specific sectors (economy, social inclusion, social services, the performance of authorities' service delivery, etc.) can provide information that may be interesting information.

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD). As an integral part of the PoCSD, the proposed joint project, the monitoring and reporting processes will involve gathering of information to make timely informed judgment and assessment of progress including among others the identification of strengths and weaknesses of the project.

Monitoring data will be collected and processed mainly by the UN organisations involved in the project's implementation. But all other stakeholders will be involved in the project's monitoring – as observers of context and implementation. Data is then made available to the Steering Committee, and to other interested actors. Monitoring data also provide an important basis for evaluations and reviews of the project – both internal and external ones.

82 Evaluation

Internal assessments of the project's progress are regularly realised at specific moments, e.g. annual planning events and meetings of the Steering Committee. Should problems with the project's implementation arise, internal assessments are to be carried out quickly, in order to react promptly and prepare adaptations that can improve the course of implementation. Internal assessments will be based on monitoring data and previous reports, and they will be important moments for taking decisions on the necessity for adapting the project's approaches and implementation. The regular internal assessments will consist of a Mid-Term Review that will be comprised, amongst other, of assessment of the support received and the improvement of social services by carefully selected beneficiaries at all levels (target groups, CSOs, authorities).

A final evaluation involving the input of all key project stakeholders, including the primary and secondary beneficiaries will be organized in the penultimate year of the project to feed in the preparation of the second phase. The evaluation will be carried out by independent external consultants, the respective terms of reference as well as the subsequent reports will be submitted to the Steering Committee. The evaluation will focus on the impact, efficiency, effectiveness (including an assessment of services by beneficiaries) and sustainability of the project; it shall provide pertinent lessons learned and recommendations regarding the new phase of the project.

83 Reporting

The monitoring results and the learnings from evaluations will inform the reporting on the project's reports – to the Steering Committee and SDC. Semi-annual progress reports will be provided by the Project Coordinator and shared with participating agencies and SDC to record progress towards the completion of outputs and outcomes as defined in the logical framework. In addition to the semi-annual reporting, an end of phase report will provide a comprehensive overview of the achievements and lessons learned. Synopsis/key results will be included in the UN Albania mid-year update and the Annual Progress Report.

Annexes

- A Logframe
- B Detailed Budget
- C Terms of Reference of Key Project Staff and Expertise
- D List of Abbreviations
- E Glossary
- F Institutional Set-up
- G Governance Architecture

Annex A Logframe⁵³

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
Impact (Overall Goal)	Impact Indicators		
Vulnerable persons and groups are empowered to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives, and hold them accountable.	<p>It is to be noted that social context in which the project evolves will also be monitored by looking at the Albanian authorities' monitoring of the <u>Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020 and SILC indicators</u>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolution of human development and diminishment of social inclusion as reflected in authorities' reporting on the Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020 and SILC indicators. 2. Evolution of number of Roma and Egyptians as well as persons with disabilities considered as vulnerable. 3. Vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania benefit from improved delivery of social services by local authorities (data disaggregated according to specific target groups, including men and women). <u>Target value:</u> 80% of vulnerable persons, i.e. 320,000. 4. The framework conditions for social service provision, including funding evolve positively as compared to the situation of 2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring. - Observations and reports of target groups and their organisations. - Studies and reports of specialised civil society organisations. - Data and reports of Albanian ministries and INSTAT. - Reports of multilateral agencies and other bilateral donors. - Studies realised by Universities, etc. - SILC Indicators 2017 (expected to be released by end of 2017) 	
Outcomes	Outcome Indicators		External Factors (Assumptions & Risks)
Outcome 1: The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social	1. The number of vulnerable population that receive adequate	- Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring, including annual	- <u>Assumption:</u> The measuring of the achievements requires that data on the

⁵³ The objectives and activities outlined in this log-frame apply for the Swiss funded *Leave No One Behind* contribution and not for the UNDAFs outcome on social cohesion.

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
<p>services from local authorities that support their social inclusion.</p>	<p>social services by LGUs and relevant organizations. <u>Target value:</u> Annual increase of documented beneficiaries by 7%. (<u>Baseline</u> to become available in end 2017 with the operationalization of MIS).</p> <p>2. Satisfaction with social services received by Roma and persons with disabilities in the project's municipalities of intervention (sex-disaggregated data). <u>Target value:</u> annual improvement by 2% (<u>Baseline</u> is defined during project's first quarter in targeted municipalities).</p> <p>3. Improved and expanded provision of social services throughout Albania <u>Target value:</u> Annual increase of number of beneficiaries receiving social services recorded in the national database by 5 %. (<u>Baseline</u> to become available in end 2017 with the operationalization of MIS).</p> <p>4. Increased coverage of needs of Roma and Egyptians by non-financial assistance (health, housing, health, education, employment etc.). <u>Target value:</u> Annual increase of 5% of Roma and Egyptians using mainstream social services (<u>Baseline</u> to be defined during first quarter).</p> <p>5. Number of issues/concerns raised by target groups addressed in</p>	<p>satisfaction surveys organised in project municipalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observations and reports of target groups and their organisations. - Trust in Government Annual Survey 2015. - Annual satisfaction survey organized in project municipalities. - Management Information System (MIS) of State Social Services. 	<p>satisfaction with social services is available annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a risk that only very selected representatives of the target groups actively participate project activities. In order to prevent this, the project will involve communities whenever possible.

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
	annual planning and budgeting of social services. <u>Target value:</u> 10% of issues/concerns addressed in annual planning and budgeting. (<u>Baseline</u> to be defined during first year of project implementation).		
Outcome 2: Municipalities effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capacities, organisation development and quality management of service providers, and effective planning and budgeting. <u>Target value:</u> At least 100 trained staff of service providers applies standards of service provision, new services, needs assessment, planning and budgeting. (<u>Baseline</u> 0). Qualitative and quantitative evolution of the services and role of non-public service providers. <u>Target value:</u> Annual increase in service provision by non-public actors by 2%. (<u>Baseline</u> to be defined during first quarter of project implementation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring. – Observations and reports of target groups and their organisations. – Studies and reports of specialised civil society organisations. – Data provided by MIS (State Social Services), MSWY. – Data provided by ROMALB, MWSY. – Record of participatory planning and budgeting of services at local levels. – Project data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <u>Assumption:</u> Municipalities do actively participate in the project's implementation. – <u>Risk:</u> the cooperation of local authorities with civil society organisations is ineffective and inefficient.
Outcome 3: National institutions implement their social inclusion policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund social services through improved data collection system, developed capacities and empowered target groups.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in implementation of social inclusion national policies and strategies especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015-2020 (SIPD); Number of new regulations and instructions on social inclusion measures that involve two or more target ministries (cross-sectoral, issue-based approach). <u>Baseline:</u> 1 (2016) <u>Target value:</u> 8 (2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Data and reports of Albanian ministries (MSWY, MUD). – Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring. – Studies and reports of specialised civil society organisations. – Reports of multilateral agencies and other bilateral donors. (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Reports) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <u>Assumption:</u> Competent ministries are prepared to engage in a continued policy dialogue with the project's implementing agencies. – The major <u>risk</u> concerns the impossibility for additional funding for social services and social inclusion. – Additional risks concern slow implementation of the national policy framework, elections lead important

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020) (SPS); (specific indicator from the SPS to be identified and included). - National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 (NAPD); Number of legal amendments drafted to align with Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and international/national standards on persons with disabilities <u>Baseline</u>: 1 (2016) <u>Target value</u> : 6 (2020) - National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians (2015-2020) (NAPRE); Level of implementation of National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian Integration; <u>Baseline</u> (2016): rated 1 of an estimated rating of 1 to 5 (UNDP assessment of NAPRE progress on basis of ROMALB data). <u>Target value</u> (2020): Rated at least 3. - National Strategy for Social Housing 2015-2025 (NSSH); Number of legal acts related to implementation of legal framework to social housing strategy; <u>Baseline</u>: 0 (2017) <u>Target value</u>: 6 (2020) <p>2. Evolution of the funds for social services, including for Roma and persons with disabilities, made available at national level. <u>Target value</u>: Annual increase of central government's budget for social services by 2% and targeted LGUs by 4%. (<u>Baseline</u> for 2016 data to be made available in July 2017).</p>		staff turnover that hinders swift implementation.

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
		3. Establishment of state funding mechanism for social enterprises development; <u>Target value:</u> Government funding mechanism established and becomes operational (Baseline 0).		
Outputs and costs		Output Indicators		
For outcome1: The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion and holds them accountable.				
Output 1.1.	Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are empowered to request social inclusion.	<p>1. Extent/level of participation of vulnerable population in the consultation process of planning and budgeting of social services. <u>Target Value:</u> Vulnerable population compose at least 20% of participants in annual planning and budgeting (Baseline: 5-7% in selected municipalities).</p> <p>2. Extent of issues/needs raised by vulnerable population and addressed in planning and budgeting of social services in pilot municipalities. <u>Target value:</u> At least 10% of issues/concerns addressed in annual planning and budgeting.</p> <p>(Baseline to be established during first year of project implementation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring, especially from LGU and from CSO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Assumption:</u> Target groups are interested in their empowerment and participate in the project. - <u>Assumption:</u> The requesting of services does not lead to disappointment, because service providers cannot satisfy expressed needs.
Output 1.2	Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are supported in their access to specific services.	<p>1. Cases of requests by Roma and Egyptians and their organisations for improved service provision. Target and baseline to be established during 2017 in targeted municipalities.</p> <p>2. At least 7 grant fund projects, a majority of them for Roma and persons with disabilities, are realised every year starting in 2018.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring, especially from local LGU and from CSO. - ROMALB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Assumption:</u> Target groups are interested in their empowerment and participate in the project. - <u>Risk:</u> Requesting services leads to frustration, because service providers cannot satisfy expressed needs. - <u>Risk:</u> The supported projects are only punctual measures that do not contribute to sustainably improved social inclusion

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
		<p><u>Target value:</u> By the end of the project phase, at least 20 projects are realised. (<u>Baseline 0</u>)</p> <p>3. At least 8 social services facilities are rehabilitated for providing new quality services.</p> <p><u>Target Value</u> 13 (<u>Baseline 5</u>).</p>		
Output 1.3	The capacity of groups of Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable.	<p>1. Policy dialogue mechanisms and monitoring mechanisms with participation of CSOs, community members in place and functional.</p> <p><u>Target value:</u> Policy dialogue and monitoring mechanisms established and functional in at least 10 LGUS. (<u>Baseline 4</u>)</p>	<p>– Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring, especially from local service providers (private and public) and from CSOs.</p>	<p>– <u>Assumption:</u> Interlocutors representing civil society, persons receiving social services and civil society organisations are interested in cooperating with local authorities in view of improving social service provision and social inclusion in general.</p> <p>– <u>Risk:</u> the cooperation of local authorities with civil society organisations is ineffective and inefficient.</p>
Output 1.4	Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including Roma and persons with disabilities, participate in the monitoring of the implementation of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.	<p>1. Number of vulnerable group representatives trained in monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies.</p> <p><u>Target value:</u> At least 100 VGs members trained in monitoring (<u>Baseline 0</u>).</p> <p>2. Number of occasions in which representatives of the target groups participate in the monitoring of national policies.</p> <p><u>Target value:</u> 8 (<u>Baseline 2- 2016</u>)</p> <p>3. Number of (approved) recommendations made by representatives of the target groups taking part and involved in monitoring/making decisions (by disaggregated data).</p>	<p>– Data and reports of Albanian ministries.</p> <p>– Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring.</p>	<p>– <u>Assumption:</u> Central authorities and target groups representatives are interested in joint monitoring activities.</p> <p>– <u>Risk:</u> The assessment of monitoring data by representatives of target groups are not taken into consideration by authorities' assessment of policies.</p>

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
		Target value and baseline to be identified for pilot municipalities during 2017.		
Costs of outputs for outcome 1: Output 1.1 910,000 CHF Output 1.2 3,010,000 CHF Output 1.3 250,000 CHF Output 1.4 200,000 CHF				
		1) in % of total cost: 55%	2) Total cost: 4,370,000 CHF	
For outcome 2: Municipalities effectively manage the provision of rights based social services and promote social inclusion.				
Output 2.1	Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion.	Indicators for outcome 2. Plus: 1. Number of social service providers (public and non-public) participating in training, conferences, etc. Target value: by the end of the project phase, 150 representatives of all 61 Albanian municipalities were trained. 2. Number of service providers (public and non-public) supported in their organisational development. Target value: by the end of the project phase, the social services of 20 Albanian municipalities were supported in their organisational development. 3. Number of operational mechanisms for cooperation between LGU and target groups in the field of social services. Target value: By the end of the project phase, respective mechanisms were introduced and are used in 10 municipalities. 4. Number of relevant organisations supported by LGUs to provide	– Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring, especially from local LGUs and from CSOs and from organisations providing training. – Annual surveys	– <u>Assumption</u> : Service providers are interested in increasing their capacities, in developing the quality of services, and in adopting new types of services. – <u>Risk</u> : The innovation of services cannot be made sustainable.

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
		adequate social services at local level for R, E, PWDs. Baseline to be defined in year 1		
Output 2.2	Delivery capacity of social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness is scaled up.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of good practices divulged annually. Target value: At least ten good practices are disseminated every year. Number of addressees of the divulged good practices. Target value: All Albanian social services (public and non-public). Change of practice in service provision. Target value: Half of the practices divulged result in scaling-up, in changes of service provision in at least 10 Albanian municipalities. At least 4 exchange activities (study tours, intra-municipal showcase exchange visits) and/or best practices forums organised through project support. Baseline to be defined in year 1 	– Data produced in the framework of the project's implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <u>Assumption</u>: There are good practices in Albania worthwhile being disseminated. – <u>Risk</u>: The divulgement of good practices do not result in a change of practices.
Output 2.3	A grant scheme is set up for municipalities to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The mechanisms of the grant scheme are in place (grant assessment guidelines and evaluation commission). Target value: 2017 Calls for submitting proposals are realised in a transparent manner. Target value: at least two calls until 2020. Number of proposals approved and implemented. Target value: at least 20 (Baseline 0) 	– Data produced in the framework of the project's implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <u>Assumption</u>: Projects are submitted in sufficient numbers and quality. – <u>Risk</u>: The supported projects are only punctual measures that do not contribute to sustainably improved social inclusion.
Costs of outputs for outcome 2:				

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention		Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
Output 2.1 1,740,000 CHF Output 2.2 415,000 CHF Output 2.3 7,407 CHF		1) in % of total cost: 27 %	2) Total cost: 2,162,407 CHF	
For outcome 3: National institutions implement their policy framework for providing social services and adequately fund social services.				
Output 3.1	The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and other competent Ministries are supported in their implementation of policies and strategies and legal framework relevant for social inclusion and in plans for funding and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of service providers (state institutions) supported on policy and law implementation. Target Value: 14 (Baseline 4) Evolution of the quality of management of social inclusion and social services. Progress in implementation of SI demonstrated in the Annual reports on SI 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Standardized data collection system on monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies established and operational. Number of civil servants trained in monitoring and data collection on social inclusion policies in partnership with ASPA and other partner training institutions. Target value: at least 150 civil servants trained (Baseline 0) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and reports of Albanian ministries. Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring. Studies and reports of specialised civil society organisations. Reports of multilateral agencies and other bilateral donors. Annual Reports on SI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Assumption:</u> Authorities are receptive for external support and can absorb it effectively. <u>Risks:</u> Risks stated concerning outcome.
Output 3.2	The establishment of state funding mechanisms that support the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of LGUs that fund services through Social Fund. Target value: At least 10 LGUs fund services/projects through SF (Baseline 0) Social Enterprise funding mechanism developed 	Data collected in the framework of the project's monitoring	
Costs of outputs for outcome 3: Output 3.1 755,000 CHF Output 3.2 120,000 CHF		1) in % of total cost: 11 %	2) Total cost: 875,000 CHF	

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
Activities⁵⁴			
Activities for output 1.1: Marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are empowered to request social inclusion			
1.1.1 Their rights and the services they are entitled to are communicated to marginalised and vulnerable persons and groups.			
1.1.2 Existing civil society organisations supporting marginalised and vulnerable groups are supported in their institutional and professional advocacy capacities to participate actively in planning and budgeting.			
Activities for output 1.2: Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are supported in their access to specific services.			
1.2.1 Models of tested inclusive services provision implemented at local level (NPF).			
1.2.2 Support to selected municipalities for rehabilitation of social services facilities.			
1.2.3 Municipalities and deconcentrated offices of employment, health and education are supported with coordinating mechanisms to expand service to Roma and Egyptians and persons with disabilities.			
1.2.4 Projects in line with the grant scheme's regulations are supported for new innovative services at local level.			
Activities for output 1.3: The capacity of groups of Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable.			
1.3.1 In selected municipalities, providers of municipal services and groups of Roma, persons with disabilities, vulnerable women are supported in establishing mechanisms allowing for involving the latter in the monitoring of implementation of specific social services for these groups.			
1.3.2 Community development activities organized in selected municipalities in support of Roma and Egyptian empowerment.			
Activities for output 1.4: Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including Roma and persons with disabilities, participate in the monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.			
1.4.1 Structures and mechanisms for vulnerable and marginalised persons' and groups' participation in the monitoring of the implementation of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion are established and operational in selected municipalities.			
1.4.2 Vulnerable and marginalized groups representative organizations are trained in the monitoring of the implementation of social inclusion policies and strategies.			
Activities for output 2.1: Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion.			
2.1.1 The social service provision in the 61 Albanian municipalities is assessed (based on existing publications and in-depth explorations in selected municipalities).			
2.1.2 The structures and mechanisms of social service provision at municipal level are supported in their organisational development.			
2.1.3 The staff of municipal social service providers are supported through capacity development. (Including NPF intervention)			
2.1.4. Social Impact Assessment conducted at local level in the target municipalities to inform municipal investment and social service provision.			
Activities for output 2.2: Social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up.			
2.2.1 Good practices in providing social services are identified through research, showcasing, study tours and intra-municipal exchange visits and divulged.			
2.2.2 The selected good practices are made available to all 61 municipalities in appropriate form (brochure, internet) and through the creation of a peer exchange group among municipalities.			
2.2.3 The introduction and sharing of good practices is supported in municipalities requesting respective support and willingness to cooperate.			
Activities for output 2.3: A grant scheme is set up for municipalities to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilisation.			

⁵⁴ The list below presents types of activities. Yearly plans of operations will present the project's activities in more detail. Also, the types of activities to be carried out in order to achieve foreseen outputs, outcomes and the project goal, may evolve during the project's implementation.

Hierarchy of objectives Strategy of Intervention	Key Indicators	Data Sources Means of Verification	
2.3.1	The rules of a grant scheme allowing for funding projects for Roma and persons with disability, additionally also for improving social service provision to other vulnerable and marginalised groups are defined.		
2.3.2	Calls for submitting project proposals are realised.		
Activities for output 3.1: The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and other competent Ministries are supported in their implementation of policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion and in plans for funding and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data.			
3.1.1	The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth is supported in the introduction of mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.		
3.1.2	INSTAT is supported in establishing a standardized data collection system for the monitoring of the national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.		
3.1.3	National capacities are built in partnership with ASPA and other training partners for implementation and monitoring of social inclusion policies and strategies.		
3.1.4	The Ministries of Social Welfare and Youth, of Urban Development, of Health and of Education and Sports are supported in implementing the legal and policy frameworks for social inclusion (social housing strategy, pre-school inclusive education, social enterprises law, inclusive health policies).		
Activities for output 3.2: The establishment of state funding mechanisms that support the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported.			
3.2.1	Conceptual support for the establishment of funding mechanisms is provided including social enterprise.		

D List of Abbreviations

AA	Administrative Agent
AJPR	Annual Joint Project Report
ALL	Albanian Lek
ASCS	Agency for the Support of Civil Society
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEDAW	United Nation's Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEFA	Alternated Education and Training (CEFA)
CHF	Swiss Franc
CPD	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil society organisation
DA	Disability allowance
DAO	Delivering as One
DCM	Decision of Council of Ministers
DLDP	Decentralisation and Local Development Programme
DSIGE	Department for Social Inclusion and Gender Equity
ESS	Employment and Social Sector
EU	European Union
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoA	Government of Albania
HDPC	Human Development Promotion Centre
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
IPMG	Integrated Planning and Management Group
ISCS	Inspectorate for Social Care Services
JEC	Joint Executive Committee
JP	Joint Project
LGBTI	Lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons
LGU	Local Government Unit
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Study
MES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoF	Ministry of Finances
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSWY	Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
MUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NAPD	National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities
NAPRE	National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians
NAPY	National Action Plan on Youth
NARU	Needs Assessment Referral Unit
NE	Ndihma Ekonomike (Cash assistance scheme)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPF	Ndihme per Femijet (Help for Children)
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
NSDLG	National Strategy for Decentralization and Local Governance
NSES	National Strategy for Employment and Skills
NSSH	National Strategy for Social Housing
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	People's Advocate
PC	Project Coordinator
PoCSD	Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SACHRP	State Agency for Children's Right Protection
SC	Steering Committee
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SE	Social Enterprise
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SIIG	Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group
SILC	Survey on Income and Living Standards
SIPD	Social Inclusion Policy Document
SPS	Social Protection Strategy
SSS	State Social Service
STAR	Support to Territorial and Administrative Reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population
UNSSIA	United Nations Support to Social Inclusion Albania
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollar
VET	Vocational education and training
VSD	Vocational skills development
WB	World Bank

E. Glossary

Basic social services consist of basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation.

Social care services is an integrated and organized system of benefits and facilities provided by public and non-public professional service providers to ensure the welfare, social inclusion of individuals and families in need of social care.

Social Exclusion is the process of inadequate participation of individuals in key aspects of their society due to their exclusion from income, services and participation.

Social Inclusion is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society.

Social protection is a tool available to governments for protecting individuals from the consequences and drivers of deprivation and social exclusion. On a more operational level, social protection systems provide contributory or non-contributory forms of income support that reduce and prevent poverty; ensures access to basic social services to all, especially for groups that are traditionally vulnerable or excluded; stimulates productive inclusion through the development of capabilities, skills, rights and opportunities for the poor and excluded; builds resilience and protects people against the risks of livelihood shocks throughout their lifecycle; and helps remove structural barriers, including barriers within the household, that prevent people from achieving well-being. Social protection systems can include various schemes and programmes, including universal schemes, social assistance, social insurance, employment guarantees and other public employment programme.

Sustainable Development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

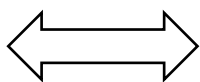
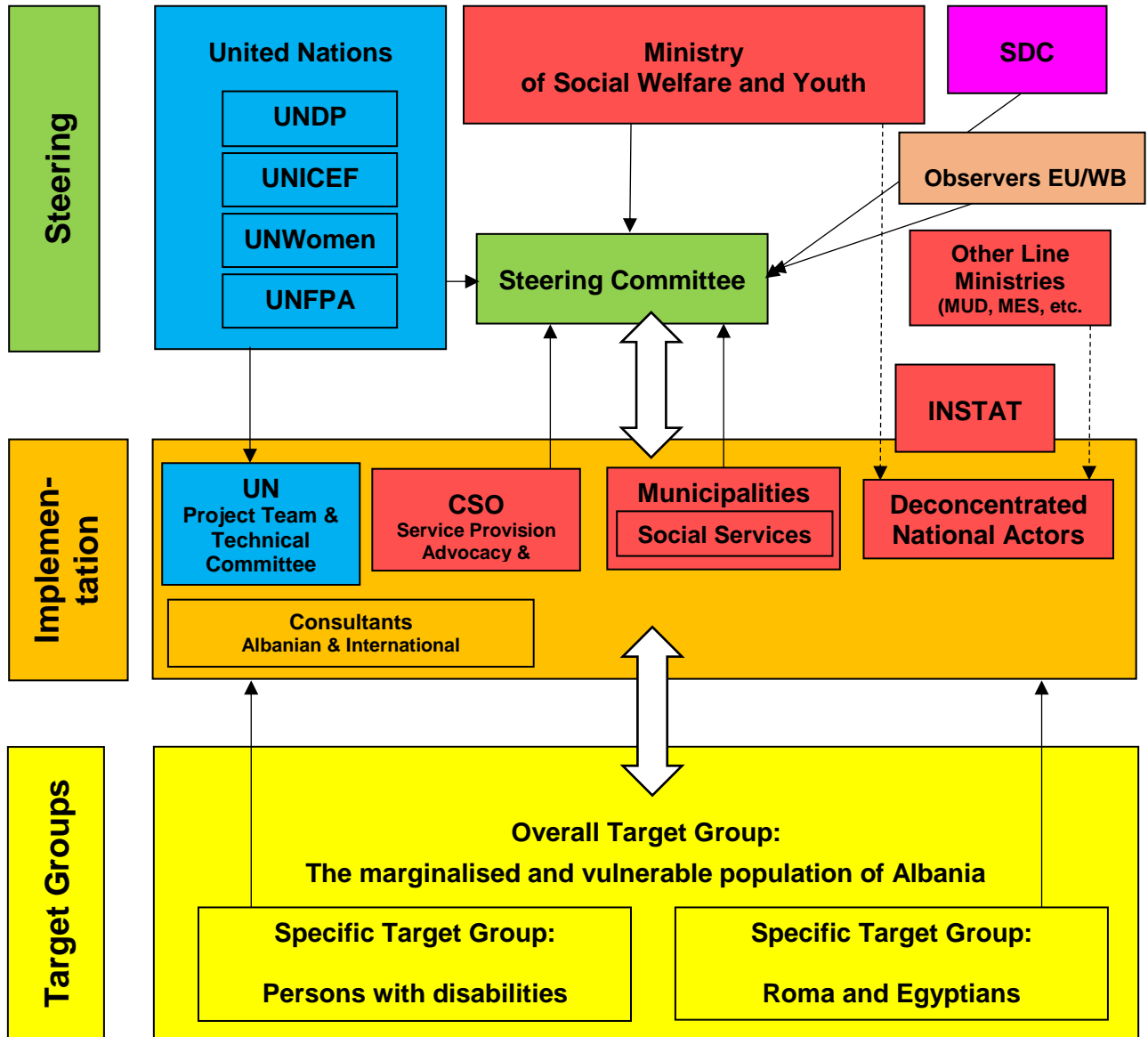
Sustainable Development Goals are a set of 17 goals to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030 agreed upon by the world leaders represented at the UN on 25 September 2015.

Targeted approach is support directed to a specific group of people to fulfil a previously identified need.

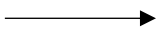
Vulnerable Groups are those groups that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population. Ethnic minorities, migrants, disabled people, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, isolated elderly people and children all often face difficulties that can lead to further social exclusion, such as low levels of education and unemployment or underemployment.

F Institutional Set-up

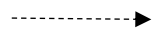
Institutional Set-up



"Production chain": from funding and steering to implementation and improved situation for target groups



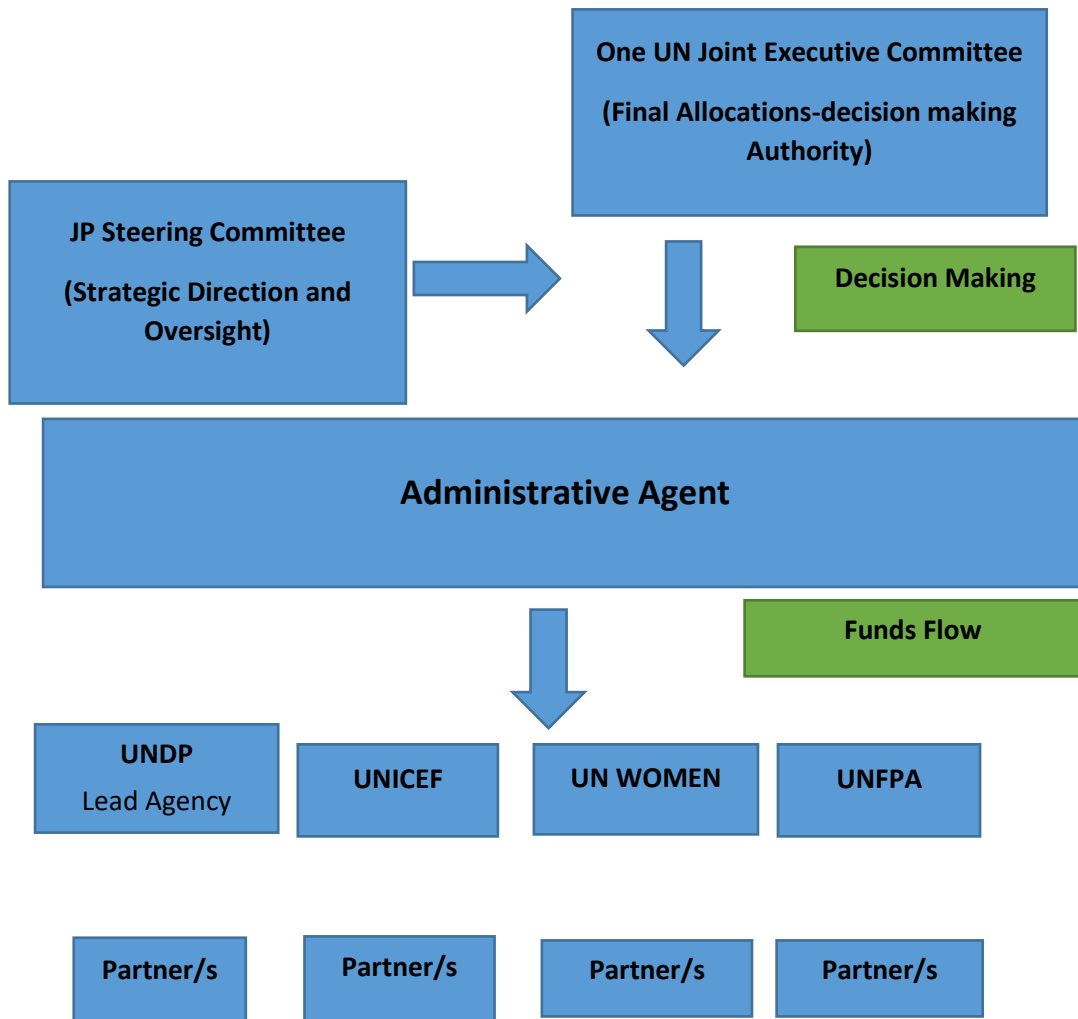
Participation (and, regarding SDC, funding)



Hierarchic relation



G One UN Coherence Fund Funding Mechanism⁵⁵



⁵⁵ The funds for the implementation of this Joint Project will be allocated through Albania One UN Coherence Fund.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



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