MONTENEGRO SDG ACCELERATION FUND

PROGRESS REPORT

2024

Montenegro SDG
Acceleration
Fund

A vehicle for
Sustainable Development

UNITED NATIONS
MONTENEGRO

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ABBREVIATIONS

EU – European Union

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

IBPA – Indicator Based Performance Assessment

ILO – International Labour Organisation

ISPI – Integrated Strategic Planning and Implementation (ISPI) system

ITU - International Telecommunication Union

LFS – Labour Force Survey

LSG – Local self-governances

MAF - Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund

MoESI – Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation

MONSTAT – National Statistical Office of Montenegro

MPA – Ministry of Public Administration

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NSSD – National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro

SDG – Sustainable development goals

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNSDCF - UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

UNOPS – United Nations Office for Project Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the key achievements from the first year of implementation of four projects supported by the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund (MAF), launched in 2023. Anchored in Montenegro's national development goals and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027, these initiatives address country's development priorities across inclusive economic growth, human capital development, and people-centered governance.

Over the past year, six UN agencies collaborated with national and local governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to implement catalytic interventions in selected key areas. The projects fostered cross-sectoral partnerships and enhanced institutional capacity, while embedding inclusivity, innovation, and digital transformation at their core.

In inclusive economic development, the EmpowHer Montenegro project by UNDP and FAO spearheaded gender-responsive rural transformation. Montenegro's first gender-mainstreamed Agricultural Census was supported, complemented by research and policy tools that inform inclusive agricultural and economic policies. Over 60 rural women received entrepreneurship training and mentorship, while 300 participated in business networking events, boosting their economic visibility and influence in regional development.

With regards to human capital development, the Digital, Inclusive, and Transformative Education project empowered over 6,000 students and 580 teachers across northern municipalities with digital skills. EdTech Hubs were established in 12 schools and recognized as a national model now set for expansion to 100 schools, with Government funding. This initiative supports the country's Education Reform Strategy and contributes to closing digital, regional, and social disparities.

In governance and institutional reform, the Digital Transformation of Local Self-Governments project completed a comprehensive assessment of digital readiness across all 25 municipalities, paving the way for targeted interventions in 2025. Meanwhile, the Optimizing Development Coordination project continues the work focused on the Integrated Strategic Planning and Implementation (ISPI) system, improving data accessibility, planning, and coordination across government institutions.

Despite challenges—including political shifts, still present consequences of a cyberattack that happened two years ago and external shocks, the projects demonstrated resilience and adaptability.

Key lessons highlight the importance of strong stakeholder engagement, proactive risk management, and strategic planning to ensure impact and sustainability.

Further resources have been mobilised in 2024. The Austrian Development Agency has provided a contribution of €500,000, the Swiss Development Cooperation a contribution of $270,000, the Government of Montenegro has made a contribution of €200,000, and the Government of Ireland a contribution of $35,000. This has increased the overall deposits to approximately $3 million of which approximately £1.3 million has been disbursed.

The EU has provided €2 million to establish an EU Window of the MAF[1]. As a window under the MAF, it will support progress on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the EU accession, and finance interventions of Participating UN Organisations in the respective field, in line with the UNSDCF and the strategic guidance of the EU Reform Facility Steering Committee. During the reporting period, the EURF Steering committee was considering the applications submitted by the Government to EURF, in the form of the Concept notes. In total, three applications/concept notes were endorsed by the EURF SC and proposed for further implementation by the United Nations system:

1. Transition: tools and strategies for SMEs (applicant institution: Ministry of Economic Development),
2. Strengthening the governance of the research and innovation sector in Montenegro (applicant institution: Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation), and
3. Advancement of EU reform processes in Montenegro (applicant institution: General Secretariat of the Government).

Process of preparation, fine – tunning and aligning the applications submitted by the Government was pro-longed. The UN system was formally informed about the approved applications for EURF and invited to take on the necessary further arrangements for the delivery of the required support, on 22 October 2024. The United Nation system has initiated internal consultations to identify capacities among UN agencies to respond to requests of the Government, and until the end of reporting period, the process of finalization of three projects was ongoing and allocations pending to be made upon their approval.

Looking ahead, the focus must be on translating evidence into policy, institutionalizing successful models, scaling interventions, and strengthening local ownership. With continued coordination and investment, the MAF-supported initiatives are well-positioned to accelerate Montenegro's progress toward EU integration and the Sustainable Development Goals.

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[1] Governance arrangements of the EU window have been developed in line with the Special Conditions agreement signed between the European Union and the United Nations. The components of the EU Window of the MAF rely on the provisions of the General and Special Conditions regarding the governance of the EU funds, financial and narrative reporting, visibility of the EU support, and others, and specific requirements of the EU Action Document "EU Reform Facility".

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the key achievements from the first year of implementing projects selected in 2023 under the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund (MAF). It demonstrates how these initiatives contribute to Montenegro's national development priorities, aligning with the UN Agenda 2030, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development until 2030, the Programme of Accession of Montenegro to the European Union, and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027.

As Montenegro continues its transition toward a fully functional market economy integrated into European Union, the country faces a complex array of socio-economic and political challenges. Since gaining independence in 2006 and joining NATO in 2017, Montenegro has remained strongly committed to European Union membership.

In response, the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund (MAF) was established as a forward-looking mechanism to address some of these challenges. It serves as a strategic platform aligned with both national and international development agendas—particularly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Fund aims to accelerate social progress, advance environmental sustainability, and ensure inclusive development, leaving no one behind. MAF supports targeted interventions in three key areas, as defined by the UNSDCF 2023–2027.

The Fund brings together stakeholders across government, civil society, and the UN development system to drive initiatives that are catalytic and vital not only for Montenegro's EU accession journey but also for achieving its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2023, four projects were selected for implementation, as presented in figure 1.
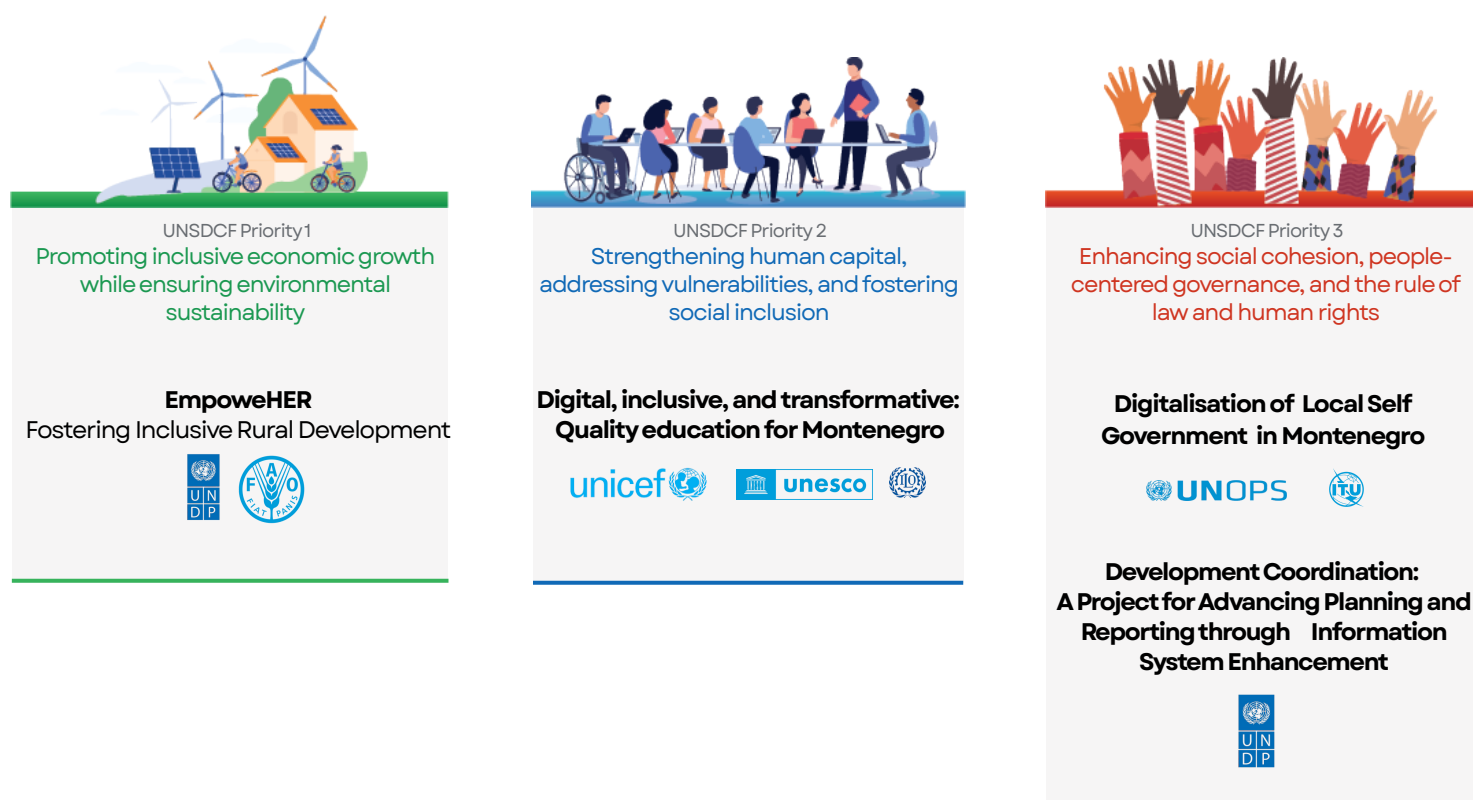

UNSDCF Priority 1
Promoting inclusive economic growth while ensuring environmental sustainability

EmpoweHER
Fostering Inclusive Rural Development

UNDP   FAO

UNSDCF Priority 2
Strengthening human capital, addressing vulnerabilities, and fostering social inclusion

Digital, inclusive, and transformative: Quality education for Montenegro

unicef   unesco   ILO

UNSDCF Priority 3
Enhancing social cohesion, people-centered governance, and the rule of law and human rights

Digitalisation of Local Self Government in Montenegro

UNOPS   ITU

Development Coordination: A Project for Advancing Planning and Reporting through Information System Enhancement

UNDP

Figure 1: Overview of the supported initiatives in connection to UNSDCF priorities

This report synthesizes individual annual reports from implementing agencies to assess the overall impact of their interventions and explore their broader implications for Montenegro's sustainable development and European integration.

RESULTS

Over the course of a year, six United Nations agencies collaborated on four distinct projects designed to advance the three principal priorities outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Montenegro. While the timeframe of a single year poses certain constraints on the scope of achievements, the integrated monitoring framework embedded in the project documentation enables tracking of progress. This approach facilitates the identification of key successes and challenges, providing a solid basis for evaluating whether to maintain the original strategic direction or to implement necessary adjustments to enhance the effectiveness of the interventions. This ongoing assessment ensures that our efforts remain aligned with Montenegro's development goals and responsive to evolving needs.

Three of the projects were selected following a competitive process under the first call for proposals. Six concept notes were received, but none under the strategic priority 3. Concept notes were assessed by the advisory board, against a pre-agreed set of criteria.

IF we create a common platform for value based convening of strategic partners

IF we establish a space for deliberations on and formulation of interventions that accelerate implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and, through that angle support implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development until 2030 and the Montenegrin Programme of Association to the European Union

IF we create more opportunities and means for the UN Organisations to jointly address complex development and humanitarian challenges

THEN we will strategically address the priority development needs of Montenegro, fill critical development gaps and be in position to provide holistic and advanced support to the people in Montenegro that closes the "last mile" in transforming society towards European Union membership and achievement of SDGs.

Figure 2: MAF's theory of change

The advisory board recommended the "EmpowHer Montenegro" project under strategic priority 1 and "Digital, Inclusive and transformative: quality education for Montenegro" project under strategic priority 2. The Steering Committee accepted their recommendation. The call for proposals was re-issued for strategic priority 3 and the "Digitalisation of local self-Government in Montenegro" was recommended by the advisory board. The fourth project on "Advancing planning and reporting through information system enhancement" was selected through a fast-track selection with only UNDP, out of PUNOs, expressing interest to participate. The concept note was approved by the Steering Committee.

The projects successfully established a comprehensive network of partnerships encompassing various governmental and civil society organizations at both national and local levels. The collaboration extended to six key ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation, the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. This broad inter-ministerial cooperation was further strengthened by the involvement of critical governmental bodies such as the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro, the National Council for Sustainable Development, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Bureau for Education Services and National Statistical Office.

Moreover, the initiative reached across seven local self-governments—Berane, Bijelo Polje, Rožaje, Plav, Mojkovac, Petnjica, and Pljevlja—enhancing regional engagement and ensuring that the projects' impacts were felt across a wider geographic area. This local involvement was crucial for tailoring the projects' activities to the specific needs and contexts of these communities.

In addition to governmental partners, the projects' network included significant contributions from civil society organizations such as the Montenegro Media Institute, NGO "Ucionica u pokretu", the Montenegrin Employers Federation, the Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro, and the Confederation of Trade Unions. These partnerships not only diversified the expertise and resources available for the projects but also helped to foster a multi-stakeholder approach, ensuring a richer, more inclusive participation and dialogue throughout the project lifecycle.

This extensive and multifaceted partnership framework was instrumental in driving the success of the projects, enabling a holistic approach to address complex challenges and leverage local insights and expertise. It also facilitated a more integrated and coherent implementation strategy that aligned with both national policies and local priorities, ultimately contributing to the projects' sustainability and long-term impact.

Priority #1

Inclusive Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability

Priority #1

Inclusive Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability

The first priority of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 (UNSDCF) is to ensure that all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved management of natural resources and economic development that is innovative, competitive, gender-responsive, inclusive, climate-resilient, and low-carbon.

The UNSDCF framework defines UN contributions by contextualizing the theory of change and national priorities, among which the following were supported by EmpowHer project:

- The UN supports a green, digital, inclusive, and shock-resilient transformation of the economy, aiming for greater diversification and improved competitiveness. This involves enhancing trade and transport connectivity to support regional economic integration and reduce regional disparities. Innovation within the economy is also a critical focus, aiming to enable access to larger markets and overcome the disadvantages of small market size.
- There is a strong emphasis on improving the investment climate for the private sector, particularly in facilitating access to markets, finance, entrepreneurship, and business services. Special attention is given to empowering women and youth, ensuring they have the necessary support to thrive in the business environment.
- By investing in 21st-century skills and bridging the skills gap, the UN aims to create decent, resilient jobs, particularly for youth, women, and vulnerable groups. The focus is on fostering employment opportunities in new green growth sectors that offer high productivity.
- Efforts include redesigning the currently disjointed system of support for small business development and enhancing labor participation among women. This strategy aims to streamline support mechanisms to increase efficiency and effectiveness, thereby fostering a more inclusive economic environment (UNSDCF, 2023/27, p. 38).

In the last year the **EmpowHER Montenegro** project has contributed to the above, especially by advancing inclusive economic development and environmental sustainability by empowering rural women and integrating gender-responsive strategies into existing Montenegrin agricultural policies.

A key milestone was the implementation of the first gender-mainstreamed Agricultural Census in winter 2024, which collected crucial sex-disaggregated data across Berane, Bijelo Polje, and Plav. This initiative marks a critical shift in recognizing and systematically recording rural women's contributions to agriculture and the broader economy, addressing a very important problem – invisibility of female contribution to agricultural production and setting a strong foundation for gender-focused analysis and informed policy-making.

The project's impact is further magnified through the development and support of key knowledge resources that guide both national and local government efforts:

- The Country Gender Assessment by FAO provides a detailed evaluation of gender disparities in resource access, financial services, and employment, awaiting validation.
- The UNDP's Mapping Financial Support for Women Entrepreneurs identifies and outlines funding opportunities specifically for rural women.
- Gender Analysis in Strategic Planning by UNDP offers a critical assessment of existing gender policies from the perspective of rural women.
- The Socio-Economic Profile of Rural Women in Montenegro by UNDP delivers a comprehensive analysis of their socio-economic conditions.

These tools are instrumental in driving gender-responsive reforms and fostering a more inclusive and equitable rural economy.

Additionally, the project has empowered 63 rural women with essential entrepreneurial skills such as business registration, funding access, business planning, and digital sales. Expert mentorship from established women entrepreneurs within the rural tourism and agricultural sectors has facilitated knowledge sharing, empowerment, and economic networking. Importantly, 18 participants received specialized training on Green Destination Standards, integrating sustainable practices into their business models to support eco-friendly growth.

The project also enhanced rural women's influence in regional economic planning through high-impact policy dialogues and networking events, involving over 200 different stakeholders, including relevant ministries, municipal representatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, and the UN agencies. This engagement has been pivotal in shaping the economic agenda for northern Montenegro, addressing the challenges posed by rural exodus and the underutilization of women's economic potential. Moreover, nearly 300 women participated in business networking events, promoting economic collaboration and opening up new market opportunities.

Gender mainstreaming of agricultural census

A fundamental component of the project was the advocacy initiative towards comprehensive Agricultural Census conducted by the Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) which was for the first time gender mainstreamed through the Programme. This census collects detailed data on agricultural holdings, including the number of holdings, utilized agricultural land, livestock by type and category, and the demographics of individuals participating in agricultural production. Such data is essential for understanding the current state of agriculture and identifying opportunities for sustainable development. The preliminary results showcase that only 12,9 % of women are owners of agricultural households, and that the same percentage are the managers of agricultural households, while men make 87% of both owners and managers.

The insights gained from the Census will enable the identification of key agricultural sectors and the mapping of supply and demand dynamics. This information is crucial for developing targeted interventions that promote the circular economy, particularly in areas such as food and forest systems, the built environment, tourism, and manufacturing. By leveraging these insights, the Programme will in the following period facilitate the creation of circular economy clusters, fostering synergies among local producers, consumers, and policymakers.

Furthermore, the data from the census and abovementioned research will serve as a catalyst for gender -responsive policymaking that support women's economic empowerment in the agricultural sector. By understanding the specific needs and contributions of women in agriculture, the programme will in the following implementation period advocate for policies that enhance their participation and leadership in sustainable economic practices, as agreed during meetings with partners from local self-governments, ensuring that gender equity remains at the forefront of agriculture and rural development initiatives.

Overall, the EmpowHer project exemplifies a comprehensive approach by UNDP and FAO, combining advocacy, policy reform, capacity building, and networking to elevate the economic status of rural women in Montenegro, ensuring their voices are heard and their opportunities are expanded.

UNDP and FAO took a holistic approach, combining advocacy, policy reform, capacity building and networking to elevate rural women's economic position in Montenegro, ensuring their voices are heard, their contributions recognized, and their opportunities expanded.

Nearly
300 WOMEN
participated in business networking events in 2024

A story about entrepreneurial journey in rural Montenegro

In the challenging environment of rural northern Montenegro, Damjana Đalović's story stands out. With only a small percentage of women leading businesses in her region, she ventured into rural tourism despite several obstacles such as language barriers with international guests and limited local infrastructure.

To support her entrepreneurial spirit, a mentorship program was introduced, focusing on business development and industry-specific challenges. This initiative proved pivotal for Damjana, enhancing her business expertise and operational effectiveness. The mentorship not only boosted her confidence but also led to noticeable improvements in customer satisfaction and return visits. Damjana's progress underscored the effectiveness of targeted mentorship programs in empowering rural women entrepreneurs. Her experiences have highlighted key areas for further support, including financial accessibility, infrastructure improvements, and stronger local partnerships.

This case provides critical insights into empowering women in rural settings, advocating for expanded mentorship opportunities and enhanced support frameworks to help other women overcome similar barriers. This kind of support can be transformative and catalytic, sparking significant change not just in individual businesses but across the community, encouraging more women to pursue entrepreneurship and contribute to the local economy. In a small community – stories of success are the strongest incentive to others.

Priority #2

Human capital development, reducing vulnerability and social inclusion

Priority #2

Human capital development, reducing vulnerability and social inclusion

The second priority of the UN in Montenegro for 2023/2027 is to ensure that all people, particularly the vulnerable, increasingly benefit from an equitable, gender-responsive, and universally accessible social and child protection system. This includes quality services aimed at labor market activation and enhancing individual capabilities. Additionally, the priority extends to strengthening human capital, emphasizing the importance of early childhood development, and ensuring more resilient, gender-responsive, and high-quality healthcare and education systems.

The UNSDCF framework outlines the UN's contributions by aligning them with the theory of change and national priorities. Among these, the project "Digital, Inclusive, and Transformative: Quality Education for Montenegro" stands out with its commitment to enhancing educational quality. This initiative aims to provide inclusive, gender-responsive education within child-friendly and safe environments. A key focus is placed on improving the learning outcomes of children from vulnerable groups, with particular attention to bridging the educational disparities compared to OECD peers.

To strengthen resilience against shocks and ensure inclusivity, the UN is dedicated to supporting digitalization efforts. This will guarantee that children from marginalized groups—including those with disabilities, from Roma and Egyptian communities, and those undergoing international protection and integration—are fully included in the educational system. The school curriculum should be enriched with values of tolerance, empathy, and diversity, fostering a more inclusive and understanding educational environment.

Furthermore, the education system should be refined to facilitate a seamless transition from education to the workforce. This enhancement is supposed to empower youth, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable, to make informed career choices. Through career guidance, counseling, and the provision of 21st-century skills, students should be better prepared for the modern job market. By fostering a partnership between the industry and the education system, the UN aims to enhance the provision of demand-driven skills, ensuring that education not only meets current industrial needs but also supports the future economic landscape of Montenegro.

In 2024, the "Digital, Inclusive, and Transformative: Quality Education for Montenegro initiative," jointly implemented by UNICEF, UNESCO, and ILO, achieved significant milestones in scaling digital education nationwide, thus contributing to UN's plans. This initiative played a key role in advancing the Education System Digitalization Strategy 2022-2027, equipping over 6,000 children and adolescents across 12 schools in six northern municipalities (Berane, Rožaje, Plav, Mojkovac, Petnjica, Pljevlja) with essential digital skills for learning, living, and working in the 21st century, whilst capacitating teachers and parents to adapt to a student-centered, equitable, and quality digital education environment.

Key achievements include strengthening teacher and ICT capacity, with over 300 teachers and 170 ICT coordinators trained to implement digital tools and technologies by using innovative and inclusive teaching methods. Furthermore, the establishment of EdTech Hubs across the 12 schools in northern region (from primary to secondary, and vocational) in six municipalities (Berane, Rozaje, Plav, Mojkovac, Petnjica, Pljevlja), was recognized as a unique, innovative effort enabling students to acquire a whole set of 21st century skills through regular classes and extra-curricular activities. Thereof, the model was expanded to 20 additional schools with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation. Furthermore, this model was prioritized within the national Reform Agenda, under the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, as it is set to scale further to 100 schools, reinforcing its long-term sustainability and impact.

The project established

**EdTech Hubs in 12 schools**

in the northern region.

Then, the Government **expanded the model to 20 additional schools**, and it is about to expand further to 100 schools under the EU Growth Plan for Western Balkans.

By ensuring inclusive, student-centered, and high-quality digital education, this initiative is transforming digital learning in Montenegro, setting a strong foundation for national education reform and digital inclusion and will provide children and adolescents with opportunities to achieve better educational outcomes and to acquire the skills needed for learning, living and working in the 21st century, in collaboration with the 12 schools in northern region (primary, secondary, vocational) in six municipalities (Berane, Rožaje, Plav, Mojkovac, Petnjica, Pljevlja), with a total of 581 teachers and 6,201 students. All activities are geared towards sustainability and further replicability across the whole country.

This initiative is also aligned with outcome 3, output 3.2 of the UNCSDF 2023-2027: Capacities enhanced to formulate and implement policies for improved learning outcomes and access to quality, gender informed education that is career oriented, inclusive, equitable and shock resilient.

Priority #3

Social cohesion, people centred
governance, rule of law and human rights

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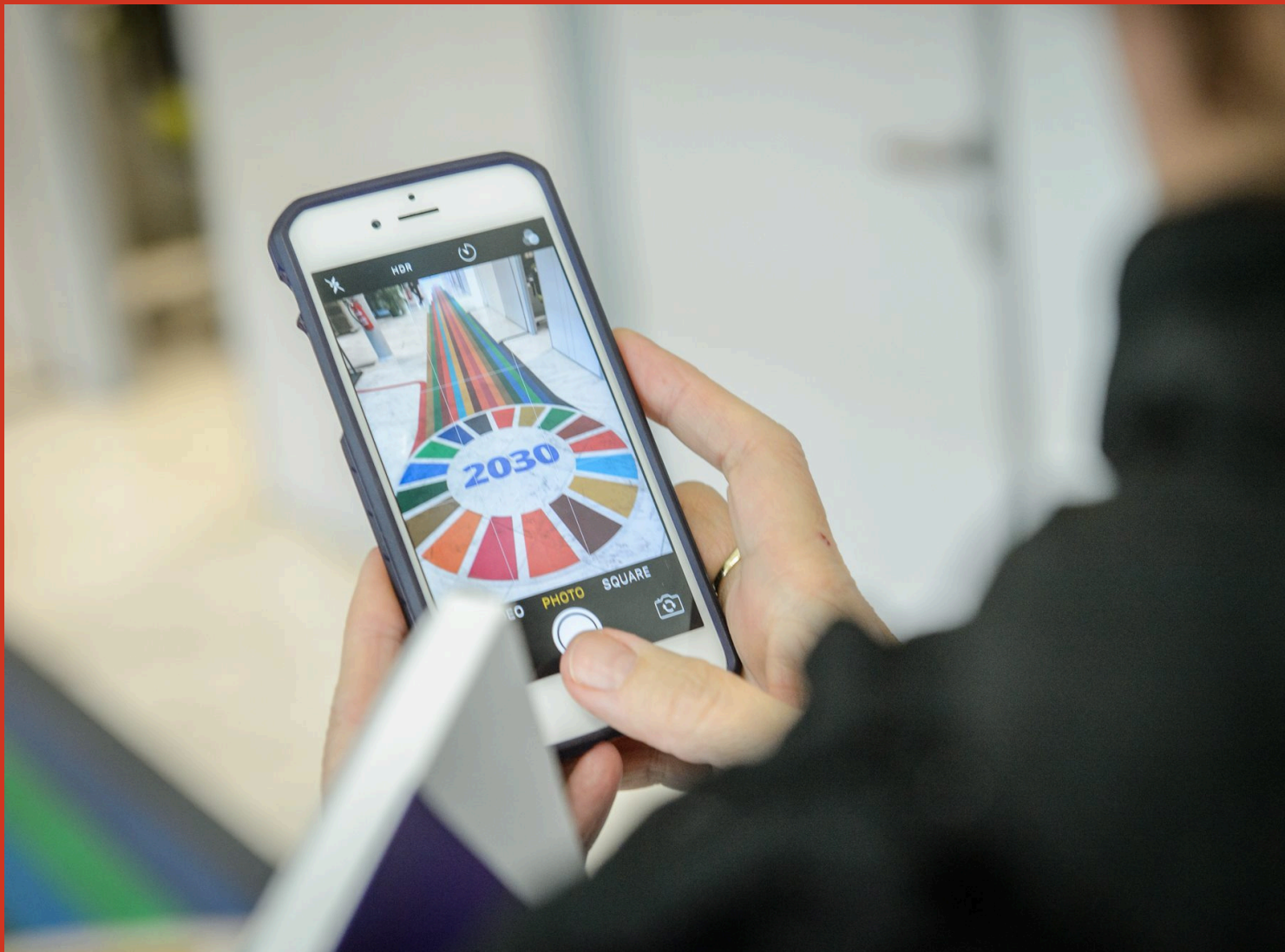
Priority #3

Social cohesion, people centred governance, rule of law and human rights

The third priority of the UN is to ensure that all people, particularly the vulnerable, benefit from enhanced social cohesion and the increased realization of human rights and the rule of law. This priority also focuses on promoting accountable and gender-responsive institutions to foster a more just and equitable society.

The UNSDCF framework defines how the UN will support this priority by advancing digital transformation to improve governance and service delivery, in line with the Public Administration Reform and Digital Transformation Strategies (2022–2026). This includes building institutional capacities, raising digital awareness, and reducing the digital and gender gaps. Digital tools will enhance resilience, enable gender-responsive policymaking, and support e-justice reforms—making legal information more accessible and judicial processes more transparent.

The UN will also strengthen evidence-based and inclusive policymaking through improved disaggregated data, SDG-aligned planning, and budgeting. Support will be provided to implement the Open Government Partnership Action Plan (2022–2024), promote open data, citizen participation, anti-corruption, and ensure women's representation in decision-making roles.

The project "Digitalisation of Local Self-Government in Montenegro" by UNOPS and ITU aims to improve the quality of life for citizens by enhancing the accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness of local public administration. Its primary goal is to support the further development of Montenegro's local e-Governance system by equipping local self-governments (LSGs) with the skills, infrastructure, and systems needed to deliver modern, accessible, and citizen-centered digital services.

Through tailored capacity-building activities, provision of IT systems, and technical assistance, the project seeks to empower municipalities to lead digital transformations aligned with European best practices. These efforts are expected to result in more inclusive delivery service and increased citizen participation in decision-making processes.

To enable evidence-based and efficient planning, the project conducted a comprehensive eGovernment Assessment across all 25 Montenegrin municipalities. The assessment, funded through the complementary Supporting Digital Transformation in Montenegro project (MPA-funded), provided critical insights into the digital readiness, infrastructure, human capacities, and strategic planning of each municipality.

Findings of the eGovernment revealed:

- **Outdated infrastructure.** Over 70% of municipalities use legacy hardware, such as servers and networking equipment, that require urgent upgrades.
- **Limited human resources.** Only 84 employees work in IT departments across all LSGs (1.18% of the total municipal workforce).
- **Lack of digital planning.** Most municipalities lack dedicated digitalization strategies, budgets, or plans.
- **Low interoperability.** Coordination between systems is minimal, hindering integration and efficient service delivery.
- **Limited eServices.** Only five municipalities offer basic eServices (e.g., online forms, case tracking, ePayments).

This assessment also confirmed the strong interest and readiness of local teams to engage in digital transformation, as demonstrated by the enthusiasm and support from MPA-formed coordination teams in each municipality.

Based on digital readiness, regional representation, and development potential, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) endorsed six pilot municipalities for the next phase of implementation: **Pljevlja**, a northern municipality with proactive IT development and capacity, but lower socio-economic indicators, **Bijelo Polje**, a northern municipality with relatively high IT readiness, **Podgorica**, the capital, offering a model of good digital governance and register interoperability, **Tivat**, smaller, tourist-oriented municipality with a strong record in digital services, **Herceg Novi**, known for its consistent investment in IT and digital awareness and **Berane**, among the least developed municipalities, but strategically located to benefit from knowledge transfer from Bijelo Polje.

These municipalities will receive targeted technical support, equipment upgrades, and training beginning in 2025, ensuring that project interventions are responsive to actual local needs and capacities.

The foundational year of 2024 focused on diagnosing systemic challenges, identifying capacity gaps, and establishing a strategic and evidence-based roadmap for digital transformation at the local level. With the completion of the eGovernment Assessment and selection of pilot sites, the project is now well-positioned to begin delivering transformative change in 2025.

The upcoming implementation phase will focus on:
- Procuring and installing IT infrastructure.
- Building the capacities of local public servants.
- Launching digital services in the selected municipalities.
- Promoting interoperability and data exchange across government systems.

By doing so, the project will contribute directly to a more responsive, transparent, and citizen-centered public administration in Montenegro.

The project "Optimizing Development Coordination: A Project for Advancing Planning and Reporting through Information System Enhancement," implemented by UNDP, was designed to offer foundational technical assistance to enhance the functionality and utilization of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Implementation (ISPI) system. This initiative targets the General Secretariat of the Government along with all government institutions and departments. The project's core objective is to streamline government operations by improving data management and accessibility, which in turn will facilitate more effective planning and reporting processes.

By strengthening the ISPI system, the project aimed to enable a more cohesive and coordinated approach to government planning activities. This included the integration of advanced data analytics tools to provide deeper insights into government operations and decision-making processes. The enhanced ISPI system will also support more transparent and efficient communication among various government bodies, ensuring that data and resources are optimally aligned with the nation's strategic objectives.

Furthermore, the project includes training and capacity-building components to ensure that government personnel were well-equipped to leverage the new system capabilities. These educational efforts will focus on increasing technical proficiency across government departments, promoting a culture of data-driven governance that can adapt to the evolving needs of public administration.

The following has been achieved so far:
- The "Structure Module" within the ISPI was successfully reviewed and redesigned to accurately link employees with their respective organizational units, enhancing organizational clarity and communication. This relied on initial review existing ISPI documentation and assess current functionality and identification of existing gaps and inefficiencies in the current system.
- A comprehensive concept and design for a video tutorial were developed and will be integrated into the "Help Section" of the ISPI. This includes the creation of downloadable user manuals in both video and paper formats.
- A thorough analysis of the processes covered by the ISPI system was conducted, identifying discrepancies between the system's processes and real-world operations. This analysis has provided a clear direction for future system enhancements.
- The need for incorporating a budgeting module was assessed to monitor the financial realization of activities in line with allocated budget funds. This assessment has laid the groundwork for future financial integration within the ISPI.

The upcoming implementation phase will focus on:
- Support the re-establishment of the Operational Team for ISPI development. In the first quarter of 2025, the team had to be reformed due to personnel changes within the General Secretariat of the Government. This caused delays in training activities and the verification of identified solutions. However, these activities are expected to be completed during April and May, including:
  - Implement system upgrades based on Phase 2 findings.
  - Conduct training for at least 10 users on system upgrades.

Outcome level contributions

The projects were strategically designed to contribute to the achievement of the outcomes outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). These outcomes represent long-term, transformative changes that are influenced by a wide range of internal and external factors, including policy environments, institutional capacities, and socio-economic dynamics. Given this complexity, it is both expected and reasonable that measurable outcome-level changes may not be fully visible within the first year of implementation. Systematic early tracking of progress is essential to assess whether interventions are on the right path, enable timely adjustments, and ensure alignment with strategic goals and long-term impact.

When it comes to the current progress on the outcome indicators from the UNSDCF framework to which the MAF projects were expected to contribute, three indicators have already reached their targets, one is on track, while three are currently lagging behind. The more elaborate information is provided in the annex of the report where Indicator Based Performance Assessment tables are provided.

Within **Priority 1** of UNSDCF, the EmpowHer Montenegro project was designed to contribute to advancing gender equality, as reflected in the Gender Equality Index (GEI). As of 2023, the GEI shows notable improvements across all dimensions: women's economic empowerment (money) increased to 61.9, the unequal distribution of unpaid care work (time) improved to 58.9, and women's labor market and leadership participation (work) rose to 70.7. Overall, the GEI climbed from 55 in 2019 to 59.3 in 2023, indicating positive progress. The activities implanted through the project contributed to the position of women in the labor market in Montenegro.

Under **Priority 2**, project Digital, Inclusive, and Transformative Education for Montenegro aimed to increase labor force participation. The project aimed to contribute to the two outcome indicators – activity rate as proportion of population (15+) and Proportion of children at the end of lower secondary education, achieving minimum proficiency level in reading, science, and mathematics. By the end of 2024, the activity rate reached 64.6%, surpassing the 63% target. However, for the other outcome indicator, progress has lagged. PISA 2022 results were the lowest in a decade, reflecting deeper systemic challenges beyond the project's scope. Nevertheless, efforts to address these include the development of the Education Reform Strategy 2025–2035, where digital education and EdTech Hubs—established through this project—are now embedded. These interventions are expected to contribute to improved outcomes by the end of the project implementation period.

Two projects were designed to contribute to the **Priority 3** of UNSDCF. The first project – Digitalisation of Local Self Government in Montenegro was meant to contribute to the outcome – enhanced level of digitalisation of internal processes and e-services. However, progress has been slower than anticipated. To formulate the intervention more effectively and ensure the efficient achievement of the intended outcomes and outputs, the programme relied on the results of the eGovernment Assessment conducted in 2024, thus preventing the activities to move on in 2024. The second project Optimizing Development Coordination: A Project for Advancing Planning and Reporting through Information System Enhancement was supposed to contribute to the WB Governance indicators (Government effectiveness, Voice and accountability, rule of law). The target values are achieved in two of them (Government effectiveness, Voice and accountability). The third is still not achieved, mainly due to the fact that the Government was reconstructed in 2024 and its activities stalled.

Output level results

The four projects included 19 output indicators.

All 10 output indicators under the Digitalisation of Local Self-Government in Montenegro project were identified as underperforming during the reporting period. This is primarily due to the extended preparatory phase in 2024, which focused on conducting a comprehensive eGovernment Assessment of all 25 local self-governments (LSGs) in Montenegro, funded by the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA). This assessment was a critical prerequisite for refining and launching the main project activities planned for 2025 and was essential for ensuring informed, sustainable, and targeted implementation.

Although previous public opinion research existed, none had captured the local governments' perspectives on key factors such as human resource capacity, digital awareness, digital literacy, outdated infrastructure, and budgeting aligned with citizen or business needs. Additionally, while the MPA coordinates digital transformation efforts, it has limited influence over decision-making at the state level. The National Strategy for Digital Transformation does not sufficiently include LSGs or address their specific needs. Given that LSGs operate independently in planning and investing in digital infrastructure, services, and capacity development, a tailored understanding of their readiness was vital.

The eGovernment Assessment thus filled a major knowledge gap and provided the evidence base required for designing effective project interventions. While this preparatory phase delayed the start of some outputs, it should not be seen as a setback. On the contrary, it established a strong foundation for impactful implementation in 2025—ensuring that interventions will be well-targeted, responsive to local realities, and capable of strengthening public service delivery and institutional trust.

In parallel, a formal request to revise the Project Document was submitted to the MAF Joint Steering Committee (JSC) in August 2024. The proposed changes reflect additional financial contributions from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and adjustments related to UNOPS' separate agreement with the MPA. These revisions followed all required MPTFO and MAF procedures and were accompanied by a Note to File. Endorsement by the JSC is currently pending.

Also, one output indicator within project Optimisation Development Coordination: A Project for Advancing Planning and Reporting through Information System Enhancement has not been achieved. The planned training for the Government staff to use ISPI functionalities was postponed due to Government reconstruction and personnel changes.

All other outputs are either achieved or on track.

LESSONS LEARNED

Strategic and Timely Planning for Impactful Policy Changes

The successful amendment of the national Law on the Agricultural Census and the decision to consolidate Digital Skills Summer Camps into a single year demonstrated the importance of strategic timing and planning. These actions ensured that initiatives were impactful and aligned with broader developmental goals, reflecting a deep understanding of policy influence and project scheduling.

For example, in agreement with the MoESI, a decision was made that both Digital Skills Summer Camps are to be organized in 2025, rather than in two successive years. The main reason for this was to ensure that a complete package of courses, digital content, and the program for the work of the EdTech Hubs are fully developed and ready for quality delivery at the Digital Summer Camps, thus allowing both students and teachers to fully engage with concrete activities. The decision to have two camps in summer 2025 is seen as a necessary step to ensure that the camps serve as a foundation for sustainable program development, which will be expanded to an additional 20 schools through the Ministry's investment. Also, this approach ensures that the camps will have a greater impact once the program is fully established and operational.

Adaptability in the Face of Unforeseen Challenges

The projects adeptly navigated unforeseen political shifts, such was the government reconstruction and local election impacts, and unexpected crises like the cyberattack on Monstat and the tragic event in Bijelo Polje. Adapting activities in response to these challenges, such as adjusting timelines and modifying project scopes, ensured continued progress despite disruptions.

One such case was a reconstruction of Government of Montenegro in July 2024. This was impactful for the project since one of the partners of the project has undergone personnel shifts which affected the continuity of the project on a strategic and policy level. Additionally, the local elections

in Berane in 2024 resulted in a temporary halt to decision-making processes at the municipal level. Newly appointed structures had limited mandates and were focused primarily on urgent matters, which caused delays in strategic decisions and partnership formation. Although these structures could not make long-term decisions at that point, adjustments were made to ensure that other activities not dependent on these processes were still progressing.

In Bijelo Polje, a tragic event of significant scale temporarily disrupted the movement of local authorities and delayed the work of NGOs and women involved in the mentorship programs. While this situation was unforeseeable, it underscored the importance of being prepared for unexpected crises. During this time, fieldwork and mentorship activities were adjusted, leading to some delays. Despite these challenges, efforts continued in other areas to maintain progress.

One of the unforeseen risks in the risk management process was the cyberattack on the Montenegrin Statistical Office in January. The attack, which had been kept under wraps for some time, resulted in the compromise of Monstat's database, locking its data and rendering it inaccessible. This event, occurring in mid-November but only revealed later, underscores the importance of anticipating and preparing for cyber threats, as such incidents can significantly disrupt operations and delay essential data access.

Frequent staff changes in key institutions often lead to process slowdowns, as they can cause interruptions or the need to restart certain activities. In the case of the ISPI system, the necessary Operational Team experienced a period of inactivity. However, with the facilitation provided by the team, the Operational Team has been re-established, and a more active phase of implementation is expected to resume soon.

Proactive Risk Management and Infrastructure Enhancement

Anticipating challenges with digital infrastructure, particularly in northern schools, the project integrated face-to-face training sessions to complement online education. This proactive approach addressed the limitations of digital readiness and supported teachers in developing essential digital skills, thereby enhancing the overall educational infrastructure.

The still limited digital infrastructure in schools in the North, which made it harder for teachers to grasp course content, particularly in the online delivery modality. Additionally, the concept of creating their own digital content was new to many teachers, especially where they were required to produce video lessons. This task took more time than initially planned, and teachers required more individualized follow-up and support.

To address these challenges, the online format was complemented with face-to-face practical sessions or "clinics" to allow teachers to interact directly with course tutors and enhance their learning experience.

Building Strong Stakeholder Relationships and Effective Communication

Overcoming low teacher participation rates and coordination difficulties highlighted the critical role of engaging directly with teachers and school leaders. Utilizing multiple communication channels, including direct engagement through ICT coordinators and school leadership, was pivotal in driving participation and ensuring the successful implementation of capacity-building efforts.

Another challenge encountered was the low participation rate in training sessions at one project location[2], primarily due to coordination difficulties with school management. This was successfully addressed by increased direct engagement with teachers through multiple communication channels, including official correspondence from the Ministry, emails, Viber, and telephone, as well as the active involvement of the school's ICT coordinator. This experience highlighted the critical importance of strong school leadership in driving teacher participation in professional development. It reinforced the need for ongoing collaboration between school leaders and educators to ensure successful capacity-building efforts, improve teaching standards, and promote sustained long-term improvements in education.

Ensuring Inclusivity and Long-Term Sustainability

The focus on including the most vulnerable children and addressing specific risks identified in the initial proposal underscored the need for inclusivity. Decisions like delaying the Digital Skills Summer Camps to develop a complete package of educational content ensured that the initiatives would have a long-term, sustainable impact, benefiting a broader range of participants and extending to additional schools through ministry investments.

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[2] This is witnessed in Mojkovac municipality, with a note that it is now successfully overcome.

CONCLUSION

The first year of implementation of the projects supported by Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund has demonstrated clear progress in aligning targeted development interventions with Montenegro's national priorities and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023–2027. Despite a complex operating environment and the inherent limitations of a single-year timeframe, most projects made meaningful contributions to implementing three key UNSDCF priorities.

The EmpowHer Montenegro project achieved a breakthrough in gender-responsive rural development, with the first-ever gender-mainstreamed Agricultural Census and comprehensive policy tools developed to support rural women. Entrepreneurial capacity-building and mentorship reached over 60 women, and more than 500 engaged in regional networking, influencing both policy and practice in the north of Montenegro.

The Digital, Inclusive, and Transformative Education initiative scaled digital skills education to over 6,000 children in underdeveloped northern regions. EdTech Hubs were established across 12 schools and are set to expand to 100 schools nationally with the support of the Montenegrin Government. Despite systemic challenges, reflected in poor PISA scores, this initiative laid strong foundations for future improvements in learning outcomes and equitable digital inclusion.

Through the Digital Transformation of Local Self-Governments project, Montenegro took initial but vital steps toward digitizing public administration. A comprehensive eGovernment Assessment of 25 municipalities provided critical insights for planning future investments. Although full implementation is expected in the second year, this groundwork ensures that digitalization will be demand-driven, evidence-based, and more likely to succeed.

The project Optimizing Development Coordination significantly enhanced the Integrated Strategic Planning and Implementation (ISPI) system used by the General Secretariat and other government bodies. Achievements include redesigning the system's structure module, and conducting a detailed gap analysis between existing processes and the ISPI system. These upgrades improve data accessibility, institutional efficiency, and policy coherence across sectors. The groundwork for integrating budgeting functionality further positions ISPI as a central tool for aligning planning with resource allocation.

Across all projects, cross-sectoral and multilevel partnerships have been central to success, involving six ministries, seven municipalities, and diverse civil society organizations.

To maintain and expand the results, it is critical to secure ongoing political and institutional commitment—especially amidst political shifts. The upcoming implementation year must consolidate gains, particularly in scaling the EdTech Hub model and activating circular economy clusters. Several research outputs—such as the Gender Assessment, the Rural Women Profile, and digital readiness reports—must now be translated into actionable policy reforms, with clear budget allocations. This is essential for embedding systemic change.

With baseline data now in place, implementation of the digitalization of local self-governments must shift into full gear. Prioritized municipalities must receive the planned technical support, IT equipment, and capacity building to ensure delivery of citizen-centered eServices by the end of 2025.

The integrated monitoring framework should continue to be used to assess not just outputs but early indicators of transformative change. Clear linkages between activities and long-term development outcomes should continued to be tracked and communicated.

Lessons from the cyberattack, teacher engagement challenges, and unforeseen political events call for stronger risk management planning, digital infrastructure upgrades, and stakeholder communication mechanisms across all levels of government.

The success of initiatives like mentorship for rural women or EdTech Hubs depends on institutionalization. Ministries and municipalities should adopt these models as standard practice and ensure they are incorporated into policy strategies and reform agendas.

The first year of MAF implementation demonstrates the promise of integrated, participatory, and evidence-based development programming in Montenegro. To build on this momentum, stakeholders must focus on deepening partnerships, reinforcing systems for accountability and learning, and sustaining reforms through national ownership. The coming year presents an opportunity to translate promising practices into lasting change—toward a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient Montenegro that leaves no one behind.

IBPA EmpowHER Montenegro - Fostering Inclusive Rural Development

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 **Indicator:** Gender Equality Index score, dimensions: money, time, work Baseline: Total: 55 (2019); **Money:** 59.7 (2019); **Time:** 52.7 (2019); **Work:** 65.2 (2019) **Planned Target:** Total: >62 (2027); **Money:**>67 (2027); **Time:** >60 (2027); **Work:** >72 (2027)	Total: 59.3 (2023) Money: 61.9 (2023) Time: 58.9 (2023) Work: 70.7 (2023)	N/A	MONSTAT
Output 1.1 **Indicator 1.1.1. a.** Number of private sector entities (including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)) that innovated their business practices, by mainstreaming environmental, social or economic sustainability elements, with UN support **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 70 (2025)	147		UN Agencies report
Indicator 1.1.2. b. Number of gender-responsive policies that promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, productive employment and decent work, based on international human rights norms and standards, adopted with UN support **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 1 (2024) – midterm target, and 2 (2025) – final target	1		UN Agencies report

IBPA Digital, inclusive, and transformative: Quality education for Montenegro

	Achieved Indicator Targets	**Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)**	**Source of Verification**
Outcome 1 is Outcome 2 of Cooperation Framework 2023-2027)[3] **Indicator 1.1:** Activity rate as proportion of population (15+) **Baseline:** 59.10% **Planned Target:** 63%	Yes		Labour Force Survey, Statistical Office of Montenegro.
Outcome 2 is Outcome 3 of Cooperation Framework 2023-2027)[4] **Indicator 1.2:** Proportion of children at the end of lower secondary education, achieving minimum proficiency level in reading, science, and maths **Baseline:** Reading 55.6 Maths 53.8 Science 51.8. **Planned Target:** Reading 60 Maths 59 Science 57.	No	Several reasons as witnessed with published PISA test results, by OECD.	Report on PISA by OECD and the Examinations Centre of Montenegro, under MoESI.
Output 1.1: Teachers have increased skills for integrating digital tools and technologies in teaching and collaboration, with focus on the use of MS tools, blended teaching, media and information literacy, STEM/coding, and career orientation.	Achieved, 170 ICT coordinators were engaged in programme in 2024 solely (100% coordinators within country)		Project report by MoESI, reports and lists of participants, emails etc.

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[3] United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Montenegro 2023-2027, July 2022, p. 84, Podgorica, Montenegro
Link: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Montenegro 2023-2027.pdf

[4] United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Montenegro 2023-2027, July 2022, p. 86, Podgorica, Montenegro
Link: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Montenegro 2023-2027.pdf

Indicator 1.1.1 a. Percentage of IT coordinators, with strengthened capacity to implement the Digital School Concept, at national level **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 80%			
Indicator 1.1.2: Percentage of teachers with capacities to use digital platforms and implement blended learning methods (UNSFC indicator), in 12 targeted schools: * STEM/coding training * MS tools * MiL * Digital content creation **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 60% (300) of total number of teachers in twelves schools in 6 municipalities (521).	On track – 73% of planned target achieved in 2024, namely 221 out of 300 teachers.		Project report by MoESI, reports and lists of participants, emails etc.
Output 1.2: Schools are embedded in functional digital eco-systems through Ed Tech hubs, coordinator networks, improved hard- and software, that include considerations of quality, equity and bridging the digital divide. **Indicator 1.2.1:** Number of targeted municipalities with Ed Tech hubs established and functional **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 6	Achieved, whilst additional 20 EdTech hubs were established by MoESI, based on this initiative.		Procurement documentation, signed delivery slips, reports and photos (MoESI and UNICEF).

Indicator 1.2.2: Number of relevant digital content developed and available at the Digital School Platform **Baseline:** 4 **Planned Target:** 10	On track, 5 out of planned 6 courses are developed and training are already implemented, already in 2024.		Digital School Platform, courses scenarios, signed contracts, MoESI report. Photos from training and lists of participants.
Output 1.3: Children and adolescents have increased 21st century skills digital and media literacy skills, increased STEM and coding education, as well as employability skills and career orientation. **Indicator 1.3.1:** Number of girls and boys with increased 21st century & digital literacy skills in targeted schools 1) through extra-curricular activities (Digital Summer Camps and Ed Tech Hubs at schools. 2) through regular classes **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target: 3200** (50% of all students in all twelve schools in 6 municipalities)	On track, with establishment of EdTech Hubs and teacher training, including available, new courses on Digital School platform. The extensive work on their engagement and learning is expected in 2025, as Hubs and programme are now in place, teachers are being capacitated, and two Digital Skills summer camps are planned for 2025.		Reports by MoESI, teachers focus group and discussions, photos and lists of participants from Days of Science 2025.

IBPA Digitalisation of Local Self Government in Montenegro

	Achieved Indicator Targets	**Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)**	**Source of Verification**
Outcome 1 Enhanced level of digitalization of internal processes and e-services **Indicator:** Number of internal processes and services digitalized within six selected municipalities. **Baseline:** 0 - 4 e-services developed within six municipalities **Planned Target:** at least one new internal process and service digitalized.	Not achieved	To formulate the intervention in a manner conducive to the effective and efficient achievement of this outcome and predicted outputs, the programme required the results of the eGovernment Assessment, carried out through the complementary "Supporting Digital Transformation in Montenegro" project, funded by the MPA, which was conducted during 2024. This assessment underpins the aspirations for systemic, evidence-based decision-making and result-driven digitalisation interventions among the six selected municipalities and more than that. It provided insight into the needs, priorities and challenges of the LSGs on their digital transformation paths, based on which below described outputs and indicators have been set up.	Provider's reports Municipality's endorsements of activities Lists of participants Field visits
Output 1.1 LSGs capacities for eGovernance enhanced **Indicator 1.1.1 Number** catalog of services established with clearly described procedures for all twenty five LSGs **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 25	N/A for 2024		
	N/A for 2024		

Indicator 1.1.2 Number of registers produced in the work of local authorities with definition of registers with which it is necessary to cooperate through the Government Service Bus; **Baseline: 0** **Planned Target: 25** **Indicator 1.1.3** Number of developed Digital Road Maps for enabling digitalisation of services; **Baseline: 0** **Planned Target: 25** **Indicator 1.1.4** A set of internal policy documents, protocols, procedures, regulations, instructions, methodologies and templates developed necessary for the functioning of all elements of the local eGovernment system and the delivery of eServices; **Baseline: 0** **Planned Target: 25** **Indicator 1.1.5** Number of municipalities receiving on-the-job support in the field and capacity building of LSGs' employees designated to deal with the eGovernment/eServices (electronic document, electronic identification, electronic signature, e-			

payments, cyber security, electronic office business, interoperability of data, significance of identifying the registers and data packages and introducing relevant European directive concerning this area); **Baseline: 0** **Planned Target: 6 municipalities** **Indicator 1.1.6** Number of specialized workshops organized for six LSGs, organised in a remote area for at least two working days, to strengthen the capacities of employees, decision makers and the consultants in the budget planning process. Topics should include, but are not limited to, the following areas: interoperability, cyber security, management of digitization processes by establishing a coordination unit (local ICT specialist and MPA's officials), budget planning and procurement, reform agenda and national strategies and the legal framework, etc.). **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 2 workshops organized **Indicator 1.1.7** Establishment of an ICT local and central level officials' network.			

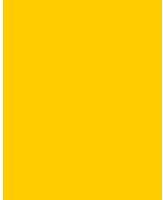|			
Baseline: 0 **Planned Target:** 1 ICT Network consisting of local and central level ICT officials established.			
Output 1.2 LSGs ICT resources for e-Governance improved **Indicator 1.2.1** Number of municipalities connected to the Government Service Bus (GSB) **Baseline:** 1municipality connected to the GSB **Planned Target:** 6 municipalities	N/A for 2024		
	N/A for 2024		
Indicator 1.2.2 Number of new e-services established in LSG, enforcing principles of social inclusion, gender equality and leaving no-one behind. **Baseline: 4** **Planned Target: 5** **Output 1.3** GovStack for scalable Digital transformation initiated **Indicator 1.3.1** **Baseline:** 0 **Planned Target:** 1			

IBPA Optimizing Development Coordination: A Project for Advancing Planning and Reporting through Information System Enhancement

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 is Outcome 4 of Cooperation Framework 2023-2027) [5] **Indicator:** WB Governance indicator **Baseline:** Government Effectiveness Index: 53.37 Voice and Accountability Index: 48.79 Rule of Law Index: 55.29 **Planned Target:** Government Effectiveness Index: >55 Voice and Accountability Index: >49 Rule of Law Index: >57	Achieved: Government Effectiveness Index: 59.91 Voice and Accountability Index: 58.33 Not achieved: Rule of Law Index: 52.36	Due to government reconstruction and personnel changes	
Output 1.1 Institutional capacity for evidence-based planning and monitoring enhanced through assessment of the ISPI system and identification of priority areas for system optimization and future development.	Achieved		UNDP annual report – ROAR

[5] United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Montenegro 2023-2027, July 2022, p. 89, Podgorica, Montenegro
Link: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Montenegro 2023-2027.pdf

Indicator 1.1.1 Assessment of the system's Operation, Utilization and Upgrade and Gap Analysis developed and submitted to the Government **Baseline:** not existing **Planned Target:** existing **Indicator 1.1.2** Capacity of government institutions strengthened for effective use of the ISPI system in planning, monitoring, and reporting processes. **Baseline:** Number of government staff trained to use ISPI functionalities for planning, monitoring, and reporting **Planned Target:** At least 10 staff from key ministries and institutions trained on ISPI functionalities by Q2 2025, with training materials and user support tools developed and made available	Not achieved yet	Due to government reconstruction and personnel changes, the training is postponed for May 2025.	UNDP annual report - ROAR

PROGRESS REPORT 2024

Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund
A vehicle for Sustainable Development

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