



UNITED NATIONS
MONTENEGRO



2022 UN Country Results Report

Montenegro



Photo: UNDP Montenegro/Duško Mijlanić



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March 2023

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UN Country Team in Montenegro



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



Peter Lundberg
UN Resident Coordinator in Montenegro

Foreword

Dear reader,

In my capacity as the UN Resident Coordinator in Montenegro, I am pleased to present the 2022 Annual Progress Report.

The Report summarizes key collective achievements during the last year of implementation of the Joint programme of cooperation (UNDAF 2017-2022) in the areas of: Democratic governance, Social inclusion, Environmental sustainability and Economic governance. Together with more than 50 partners, progress has been made in accelerating 2030 Agenda through advancing human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment, social protection and access to education and health, addressing impact of climate change, enhancing sustainable economic development as well through supporting governance capacities, digitalization and social cohesion. Once again, our programme tested its ability to respond to emerging challenges – this time by helping national authorities in providing immediate response to the impact of invasion of Ukraine, where Montenegro prides itself on being one

of the top countries for providing home to the largest number of refugees per its population size.

In 2022, Montenegro assessed national progress towards Sustainable Development Goals by conducting its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) that was presented during the High-level political forum in New York. Another opportunity for Montenegro to engage in global UN platforms was participation in the Transforming education summit where country has pledged towards transforming education in line with global priorities. Both processes will inform future policy planning and programming.

The year 2022 was important as we have agreed and signed with the Government of Montenegro the new strategic document – United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (CF) that will be jointly implemented in the next 5-year period. Priorities of the CF are fully aligned with national agenda, Agenda 2030 and the EU accession process. In parallel, two UN agencies, UNICEF and UNDP, have developed their five-year Country Programme Documents to support implementation of the CF in achieving its key objectives.

Another milestone in 2022 was setting up of Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund– a country-based pooled funding mechanism established with the aim to strategically direct donor support towards addressing the key development challenges in Montenegro and support in-country implementation of the UN reform.

Under the framework of the new CF, 18 UN agencies and the Government of Montenegro will strengthen their partnership for achieving Sustainable Development Goals and by doing so, support the country in meeting the requirements of the EU accession process.

Wishing a good start and successful cooperation in our next five-year journey!



Key development partners and funds



Government of Montenegro



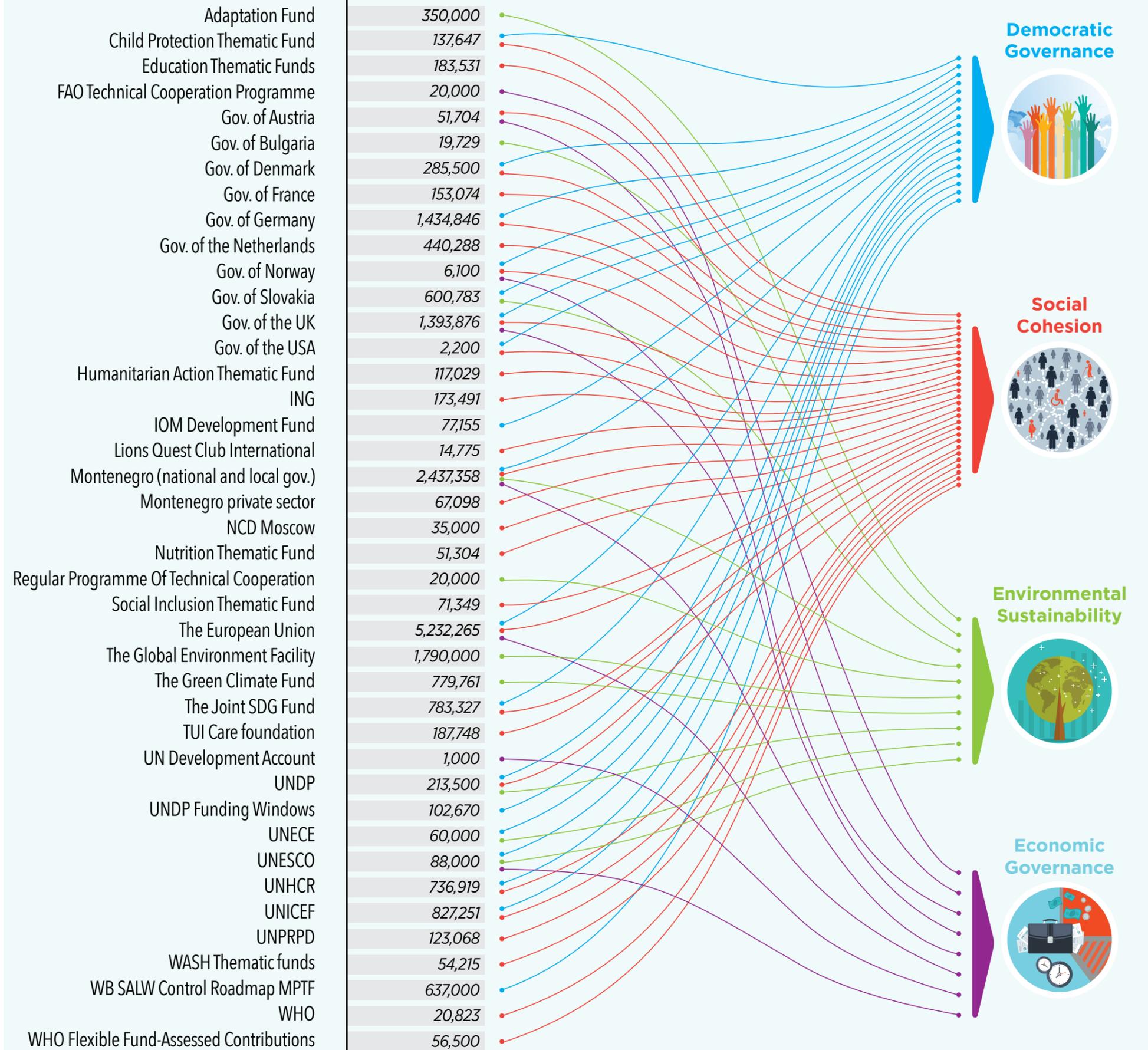
UN Agencies' core and thematic funds



Other strategic partners



Sources of funds available in 2022, in USD (Figure 1)



MONTENEGRO

Key socio-economic data

World Bank Good Governance Indicator

Percentile Rank 2021



Rule of Law
52.9
(EU27 average 80.4)



Government Effectiveness
53.9
(EU27 average 77.4)

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



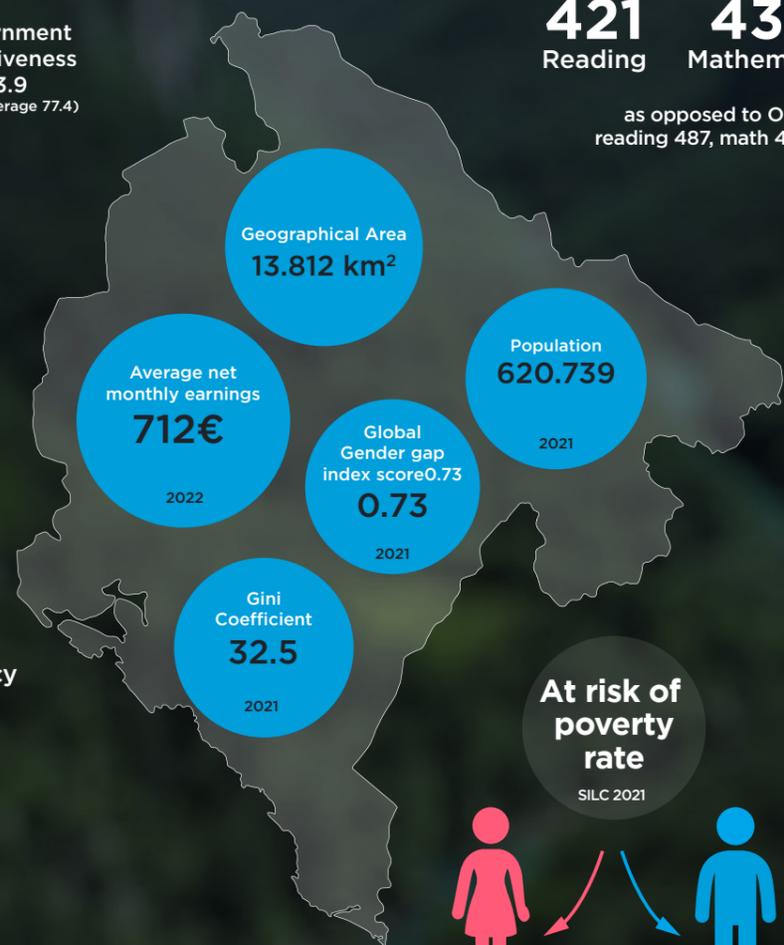
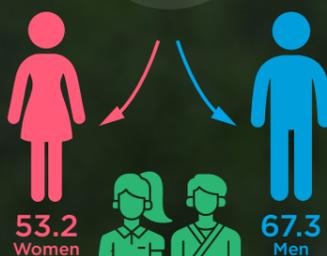
27.2

Life expectancy at birth 2021



76.3
Years

Activity rate 2021

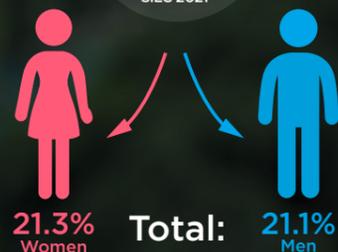


Gender equality Index score 2019



55
(EU average 68)

At risk of poverty rate SILC 2021

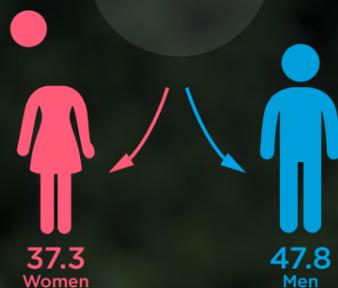


HDI classification 2021



0.832
Very High
Human Development

Employment rate



CHAPTER

1

Key developments in the country and regional context

Development trends in Montenegro in 2022, like in many countries in the Western Balkans, were impacted by global geopolitical shifts while country was still recovering from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. While the direct impact on Montenegro, through tourism and Foreign Direct Investments, has been less serious than expected, the indirect influence of the geopolitical developments was felt on the rising cost of living. Average inflation in 2022 was 13 percent, as opposed to 9.2 percent in the Eurozone. Overall real incomes rose at the beginning of 2022, but real incomes are being eroded by the higher rates of inflation. Unlike many countries in the region of Europe and Central Asia, Montenegro is not dependent on gas for energy generation, so energy prices were less of a concern. However, food price inflation averaged 22.6 percent, which is where most of the impact is being felt. Vulnerable groups are disproportionately impacted as they spend a larger proportion of their disposable income on food. Some of the gaps between men and women have reduced, even if those gaps themselves continue to exist. The gap fell between male and female employment and activity rates, measuring women's participation in the formal labour market. The disparity between the north and south is growing, manifested in a growing gap in the respective risk of poverty rates. The north's employment and unemployment rates lag other regions.

While progress has been made (as displayed on the graph), inequalities persist. These continue to negatively impact on how some groups, including members of the Roma and Egyptian community, adults and children with disabilities, the LGBTI community, as well as women and children victims of violence, benefit from development gains. While some data indicate that discrimination against persons with disabilities declined, at the same time, prejudice and discrimination on various grounds persisted, resulting in hate speech. Hate speech has increased over the past few years, also significantly affecting women in public life, particularly women politicians, but also women journalists and some human rights defenders.

In spite of this, Montenegro recovery has broadly remained on track. The COVID-19 pandemic had reversed progress on some of the SDGs, but the recovery has enabled Montenegro to broadly return to its pre-pandemic progress levels. During the recovery, poverty has continued a downward trend and is at 17.1 percent in 2022 compared to 17.9 percent in 2019. Employment and unemployment have recovered beyond their pre-pandemic levels. The major impact of these developments has been the need for more focused support in terms of cost of living at a time when the post-pandemic recovery was vulnerable to further shocks. However, broader focus shall remain on longer-term challenges while balancing the need to support the response to the developing challenges from the rising cost of living. These interventions are in line with Montenegro's new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.



Photo: Marko Ilić/UN Montenegro

CHAPTER

2

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

2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

In 2022, the UN system in Montenegro was closing the circle of implementation of the **UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)**. The UNDAF was implemented over the past 6 (5+1) years, and it was focused on four strategic priority areas: Environmental sustainability; Economic governance; Social inclusion and Democratic governance. Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and a changing political context, the United Nations made good progress in meeting the results set to accomplish within 2017-2022 programme cycle.

Over the past six years, the UN's support towards implementation of 2030 Agenda has led to notable progress in advancing human rights and gender mainstreaming, social protection, improving access to education and health, promoting climate change and sustainable economic development as well as strengthening governance capacities - with a special focus on the most vulnerable. Reduction of at-risk-of poverty rate from 24 to 21,2%; the increase of 50% in the number of children with disabilities in mainstream education and 30% more children enrolled in preschool education are a few of the groundbreaking achievements during the UNDAF lifespan. In the area of environmental protection, the extent of the nationally protected area has been steadily increasing. A decision was also made to declare 1% of the total marine area as the first marine protected area in Montenegro. Moreover, the planned goal of reducing emissions by 30% compared to the 1990 has already been met, while the national goal of 33% energy demand from renewable sources has been surpassed. Collective efforts were invested in supporting

public administration at local and national level, to improve transparency, accountability and efficiency, including through improved digital governance framework. However, challenges remain.

The UN's programme has shown outstanding flexibility during the Covid-19 pandemic when only by the end of 2020 1,67 million USD were re-programmed and an additional 5,96 fundraised to support the country's response to health and socio-economic impact of the crisis. Overall, the programme exceeded its originally planned funding for five years by 52% (figure 2) while managing to extend and adapt its support to newly emerging challenges and circumstances. The funds were directed towards programmes and projects that span across all SDGs, with the largest share of expenditures directed to SDGs 16, 3, 4, 1 and 12, as displayed in figure 3.

Meanwhile, 67% of funds available in 2022 were invested in programs which either significantly contribute to gender equality (52%) or gender equality is their principal objective (14%). Likewise, 61% of funds were invested into programs which either significantly contribute to human rights (40%) or human rights is their principal objective (21%).

Based on results achieved during this period and on the UNDAF evaluation, experience and lessons learned, as well as findings of the Common Country Analysis (CCA), the priorities of the new five-year program – the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF) were identified jointly with the Government. **The new CF was signed in July 2022.**

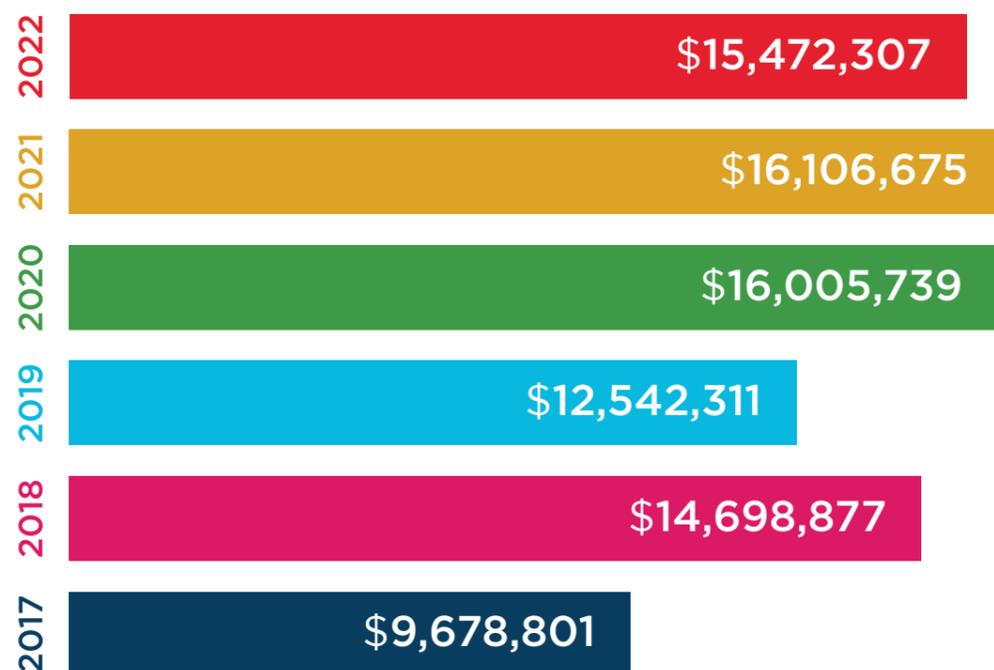


Figure 2: Overview of UNDAF annual delivery

In parallel with the CF development, a country based pooled funding mechanism – **the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund** – was established to mobilize and direct donor support to accelerate achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Fundraising efforts have already resulted in commitments of about 60% of the funds that were expected to be raised (USD 5 million).

In 2022, the UNCT supported Government to conduct its second **Voluntary National Review (VNR)**, taking a stock of national progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Meanwhile, national capacities in data

collection, identification of data gaps and SDG reporting were additionally strengthened through support to establish an **SDG dashboard** (hosted by Office for sustainable development) – a platform to manage and publish national data and statistics related to SDGs. UNCT conducted an SDG Financing analysis which will serve as a basis for further deep diving into sectoral budget allocations and identification of areas where public financial management should be improved. With UNCT support, the renewed Council for Sustainable Development was constituted and held its first meeting in December under the auspices of the Prime Minister.

An opportunity for Montenegro to actively participate in UN global platforms was provided during the **Transforming Education Summit** held in September during the General Assembly in New York. As a follow up to the nation-wide consultations supported by the UN system, Montenegro presented its political commitments on SDG 4 and declared its full commitment to integration of identified priorities in the new National Strategy on Education.

Under the **Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights**, important results were achieved. The UNCT commissioned and adopted a Joint Preliminary Risk Assessment conducted under the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces. The UNCT contributed to the upcoming fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Montenegro by the UN Human Rights Council by submitting a report that identifies areas in which progress has been made but where challenges remain with recommendations how to address these. The UNCT also submitted confidential reports to the UN Committee Against Torture and the UN Committee on the Elimination of

Discrimination Against Women and provided confidential briefings to both Committees during the year. Under the 2022-2023 UN Montenegro internal action plan on addressing hate speech, the UNCT carried out joint and individual agency activities varying from monitoring instances and trends of hate speech, reporting and public advocacy, to capacity building of UN staff, promoting positive stories about members of marginalized groups, and providing comments to Government on draft anti-discrimination legislation.

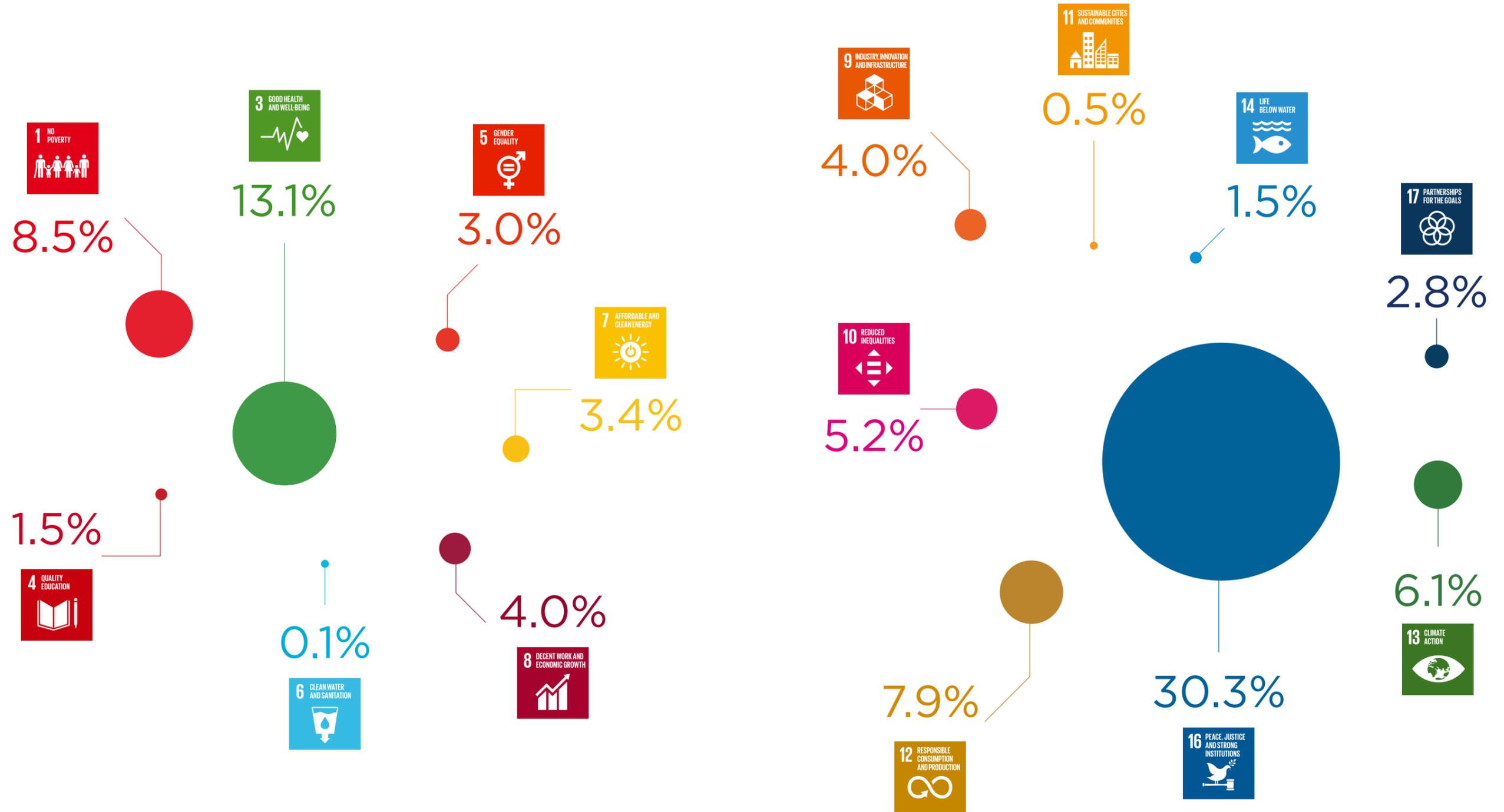
Joint UN communications and advocacy continued to streamline the UN's collective voice in 2022, both internally and externally, with increased space for regionally based UN entities. The work of Joint Communications Team intensified, including through the production of 10 editions of the UN Montenegro's Snapshot – a monthly newsletter summarizing key UNCT activities, disseminated to all UN staff, partners and general public. Public advocacy by the RC during the year was focused on two pressing issues – transitional justice and hate speech.

2.2.Cooperation Framework priorities, outcomes and outputs

Programmatic work in 2022 continued around **four pillars of UNDAF framework** (Democratic Governance, Social Inclusion, Economic Governance and Environmental Sustainability)¹. Still, the interventions spread across and through all pillars, as the identified development challenges have been tackled through innovative and cross-sectoral approach, and multi-layered partnerships. Capacity development/ technical assistance, policy advice and normative support continue to be three key modalities of the UN system response. As an example, only in 2022 the UN supported work on eight laws, nine national strategies, and development but also implementation of a number of Roadmaps, Action Plans and similar strategic and policy frameworks.

¹ The results presented in the chapter are organized around key thematic areas under each Outcome, rather than original outputs given that UNDAF was extended by one year without changing its results structure (efforts were fully focused on development of new CF). Hence, capturing the contribution in such a way is truer to current momentum of program implementation.

Figure 3: Breakdown of available funds in 2022 per SDG



DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE



Required budget
\$5,435,202

Available budget
\$5,251,497

Expenditure
\$3,882,974

Public administration reform at national and local level

Public service delivery was improved through the development of new e-services for citizens, such as online enrolment at the private kindergartens and students' dormitories.

84%
online enrolment at the private kindergartens

87%
online enrolment students' dormitories

Forces were joined with the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of the Interior aiming to popularize the electronic identification document. Ten thousand (10,000) of electronic ID readers were provided, of which 3,000 for persons with disabilities, retirees, young entrepreneurs, women in business, Roma and Egyptian population, single parents and students living in dormitories.

An assessment of digital governance framework was submitted to the Government, focusing on legal, institutional, internal IT system and gender gap in digital governance. The Government officially adopted Analysis of legal regulations for the development of e-services and endorsed its recommendations to all public administration institutions.

Furthermore, the preparation of Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2026 and Digital Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 was supported and the framework of the Catalogue of services and administrative procedures on central and local level was developed. Cooperation of public administration and private sector on the development of inclusive digital solutions was enhanced through Start-up Adventure innovation challenge. Additionally, UN supported the General Secretariat of the Government in the development of the Guidelines for preparing strategic documents and the Manual on the evaluation of public policies.

Capacity development for gender mainstreaming remained in focus, so as to ensure availability of analytical skills and competencies across public institutions. Recognizing human resources as the key for setting up the system for gender mainstreaming, the partnership with the Human Resource Management Authority was strengthened through introducing advanced trainings for public administration employees and piloting international gender mainstreaming certification (Gender Equality Seal) in this institution.

The Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Council were supported in the implementation of ICT Development Programme in Judiciary 2021-2023 through strengthened capacities of professionals on Information security and quality management systems, as well as data protection regulations. (UNDP)



Photo: UNDP Montenegro

E-services – quick and easy

efirma.tax.gov.me

upisi.edu.me



Through the support to setting up information system for the Clinical Centre of Montenegro, which currently provides more than 60% of total health services in the country, the UN facilitated centralized and timely management and use of reliable data for strategic decision-making, contributing to improved quality of health services.

With the aim of assisting the Government in the reform of public finances, the capacities for planning and implementing the capital budget at the local level are enhanced and the Manual on Capital Budget of Local Governments in Montenegro has been prepared. LARIS software was provided to support the process of electronic administering local taxes in 16 municipalities. Furthermore, 63 local civil servants from 15 municipalities were trained to better plan and implement their Public Calls for NGOs, cooperate with NGOs more openly, integrate gender aspect in local policies, as well as to better communicate to public on achieved policy results and utilized public funds. In addition, 143 NGO representatives were trained on project cycle management. (UNDP)

Gender, culture, and media

The capacities to promote and integrate gender equality in the institutions of culture, media and human rights were enhanced. In partnership with the National Broadcaster, innovative content was produced addressing gender equality concerns with celebrities and public figures from Montenegro, reaching 40k households and framing public broadcaster as a platform for next generation gender equality conversations. Furthermore, the National Public Broadcaster was supported to mainstream gender equality in its Code of Conduct, offering accredited trainings programme on public communications with a number of tools and instruments for practical work. A number of knowledge and creative products were developed to inform public debates and raise awareness, among which the key are following: the monography “Women of Montenegro”, short video stories of famous Montenegrin women displayed on National Broadcaster on the primetime, and digitalized sculptures in two locations in the country capital.

Check out how **E-services are changing lives.**

Find out how are local communities strengthened in domain of **social inclusion, environment protection and rural development**, bringing benefits for men and women through the NGOs initiatives.

Apart from contributing to capacity building of media and national institutions for addressing gender-based hate speech, sexism and misogyny, recommendations were provided for the set of antidiscrimination and media laws, vis-à-vis provision related to gender equality and sexist hate speech. (UNDP)

Have a look at how the UN **raises awareness of importance of gender equality through culture lenses.**

Following the decision of the National Council for General Education to include media literacy as a required elective subject in primary schools, the UN developed a Media Literacy Handbook (MIL), with the goal to help teachers in conducting MIL classes in primary schools where that subject is elective. (UNESCO)

Women in STEM

As the part of broader regional initiative on Women’s Economic Empowerment, jointly implemented with the Regional Cooperation Council, the Western Balkans Regional Network of Women in STEM has been developed. The Network gathers prominent representatives of WB6 national networks of **Women in STEM** that gather to discuss strategic priorities such as promotion of role models, mentoring (& coaching) programmes, regional consultative events and sharing good practices. (UNDP)

Anti-corruption

In order to enhance participatory policy making, the UN supported Government in organizing consultations for the new National Strategy for Fight Against Corruption with the focus on special risk areas. The Agency for Prevention of Corruption was supported in developing their Strategic Plan, and in assessing the impact of the anticorruption measures through verifiable evidence. The initiative aims to assess whether the authorities are implementing anti-corruption

measures, to what extent the implementation has led to a certain change, and to encourage the authorities to be proactive in planning and implementing anti-corruption measures that are not prescribed as mandatory. (UNDP)

Check out **some of the latest anti-corruption tools.**

Under the Implementation Review mechanism of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the UN expert mission was conducted as one of the series of steps in evaluating Montenegro in the UNCAC implementation. The national Asset Recovery Roadmap for Montenegro and the Guide on Mutual Legal Assistance for Asset Recovery were developed together with the Manual on international cooperation which aims to support judicial authorities, prosecutors, central authorities, and policymakers. (UNODC)

Institutional set-up for child rights protection

With the UN support, the Government of Montenegro has reinforced the role and the mandate of the Council on the Rights of the Child, as the main child rights governance body in the country, by placing it at the Prime Minister level. The aim is to strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation, effective implementation of laws and policies, accountability and monitoring of cross-sectoral priorities with the focus on the most vulnerable children.

Long term partnership with the Parliament of Montenegro has been reinforced, through expert assistance to Women’s Club for prohibition of child marriages in Montenegro’s legislation, providing policy and economic briefs for sustaining public finances for social and child protection, maintaining essential funds for a minimum package child and family support services and fostering meaningful child participation.

The capacities of Ombudsman in accelerating child participation, generating evidence on children in misdemeanor procedures and monitoring of child safety online were



strengthened. 830 children from eight municipalities took active participation in 36 workshops on child rights and access to justice. Intense cooperation with the Ministry of Justice has continued, through technical support for the amendments of the Law on free legal aid to ensure expansion of the right to legal aid to all children. (UNICEF)



The UN and the Parliament **join forces for improved health of children.**

Trafficking in persons and Mixed migrations

The work of UN on specific thematic areas within the migration management portfolio, i.e. countering trafficking in human beings, return, readmission, reintegration and border management included capacity building, coordination and cooperation at operational level. Certain migration management areas were systematically analyzed, such as provision of reintegration assistance and readmission frameworks and capacities with prospects of tailoring future interventions in line with national needs and respective EC recommendations. The National Road Map on Migration Statistics for Montenegro was

finalized and validated, with the purpose to serve as a basis for further interventions in terms of policy work and capacity building in the context of alignment with the EU Directive 862/2007.

Counter-trafficking campaign aimed at raising awareness on the dangers of trafficking in human beings, reached 1802 beneficiaries, including primary and secondary school students and Roma and Egyptian settlements.

81 professionals from the Ministry of Interior, Police Directorate, Center for Social Welfare and NGOs were capacitated in humanitarian border management and prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), through Training of Trainers and subsequent roll out trainings. (IOM)

Montenegro participated in several UN-organized, regional events addressing trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants aiming at enhancing capacities on the issues such as compensation on victims and improving response to trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation (UNODC).

The UN support to asylum seekers continued through providing information, free legal aid and representation for pursuing asylum



Through provision of free legal aid, the number of refugees from former Yugoslavia in need for the status resolution has been reduced from 319, at the beginning of 2022, to 93 persons in mid-December, with clear perspective for Montenegro to resolve all cases by the end of 2023.

claims, as well as through psycho-social support. To ensure longer-term results, standard training program for the relevant staff of the Ministry of Interior has been developed, followed by guidelines for the implementation of state-funded free legal aid support. (UNHCR)

Upgrading capacities of **humanitarian border management** in Montenegro.



Photo: Mилош Vujović/UNDP Montenegro

SOCIAL INCLUSION



Response to the impact of the invasion of Ukraine

At the onset of the invasion of Ukraine, the UN provided technical support to the Government to deal with the influx effectively. The number of people arriving from Ukraine has been significant, making some 5% of the total population of Montenegro. The UN helped the authorities to launch the temporary protection (TP) measure which has allowed the most vulnerable groups get an immediate access to health care services. More than 7,500 Ukrainian refugees applied for TP certificate, out of more than 31,700 Ukrainians who registered some residence in Montenegro. The UN also helped other state institutions to draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and amend relevant legislation to align with the TP regime.

over **90%** of the TP applications were resolved at the end of 2022.

The UN directly supported over 500 beneficiaries with food, non-food items, and other necessities, and provided continual

free legal aid, psychosocial support, support in access to health care and education, and alleviating legal obstacles in access to employment. (UNHCR)

Moreover, the UN provided support to four Ukrainian Cultural Centers (Podgorica, Budva, Bar and Herceg Novi) with furniture and equipment for educational and occupational activities for children, thereby rendering mental health and psycho-social support. In order to adequately assess emerging needs of the Ukrainian population in Montenegro, five Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) enumerators from Ukraine were engaged, bringing an added value to data collection from culturally sensitive and language appropriate perspectives. Additionally, raising awareness on trafficking in human beings among the Ukrainian population present in the country was also conducted through provision of informative leaflets. (IOM)

Required budget
\$9,409,803

Available budget
\$9,211,524

Expenditure
\$6,824,428

Social inclusion of Ukrainian refugees on the ground.

To help children and families cope with stress, the UN partnered with the Red Cross in providing psychosocial support activities for most vulnerable families. (UNICEF)

504 children and caregivers benefitted from psycho-social support

328 women and girls received information on GBV prevention and services





Ten most vulnerable children have received individual case management from Red Cross specialized staff. 117 refugees were supported and provided with primary health services through the UN support to the Ministry of Health and 5 primary health centers.

The UN successfully advocated with the Ministry of Education to remove administrative obstacles to enrollment in schools.

501 Ukrainian children, including those with disabilities, enrolled in formal education system benefiting from the support provided by the Ministry of Education and the UN.

Moving beyond enrolment itself, supportive Ukrainian speaking staff in the schools with the most refugee children were engaged and trained to support children in learning. Learning material on the Digital School platform was translated in Ukrainian language and prepared to be shared with refugee children and families. Psychosocial support was provided to 186 children through implementing group workshops based on the standardized package "Empower yourself" while individual sessions were provided to 6 children.

Furniture and IT equipment was procured for 6 primary schools and 4 preschools to support enrollment and quality conditions for children from Ukraine. The Ukrainian NGO Dobro Djelo was also supported to organize non-formal education support, including early learning with 256 children benefiting from non-formal learning support and provided with learning materials. (UNICEF)

Sustainable (re)integration and protection of vulnerable groups (migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and temporary protection holders)

Refugees from former Yugoslavia and persons at risk of statelessness/stateless persons also benefited from free legal aid in obtaining documents pertinent to their legal status

in Montenegro. The UN also supported the improvement of reception conditions of asylum seekers through the provision of medications and non-food and hygiene items to asylum seekers and providing for the appointment of one part-time doctor and two social workers in the reception center in Spuz.

The UN supported the Government to implement SOP on integration adopted in December 2021 with an aim to facilitate support of the integration of refugees. Examples include individual integration plans and support to refugees with accommodation, access to the labor market, education, social services etc. (UNHCR)

Ending statelessness: Every step matters.

The UN provided direct support to 33 readmitted nationals of Montenegro who returned from the EU countries, in the form of small grants for housing assistance and microbusinesses. (IOM)

Social and child protection system

In the framework of social services workforce capacity building, the UN assisted the Institute for Social and Child Protection to fulfil its role relevant to quality assurance of social work. As a result, a total of 155 social workers went through the supervision process, which accounts for about 24% of the total number of licensed professional workers. Furthermore, 35% of the Institute professionals completed their education in external supervision.

Innovative approach to treatment of children exposed to violence and trauma was introduced through providing of advanced NMT (Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics) 8 months long training delivered by the Child Trauma Academy, to the professionals from three sectors (social and child protection, health and education). So far 40 children and 30 adults have been supported with specialized treatment using the NMT.

To prevent family violence and promote positive disciplining of children CSO Parents Helpline was supported and reached out to **1,350 mothers and fathers** (30% fathers and 70% mothers) while **107,461 of people** are reached with messages on positive parenting.

National Child Helpline was also supported to provide mental health and psychosocial support- the Helpline received 418 calls from children (40% boys and 60% girls). Promotional activities on the importance of mental health and seeking support for mental health issues reached 67,782 people. (UNICEF)

The UN continued to support the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW) in upgrading and maintenance of the national Social Welfare Information System - SWIS (Social Card). Social Card enables one-stop-shop for access to social cash transfers and services by its interoperability module with nine other national information systems.

Social Card provided payments of **18 types of cash transfers** to nearly **200,000 beneficiaries in 2022**, in the amount of **146 million euro**. Two new cash transfers were rolled out-universal Child Allowance (6-18 years old children), which was delivered to **87,000 children** and cash transfer for **15,000 mothers of 3+ children**, increasing the current caseload of cash transfers beneficiaries by **100%**.

The UN also continued with policy advice. The Study on Social Cash Transfers for Priority Changes of the Social Protection Law was endorsed by the Ministry, and it fully relies on evidence-based data generated through BI (Business Intelligence) module of Social Card. The Government's capacities were increased to develop optimal models for Montenegro to improve targeting and coverage of social protection. Evidence-based social policy simulations and subsequent scenarios for social protection system reform have been developed, and are expected to result in more just, better targeted and more adequate social protection programmes and services.

In order to improve access to quality social protection services, the UN continued to support establishment, improvement of capacities for and provision of community based social services. Focus was on their handover to the licensed service providers, thus being formally recognized as integral part of the social services delivery system in the country. (UNDP)

The UN continued providing support to the Government in reforming overall national disability assessment and determination system, through developing new legal framework including Law on Disability Assessment and Decree on Disability Assessment Methodology. The reform covers all disability entitlements (cash transfers and services) in the sectors of employment, social protection, pension insurance, war veterans and education. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) are stakeholders of the reform and they implemented grants program promoting the on-going reform and advocating for persons with disability position. (UNDP)

Assessment of Youth Needs, the Analysis of the state of affairs in the area of youth policy and Analysis of integrated labor activation of vulnerable groups. The UN also supported implementation of the Government programme for digital skills training for young people. (UNDP)

Find out why Milica, economy student from Kolašin, has recently taken up beekeeping.

Meet Jasna, young entrepreneur from Plav giving life to toys made of organic materials.



In the context of life skills education and support for youth and their parents to

*The experience of Balša, Slađana and Ismar: **Change of discriminatory mechanisms for disability assessment are possible** through the targeted UN intervention.*

*Changing lives of persons with disabilities through small grants support: **Sanja Popović, Kristina Korać, Adnan Kujović***



Youth / unemployment

In order to prepare for piloting of Youth Guarantee scheme, the Profile NEETs report for Montenegro was endorsed by the MLSW along with conclusions and recommendations from the Child begging rapid assessment. (ILO)

The UN programme “Prilike”, through its partnership with the TUI Care Foundation, offered job-shadowing and internship opportunities to adolescents in their final two years of secondary school. In 2022, more than 1,500 adolescents had the opportunity to go through experiential learning, with 98% reporting that this was the first time they had had this type of opportunity. (UNICEF)

*Tailored mentoring, internships and trainings for **200 beneficiaries** were provided based on innovative and human-centered approaches to labor activation of vulnerable groups.*

Strategic response in social protection and youth development will be improved through the support provided to multiple analyses and strategic documents development, such as the new Youth Strategy for Montenegro,

find solutions for problems in community through dialogue, to prevent radicalization of youth, 113 young people from Nikšić, Berane and Cetinje was educated on how to engage in initiative taking, critical and active thinking. In addition, 49 parents were educated on understanding violent extremism and radicalization and role of parents as a resource in prevention. (IOM)

Early childhood development (ECD) and health

The Ministry of Health (MoH) with the support of the UN and the EU initiated the process of developing the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategy. To address low immunization rate, a national high-level commission led by the Minister of Health has been established to oversee catch up in coverages with children's routine immunization. Through cooperation between health institutions and the UN, the Law on breastfeeding and national guidelines on baby friendly hospital initiative on infant and young child feeding have been drafted. The Clinical Centre of Montenegro was supported in capacity building on family-centered developmental care for small and sick newborns. The Situation Analysis of Early Childhood Interventions was completed.

More than 180 professionals were trained in social and behavioral change approaches to increase demand for early childhood development and health. The Caring Families programme was expanded and during 2022, 385 parents (29 fathers) were recruited into the programme. (UNICEF)

national Digital School Platform became fully functional, containing as many as 11,330 lessons categorized in 1,000 courses. (UNICEF)

Following nation-wide consultations supported by the UN, Montenegro participated in Transforming Education Summit held in September during the General

Bebbo app helps parents gain new insights.
 Find out how **“Caring Families” programme helps parents.**
 Meet nurse Vanja who serves as a stable **support for parents and children.**
 Testimony of a mum on **why the milk was the best choice for her child.**

Surveillance capacities for case investigation and contact tracing were strengthened. Support was provided in developing the National Plan on HPV immunization and launch of the immunization program. Country COVID-19 laboratory and diagnostics, and capacities of the Institute for Public Health were enhanced. Additionally, enforcement capacity and practices in Montenegro with respect to commitments stemming from the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and harmonizing national legal framework with FCTC were strengthened. (WHO)

Assembly and declared its commitment to integration of identified priorities in the new National Strategy on Education. (UNESCO, UNICEF)

*Digital technologies **increase quality of teaching, but also learning.***

*Find out **how the preschool helped a four-year-old boy with disabilities.***



Education

The coverage of children aged 3-6 by preschool education rose to 75%, which is by 4% higher than in 2021. An important increase in the number of children with disabilities equaling 7% and 5% were recorded in preschools and secondary education, respectively. Although in nominal terms the number of Roma children in preschools is still rather low, there was a significant increase in enrolment equaling as much as 47% in comparison to 2021. The Education Sector Analysis (ESA) was launched as a joint initiative with the Ministry, providing an in-depth insight and trends in the education system in the period 2015-2020 from the aspects of quality, equity, infrastructure, governance, and financing. As many as 20% of teachers received training to use digital tools in teaching in quality and inclusive manner, reaching almost 50% of all students in primary and secondary schools in Montenegro. The

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women (VAW)

With the UN support, institutional infrastructure to assure implementation of Istanbul Convention was enhanced, resulting in the establishment of the Division of GBV and VAW in the Ministry of Labour and Social welfare that receives continuous support for capacity development. CSOs were also supported to monitor and address challenges regarding implementation of legal and strategic framework, victim-focused support, access to justice for victims and lack of systemic support. Priority in 2022 was development of capacities of 12 local women's groups to develop the better services for victims of GBV, tackling most disadvantaged groups of women. In parallel, CSOs have been supported in development of sustainable partnerships with institutions, with particular focus on assuring financial sustainability and multidisciplinary coordination and cooperation. (UNDP, UN WOMEN)

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Institutional set-up for sustainable development

The UN technical support and guidance (such as development of strategies, policies, capacity building) were crucial in redesigning the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) and its repositioning as a part of the General Secretariat of the Government. The Council was launched by the Prime Minister, and designated to serve as a national platform to facilitate sustainable development of the country. To support the NCSD operations and build its capacities in this regard, five working groups were established, including the Working Group on Mitigation and Adaptation, as well as the Working Group on Just Transition.

Through Cooperation between the Climate Change Directorate of the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism (MESPU), the Secretariat of the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) and the UN,

several Dialogues for Development were organized, including: country presentation of the Second Voluntary National Report prior to 2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Workshop on Adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation, National adaptation to climate change plan consultations, National Strategy on circular economy consultations etc. (UNDP)

Environmental sustainability and climate change

In order to track Montenegro's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2021, the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial planning and Urbanism (MESPU) was supported to develop NDC Roadmap.



Required budget
\$3,843,418



Available budget
\$3,843,418



Expenditure
\$3,411,412

In the adaptation sector, climate risks assessments of four priority sectors (water, tourism, health and agriculture) were developed. MESPU was provided with technical support to develop the draft Law on Protection against Adverse Impacts of Climate Change that recognizes gender-sensitive assessment of climate risk as one of the main principles in taking adaptation action.

As MESPU will be Implementing Partner for the projects dealing with reporting towards UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, climate transparency and mainstreaming biodiversity into sectoral policies and planning, specific guidelines on transition from Direct Implementation Modality to National Implementation Modality were developed, followed by hands-on training in project management. Project Implementation Unit was established at MESPU premises.

Expert support to the Government was also provided to develop Circular Economy Roadmap and Circular Economy Strategy until 2030 with an Action Plan for 2023-2024, thus creating an environment that would enable the transformation of the national, linear, economy into the circular. (UNDP)

Vox populi: **How the climate change affects you?**

The voice of the young ones **on climate change.**





Photo: UNDP Montenegro

Environment for the active involvement of local young actors in the “new age” transboundary biosphere reserve concept of sustainable development practices in the Bojana/Buna delta area was developed. Youth, aged 18 to 35 were engaged with the purpose of developing a strategic and bottom-up approach to “Man and Biosphere” program for the protection and development of this area. (UNESCO)

The country was supported in undertaking an equitable access self-assessment exercise at national level, using the draft updated version of the Equitable Access Scorecard under the Protocol on water and health. The assessment looks into three critical factors in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation: reducing geographical disparities; overcoming the barriers faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups; and addressing affordability concerns. The UN also launched development of smart sustainable city profile of Podgorica to provide detailed recommendations based on the U4SSC KPI

Collection Methodology and investment Project Book to facilitate the city’s sustainable and smart development. (UNECE)

Disaster risk reduction (DRR), Waste management and energy efficiency

In view of the efforts of the authorities of Montenegro to contribute to climate resilient future, different governmental actors have been [capacitated on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management in selected UNESCO Designated sites](#). Participants strengthened their knowledge and understanding of hazards and risks identification, and their relation to climate change adaptation, the use of an integrated approach and the necessity of integrating DRR and Climate Change Adaptation within management plans of UNESCO Designated sites (UNESCO).

The investments made in energy efficiency support to households in Pljevlja Municipality resulted in improved living conditions for 339 residents and energy savings in the amount of 648.341,40 kWh/year, which is equal to 187 tons of coal annually.



The UN removed 1,050 tons of the soil highly contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) from the location in Aluminum factory, around PCB storage facility, making this location safe for the workers and reducing the threat this contamination represented for human health and the environment.

During 2022 the UN improved national system for flood monitoring and forecasting by expanding hydrometeorological network. Significant improvement has been achieved by introducing the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment and Innovative Damage and Loss Protocols at country level, as preconditions for recovery in post-hazard processes. (UNDP)

How the UN helps in making green businesses and energy efficiency reality.



Montenegro benefitted from a regional study aimed at enhancing capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for residential buildings, introduce energy efficiency technologies, and accelerating their uptake through improved knowledge of best practices in this field. (UNECE)

Cultural heritage

With the UN support, the enhanced management of cultural heritage potential, including for contributing to economic development, was initiated. Two strategic documents have been finalized: Strategy for sustainable development of cultural heritage for the period 2023-2028 and National strategy for the safeguarding and sustainable use of cultural heritage. Furthermore, a comprehensive training program for the experts in the Ministry of Culture and relevant institutions on management of cultural heritage was created. (UNESCO)



Photo: UNDP Montenegro

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE



Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) through innovation

Capacities of the Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism (MEDT) were built to design SMEs related policies, including initiation of the next National SMEs Strategy and establishment of the Information system to monitor and produce analytical overview of the financial support provided to the SMEs through annual Competitiveness Programme.

The UN also supported efficient functioning of the Council for Innovation and Smart Specialization. The Council adopted the S3 National Implementation Framework, named S3 National Coordinator and the Council's Secretary and gave a positive opinion on the Proposal of the Operational Program for the Implementation of the Smart Specialization Strategy 2021-2024. The UN also provided administrative and technical support for the establishment of the Innovation Fund of Montenegro, which became operational at the beginning of 2022 and successfully launched two innovation programs. Additionally, the Government was supported to reach the goals of the Strategy for the development of women entrepreneurship, among others through the development of web platform for women's economic empowerment www.zenskibiznis.me. (UNDP)

Through five grant projects implemented by Business Support Entities (BSC Bar, Tehnopolis, Cortex, NGO Cluster Initiative and BC Niksic), 68 SMEs are supported to transform business operations by introducing innovation and production or/and overall business functioning. Four Business Info centers were opened (Tivat, Danilovgrad, Kolasin and Zabljak)



How to **support women`s entrepreneurship?**



Manual for design for grant schemes for local self-governments was also developed. (UNOPS)



Required budget
\$1,530,909



Available budget
\$1,531,445



Expenditure
\$1,353,493



Helping young entrepreneur Jelena to **realize her business vision.**

In preparation for comprehensive capacity building for farm management, hygienic standards and farming practices, 39 smallholder livestock producers had their needs identified and assessed. (FAO)

Economic reforms for increased competitiveness and decent jobs creation

The Ministry of Finance of Montenegro (MoF) was provided with technical support in the preparation of the Economic Reform Programme 2022-2024. Among others, the Programme will help economic dialogue in EU integrations through comprehensive agenda of structural reforms, aimed to accelerate growth, development and competitiveness of economy. (UNDP)



With the UN support, the country improved its policies aiming to increase competitiveness and create a more favorable business environment. The updated Decree on the Methodology for Calculation of Competitiveness Index of Local Government Units in Montenegro was prepared by the MEDT, as well as two policy documents: Guidelines for the Revitalization and Development of Processing Industry and Analysis of the Law on Skilled Crafts of Montenegro. The UN also ensured the conditions for continued functioning of the online service platform Programme for Improvement of Competitiveness of the Economy for 2022 through the upgrade and modifications of the platform. (UNDP)

In 2022 preparatory activities for the digitalisation of the Employment Agency of Montenegro and its functional assessment were conducted. The UN's support has also yielded the awareness of critical reforms required to make institutional set-up for employment to operate more efficiently during the crisis. (ILO)

Fighting illicit trafficking of cultural property

With the aim at strengthening the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property, the toolkit on Fighting the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property, as well as of the e-learning training tool on Engaging the art market in the Fight against Illicit Trafficking of cultural property have been prepared. (UNESCO)



Photo: Marko Ilić/UN Montenegro

Below is the non-exhaustive list of the most commonly identified challenges that somewhat hindered implementation of particular programme interventions, as well as recommendations and lessons learnt from their implementation:

CHALLENGES

- » Frequent change in political landscape, turnover of government staff and late appointments of the key officials influenced sound, agile engagement and decision-making processes
- » Lack of ownership and resources for investing in longer-term solutions to identified development challenges
- » Limited capacities for operationalizing cross-sectoral coordination
- » Insufficient technical and IT skills in the public sector institutions
- » Delays with adopting required legislation
- » Cyber-attack on digital infrastructure in Montenegro

RECOMENDATIONS / LESSONS LEARNT

- » Volatile political environment, which includes changes in national and local government structures can be mitigated by strengthening cooperation with the institutional mid-management, to minimize obstacles to programme implementation.
- » More direct engagement with the Parliament as a fundamental custodian of political accountability is critical to achieving sustainable results of development initiatives.
- » Cross-sectoral cooperation should be accelerated and strengthened through policy dialogue, analytical products, platforms for multi-sectoral work and financing.
- » Consensus on key development priorities should only be reached through dialogue with ordinary citizens, children, youth, women, and representatives of all groups whose voice is not being heard.
- » Great potential of public-private partnerships should be capitalized upon.
- » To secure timely response of the state to future emergencies, and in the context of Temporary Protection, harmonization of the national legislation with the asylum law and development of procedures for implementation of laws is indispensable.
- » In order to provide sustainable solutions for reintegration of returnees in their home countries, reintegration assistance to returnees under readmission agreement should be tailored to individual needs.
- » Management of shared natural resources, such as waters, should be done in coordinated manner and through inter-governmental cooperation from the earliest stages in order to have efficient and quality results.



Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

In joint and individual agency programming, the UN provided support to enhance the realization of the equal rights of the majority of the ten groups identified in the Common Country Analysis (CCA) as most left behind in Montenegro. While progress has been made, inequalities persist that continue to negatively impact on how some groups, including members of the Roma and Egyptian community, adults and children with disabilities, the LGBTI community, as well as women and children victims of violence, benefit from development gains. The UNCT dedicated the 2022 International Human Rights Day commemoration to highlighting the situation of hate speech against women, Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities and transgender persons, providing space to representatives of these groups to highlight experiences to an audience of decision-makers and civil society and calling for the practice to end.

In spite of legislation and policies promoting equal rights of marginalized groups in society, the level of implementation continued to lag, due to challenges that include weak coordination, lack of data, and weak monitoring and accountability.

The UNCT jointly stepped up efforts to implement the **UN Disability Inclusion Strategy** through joint and individual programming that specifically focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities, as described in other chapters of this results report. The disability scorecard report submitted in December 2022 provided evidence of improvements as compared to the 2021 report on four indicators due to more data on disability in the updated CCA, better accessibility of UN premises and services, training on disability inclusion in monitoring and evaluation and integrating disability in humanitarian response planning to support refugees from Ukraine. This resulted in a 14% increase in 2022 in the number of indicators being met or exceeded as compared to 2021.

Similarly, UNCT programming with and for youth, as per **Youth 2030 strategy**, witnessed continuous increase with three new indicators reaching milestone (comms and advocacy for youth, youth situational analysis in the CCA, and capacity building on youth). Finally, when it comes to **System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality**

and Women's Empowerment, Gender Scorecard comprehensive assessment with accompanying Action Plan developed in 2022 provided the framework for systematic advancement of gender mainstreaming in UNCT. The assessment showcased steady pace of progress, with 80% of indicators already having been met or exceeded.



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

2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

The UN continued and further strengthened traditional partnership on multiple levels: on one side, the Government with its ministries, a number of institutions from different sectors, to independent institutions such as Statistical Office, Ombudsman, up to the level of local authorities. CSO partnerships were crucial for reaching out to some of the most vulnerable children and families including in humanitarian and development context.

The UN Montenegro continues to play 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 is expected to 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 2022 alone, the UN system mapped the current coordination practices and laid ground to establish a functional coordination mechanism in the following year.



The United Nations System in Montenegro established a platform for partnership through the **Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund**. The Fund is an innovative and strategic platform for partnerships to address key issues of the EU accession process, implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Montenegro and the country-level UN Reform. The Fund is a pooled funding mechanism established with the UN's Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) that has become operational as of 1 January 2023. For now, Montenegro, Switzerland and Luxembourg stepped forward to partner with the UN System in Montenegro on developing the country. Fundraising efforts will continue, while the UN crafts strategic interventions to achieve aims of the Fund.

In 2022, the UN System provided strong support to the Government in developing and presenting the second **Voluntary National Review**. The process was conducted in a participatory manner and resulted in a user-friendly presentation of findings through the report, respective video presentation, and data dashboard. The process itself was led by the recently empowered Office for Sustainable Development in the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, and included more than 700 people engaged through online and three in-person consultations in all three regions of Montenegro. At the High Level Political Forum, the UN System used the opportunity to host one side event and introduce the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund to the representatives of 23 UN Member States, representatives of Montenegrin diaspora, and colleagues from the United Nations. Furthermore, the UN supported the Government in hosting and co-hosting two side-events on (i) sustainable development in the Western Balkans, and (ii) participatory VNR processes.

Towards the end of the year, the Government of Montenegro, the United Nations and the

Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA) hosted the **Western Balkans Conference on Sustainable Development**, thus offering a platform for regional exchange on various dimension of sustainable development policy: institutional framework, data, VNR processes, financing, and similar. The Conference is a continuation of dialogue in the Western Balkans on the topic of sustainable development that started in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2021. The expectation is that the Conference will continue in the future on a rotating basis for hosting.

The United Nations finalized the first phase of the **SDG Financing exercise**. This initiative resulted in an analytical piece that mapped the expenditures of the central budget against the Sustainable Development Goals. The exercise also produced a bridge table that provided the basis for better understanding of links between the national budget classification framework, including organizational, economic and functional budget classification, with targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda.

The UN continued to partner with civil society organisations and independent institutions to, inter alia, **advance human rights in Montenegro**, fight against hate speech, strengthen engagement with Roma and Egyptian communities, persons with disabilities, women, youth, and others. These partnerships are visible in UN human rights reviews like the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and by Treaty Bodies, but also in programmatic work by the UNCT at national and at the local level.

The UN Resident Coordinator continues to convene **sounding boards**, including with women entrepreneurs, and to play an active role in the society through targeted UN advocacy. The Office of the Resident Coordinator also had intensive programme of **visiting the local governments of Montenegro** and strengthening partnership with local administrations, local civil society organisations, and private sector, while discussing the pressing local issues.

Examples of strong and multiple-layered partnerships:

- » As part of the **fundraising campaign for the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund**, the UN system organized a two-day field visit for prospective donors and, thus, confirmed numerous successes in the North of Montenegro, while confirming partnerships with the local government, civil society and private sector. The visit included meetings with the mayors of the North-East of Montenegro, regional development agency, beneficiaries of UN programmes, including children, refugees, Roma and Egyptian community, rural women and men entrepreneurs, also young entrepreneurs, and similar.
- » The **mobile app for parents Bebbo** is a digital innovation that was launched in Montenegro along with 11 additional countries in the Europe and Central Asia region. In Montenegro it was launched in partnership with the Institute for Public Health of Montenegro and the EU Delegation. It had a high reach in Montenegro of 10,000 downloads, proving that digital support to parents in consistent and accurate tracking and stimulation of young children's development from birth to the early years is feasible and in demand in Montenegro. Strong outreach of Bebbo was secured through intensive promotion in mass media including social media, partnership with service providers such as kindergartens. Furthermore, UNICEF Business Council's members provided a significant contribution to promote the Bebbo app, by using two channels of communication: 1) promotion among employees, 2) promotion among customers by sending broadcast SMS messages.
- » UNDP, in cooperation with Pljevlja Municipality has launched the **Co-creation Hub**, with the aim to serve as a Local Just Transition Platform, and as a resource center to support dissemination of a culture of innovative technologies and sustainable solutions. The hub enables the citizens and the youth to explore diverse and future-proof economic opportunities that attract and retain young talent to the Pljevlja coal region and reverse the talent leak and to contribute to setting up the Pljevlja coal region for renewal of its socio-economic system, explore paths for transitioning from coal-based and mining to green sectors.
- » **Partnership with Pljevlja municipality has also led to resource mobilization of 1.3 mill. USD** that has been dedicated to the implementation of inclusive, gender-sensitive energy efficiency support program for households in Pljevlja and for the facilitation of the just transition process in Montenegro. The financing and implementation modality implied investment of municipal funds coupled with the investments of citizens, supported with UNDP's technical assistance.
- » Within the UNESCO's initiative to empower youth for advocating for inclusion of the Bojana/Buna delta area into the Man and Biosphere reserve programme, **the website <https://togetherforbuna.adriaweb.me/>** was developed which is maintained and organized by the Youth club mentors, also established within the same initiative.
- » UNOPS established tight cooperation with the local self-governments by designing and implementing the concept of the four **Business Info centers**, as new form of direct support to the SMEs. Most of the 68 supported SMEs introduced innovation in their business functioning, stimulated by close cooperation between Business Support Entities, Local self-governments and SMEs, which showcased a winning format for on-the ground everyday support to the SMEs in Montenegro.
- » In 2022, UNHCR started a **formal partnership with the Ombudsman of Montenegro** through a project to monitor detention facilities and border crossings, to secure access to asylum procedure for everyone in need. Findings from this project, and recommendations by the Ombudsman, will be used to advocate for better protection of human rights of those who are planning to, or have applied for asylum in Montenegro.

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

In 2022, the UNCT finalized the implementation of the UNDAF (2016-2022) and preparations for the new CF (2023-2027). The UN Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Foreign Affairs **signed the CF on 20 July 2022**, together with the Heads of 18 UN agencies. The priorities of the new programme are fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda, national priorities and requirements stemming from the EU accession process. Lessons learned and experience gained from the previous cooperation cycles are fully embedded in the CF, its theory of change and configuration. CF is also strongly grounded in the CCA, which was updated in 2022, reflecting on emerging socio-economic issues and trends. The novelty of the CF is merging inclusive economic development and environment sustainability in one strategic priority aiming to support sustainable economic development in a more holistic manner. This is additionally strengthened through affiliating two ministries as the

co-chairs of the corresponding Results group along with the UN.

Additional focus of the CF will be on **strengthening interlinkages between the key priorities** as well as on horizontal coordination across all three strategic priority areas. Two core principles of the UN, LNOB and Gender equality are fully integrated across the CF and mainstreamed through all three pillars. In addition, the CF will seek to accelerate progress through following **cross-cutting strategies**: a) Synergising with EU accession; b) Generating and using quality and disaggregated data; c) Digital transformation and innovation; d) SDG financing; e) Partnerships with international financial institutions (IFIs) and private sector; f) Youth participation; and g) Preventive approach.

While the above-mentioned shifts do not require substantial changes, the assessment of the capacities within UNCT configuration

exercise has led to **reinvigorated composition of the new UNCT**. Four new agencies have joined (UNDRR, ITU, IFAD and OHCHR) while two have left (IAEA and UNCTAD). The UNCT developed and endorsed the new CF Governance and management arrangements. The UNDAF Gender and Human rights Working Group was split in two, to strengthen integration of both core principles in CF implementation. To ensure a culture of **zero tolerance to sexual exploitation and abuse**, the UN Montenegro Task Force on PSEA established a 24/7 system for online reporting alleged cases of SEA along with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and will continue to streamline UNCT work in this area. A Pilot project to **enhance disability inclusion** and further the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), funded by the UN Development Coordination Office, started in 2022. It focused on improving the UN in Montenegro's accessibility in IT, physical accessibility, particularly of the common premises, and in human resources. Within the inclusive and participatory process, three comprehensive assessments were conducted, mainly by persons or organizations of persons with disabilities. By the end of the 2022, several recommendations had been implemented, while work on improving policies and practices will continue in 2023.

The UNCT Montenegro will continue to strengthen coherence through joint programming facilitated by **bi-annual Joint workplans** (2023/2024). Twenty-four (24) indicators from the global output indicators framework are incorporated to facilitate system-wide reporting on SDGs.

The UNCT has a successful record in implementing **joint programmes** demonstrating high impact of coordinated inter-agency work. The joint programme "Activate", funded by the Joint SDG Fund, ended in June leaving innovative approaches in social policy planning fully institutionalized. Furthermore, innovative approaches in the areas of social inclusion and access to employment were streamlined

through the Joint programme "Norway for you". Support was provided to the newly established Secretariat for Innovation and Smart Specialization Council, to the newly established Innovation Fund as well as to the Science and Technology Park of Montenegro. Under the ongoing project "Acceleration Disability Inclusion of Adults and Children with Disabilities", funded by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, support was given during the year to various Ministries, Ombudsman and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). The project focuses on preventing and addressing institutionalization of children and adults with disabilities, on establishing an independent and inclusive mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and on increase the disability inclusion in the work of the UN in Montenegro.

In 2022, the UNCT benefited from the collective knowledge of **global inter-agency mechanisms**, in particular Issue-Based Coalitions who were consulted during development of the CF. In addition, the Peer Support Group provided experience, best practice and quality assurance at different stages of the CF development.

The UN continued implementing **Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0**, ensuring cooperation in 23 common services, inclusive of 5 new services added in 2022 BOS annual review. The BOS review 2022 showed a total benefit to 247k USD. In 2022 review five new services were added: human resource surveys, PSEA and services related to the disability inclusion such as reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, training of staff on disability inclusion and mapping of digital and web accessibility. Specific effort of the team in 2022 was invested on advancing of disability inclusion in business operations.

The UN system continued coherent reach and consolidated messaging with a consistent **One UN Voice** in the areas of human rights and sustainable development through, among other things:



- » UN public outreach including 9 joint events, marking 20+ UN observances, 7 press releases, 6 RC's public statements, 10 monthly newsletters *UN Snapshot* distributed to 500+ recipients, production and placement of 3 thematic UN films, placement of 4 OpEds (2 RC's + 2 Secretary General's), comms support to 19 bilateral meetings, continuous media monitoring, as well as placement of three global UN topics in Montenegrin media.
- » 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 all supported with multimedia, with average followers increase of 12%.
- » Increased outreach on hate speech including a sub-regional social media campaign, two OpEds in national media, a landing page on hate speech, a high level event on hate speech with a performance by young people and branded items on hate speech, and development of a consolidated UNCT toolkit on hate speech to ensure coherent UN outreach on the topic. UN staff took part in the 10th Montenegro Pride, in support of the equal rights of the LGBTI community.
- » Design, branding and strategic placement of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027, including through three different events around the CF. Branding and placement of the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund, including via the 7-minute film placed on different platforms and events.
- » Increased global visibility of the UN Montenegro's work through placement of UN success story, film and two RC's OpEds on global UN platforms.
- » Four joint UN publications including [2022 Update UN Montenegro Common Country Analysis](#), annual [UNCT Results Report](#), [Fighting poverty in Montenegro through responsive evidence-based social and child protection](#), as well as CF.

Internal communications further enhanced via ten monthly UN Montenegro Snapshots keeping UN staff informed of major highlights across the UN, but also via 10 joint communications team meetings as well as through organization of joint UN actions such as UN Town Hall gathering, voluntary blood donation and charity action.

2.5. Evaluations 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 CF cycle, 15 actions have been contextualized within the new CF development process. Of these 15 items, four have been finalized in the year following the evaluation (2021), four were finalized in 2022 as part of CF post-signing arrangements, and the remaining seven are of ongoing character. Key programming implications include stronger integration of LNOB and gender mainstreaming principle, aligned with sound results-based management framework into the new CF, which has been duly reflected.

2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

2022 was the **final year of implementation of the UN Development Assistance Framework** for Montenegro (UNDAF) 2017-2022. As presented in figure 2, out of a total UNDAF funding plan of \$55,68 million, by end 2022, programmes totalling \$84,5 million were delivered, exceeding the UNDAF funding plan by 52%. The increase is the result of the extension of the UNDAF period by one year, and the additional funding obtained, including for the response to Covid pandemics.

In 2022 alone, the UN had at its disposal \$19,8 million, which was slightly below the amount needed to implement programmes at scale. The utilization rate was 78%, which means that the UN System delivered interventions worth \$15,5 million.

As shown in figure 5, **the largest financial portfolio continues to be in the Social Inclusion domain**, followed by Democratic Governance, Environmental Sustainability, and Economic Governance respectively. The delivery rate spun from 74% in Social Inclusion and Democratic Governance areas to 89% in Economic Governance and Environmental Sustainability.

As noted in the challenges section, the rate of implementation (which affected delivery rate), was partly influenced by turnover of Government staff and late appointments of key officials, which hindered decision-making processes that would enable smooth program implementation. Unspent funds from 2022 were carried over to 2023 budget, to be utilised as per the agreed Joint Work Plan.



Figure 5: Financial breakdown per Outcome area, in mill USD

As to **expenditure per UN Organisation**, the UNDP remains the agency with the highest portfolio of \$7,7 million USD of delivered funds in 2022 and activities across all four strategic areas, followed by UNICEF with \$2,8 million of delivered funds in 2022, and WHO \$1,6 million in 2022. Full information on funding framework per UN Organisation is presented in figure 6.

Finally, when deep-diving into **modalities** of financing the programmes in 2022 (Figure 7), the European Union remains the strongest institutional partner of the UN System in Montenegro with \$5.2 million invested in interventions. Numerous other bilateral donors supported the UN interventions with a total of \$4,4 million USD. The UN System in Montenegro was successful in accessing another \$4,4 million of the UN's core, pooled and thematic funds, while also fundraising \$2,9 million from global vertical funds such as the Adaptation Fund, the Global Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).



Figure 6: Funding framework per UN organization, in USD

The percentage of funds from the private sector remained at the same level, with the novelty as compared to 2021 that 15% was from Montenegrin companies.

The Government of Montenegro through ministries, but also municipal authorities² invested \$2,4 million in development through UN interventions.

Apart from the total funding that was operationalized through UN agencies, the Resident Coordinator’s Office delivered additional 140,000 USD from Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF) on coordination.

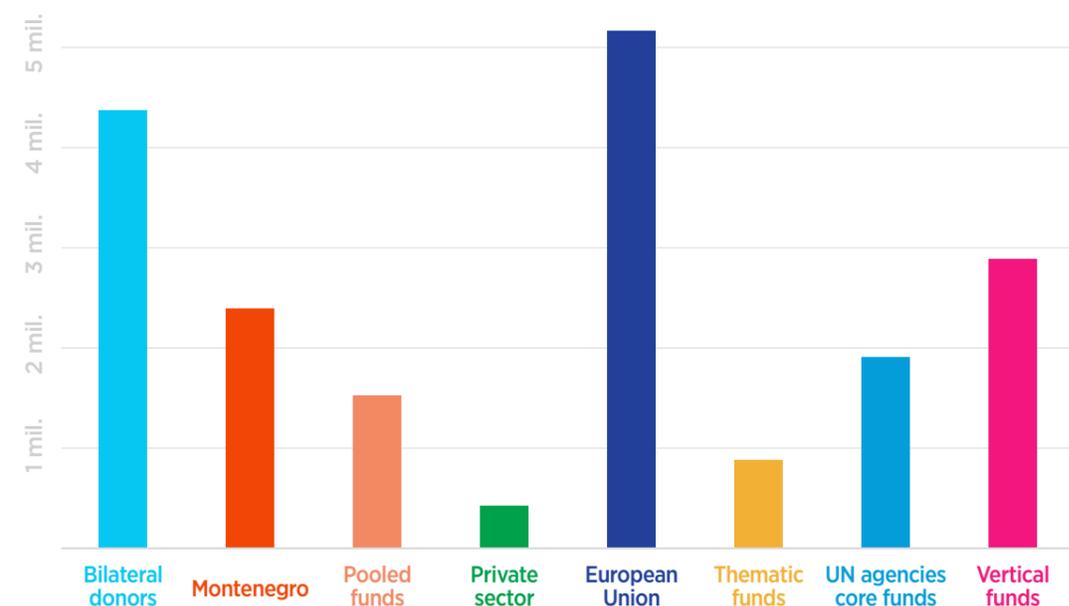


Figure 7: Total available funds, per funding modality

² Ministries of economy, culture, health, labour and social welfare, and justice; Union of municipalities, municipalities of Golubovci, Pljevlja and Old royal capital Cetinje

CHAPTER

3

UNCT key focus for next year



Figure 8: Financial framework for 2023, in USD

In 2023, the UN system and the Government of Montenegro will embark on **implementing the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 (CF)**, focusing on three key strategic priorities:

- » Inclusive economic development and environmental sustainability;
- » Human capital development, reducing vulnerabilities and social inclusion;
- » Social cohesion, people-centred governance, rule of law and human rights

The CF will be operationalized through **bi-annual Joint workplans**. Their planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting will be done through three Results groups – each focusing on one strategic priority area. The programme will be delivered by **18 UN agencies** under the overall coordination of the Joint Steering Committee composed of UNCT members and line ministries, and supported by thematic and programme support groups. The new CF will see strong horizontal coordination across the three strategic priority areas and will apply the following key strategies aiming to

accelerate progress towards Agenda 2030: a) Synergising with EU accession; b) Generating and using quality and disaggregated data; c) Digital transformation and innovation; d) SDG financing; e) Partnerships with IFIs and private sector; f) Youth participation; and g) Preventive approach.

The UNCT will continue to strengthen its work in **gender mainstreaming** through the Gender thematic group, now de-linked from human rights and LNOB which was established as a separate thematic group. This will allow both core principles to be strategically mainstreamed across programmes and operations. Furthermore, work to strengthen the UN Montenegro’s internal organizational culture will continue in two more areas: **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** and **Disability inclusion**. Each area has an accompanying Action Plan as a framework for efficient and effective inter-agency work. The UNCT will also continue to coordinate its **support to refugees from Ukraine** and provide assistance to national authorities through the UN’s Ukraine Crisis Task force.

At the operational level, the UNCT will utilize the UN's convening power more strategically, both at the national and local level, along with innovative financing solutions. The newly established **Montenegro's SDG Acceleration Fund** will provide opportunities to make transformational changes through joint programmes and will strategically target key development challenges in Montenegro. Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) will work on setting up and operationalization of the coordination structure - Fund Steering board. RCO will perform its secretarial function.

Through joint support to the **National Council on Sustainable Development**, the UNCT will collectively influence national policies and strategies towards achieving SDGs targets. Further support will be provided to the National Office for Sustainable Development in operationalization of the SDG dashboard and in further strengthening on national data collection capacities. Strategic support to National Statistical Office will be identified and provided through the work of

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning/SDG Policy working group.

UNCT will also support the country to enhance development coordination through setting up of a nationally-led **development coordination mechanism** to accelerate Agenda 2030. Based on SDG Financing analysis that has mapped state budget allocations towards SDGs, further analytical work will be conducted focusing on specific sectors and providing recommendations for improved public finance management.

Finally, the UN will utilize its knowledge and expertise to also facilitate **nation-wide dialogue** towards a politically stable and more cohesive society focused on inclusive economic and social development. RCO will coordinate production of analytical documents including regular thematic policy briefs that will gather UNCT collective knowledge and provide in-depth analyses and recommendations on selected development challenges.

Programmatic focus in three key strategic priorities



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- » Further support to the NCSD and its working groups to pursue and accelerate sustainable development of the country and implementation of the Agenda 2030.
- » Development of the national roadmap for just transition and facilitating the dialogue for just transition
- » Technical expertise to finalize development of the National Adaptation Plan
- » Further support for integrated management of flood risks at national, bilateral and regional levels
- » Capacity building for mitigation, adaptation and climate finance
- » Collection of data for development of Greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, as well as GHG emission and climate projections.
- » Mainstreaming biodiversity into sectoral policies and strategies
- » Sustainable management of natural resources Preservation and development of cultural and natural heritage of Montenegro through new policy documents
- » Supporting private sector growth through development of the National SME Strategy, networking of local infrastructure of institutions supporting SMEs development



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT, REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- » Expert support for the development of key social protection strategies including Strategies for Social Protection, on Strategy on Deinstitutionalization (adults and elderly), and the Law on Social and Child Protection
- » Expert support and capacity building in reform of the overall new legal framework for disability assessment, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- » Continue strengthening of the institutional set-up for prevention and protection of children from all forms of violence and exploitation
- » Continue to provide further development of Social Welfare Information System for effective provision of social cash transfers, social services and business intelligence for reporting, monitoring and policy development.
- » Continue with the implementation of services – such as human center design focusing on youth and social protection beneficiaries' activation and labor market inclusion
- » Increase the capacity of the authorities to enable persons of concern to UNHCR unhindered access to the territory, legal status, and access to rights and services as stipulated by the law governing international and temporary protection of foreigners.
- » Continue providing needs-based support to the authorities as to further enhance migrant response and better migration management of mixed migration flows
- » Initiate development of a comprehensive Education Reform Strategy for the period up to 2030 that will steer education reform until 2030 including commitments from Transformation Education Summit.
- » Expand the early childhood development and health programs, including quality maternal care, vaccination, improved access to essential health services, diagnostics and medications.
- » Continue placing in focus persons at risk of being left behind (such as Roma and Egyptians), throughout all the priority interventions



Photo: UNDP Montenegro



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3:
SOCIAL COHESION, PEOPLE-CENTRED
GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW
AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

- » Support for transparent and accountable governance at the local and national level
- » Public finance strengthening, including the framework for programme, gender, disability inclusive and child rights budgeting
- » Support the country to strengthen social cohesion, dialogue, tackle and prevent hate speech and to support addressing transitional justice issues
- » Technical support to State Institutions and civil society to engage with the UN human rights mechanisms and assistance and advocacy to increase implementation of mechanisms' recommendations
- » Cooperation and support to key duty bearers (Government, Parliament, Ombudsman office, judiciary) and rights holders (civil society, academia) – with a focus on children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities and maintaining civic space
- » Support the Council on the Rights of the Child as the expert body for improved child rights monitoring
- » Technical support on key draft legislation, including in the area of anti-discrimination
- » Support digitalization and data interoperability across sectors
- » Support authorities in improving response to the invasion of Ukraine crisis and implementation of activities foreseen by the 2023-2024 AP to the Strategy on Migration.
- » Free legal aid to remaining refugees from former Yugoslavia to acquire a stable legal status in Montenegro
- » Support to strengthen the asylum system and securing better protection of stateless persons.
- » Implementation of Integrated Border Management Strategy and Schengen Action Plan in areas of border security, migrant identification and registration and information management
- » Further interventions in the areas of anti-corruption, fighting trafficking in persons, illicit trafficking of cultural property



Photo: Marko Jilic/UN Montenegro

List of acronyms and abbreviations

- BOS - Business Operations Strategy
- CB - capital budgeting
- CCA - Common Country Analysis
- CF - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
- CSO - Civil society organization
- DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction
- GBV - Gender-based violence
- GHG - Greenhouse gas
- IFI - International financial institutions
- LNOB - Leave no one behind
- MEDT - Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism
- MESPU - Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism
- MLSW - Ministry of Labour and social Welfare
- NCSD - National Council for Sustainable Development
- NDC - Nationally Determined Contributions
- PSEA - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- RCO - Resident Coordinator`s Office
- SDG - Sustainable Development Goal
- SME - Small and medium-sized enterprise
- SOP - Standard Operating Procedures
- STEM - Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- UNCT - UN Country Team
- UNDAF- United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- UNPRPD - UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- VNR - Voluntary National Review

2022 UN Country Team Results Report

MONTENEGRO