



UNITED NATIONS
MONTENEGRO



DECADE
OF
ACTION

2021 UN Country Results Report Montenegro

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UN Country Team in Montenegro



* OHCHR - capacity embedded in Resident Coordinator's Office
ITU - observer status in UNCT



Dordje Radulović
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro



Peter Lundberg
UN Resident Coordinator in Montenegro

Foreword

'A Wake-Up Call'. This title has been given to the report of the Secretary General (SG) of the United Nations, 'Our Common Agenda', a report that was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2021. In this report, the Secretary General reminds us that in the last 75 years, the world emerged from a series of cataclysmic events: two successive world wars and genocide, including also the devastating wars that took place in the Balkans during the nineteen-nineties. Once more, today, we are faced with a new devastating war on the European continent; this time it is taking place in the Ukraine. However, the repercussions of this conflict for the rest of the world, are still unknown. This moment, therefore, is the time for us to reaffirm our common faith in fundamental human rights, in dignity for all, in equal rights for men and women and in all nations. In this moment of darkness and uncertainty, we should, once again, recollect the energy and drive demonstrated by the founders of the United Nations when they gathered in San Francisco in 1945 around their firm beliefs in the value of collective efforts to achieve a better world. They enshrined their vision into the UN Charter in order to ensure peace, prosperity, justice, human rights, hope and support for all people in the world.

In line with the shared belief in value of collective efforts, we are pleased to present the results achieved last year by the UN Country Team in Montenegro, whilst working in close partnership with the Government, the civil society, the private sector and the wider international community.

The beginning of the year was again marked by an effective response to COVID and continuous support to national incentives to combat the impact on the health system, including help in facilitating the arrival of the first COVAX vaccines. As Montenegro was hit hard, UNCT mindfully crafted and managed the support it provided, ensuring that a high degree of flexibility was offered. This enabled to adapt the programme to new and difficult circumstances including exacerbated structural weaknesses and the risk of being left behind. The work carried out also included a strong focus on the Climate Action Agenda in the run up to COP26; this was central to marking the UN day together with the Government of Montenegro.

Achieving an effective response to these challenges required a high level of coordination between development partners; this was another highlight of the work carried out by UNCT in

2021. In order to inform the process of setting up effective strategic partnership coordination, whilst also informing its advocacy efforts to adapt and amplify financing so as to adequately meet the needs of the 2030 Agenda, UNCT initiated the development of the SDG Financing Study. Coupled with efforts on repositioning the government's SDG unit, along with the Sustainable Development Council, this work laid the foundations for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Montenegro throughout the entire system. An excellent opportunity to further improve on mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda with the EU accession process occurred with the launch of the initiative EU Global Gateway. This initiative is closely aligned to the SG's 'Our Common Agenda'; it further reaffirms the role of multilateralism, its strength and importance for ensuring peace, prosperity and a healthy planet for all.

Additionally, strengthening of financial instruments and mechanisms to support sustainable development of Montenegro is considered, in parallel with the new five-year programme cycle - the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Having appropriate financial instruments will enable the UN to deliver its work in an even more efficient and effective manner, whilst also continuing to embrace the spirit of the UN system reform.

The upcoming Voluntary National Review, taken on board by the Government, with strong support from the UN, is indeed a milestone and the future joint efforts will strongly build upon it, making sure that people of Montenegro feel the benefits of moving towards joint sustainable future and equal opportunities for all. Together.

Key development partners and funds



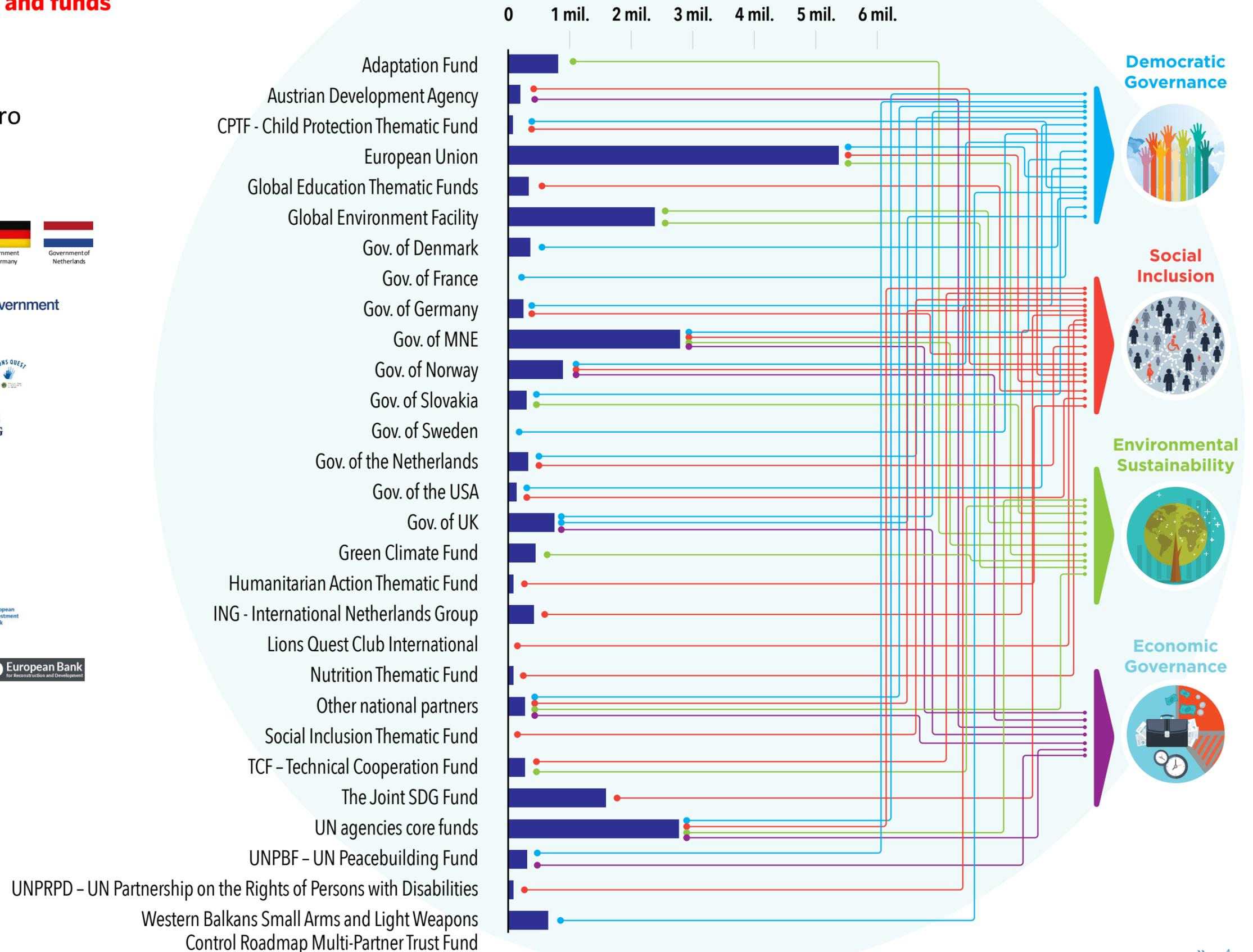
Government
Of Montenegro



Other strategic partners



Sources of funds available in 2021



MONTENEGRO

Basic socio-economic data

World Bank Good Governance Indicator

Percentile Rank 2020



Rule of Law
55.3
(EU27 average 80.4)



Government Effectiveness
53.4
(EU27 average 80.9)

PISA mean score 2018



421
Reading



430
Mathematics



415
Science

as opposed to OECD average
reading 487, math 489, science 489

Women % of MPs

2020



27.2

Life expectancy at birth

2020



76.7
Years

Activity rate



46.4
Women



60.6
Men

Total:
53.3

HDI classification

2020



0.829
Very High
Human Development

Employment rate



37.9
Women

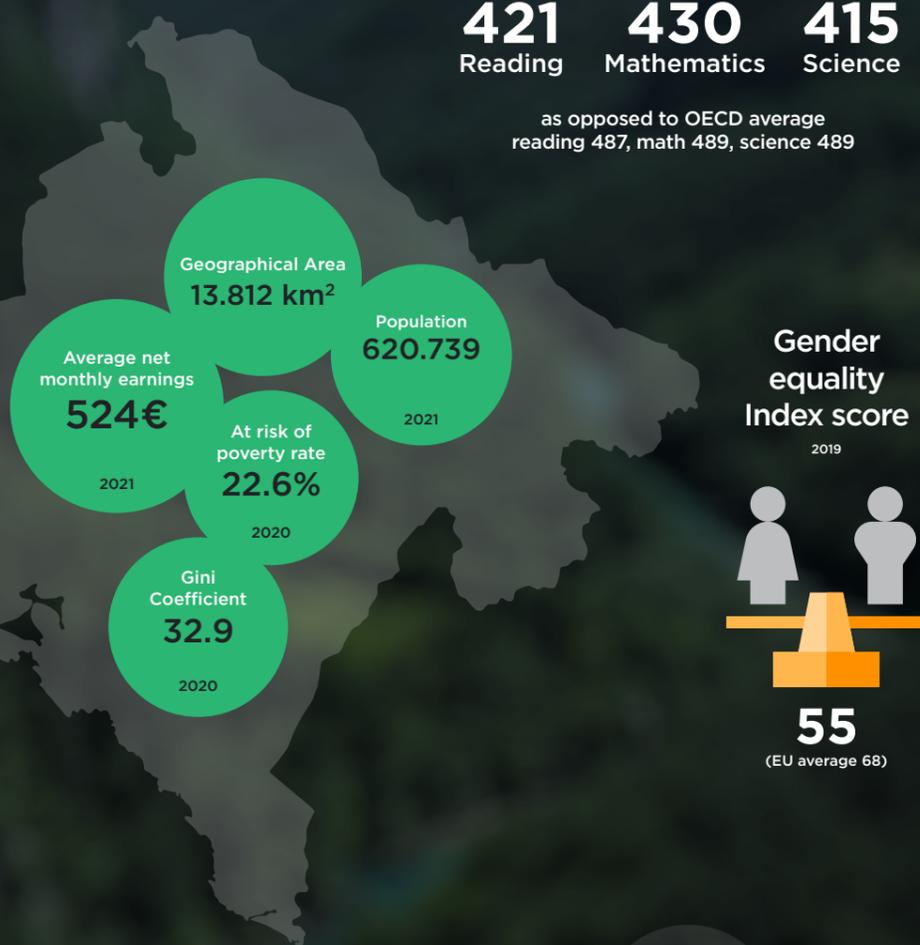


19.8
Youth



50.0
Men

Total: 43.8



Gender equality Index score

2019



55

(EU average 68)

CHAPTER

1

Key developments in the country and regional context

Montenegro was making steady progress towards the 2030 Agenda before it became the worst hit economy within Europe and Central Asia. COVID-19 has reversed the progress made in many key indicators.

Montenegro is an upper-middle income, EU candidate country located in the Western Balkans, with a population of less than 650,000.

The latest Human Development Report (2020) assessed Montenegro as a country with a high human development and placed it 48th among 189 countries that were analyzed. The GDP per capita in 2020 went down to € 6.737, as more than € 1.000 in GDP per capita was lost due to Covid-related economy contraction. Montenegro is more democratic than it was a year ago- as per the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, the country is assessed as being a "flawed democracy", having improved its status from "hybrid regime".

The work of UNCT in the last year was predominantly centered around alleviating the impact of Covid and supporting the process of EU accession, the main national and foreign policy goal.

Montenegro has opened negotiations on all of the 33 chapters of the EU acquis, and has provisionally closed three of them. Focusing on fundamentals, the European Commission continues to seek progress around freedom of media, rule of law, fighting corruption and organised crime, as well as evidence of implementation in areas of adopted legislation and further preparedness in establishing an independent public administration before accession can be fully considered.

Moderate progress has been achieved in 2021 due to a high level of fluctuation of professionals and outflow of mid-level management in

public service, along with changes of the EU accession methodology which has created a vacuum in several important processes.¹ The 2021 EU progress report positively highlighted the economic reforms and cooperation regarding organised crime, but noted that a lack of political dialogue, and slow reforms in the area concerning rule of law, had substantially impacted progress.

Covid snapshot

Total number of cumulative confirmed cases is around 370,000 per 1 million people, which is the 16th highest globally.

The total number of cumulative deaths caused by Covid infection is around 4,300 per 1 million people, which is the sixth highest in the world. Notably, other countries from the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia) are all among top 10 countries hardest hit by Covid in terms of deaths per capita.

The vaccination rate is relatively low and at around 52% per cent of the total population.

Data from 8 March 2022, Source: OurWorldInData.org

The continued polarized political environment in Montenegro has additionally hampered the development efforts of public administration and of the international community.

Following the end of three decades long reign of the Democratic Party of Socialists, a newly formed parliamentary majority established a government late in 2020. This new government was led by a non-partisan prime minister, the majority of

¹ The negotiation structure was weakened by the resignation or dismissal of 110 professionals, including 16 chapter negotiators and 24 heads of working groups. These positions have now been filled and a new negotiation structure has been put in place.

whose cabinet consisted of experts from non-political backgrounds. The anticipated effect was to professionalize public service and to bridge divides within the society.

Soon after its establishment, however, the government lost support in parliament, which led to an institutional gridlock where the initiatives of the executive branch were often not supported by the legislative body. This materialized in the late adoption of the central/state budget despite having been tabled at the end of 2020 and important processes such as adopting electoral legislation, electing Prosecutors and Judicial Councils being delayed. There was a sudden loss in human capacity and the institutional memory in public service due to the fluctuation of its cadre. This created challenges for the UN regarding the smooth implementation of its programmes during the last twelve months, despite progress having been made in accessing the highest levels of the government on several key topics and despite moving forward in areas such as the coordination of development partners working in a host country.

Prior to the pandemic (2019) Montenegro's poverty² and at risk of poverty rate³ were 14.5 percent and 24.5 percent respectively. The poverty rate was the lowest in the Western Balkans (excluding EU members) and economic growth was at an average of 4 percent per annum over the period of 5 consecutive years.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the economy contracted by 15.3 percent in 2020. The preliminary data suggests that the poverty rate rose by 5.5 percentage points in 2020, to a new level of 20 percent.⁴ This approximates to reversing around six years of progress. Employment fell from 47.4 percent in Q1 2020 to 38.5 percent in Q1 2021, reversing around seven years of prior employment growth.⁵ On the back

of the tourist season, employment rose to 46.5 percent in quarter 3 of 2021, and unemployment fell to 14.8 percent in Q3 2021.

COVID exposed some of Montenegro's underlying vulnerabilities and weaknesses.

Montenegro's small and open economy is reliant on tourism and public investment for growth, which left it vulnerable to such an economic shock.

In 2021, Montenegro's economy rebounded in terms of economic growth, but this masks some underlying issues that remain from the COVID-19 crisis. At the end of 2021 the government launched the "Evropa Sad!" (Europe Now!) programme; a package of measures designed to improve the standard of living and to adjust the burden of taxation. This programme went into effect on 1st January 2022. Included in the package was the almost doubling of the (net) minimum wage, from €250 to €450 per month, a non-tax threshold of €700 per month, increasing the personal income tax rate to 15 percent on income above €1000. Compulsory national health contributions were also removed.

The pandemic put social services under severe pressure.

Women bore the brunt of the pandemic. They were disproportionately affected by job losses as they were more likely to enter the care economy.⁶ Montenegro has implemented a comprehensive social welfare information system called the Social Card, which has helped to minimize both inclusion and exclusion errors and has also facilitated the adaptation of social benefits, including pay-outs of additional cash support to the poorest during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the effectiveness of such social assistance is still hampered by the low coverage of poverty targeted programmes and by inadequate integration with employment policies to activate beneficiaries. The coronavirus disease has

revealed in Montenegro, and elsewhere, our shared vulnerabilities and interconnectedness and in many cases exposed deepening fragilities and inequalities in our societies including human rights concerns. And as stated in the Secretary General's 'Our Common Agenda', "we have been reminded of the vital role of the State in solving problems, but also the need for networks of actors stretching well beyond States" including cities, corporations, health professionals, media, and individuals. COVID-19 has reminded us that "when we all face the same threat, cooperation and solidarity are the only solutions, within societies and between nations"⁷.

Regional co-operation is one of the three pillars of Montenegrin foreign policy, together with EU integration and NATO membership.

Montenegro contributes to stability and security at a regional level through participation in around 35 regional organisations and initiatives,

including trade agreements such as CEFTA and through political processes such as the Berlin Process that aims to accelerate the European integration of the Western Balkans. Montenegro is furthering its links to the region through the EU acquis and is bringing its rule of law in line with that of the EU chapters, whilst also maintaining close economic ties with the Western Balkans and the EU⁸. Montenegro continues to actively engage with the UN human rights mechanisms and is a member of the UN's Human Rights Council, having been elected onto the body at the end of 2021, for a three-year period starting in 2022.



UN Montenegro/Miloš Vujović

2 Measured using the World Bank Middle Income Country poverty rate of US \$5.5 per day (2011 PPP)
 3 Measured as the share of persons whose equivalised disposable income is below 60 percent of the median of national equivalised disposable income
 4 Source: World Bank Regular Economic Report: Greening the Recovery
 5 Source: Labour Force Survey, 2021
 6 Source: Rapid Social Impact Assessment, 2021, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Summary%20of%20the%20Rapid%20Social%20Impact%20Assessment%20of%20the%20COVID-19%20Outbreak%20in%20Montenegro%20-%20September%202021.pdf>

7 Our Common Agenda, UN Secretary General Report, 2021
 8 Preliminary foreign trade data for 2021 show that Serbia is still the most significant trading partner of Montenegro, both in terms of exports and imports. It is followed by Germany, Italy, Croatia, Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Link: <https://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/spoljna%20trgovina/2021/12/Spoljnotrgovinska%20robnna%20razmjena%2020januar-decembar%202021.%20godine.pdf>



CHAPTER

2

UN development system support to national development priorities through the Cooperation Framework

2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

Through the course of 2021, Montenegro was rebounding from the severe health and socio-economic impact of Covid-19 within an environment of increasing political uncertainty and social polarization. UN efforts within the four Outcomes of UNDAF were predominantly focused on addressing socio-economic impact of Covid-19 in the areas of Democratic Governance, Social inclusion, Economic governance and Environmental sustainability, and on the achievement the national development priorities.

Moreover, the joint work carried out by the UN and the Government of Montenegro in 2021 contributed to the implementation of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development

(2016 - 2030) and the realization of certain benchmarks within the 20 EU acquis chapters. Priority SDGs, from the perspective of available funding, were 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth) 12 (responsible production and consumption) and 3 (good health and wellbeing) (see figure 1)

Implementation of UNDAF has reached 69 mil USD of utilized funds for five years of implementation, meaning that UNDAF funding plan has been exceeded by 24% (see figure 2).

Figure 1

Breakdown of available funds in 2021 per investment in SDGs

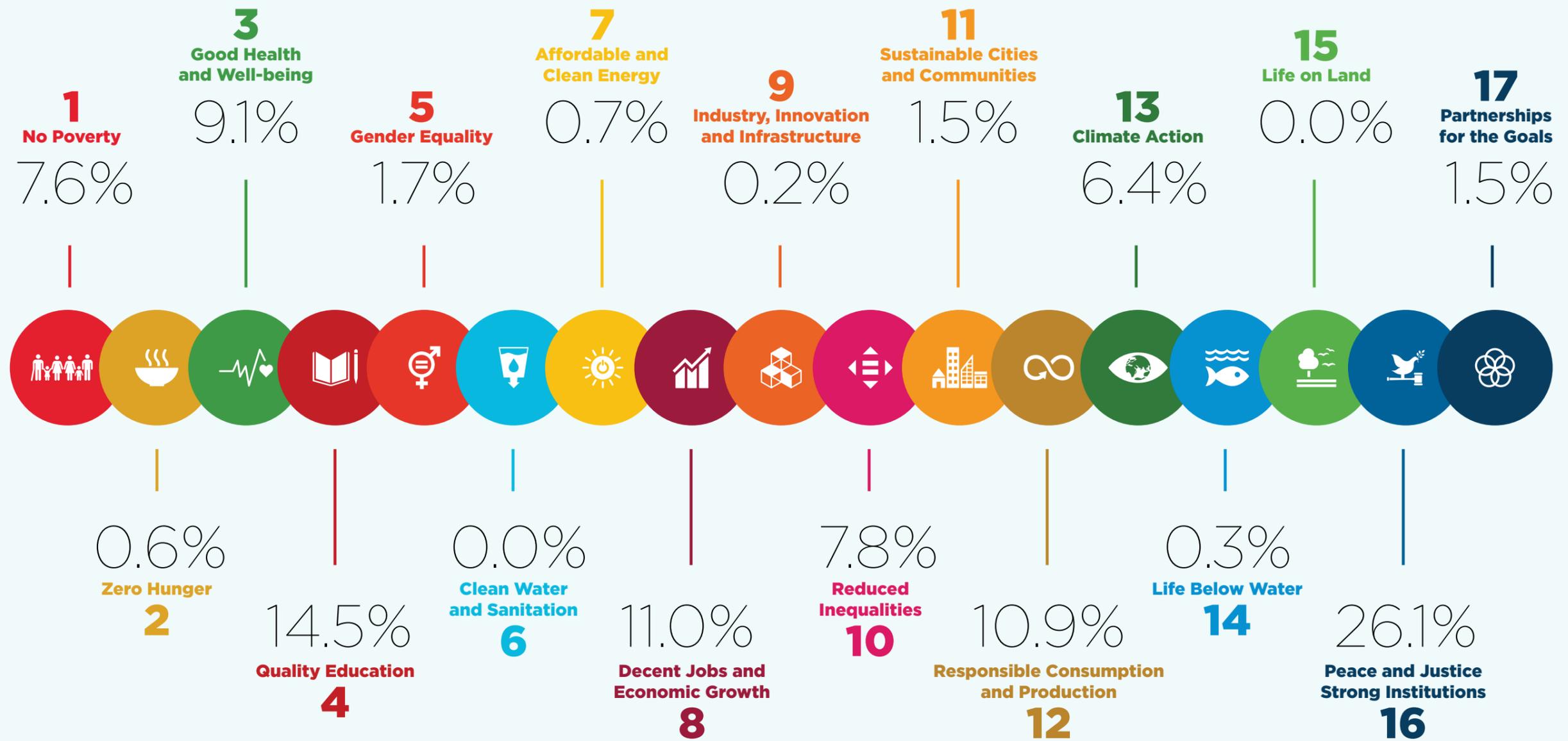




Figure 2- Breakdown of UNDAF expenditure per year

The results achieved in 2021 were also contextualized around *Common Agenda*-Secretary-General (SG)'s Agenda of Action endorsed on the occasion of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the UN. It outlines 12 commitments designed to strengthen and accelerate multilateral agreements, particularly the 2030 Agenda, and make a tangible difference in people's lives. Following are some of the highlights of its implementation in Montenegro:

» Pertaining to **SDG I** and **SDG 10** and under the area 'Leave no one behind' of the Common Agenda, the smooth roll out of the universal child allowance for children 0-6 was supported. The introduction of a

universal child allowance for 0-6 is a step towards providing a universal minimum income guarantee for children, through social protection. More than 50,000 children now benefit from child allowance compared to previously 13,000 children. In addition, the CODI assessment of the Social Protection System in Montenegro showed that the expansion of the child allowance scheme had the highest potential in terms of poverty and vulnerability reduction, as well as providing an effective response to systemic shocks.

» The UN's contribution in the area of environmental sustainability - **SDG 13**, along with the area 'Protect our Planet' of the Common Agenda, enabled the country

to make progress with EU accession negotiations in Chapter 27. This included the strengthening of internal legal acts and building institutional capacity in areas related to green business financing through the Eco Fund. Following its international commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Montenegro submitted its Third National Communication, which demonstrated that Montenegro had already reached its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) target in 2018. Following the revision of the NDC, Montenegro has now set a new target value of GHG reduction, of 35%, by 2030.

Genocide, Mrs. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, who visited Montenegro in November, [18-year old high school student, Ms Jelena Tadic, addressed the Secretary-General](#), the President of the UN Assembly, the government, members of the civil society and others, in a global online conference to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the Genocide Convention. Speaking on the theme of the role of youth in promoting peace and the prevention of atrocity in the world, Jelena used this unexpected opportunity to voice her view that tackling hate speech everywhere is urgent. She shared information about the way that



Around **\$13.000.000** was leveraged for green investments in tourism by the private and public sector



together, they will contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions by a total of **121.8kt**

» Despite the fact that various challenges still remain, the UN's interventions have induced some progress regarding public administration reforms through **SDG 16** and through the area 'Improve Digital Cooperation' of the Common Agenda; this was achieved by maintaining continuity in public services during the pandemic. Eleven (11) key institutional data registers were connected with one another, and 35 institutions expressed an interest in joining a single information system for the electronic data exchange (SISEDE).

she and her peers work jointly to increase empathy, understanding and respect for others in their community through a network of young innovators, established by Jelena at her high school. She called on leaders to serve as examples for promoting respect and diversity, and on the UN to support youth by creating space for dialogue between peers of all backgrounds and by working with those who influence youth to become positive agents of change.



Citizens benefited from a SISEDE platform that was used significantly during the Covid 19 pandemic for the exchange of data between institutions; over 1.9 million web service requests were processed in 2021 alone.

Youth also played an important role in **addressing COVID-19 pandemics** in 2021. Apart from regular support to health authorities, serious work on dispelling negative attitudes concerning immunisation was required. Evidence collected through a series of regular surveys provided the basis for the communication campaign, where a group of young reporters were recruited to help to combat the dissemination of disinformation and conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and vaccines, through fact-checking analyses.

» **Youth participation** was also central to the UNCT approach in 2021. As a highlight, following the in-person invitation of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of

Some of the key results across five pillars of the Socio-Economic Response Plan to COVID-19 are outlined in figure 3.

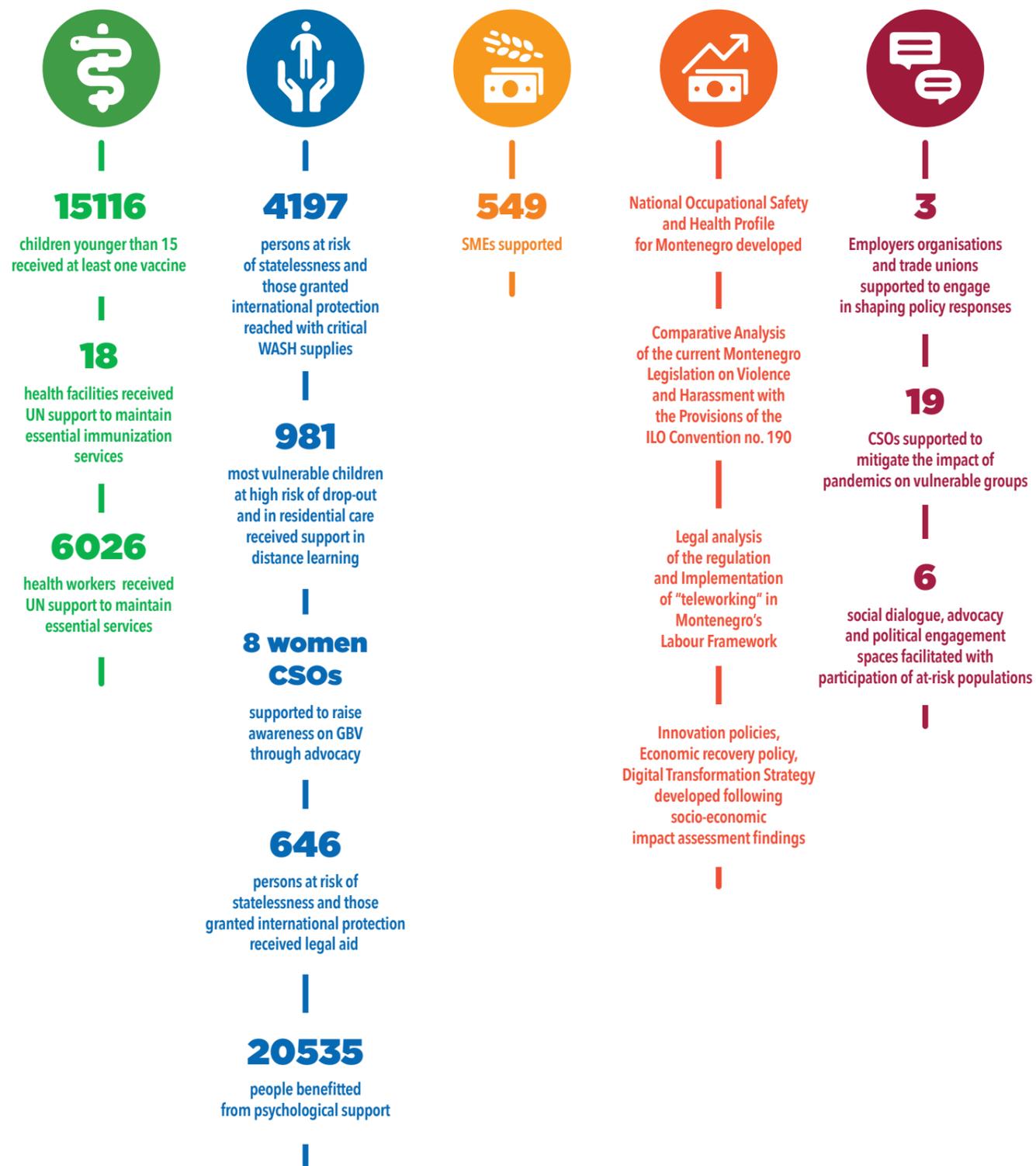


Figure 3: Key results on Global-level indicators for the UN Framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19

The UNCT applied the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle in programme implementation and in its cooperation with partners, and collectively operationalized global agendas for advancing human rights accountability, inclusion, and equality, such as the SG's transformative vision for human rights - *Call to Action* (more in chapter 2.4).

In parallel with the implementation of UNDAF, the UN and the government continued to carry out consultations to identify key priorities in the new UNSDCF. The culmination of this activity was the Strategic Prioritization Retreat

(SPR) which was held with government and development partners in December 2021; here, the outcomes of the new UNSDCF were agreed and politically endorsed. This event was preceded by extensive consultations with various stakeholders including civil society, professional associations, diplomatic representatives and by holding specific consultations with youth and with women.



Strategic Prioritization Retreat of the Government of Montenegro and the UN Team in the country, December 2021
UN Montenegro/Miloš Vujović

2.2. Cooperation Framework priorities, outcomes and outputs

In 2021 the UN Country Team continued to support reforms in the country through four pillars of UNDAF: Social inclusion, Democratic governance, Economic governance and Environmental sustainability. Particular focus of the programme in 2021 was on the following areas: covid response and recovery; service delivery; public administration and public finances reform; citizens' participation; environmental management and financing; innovations; energy efficient economy and sustainable use of natural resources; the efficiency and transparency of the judiciary, as well as strengthening strategic and policy framework. In the year of acute covid crisis, attention was also given to evidence collection and regular monitoring of the socio-economic impact of covid, such as *The third round of Rapid Social Impact Assessment, National Occupational Safety and Health Profile for Montenegro, Social protection system assessment and Gender Equality profile of Montenegro*- to name but a few.

UNCT has given particular attention to the most vulnerable groups as identified in LNOB Survey (2020) including identification of the new and emerging poor as a result of covid crises. UN normative mandate has been integrated across all programmatic areas and principles of LNOB, HRBA and GEWE incorporated in all programme actions.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE



With the aim of assisting the government in the **reform of public finances**, the capacity of all Montenegrin municipalities was increased whilst planning and implementing the programme budget (PB) and the mid-term budget framework (MTBF). In addition, capacities for tracking and administering local revenues were also strengthened through the establishment of an interoperable IT system for revenue generation (LARIS) in 16 municipalities. These municipalities are now able to automatically

transparent allocation of public funds to NGOs. Additionally, the capacity of 63 civil servants at the local level was improved in the areas of project cycle management, PR and cooperation with NGOs and youth. This cooperation yielded direct benefits in the lives of many people, for example through [strengthening youth and women for creative industries](#), or introducing community based services, such as counselling for underaged drug-users and their families, to name but a few.

A young man who used to visit the counselling for drug users has shared his experience and encouraged young people not to hesitate and ask for help.

Read his story.

track, plan, collect and control their local revenues; furthermore in 7 of them citizens can access data on-line regarding their property tax liabilities.

Budgetary mechanisms, in 15 local self-governments participating in ReLOaD2 programme were assessed in terms of their

Public service delivery was further improved through the development of **new e-services for citizens and businesses**; the interoperability of data registers was also significantly improved. For example, the UN supported the establishment of an EU Covid pass and [helped the Country to join the EU system of digital](#)



UNCT hosted UN Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children Mama Fatima Singateh in her eight-day visit to Montenegro, October 2021.

UN Montenegro/Miloš Vujović

Covid-19 certificates. This enabled citizens to show proof of vaccination and to move and travel safely, while Montenegrin data registers were made interoperable, for the first time, with those from the EU. The Ministry of Health and 33 health institutions were also connected to operate within a single system; this allows them to keep track of all medical and protective equipment, as well as to obtain efficiently the missing equipment, so all health workers are adequately protected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Child engagement in the work of Parliament was enhanced through the participation of 41 adolescents in parliamentary simulation workshops, for which the UN provided training and other support to the Parliament Education Centre; this means that the programme can now be replicated to reach diverse groups and more participants.

High-level advocacy resulted in **improved child rights monitoring**, particularly the decision to place the Council for the Rights of the Child under the office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Facing justice can be one of the most stressful events in the life of a child. Check out here why the child-friendly spaces in judiciary are critical in preventing this.



It is important that young people are more represented in the decision-making process and consulted at least as an advisory body, before taking any important decisions for of Montenegro, but also decisions related to youth in general.

Mitar Paunović, secondary school student

Parliament of Montenegro

The **new birth registration** practice for children whose birth was not registered due to being abandoned, or whose mothers are without identity documents, has yielded results as birth registration of all children known to UN has been completed.

As a pre-requisite for further digital transformation, 25 experts were trained on Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6), increasing the readiness of the country to roll out the IPv4 to IPv6 transition.

To increase **the efficiency of justice**, a new ICT system was established for the *Institute for enforcement of criminal sanctions*; this resulted in the simplification of work procedures for workers at the Institute, the rationalization of financial and human resources, and the provision of reliable statistics and reports for managers at the Institute. The capacity of justice professionals was also enhanced to apply child-friendly standards, and child-friendly spaces were modelled in Montenegro's judiciary in three courts and three prosecutors' offices.

The UN proved to be a strong partner for government in **providing strategic planning and policy advice** in line with international commitments and EU accession. Comprehensive support was provided to uphold the consultative process in the development of the *Public*

Administration Strategy 2022-2026, the Mid-Term Work Plan of the Government 2022-2024 and the Annual Work Plan of the Government for 2022; this included setting overarching results frameworks. Support in evidence-based policy making in cooperation with academia was provided in development of: the *Tourism Development Strategy 2021-2025*, the *Forestry Development Strategy 2021-2026*, the *Regional Development Strategy 2021-2025* and the *National Program for Attracting Digital Nomads and Encouraging Foreign Investments in Montenegro by 2025*.

Furthermore, during 2021 the ministry's working group used the 2020 analysis of children's position, status, and rights in criminal legislation to align national legislation with UN, CoE and EU standards on child positioning in criminal proceedings. The implementation of the *Women, Peace and Security Agenda* in the country was supported through development of the new *Action Plan 2021-2022* that was adopted by the Government. With support from the UN, the *Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap* was also developed and adopted, aiming to fast-track the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

When it comes to firearms, a *gap legislative analysis and a legislative analysis on special investigation measures* were produced.

The current set-up is largely in line with the CRC Committee's concluding observations, including a secretariat with four professionals to operationalize the Council's work. With UN support, the Council prioritized key areas of child rights-related work and drafted a 2022 action plan. The institutional capacity of the **Ombudsperson's office** for conducting a comprehensive assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on child rights was also strengthened, focusing on children's mental health, violence against children, children without parental care and children with disabilities.

In areas concerning **asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons and remaining refugees from former Yugoslavia**, UN Montenegro tackled both policy and operational levels in order to support people-centered and inclusive institutions, pursuant to the principle of leaving no one behind. More specifically, by participating in the creation of the new *Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro 2021-2025* and the *Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians*, the UN supported the government in defining short, medium and long term goals on the way towards the EU accession. This was done through capacity building, coordination and cooperation at an operational level.

Supported by the UN, the Ministry of the Interior Directorate for Asylum, significantly **reduced the backlog of pending asylum applications** from 21 months to 6 months deadline for decision.



When it comes to the integration of gender equality concerns in the strategic framework, in cooperation with the Human Resource Management Authority, 168 public employees were trained on gender mainstreaming in public administration; this resulted in better understanding of gender mainstreaming as a concept and also facilitated the integration of the principle of equality into policy development.

The effectiveness of **border law enforcement** agencies was enhanced, including at the Port of Bar through online and in-person mentorship, by advanced strategic trade and export control training, as well as procurement of the IT and other basic equipment and tools. The availability of data and credible information was facilitated, and cooperation in tactical intelligence with the selection of high-risk containers and other shipments was strengthened. Furthermore, cooperation between customs administrations of Montenegro and its neighbouring countries was facilitated through the organization of joint operational activities and information exchange.

I'm more than a home-visit nurse. They know me as a woman who lives right there among them. They trust me and easily ask me for help.

Sanela Rastoder, home-visiting nurse at the Primary Healthcare Centre in Podgorica trained to support vulnerable families



SOCIAL INCLUSION



Agenda 2030 EU Accession



Required budget
\$10,608,037



Available budget
\$9,407,021



Expenditure
\$9,085,117*

* For the explanatory note on delivery rates, see Chapter 2.6, p. 22

To reduce children's exposure to **multi-dimensional poverty** and contribute to achieving SDG 1, the UN supported Montenegro in introducing universal child benefits. In December 2021, the Parliament of Montenegro passed a law to expand the child allowance scheme to cover all children up to 18 years, thus expanding the current scheme for children up to 6 years established in June 2021.



As a result of this, the child allowance coverage rate has increased from approximately 13,000 children (10% of all children) in 2020 to 50,000 (37%) in 2021; and it is expected to reach more than 130,000 children (near 100%) in 2022, which could decrease the risk of child poverty rate by 6.7 percentage points, from a 2019 rate of 33.7 %.

The effective roll-out of child allowance was carried out through the **Social Welfare**

Information System (Social Card), developed with UN support; this system facilitates 18 different cash transfers, amounting to Euro 80 million annually, to nearly 100,000 beneficiaries nationwide, proving once more that digitalization is the key element of the efficient public administration. The Social Card enables one-stop-shop for access to social cash transfers and services by its interoperability module with nine other national Information Systems. From March 2020 till August 2021, the continuity of social rights along with ad hoc cash transfers to the poor at the peak of the COVID pandemic was also ensured through direct support to the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare.

Integrated policy support served both as a mechanism for crisis response and to inform changes of the Social Protection framework. Through an inter-agency effort, sophisticated tools (micro-simulations) were deployed to inform the government in the process of strategies' development. The third round of *Rapid Social Impact Assessment* helped the Government to define adequate responses to the Covid crisis and to the needs of the most

UNCT Annual Report 2021

vulnerable groups. In 2021, a social protection system assessment (SPSA) was completed; this outlined a roadmap for the reform of the social and child protection system and reducing child poverty and vulnerability.

As a result of convening the national dialogue to address violence against women (VAW), the

of catch-up plans for missed doses, alongside the launch of MMR campaign. Seventy-five nurses were capacitated on strengthening parenting skills by the primary Health Care center Podgorica.

Furthermore, the *National Action Plan on Health Security* and National health policy

UNDP launched provocative public campaign targeting gender stereotypes. Watch it here.



National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention was drafted to cover the next four years. Furthermore, in line with the EU Gender Strategy, the *Gender Profile of Montenegro* was developed as a baseline for monitoring of country's progress on gender equality, focusing on gender mainstreaming, legal frameworks and coordination with other strategies.

Under the **Reform of the Disability Assessment System**, a variety of draft legislative frameworks were developed (a draft *Law on Disability Assessment* and the *Decree on Disability Assessment Methodology*); this was achieved through a wide participatory process with representatives from sectors of employment, social protection, pension insurance, war veterans, education and CSOs.

The service provided to the vulnerable groups was enhanced through the provision of user-oriented community-based social services to prevent institutionalization and to improve the quality of life of beneficiaries. In this regard, innovative practices such as human-centered design and the piloting of tailored made services to fit beneficiaries' needs were introduced in support of activation and transition from social welfare to employment. The services are mainly focused on the elderly, on youth and on victims of gender-based violence (GBV) through multidisciplinary approach, and with continuous awareness raising efforts.

Health was also in focus. Immunization system was strengthened through Effective Vaccine Management assessment, capacity building of professionals on vaccine safety and development

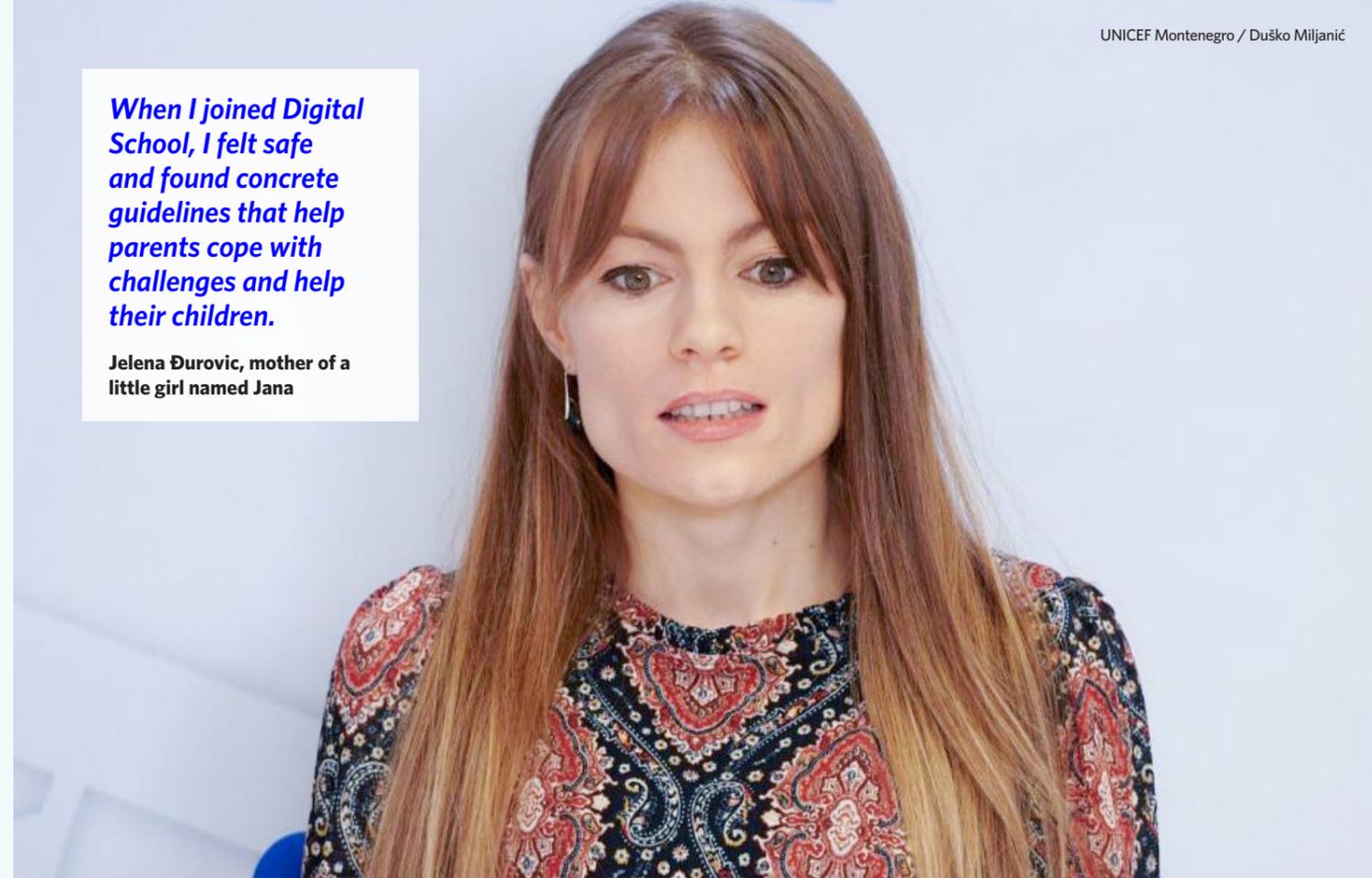
-  **48.000 AstraZeneca vaccines, syringes and safety boxes**
-  **Cold chain supplies, PPE, therapeutical and PCR Coronavirus tests**
-  **Tens of thousands of PPE and hygiene items for refugees and asylum seekers, to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission in vulnerable communities.**

was developed with UN support, addressing, among others, implementation of commitment stemming from international conventions (tobacco control, Protocol on water and health etc.). Paediatric CT diagnostic was improved with delivered CT equipment and training. Also through procured equipment the Institute of Public Health was supported to carry out analysis of micronutrients in food according to the Nutrition Action Plan of MNE.

To create a foundation for long-term **educational** reform, two major initiatives were supported: i) launch of a platform for online teaching and learning based on the 'learning passport' prototype containing digital content for students, teachers and parents, including 8,000 lessons categorized into 400 courses. ii) A *digital education strategy* has been adopted by the Government, to provide a roadmap for the

When I joined Digital School, I felt safe and found concrete guidelines that help parents cope with challenges and help their children.

Jelena Đurovic, mother of a little girl named Jana



Several critical initiatives were implemented in support of children and adolescents from some of the most vulnerable groups:

- » Learning support through catch-up classes and mentoring for one third of Roma students in primary and for almost two thirds in secondary schools, as well as for 50% of children living in residential institutions
[Roma girl Edina diligently studying with volunteer Marina Enis studies hard and dreams about seafaring](#)
- » 55 per cent of children with disabilities, in primary and secondary schools, received individual support through the use of a variety of assistive technologies, to compensate for learning loss, while in 3 municipalities the service of intersectoral professional support within the day care centers for children with disabilities of preschool and school age was piloted.

[C-board helps Seid to communicate Maria learns more easily with the donated tablet.](#)

implementation of quality and sustainable digital education through 2027. A final draft of the comprehensive education sector analysis was prepared; this document provides in-depth insight into quality, equity, governance, and financing of the education system.

The **school-to-work transition programme** was expanded to include career guidance services and workshops on career orientation reaching

682 adolescent girls and boys while 240 passed the practical job shadowing experience.

The *Employment Agency of Montenegro* was supported in implementing two interventions to enable **activation of young unemployed women** with preschool children in: Podgorica, Niksic, Berane and Bijelo Polje. To date, 53 women have been activated and 16 have transitioned to the labour market.



Child Helpline

942 children received psychosocial support
38,289 people reached with video messages and posts



Parents helpline

1,535 parents received support



Child marriage prevention

42 specially tailored workshops on preventing child marriage to 362 Roma children and adolescents and to 261 parents



Mental wellbeing support programme

8,570 children from 40 schools reached

2021 was also marked by the provision of **direct assistance to migrants**, systematically providing needs-based support to the government to manage migration flows, demonstrating commitment for the protection mainstreaming and accountability to affected population. Operational support comprised of: food, non-food items, psycho-social counselling, transportation, cultural mediation/interpretation, medical assistance, referrals and counselling on the assisted voluntary return and reintegration of migrants into their countries of origin. Moreover, in order to improve social cohesion among migrants with the local population, a tailored set of interventions in partnership with NGO sector targeted quite a broad audience: migrants, professionals working with migrants,

benefits migrants and society and the principle to uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

The UN also continued to offer **legal support to asylum seekers and refugees** in accessing their rights, and to the refugees from former Yugoslavia in Montenegro to obtain documents pertinent to their legal status in Montenegro. In addition, reception conditions for asylum seekers were improved through the provision of non-food items, items for personal hygiene, medications and premises maintenance. Asylum seekers and refugees received support in accessing services, including health care, education, protection-sensitive interpretation and medical assistance, as well as psycho-social support.

After 35 years, the nightmare of a legal limbo ends for Valentina, a mother of 9. Check out her story.

those granted protection, institutions, and local population in general. The programme contributed to combating racial discrimination and fostering tolerance in a multicultural environment, as well as raising awareness on migrants' rights among the local population.

The 2021 migration related interventions contributed to the achievement of *Global Compact on Migration (GCM)* objectives, due to the fact that they were focused around the principle that humane and orderly migration

The government's individual **integration programme for refugees** was supported by providing rental assistance to 28 refugees (13 households), and by supporting the education of all refugee children. The adopted SOP on integration, drafted jointly by the UN and the Ministry of Interior (the Directorate for Integration) outlines the steps required by each service provider in order to create conditions for the socio-economic integration of refugees into Montenegrin society.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Required budget
\$4,103,855



Available budget
\$4,003,855



Expenditure
\$1,941,772*

* For the explanatory note on delivery rates, see Chapter 2.6, p. 22

With the UN support, the Government of Montenegro made a bold commitment to reduce its GHG emissions over the next ten-year period. **The Country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) was revised by enhancing its commitment to decrease GHG emissions for 35% by 2030**, in comparison to 1990, thus taking one step closer to a low carbon future. Gender aspects were considered and mainstreamed into enhanced NDC, through consultation processes; this resulted in recommendations for intersection of gender and climate change in five main areas: legal framework, institutional coordination, capacity building, data gaps and financial instruments.

Together with UN, the Government of Montenegro pursued the principle of leaving no one behind, hearing the voices of ordinary

citizens, as well as the youth and women about the climate change and its impacts on their everyday lives. One such occasion was through the [GreenDays.me](https://greendays.me) platform.

The Assessment of Financial Needs for the Fulfilment of the Closing Benchmarks within the Negotiation Chapter 27 - Environment and Climate Change has been completed; it is estimated that €483 million will be needed in the period 2021-2025. The UN also supported the improvement of the climate policy coordination framework with a focus on adaptation, which resulted in the structural redesign of the National Council for Sustainable Development and the creation of a central unit within Government's General secretariat, thus allowing for better future climate policy decision-making.



Angry. Anxious. Ready to act.

That's how most young people, aged 18-29, said climate change made them feel in a UNDP Survey, revealing growing "climate anxiety."

On International Mother Earth Day, 22 April 2021, Montenegro has declared its first Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Platamuni. [Check out here.](#)

Following the provision of technical support, studies on Nature Protection and Proclamation Acts were prepared for three coastal and marine protected areas (**C/MPAs**). Consultations were also held with relevant stakeholders. This process resulted in the successful proclamation of three C/MPAs: (i) Nature Park "Platamuni" (April 22, 2021), (ii) Nature Park "Katič" (September 16, 2021) and (iii) Nature Park "Stari Ulcinj" (December 29, 2021). Thus, **the total coverage of the Protected Areas in the Country has been increased by an additional 4,764.7 ha.**

The establishment of a national training centre for radiation protection was also supported, through procured equipment and expert mission to evaluate current status of the center and provide directions for future steps.



A total of **224,76 tons** of equipment, oil and waste highly contaminated with PCB was disposed of; thus **85%** of the total waste of this type, identified in the country, was managed in an environmentally sound way and any risk of exposure to this dangerous chemical was **significantly reduced.**

Within the area of **climate resilient flood risk management**, a national hydrometric network was equipped to improve flood forecasting and response mechanisms. As a result, the country will now be able to activate flood protection

rivers is prioritized by the government within the national list of priority infrastructure projects.

The policy framework concerning the **management of cultural heritage** was improved; the promotion of the role of culture and cultural heritage was also enhanced in advancing the achievement of the SDG Agenda. More concretely, support was provided for the preparation of the *Strategy for Development of Cultural Heritage for the period 2020-2025*, and of the *National Strategy for the Safeguarding and Sustainable Use of Cultural Heritage*. The Cultural Heritage of the Boka Navy, Kotor, [has been inscribed to the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.](#)

Cultural Heritage of Boka Navy Kotor: A festive representation of a memory and cultural identity.



More than 70 people participated in a joint UNDP-Government cleaning waste of the UNESCO protected Kotor Bay. [Check out.](#)

system faster and thus protect lives, properties and ecosystems. The implementation of flood reduction measures on the Bojana and Gračanica

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE



Required budget
\$2,588,833



Available budget
\$2,588,833



Expenditure
\$1,953,050*

* For the explanatory note on delivery rates, see Chapter 2.6, p. 22

Following the functional Assessment, the capacity of **Employment agency of Montenegro (EAM) was increased and** its procedures were modernized. The intervention resulted in new internal organizational Act of the EAM, 66 new internal procedures, the design and piloting of two new Active labour market procedures, and a diverse range of training sessions for the EAM staff, all with a special focus on the monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the transposition of EAM procedures into digital forms is expected to decrease the workload for the caseworkers, enabling them to dedicate more time to clients.

Through the [Norway for You programme](#), balanced regional socio-economic development of the country was also enhanced, by supporting 16 less developed municipalities through allocation of 47 grants, in total amount of approximately 1 mill USD. This resulted in 80 new jobs created, 170 small businesses growth and competitiveness supported, including [rural tourism](#), [empowering female entrepreneurship](#), [crafting jobs](#), [cheese producers](#); 60 unemployed trainees going through in-company training

and employment process reskilling. More than 60,000 Montenegrin citizens from 9 municipalities benefit from improved local infrastructure. In addition to contributing to implementation of the *Strategy for Regional Development* and *Strategy for Development of SMEs*, the intervention also accelerated the progress made by Montenegro in implementing the *Small Business Act for Europe* and EU Chapter 20.

Efforts made to strengthen **innovation governance ecosystem** resulted in the establishment of the *National Council for Innovation and Smart Specialization* and also the *Innovation Fund of Montenegro*. Eight National Innovation 'support lines' were developed to spur innovation and cooperation between academia and businesses.

Municipal strategic plans were developed in 23 out of 24 municipalities, thus enabling competitiveness and innovation, whilst also encouraging employment at a local level.

I wanted to keep Montenegro's mountains alive.

Marko Maraš, agri-digital social activist who launched an e-commerce and knowledge-sharing platform



With UN support, Montenegro established the system of [farm data collection \(FADN\)](#) in line with European standards, while also boosting digital agri-entrepreneurship. [Read here](#) an inspiring story of trading farm assets with virtual currency.

Business mentoring programmes focused on the green economy, gender equality and labor integration of vulnerable groups were also introduced. More specifically, the UN supported [the development and resilience of 85 small businesses](#), all of which were led by previously unemployed women, men and young people.

— **Danka Ralević Raščić from remote place of Murino managed to make her dental business sustainable. Find out how.**

The supported amendments of legal framework in the areas of **energy and spatial planning** enabled investments to be made in solar PV systems (prosumers). With UN support, The Eco Fund, the Investment Development Fund and the National Energy Company onboarded several incentive programmes which aimed to boost **green investments and employment**. In addition, the Old Royal Capital Cetinje, supported by the UN, [designed and implemented a programme](#) to enable 25 remote, off-grid agricultural holdings to install solar panels and to conduct the electricity to their homes and properties.

UN continued to deploy innovative tech solutions and digital tools in support of women entrepreneurship such as [Gender Map](#); this tool has had an excellent outreach with more than 9,500 visitors. Advocacy efforts resulted in direct financial support from 12 (out of a total of 24) municipalities to 131 business ideas put forward by women.



Jelena Glušica Nikolić from Nikšić is one of 11 female entrepreneurs who were supported in upscaling their businesses. Find out more.

The development of Women's entrepreneurship is also supported in Bar, Ulcinj, Herceg Novi and Kotor, through financial and non-financial means, together with strengthening the work done by the Local Employment Partnerships

in these municipalities. With the above listed, the UN strongly influenced the realization of commitments made in the *Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurship*.

Key challenges and lessons learnt in relation to UNDAF outcome areas



- » Limited capacities for operationalizing cross-sectoral coordination lead to hampered programme implementation
- » COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions of movements, within the country and across borders, reduced operational capacity.
- » High staff turnover and changes in mid-management caused certain delays to implementation of UN programme, which is also evident from lower than expected delivery rate.



- » Increased direct engagement with parliamentarians as a fundamental custodian of political commitments is critical to achieving better results for people and children.
- » Cross-sectoral cooperation, though challenging in many domains, should nonetheless be accelerated and strengthened through policy dialogue, policy briefs, platforms for multi-sectoral work and financing, etc. Overall, accountability should be strengthened and clarified for cross-sectoral initiatives.
- » Only by hearing the voices of ordinary citizens, as well as the Youth and Women about the key development issues, and encouraging their engagement, such as on environment conservation, climate change and its impacts on citizen's everyday lives, a wide consensus on key development priorities is possible.
- » Communication between national and local level and their synchronized work is key success factor in supporting growth of the small business sector in Montenegro. However, support measures must include quality monitoring dimension, creating ground for feedback-based policies development.

2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

UN Montenegro plays a central role in establishing the **Strategic Partnership Coordination** – a mechanism for enhancing the efforts of international development partners with the Government of Montenegro. This mechanism aims to be a single point platform for the coordination of development partners, and for strategic, EU-related and sustainable development policy deliberations. To date, no such mechanisms have been present in

Montenegro, so the expectations of this proposal are to shift the dynamics among development partners and strengthen partnership with the Government. It will also contribute to a better understanding of the priorities and pipeline initiatives of the national authorities, recognizing more clearly the offer and role that the international community can play in achieving synergy and addressing of development challenges.

In order to inform the process of setting up the Strategic Partnership Coordination, whilst also informing its own advocacy efforts to shift and amplify the **financing of the 2030 Agenda**, the UN has triggered the development of the study of SDG Financing. This exercise focuses on (i) analyzing public finance expenditures from the inception of the 2030 Agenda up to the present time, whilst also aligning public finances with the SDGs and targets, and (ii) building a tool that will help the government to report on expenditure per SDG over the next decade. This methodology will be verified with the relevant public finance interlocutors – the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare, the State Audit Institution, the Central Bank, and

with other relevant development partners and the civil society. As such, the methodology has the potential to influence beyond national discussions on SDG Financing. This exercise will also set the ground for further analysis and policy interventions of development partners in Montenegro. Once paired with the results of the EU Accession process and SDG indicators, this exercise will provide information on the efficiency of public expenditure in certain areas and will also highlight to the development community where further efforts are needed to improve public value-for-money.

The United Nations are still exploiting the conclusions reached in the tailor-made **Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS)** exercise that mapped links between the EU accession Process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see: [Unravelling Connections: EU Accession and the 2030 Agenda](#)). A significant extent of synergies between these two agendas was mapped – up to 65% (109 out of 169 SDG targets) of the 2030 Agenda is addressed through the EU Accession process – which revealed the potential for policy intervention along with shifts in development financing. These conclusions will continue to occupy the UN’s advocacy for sustainable development policies, whilst also serving as solid ground for a fruitful partnership with the European Union and other development partners in the country.

formal education, whilst also increasing capacity to enable teachers to use digital technologies.

Academic cooperation and partnership between the Faculties of Political Sciences in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Podgorica through an interdisciplinary approach, contributed to the development of a strategic framework for the integration of a Media and Information Literacy (MIL) concept in formal and non-formal education; it also introduced the core competences of this model into the training curriculum for primary and secondary school teachers and librarians. This has been achieved through UNESCO-supported programme.

To reduce children’s exposure to multi-dimensional poverty and contribute to achieving SDG 1, the UN system advocated with the Parliament and supported the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare to introduce **Universal Child Benefits and provided evidence to develop Roadmap of Reforms to social protection system** (as outlined in Chapter 2.2).

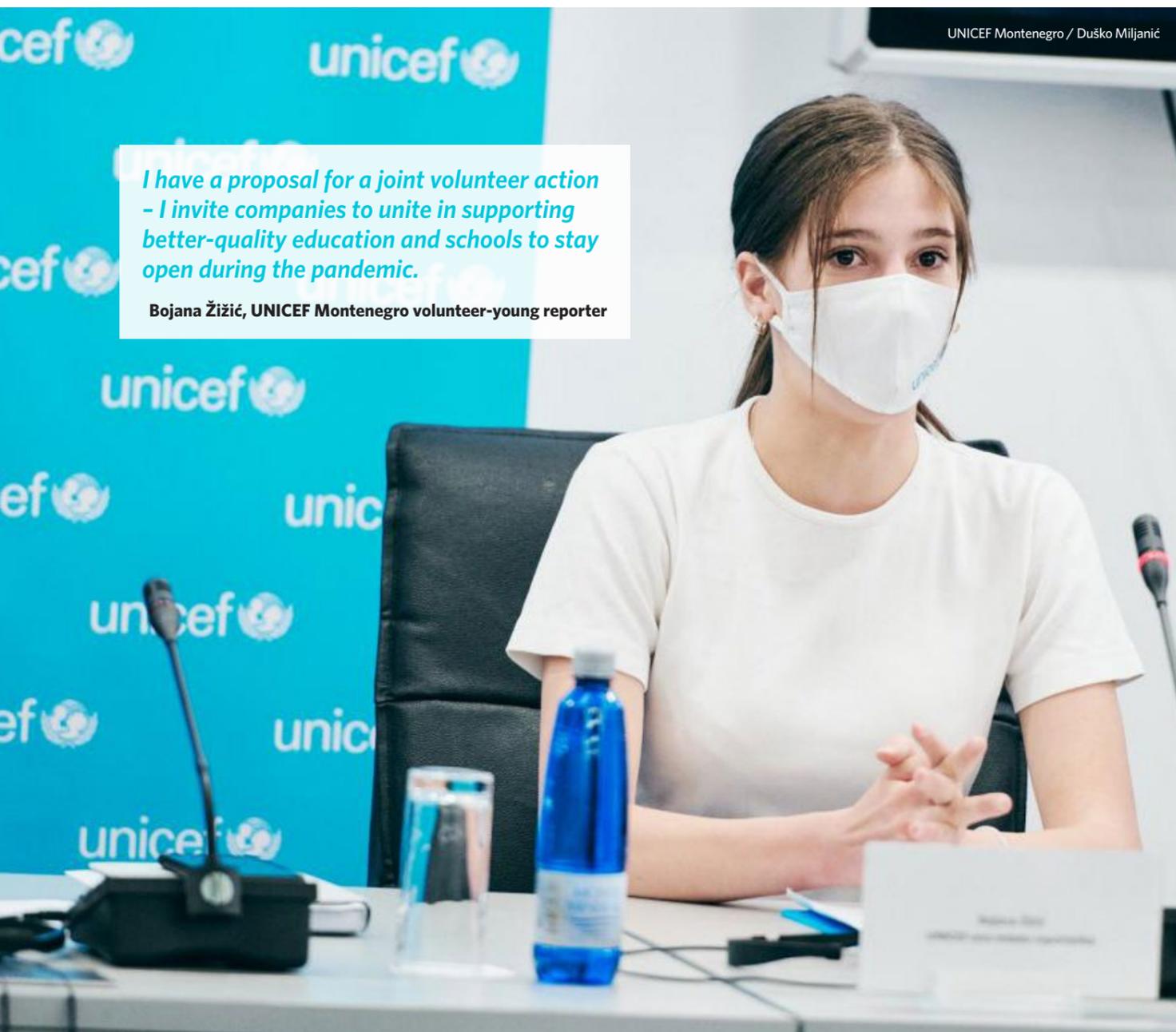
With the support of the ILO, **Local Employment Partnerships** (LEPs) piloted an innovative approach to support women in entrepreneurship, in selected municipalities, through the implementation of the Gender and Entrepreneurship Programme. This approach strengthens the capacity of women in all the phases of developing a business idea- from its inception to the writing of business plan.

The Regional Women Entrepreneurs Hub enables dialogue between 168 entrepreneurs on sustainable solutions for gender equality and women economic empowerment. It is the result of a partnership between the UNDP and the Regional Cooperation Council. The platform brings together women leaders and entrepreneurs to address a number of important issues: boost collaboration between the public and private sectors, IFIs and academia; to incentivize innovation and creativity; work towards shared goals and tackle challenges together; and share experiences and good practices in shifting towards a digital and green economy whilst showing a high level of awareness regarding the repercussions of the pandemic.

Participating UN organisations have also been very active in establishing and maintaining strong traditional partnerships, as well as exploring new opportunities and reaching out a variety of innovative partners.

The Business Council on Child Rights was established by the UNICEF Country Office. The Council will amplify partnerships with private companies and support socially responsible initiatives that provide concrete, and sustainable improvements to children’s lives. In 2021, seven business associations and seven private companies have joined the Council and have started developing initiatives with a focus on education and health. Additionally, UNICEF continues to foster its renowned partnership with ING, a global bank and insurance company, through a shared-value partnership, ‘Power for Youth’, while the school-to-work transition programme is the result of a partnership with TUI Care Foundation.

UNICEF’s global partnership, **Learning Passport Platform**, with Microsoft and Cambridge University on one hand, and with the Regional Office on the other, supported an initiative on reducing the impact of COVID19; this significantly contributed to the building of a sustainable, quality and inclusive digital education platform suitable for all levels of



I have a proposal for a joint volunteer action - I invite companies to unite in supporting better-quality education and schools to stay open during the pandemic.

Bojana Žižić, UNICEF Montenegro volunteer-young reporter

An innovative methodology for **human-centered design (HCD)** was implemented in partnership with the Employment Agencies to (re)design the labor activation services. This methodology goes far beyond the usual practices of service provision and enables beneficiaries to become involved in the design process. It aims to achieve insights into the needs of beneficiaries, their

life circumstances; thus the path taken seeks to develop a new and/or improved style of service delivery that is, human-centered.

All of the aforementioned partnerships and financing for 2030 Agenda initiatives, have contributed to overall better positioning of the UN System in the country.

2.4. Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

In 2021, the implementation of UNDAF was extended for one year (until the end of 2022) as a result of a request from the government. The aim was to provide the government with sufficient time to appoint new national UNDAF coordination structures and to allow the informed participation of its technical staff in joint results groups. UNCT ensured that efficient delivery and the pace of UN reform were not interrupted by this. UNCT embarked on more than 30 joint actions during 2021.

UNCT has adopted new working arrangements with non-resident agencies, aligned with the revised Management and Accountability Framework (MAF), through which they are now fully and equally included in the work of UNCT. In total, 15 UN agencies participated in the implementation of UNDAF in 2021, with observer status having been given to ITU.

In addition to the five existing inter-agency groups, another group was set up in 2021 – the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA); this group will coordinate and monitor the implementation of the UNCT PSEA workplan.

In line with reforms, RCO is gradually starting to take over responsibility for administration, human resources and finances from UNDP. A new **Business Operations Strategy (BOS)** has been rolled out and a plan for future collaboration in 18 common administration service areas has been defined. These include: facilities/premises, finance, ICT, procurement and human resources.

The following UN entities are participating in the Montenegro BOS:

It is estimated that full implementation over five years will have total benefit of 476.000\$.

UNCT has regularly updated its monitoring and reporting platform UNINFO, contributing to transparency and accountability for its work, and ensuring visibility to its development partners through a reconfigured [website](#). This also includes information on efforts to integrate **Gender, Youth and Disability** concerns throughout its programming and operations. The scorecards, outlined in Figure 4, show continuous progress of UNCT Montenegro against indicators of global GEWE System-Wide Action plan, Disability Inclusion Strategy and Youth Strategy. As an example, UNCT joined a pilot scheme to strengthen the inclusion of persons with disabilities by adapting the areas of IT and human resources and by enabling physical accessibility to all UN communal areas. The *getting ready* and *missing* areas are being addressed through targeted actions.

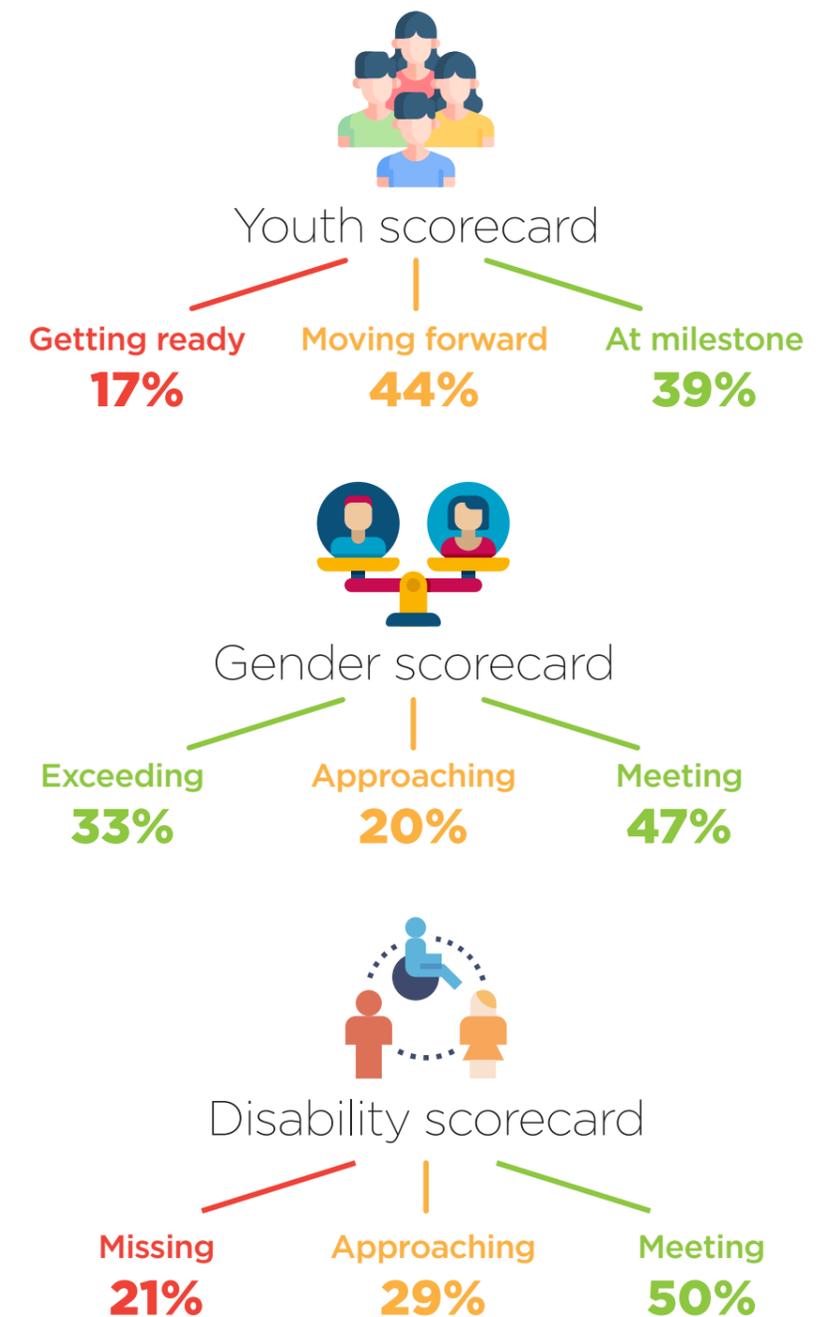


Figure 4: progress on Youth, Gender and Disability Scorecard indicators

To ensure a coherent UN approach to a variety of emerging issues in the country, whilst also collectively supporting the implementation of the *Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights*, UNCT adopted its *Action Plan on Hate Speech*; this has been developed under the *Global UN Strategy and Action Plan on Hate Speech*. UNCT facilitated the visit of the SG's Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide in November, along with a technical mission from

the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations in August/September, to support the work of UNCT on hate speech. In November, UNCT also adopted a Montenegro specific Standard Operating Procedure to ensure a consistent approach when implementing the UN's global Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces.

The greatest value added to system-strengthening efforts is achieved through **joint programs**. In 2021, three joint programs were active, as outlined below.



Within its Joint programme “Activate”⁹ UN Montenegro has ensured that real-time data and collective knowledge regarding the socio-economic impact of Covid on general population and on the most vulnerable groups are available and used for programme and national policy planning. Details on programme results are already mentioned in Chapter 2.2- Social Inclusion.



Through another joint project, implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO [Dialogue for the Future](#), the citizen participation and dialogue was enabled resulting in improvement of policies and programmes in the areas of gender equality, women entrepreneurship, youth and public administration. In total, over 1,200 adolescents and young people have been trained in socio-emotional skills, advocacy, leadership, teamwork, mobile journalism, public policy processes, media and information literacy. In addition, 221 girls and women have been empowered for social activism, 490 teachers and librarians were trained to teach media and information literacy and civic education, while 108 journalists and editors have learned about media literacy and objective reporting.



With funds from the (UNPRPD), inception of a new two-year programme implemented by UNICEF and UNDP took place with the aim of supporting better implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and disability inclusive SDGs. The inception phase included six day disability rights training, facilitated by persons with disabilities, attended by government representatives, the National Human Rights Institution, civil society and the UN staff; a thorough analysis of the level of implementation of the CRPD in Montenegro; and the design of a programme proposal that was endorsed by the UNPRPD in December 2021.

The greatest value added to system-strengthening efforts is achieved through joint programs. In 2021, three joint programs were active, as outlined below. The relevance of the UN as a reliable partner for the people of Montenegro was further strengthened in 2021 through **joint UN communications** in the areas of human rights and sustainable development. Following are the examples of successful interventions:

- » Coordinating joint UN public outreach including 10 press releases/interviews, 7 joint events, 11 RC’s public statements, 9 observances, as well as placement of five global UN topics in Montenegrin media.
- » Enhancing the digital presence of UN Montenegro including development and placement of over 30 new content items on the UNCT Montenegro website and regular administration of five official UN social media platforms with average increase of the outreach on social media for 11%.

⁹ The JP Activate!, implemented jointly by UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, ILO and IOM, aims to enhance the capacities of the social protection system to better serve people in need - through a dual focus on improving the effectiveness of social policies as well as delivery of social services.

- » Supporting increase of global visibility of the UN Montenegro’s work including placement of three UN success stories and RC’s OpEd on the global UN platforms, positioning UN Montenegro at the global commemoration of the Genocide Convention, as well as featuring UN Montenegro’s work in the UN Secretary General’s Spokesperson daily brief.
- » Three joint UN publications including the [UN Montenegro Common Country Assessment](#), annual [UNCT Results Report](#), as well as the third [Rapid Social Impact Assessment](#) report.
- » One UN voice on Leaving No One Behind enhanced through several initiatives, including: a) joint support to filming the theatre play “Love and Violence” dealing with invisible forms of violence against female adolescents and displaying the film to over 600 adolescents in 9 municipalities, b) mobilizing UN staff to enhance voice of support to the LGBTI community at the ninth Montenegro Pride, as well as c) enhancing outreach towards young people not in education, employment or training via the Joint UN SDG Fund Programme Activate!
- » Internal communications further enhanced with the support of ten monthly UN Montenegro Snapshots, each depicting major monthly highlights achieved by the UN.

Finally, UN coherence has been ensured throughout the process of new UNSDCF preparation, as outlined in Chapter 2.1

2.5. Evaluation and Management response

The UNDAF evaluation, conducted in 2020, was followed-up by an agreed Management response, which outlined 21 actions to address 6 key evaluation findings and recommendations. While it is planned that six of these action points are to be mainstreamed during the next UNSDCF cycle, 15 actions have been contextualized within the new UNSDCF development process. Of

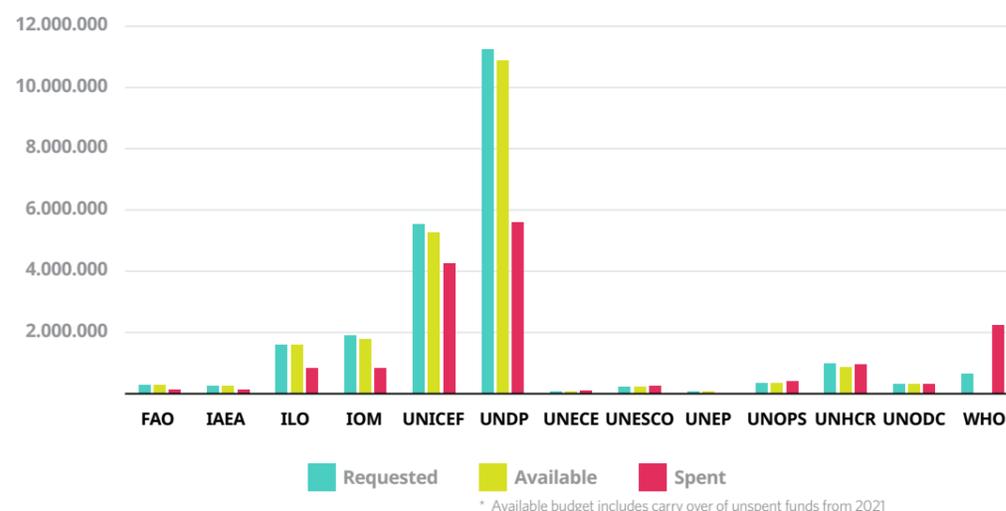
these 15 items, four have been finalized, seven are ongoing, and four more are expected to be finalized by the end of 2022 as part of UNSDCF post-signing arrangements. Some of the key programming implications include stronger integration of LNOB and gender mainstreaming principle, aligned with sound results-based management framework into the new UNSDCF.



2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

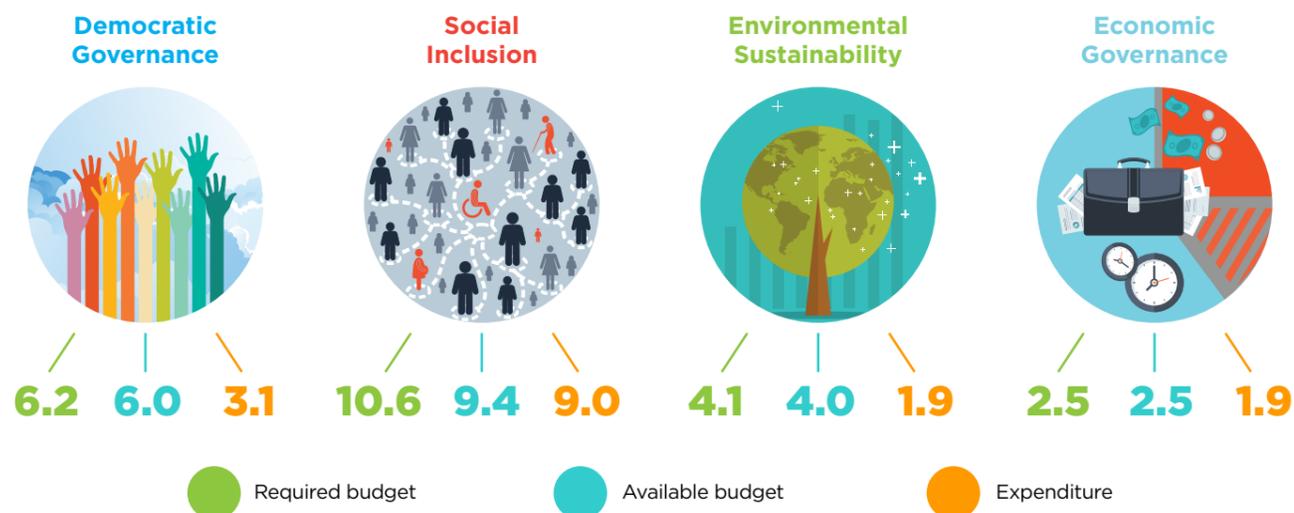
2021 marked the fifth year of UNDAF (2017-2022) implementation in Montenegro. Out of total UN-DAF funding plan of \$55,68 million, as shown in the graph in Chapter 2.1, by the end of 2021, \$ 69 million has been delivered, i.e. it exceeded the UNDAF funding plan by 24% . With 21 million already available for operations in 2022, it is to expect that UNDAF financing promise will be additionally exceeded by up to 50 percent- showcasing strong efforts to continuously raise funds for the key national development priorities.

Figure 5: Budget breakdown in 2021 per UN agency



Budget breakdown per agency is presented in figure 5, while figure 6 outlines budget breakdown per Result areas. Notably, greatest investments continue to be made in Social Inclusion, followed by Democratic Governance, while Economic Governance and Environmental Sustainability have been on an almost equal level. As noted in the challenges section of Chapter 2.2, programme implementation was somewhat affected by continued COVID-19 crisis and the new Government setting up, as the turnover of civil servants caused delayed appointments of project focal points. This resulted in a lower than expected delivery rate for some results groups.

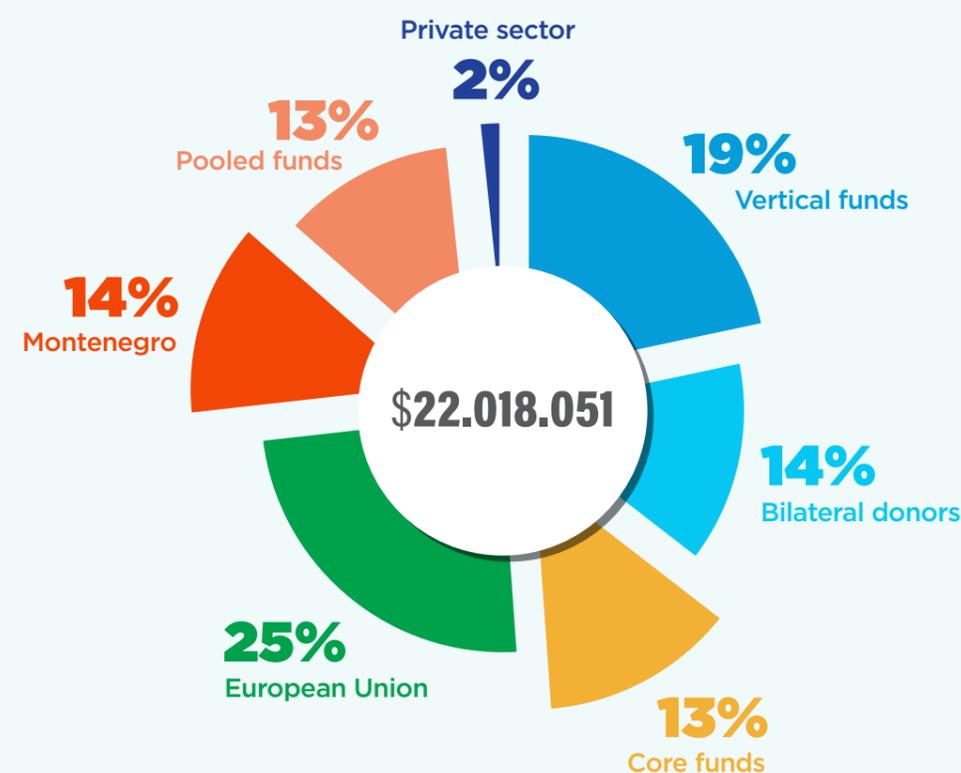
Figure 6: Overview of required, available and spent budget per Results group, in \$ mill.



Other reasons for the difference between planned and delivered budget is linked to delays in nationally executed and regional projects under the bilateral agreements, where the decision-making processes were shifted to 2022 and, in some cases, challenges related to very narrow and constrained market to offer specific equipment and specialized expertise. In agreement with the donors and adjusted project dynamics, unspent funds will be used in 2022.

Seven (7) types of funding modalities were in place in 2021 (as displayed in figure 7): vertical funds¹⁰, bilateral donors¹¹, the European Union, pooled funds¹², private sector funds, UN agencies` core funds¹³, as well Government of Montenegro with other national partners¹⁴. European Union has traditionally been the single largest investing partner to the UN, thus boosting the partnership for achieving common goals of the 2030 and EU accession agenda, while the Government of Montenegro continues to prove its commitment to strong cooperation with UN system, through the funding support as well.

Figure 7: Breakdown of available funds by funding modality



Currently, UN country team is in the process of analyzing and sounding out donor dynamics, including considering new mechanisms for funding and new partnerships for the upcoming Cooperation Framework. This would support efforts of Montenegro to work on criteria for joining the European Union, achieving Sustainable Development Goals, while supporting the reinvigorated UN System and the ongoing Reform.

10 Programs for allocating official development assistance that focus specifically on an issue or theme.
 11 A single country or entity official development assistance
 12 A financing mechanism that provides more flexible and predictable earmarked funding for jointly-agreed UN priority programmes in areas such as development, transition/peacebuilding, and humanitarian interventions.
 13 Funds provided directly from the budgets of specific UN Organisation or entity
 14 These include: Islamic Community of Montenegro, Municipality of Danilovgrad, Municipality of Golubovci, National Museum of Montenegro, Old Royal Capital Cetinje and the Union of Municipalities

CHAPTER

3

UNCT - Key Focus for Next Year



Requested
funds

21,047,703



Available
funds

20,258,182



To be
mobilized

789,521

In 2022, UNCT will focus on the finalization of the **new UNSDCF** (Cooperation Framework), as well as defining corresponding results, formulating programme strategies and monitoring and coordination structures, with the aim of enabling its smooth implementation from January 2023. **UNCT** will also conduct a **configuration exercise** in 2022 to review and determine UN assets and capacities to deliver on the new Cooperation Framework. The **CCA update** will be finalized by Q3 and will advise on UNCT programme planning for 2023 and onwards.

In the final year of UNDAF implementation, UNCT will continue to **support the recovery efforts** of the government by providing analyses for the improvement of evidence-based policy planning and leveraging partnerships. It will also consider technical issues and policy support whilst pursuing national reforms in the areas of economic governance, social inclusion, democratic governance and environmental protection, with the total available funding of 20,23 mill. USD.¹⁵ For details of key programmatic streams, see figure 8.

¹⁵ This amount includes carry-over of unspent funds from 2021.



Democratic Governance

- » Enhancing effectiveness and accountability of institutions through digitalization
- » Mainstreaming of gender equality in public administration
- » Public finance management
- » Child rights monitoring
- » Partnerships for accountability and policy implementation
- » Protection of refugees and stateless persons
- » Migration management system
- » Strengthening the role of youth in promoting increased mutual understanding, constructive narrative and respect for diversity
- » Measuring and monitoring the progress of culture's enabling contribution to the SDGs
- » Continued activities on countering corruption and organized crime



Environmental sustainability

- » Roadmaps for Just Transition and for Implementation of Revised NDC commitments
- » Circular and green economy frameworks
- » Climate change adaptation capacities
- » Strengthening capacities for management of the 3 Coastal and Marine Protected areas
- » Strategic framework and capacities for management, promotion and sustainable use of cultural heritage



Social Inclusion

- » Integrated policy support, strategic planning and implementing reforms in social and child protection and education system
- » Technical assistance for provision and broadening the coverage of social services
- » Assisted voluntary return and reintegration of migrants
- » Strengthening public health emergency operation
- » Improved access to quality essential health services
- » Socio-economic inclusion and free legal aid for asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons
- » Protection-sensitive reception of asylum seekers



Economic Governance

- » National policy framework and institutional capacities in designing support to SMEs, including direct assistance to SMEs
- » Furthering the country's innovation ecosystem and creative industries
- » Leveraging digital technologies for public finance transparency
- » Strengthening the capacities and modernization of Employment Agency
- » Establishing Decent Work Country Platform
- » Improving labour market participation of the young people through a piloting of the Youth Guarantee scheme.

UNCT will collectively support the Government of Montenegro in its preparation of the **VNR report** and the review of the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016-2030). Moreover, UNCT will help the government to develop **SDG dashboard** – an online platform that will enable easy access to data and evidence, relevant to monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. UNCT will also continue to support the national statistical office- **MONSTAT** with the aim of improving its current business processes and data dissemination systems whilst also facilitating access to high quality and policy-relevant statistical data in terms of quality, comparability and timeliness, particularly regarding SDG targets and indicators.

The **SDG financing exercise** will be conducted jointly with the government to enable Montenegro to report on public financial flows aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. This will allow budgetary expenditure to be mapped against SDGs and will thus provide concrete data for the CCA, the Cooperation Framework, the Voluntary National Review (VNR) and other relevant policy planning processes.

Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the UN will engage with the government to establish a **permanent platform for policy and development coordination** between the government and its development partners. This process will serve as the key vehicle to drive sustainable development and policy discussions between the state, on one side, and IFIs, bilateral development agencies and other development partners, on the other. UNCT decided to look into setting up the **Montenegro Acceleration Fund**, a joint UN pooled funding mechanism, which aims to support the implementation of the Cooperation Framework, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to accelerate the EU accession process. This will be presented to the Government in 2022 for further deliberations and pending approval.

The UN will continue to implementation its **Action Plan on Hate Speech**, whilst analyzing the situation regarding marginalized groups in close consultation with representatives from these groups. This will include analyzing key gaps to realize the rights of persons with disabilities under a **new joint UN agency project, funded by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)**. The UN will undertake a range of actions to make progress on implementing the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy in field operations by **piloting disability inclusion** in ICT, in human resources and in physical accessibility.

UNCT will advance implementation of the **Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0**, achieved in 2021. This will include promoting UN common business operations more actively in 2022 to enable joint work and to generate greater efficiency, synergy, coherence and compliance with BOS 2.0.

Finally, UNCT will remain vigilant during all global security crises and will keep a sharp eye on the impact of diverging socio-economic levels and political measures. The potential for increased vulnerability in the region, in addition to the increased vulnerability already caused by the pandemic over the last two years, will also be carefully monitored. Thus, UNCT will remain flexible regarding possible adjustments to its programme.

Figure 8: key focus of UNDAF Outcome areas for 2022

List of acronyms:

BOS- Business Operations Strategy

CSO- Civil society organization

C/MPAs- Coastal and marine protected areas

CoE- Council of Europe

CRC- Committee on the Rights of a Child

CT- Computed tomography scan

EAM- Employment agency of Montenegro

GBV- Gender-based violence

GEWE- Gender equality and women`s empowerment

GHG- Greenhouse gas

HRBA- Human rights-based Approach

IFI- International financial institutions

LNOB- Leave no one behind

NDC- Nationally Determined Contributions

ReLOaD- Regional programme on local democracy in the Western Balkans

SDG- Sustainable Development Goal

SG - Secretary General

SME- Small and medium-sized enterprise

SOP- Standard Operating Procedures

UNCT- UN Country Team

UNDAF-United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNPRPD- UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNSDCF- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

VNR- Voluntary National Review

2021 UN Country Team Results Report

MONTENEGRO