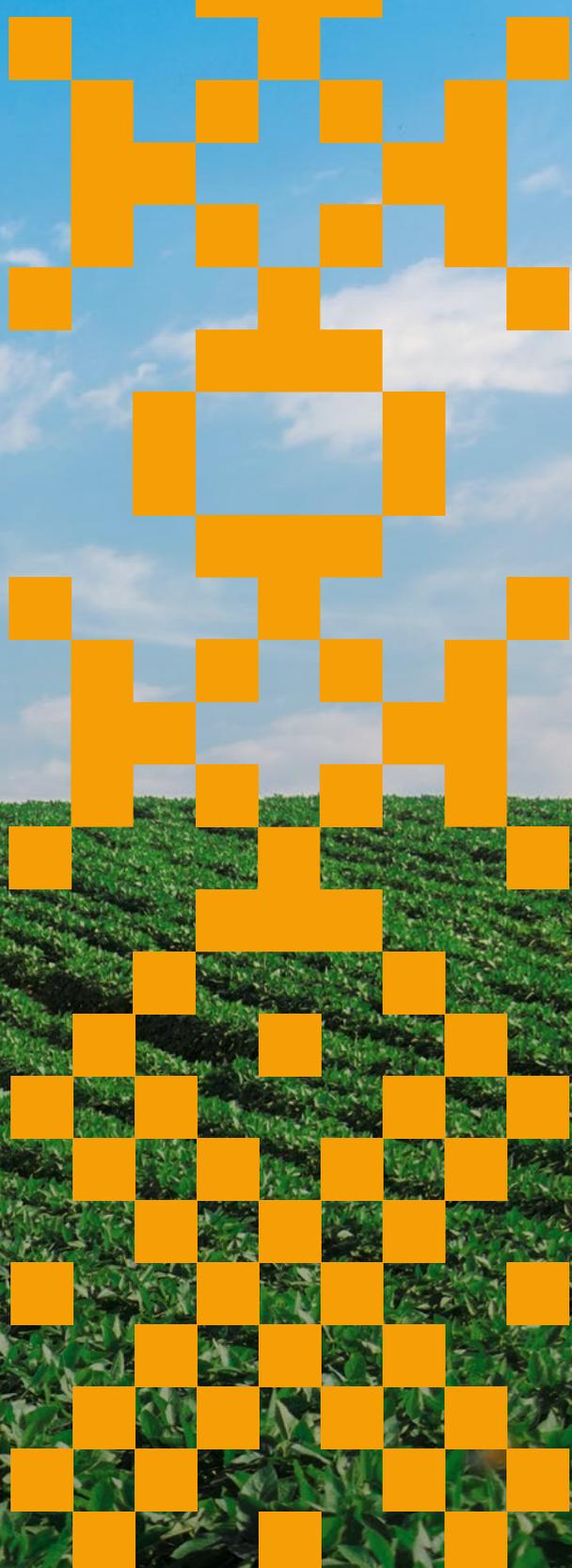




UNITED NATIONS
SERBIA



United Nations Serbia

2022
RESULTS
REPORT



FOREWORD BY THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

2022 was a tumultuous year. We learned once again that our strength, as humanity, lies in our capacity to sustain rapid changes and respond to multiple crises, adapt, and manage uncertainties. 2022 also reminded us that we need to accelerate fundamental transformations in our economic and social models, anticipate risks and take robust preventive actions. The global nature of the poly-crisis that we are facing - from the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and its impact on food security and the cost of energy, the renewed nuclear threat, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution - has contributed to increased inequalities within countries, and between countries.

In 2022, Serbia showed a high degree of resilience to multiple stresses. While inflationary trends increased, the country remained self-sufficient with local food production. Rising energy costs were mitigated by the local coal production as well as supportive measures by the government. These impacted favorably households' and businesses' bills for power, heating, production, and transport. Legislative changes and innovations continued, although at a slower pace than in 2021. Ahead of COP27, Serbia endorsed its updated National Determined Contribution, laying the ground for more dedicated actions to fight climate change. With the development and publication of the Leave-No-One-Behind tool¹ that will be mainstreamed through all legislation, Serbia made a strong commitment to one of the key principles of Agenda 2030, as an attempt to fight inequalities more systematically. The most vulnerable and invisible segments of the population are still facing hardship in many areas of life, be it housing conditions, access to decent work or specialized social protection services. GDP grew at 2.3%², and the fiscal situation of the country remains stable overall. Foreign investments increased, in both traditional industries (agrobusiness) and high technological ones (biotech in particular). The construction sector expanded with both large public infrastructure projects and real estate development in main cities. At the regional level, initiatives to facilitate mobility, trade and investment have moved forward but have been shadowed by divisive narratives across the region.

The protracted election proceedings, which started late January 2022 with candidates' campaigns and ended by October with the appointment of a new cabinet, was an impediment to the reform process in several sectors. Coupled with the energy crisis, this slowed down legislative and implementation actions towards several sensitive or complex files, including on the green transformation and other environmental related challenges such

as air pollution. At the same time, citizens' main concerns shifted away from environmental and public health matters, focusing on rising costs of living generated by global trends as well as by the influx of foreigners in Belgrade and Novi Sad.

Serbia consistently condemned Russia actions at the UN general assembly and in the UN human rights council but stayed short of full alignment with the EU foreign policy, most specifically as regards to the economic sanctions. This political position was shaped by dissenting and polarised opinions in country about the war in Ukraine, pragmatic security and energy concerns, a tradition of non-alignment, and the absence of a tangible timeframe for EU accession. Tensions between Belgrade and Pristina rose throughout the second half of the year, culminating in late December, and posing new challenges to the EU-facilitated dialogue. Confrontations on the ground, withdrawals of Serbs from public institutions, and other symptoms of instability diverted political energy and attention away from other priorities, including sustainable development. Looking forward, Serbia remains at the center of diplomatic efforts to secure improved regional stability and cooperation.

Mixed migration movements increased in 2022. The number of estimated refugees and migrants who entered Serbia doubled from 2021, reaching over 124,000 (not including arrivals from Ukraine and Russia) – with many transiting towards the EU. Hosting conditions are adequate in country and opportunities exist for integration, whereas the fair and fast asylum procedures will require further investment. High-risk crossing paths continued to pose a threat for individuals and families, with a persistent risk of trafficking and exploitation of those most vulnerable. Serbia has significantly augmented and aligned its legislation related to human rights, discrimination, gender equality and gender-based violence with EU and UN standards. Yet incidents challenging EU and UN standards of fundamental rights and freedoms and inciting hate have taken place throughout the year with little condemnation.

In this complex environment, the United Nations in Serbia accelerated its own pace of action on the three strategic priorities agreed with the Government of Serbia under the 2021-2025 Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: the green transformation, building on the human capital, and strengthening the rule of law and human rights agenda. This report presents some of the most significant joint achievements of the UN family and its partners in Serbia.

Françoise Jacob

¹ <https://serbia.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/the-tool-for-the-introduction-of-the-Inob-principle-sprds.pdf>
² https://www.nbs.rs/export/sites/NBS_site/documents-eng/finansijska-stabilnost/presentation_invest.pdf

United Nations Serbia

2022
RESULTS
REPORT

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UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM IN SERBIA



A total of 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes comprise the Country Team in Serbia, chaired by the Resident Coordinator, the designated representative of the Secretary General for development operations in the country. The twelve UN agencies operate with an in-country presence, a number that has steadily increased over the years, and eight non-resident agencies. Three new agencies joined in 2021: the International Telecommunication Agency, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), which assigned in late 2022 a dedicated Urban Planning Advisor in the Resident Coordinator's Office in support of the sustainable urban planning agenda.

The UN Country Team leads the implementation of Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, with its Steering Committee chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator with the Deputy Prime Minister / Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of European Integration. The UN Team works together with the Government and other partners to harness the full potential of green, sustainable and inclusive development, reduce inequalities to enhancing well-being, social equity and human potential, and build trust and mutual accountability in the country and across the region of Western Balkans, in line with the EU Accession and Agenda 2030.

Key development partners of the UN in Serbia

The UN system's key development partners include the Government of Serbia, donor governments and development agencies, international development organizations and financial institutions, civil society organisations, academia and think-tanks, religious leaders, the private sector, and the media.

The UN Country Team expresses its deep appreciation to the donors and financial contributors who supported UN initiatives in 2022 both financially and in-kind, and to our dedicated implementing partners who supported our work in 2022.



KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN SERBIA AND REGIONAL CONTEXT



In 2022, Serbia's economy and society proved relatively resilient to the challenges that confront the whole region. Preliminary estimates indicate that the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 2.3 percent, while the at-risk-of-poverty rate fell by 0.5 percent. The labour market performed strongly, recording an increase of 2.4 percent year-on-year in the total number of employed persons in the final quarter of 2022. The debt to GDP ratio stood at 53.5 percent of GDP, down from 56.5 percent one year earlier.

Unfavourable demographic dynamics were evidenced from the early results of the 2022 census by a 6.9 percent contraction in Serbia's population size. An estimated 22 percent of women and girls were victims of violence by an intimate partner, and the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic remained apparent in the lives of Serbian citizens. The geopolitical upheaval sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulted in multiple disruptions in the food and energy markets, soaring inflation and high interest rates. Throughout the year, the government cushioned the effect of the price increases on the most vulnerable through price caps and subsidies and the adoption of a "Regulation on vulnerable energy customers".

Despite a slower rhythm of reform due to the political cycle – with elections in April and the government inauguration in October – important policy priorities progressed. These included a New Strategy for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination 2022-2030, and constitutional changes – approved by referendum. Once fully integrated into the legislative framework, these are expected to result in an increased level of independence of judges from political influence.

Government established a coordinating body for the social inclusion of Roma men and women. Serbia extended its assistance to an increased number of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who transited and in smaller numbers, remained in the country, providing for 6,000 accommodation places in government centers. Serbia's level of human capital increased from 2010 to 2022, reflecting both longer years of schooling and enhanced quality of learning. Environmental challenges continued to impact upon citizens' health. Levels of air pollutants,

particularly in cities, rebounded after the COVID-19 related lockdowns were lifted, while the rate of municipal waste that is recycled continued to stagnate at around 2% of total waste generated by households. In response, the Air Protection Program until 2030 and a related Action Plan for the period until 2026 were adopted, alongside the Draft Programme for Circular Economy 2022-2024. The impact of the climate crisis became more visible, as the protracted heatwave and drought of the summer of 2022 resulted in the loss of hydroelectric power, reduced agricultural production and increased health hazards, especially for vulnerable groups. The country submitted its revised National Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in August 2022, committing to an unconditional emissions reduction target of 13.2 percent compared to 2010 levels, or 33.3 percent compared to 1990 levels, by 2030.

Serbia is making progress towards achievement of Agenda 2030 in several key areas, as evidenced by analysis by the National Statistical Office that shows progress in 43 indicators and the recent Sustainable Development Solutions Network index, which gives a score of 75.9, exceeding the regional average by more than four percent and the EU average by three percent.

At the regional level, within the Berlin Process, regional agreements were signed facilitating movement of citizens across borders and the integration of the job markets of the Western Balkan countries. Cooperation with Albania and North Macedonia also continued under the regionally based Open Balkan Initiative.

<p>Population</p> <p>6,690,887</p> <p>(2022 Census; Statistical Office of RS)</p>	<p>Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training</p> <p>M:18.3 F:16.9</p> <p>(2021; Statistical Office of RS)</p>	<p>Global Freedom Score</p> <p>62/100</p> <p>(Partly Free) (Freedom House, 2022)</p>
<p>Number of enumerated households</p> <p>2 520 854</p> <p>(2022 Census; Statistical Office of RS)</p>	<p>Unemployment rate (15 and over)</p> <p>9.2%</p> <p>(2022, IV quarter; Statistical Office of RS)</p>	<p>Internet Freedom Score</p> <p>72/100</p> <p>(Free) (Freedom House, 2022)</p>
<p>At-risk-of-poverty rate</p> <p>21.2%</p> <p>(2021; Statistical Office of RS)</p>	<p>Geographical area</p> <p>77,474 km²</p> <p>88,361 km² with Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99 (Statistical Office of RS)</p>	<p>HDI 0.802</p> <p>63/189</p> <p>(2020; United Nations Development Programme, UNDP)</p>
<p>GDP real growth</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>(IMF)</p>	<p>Female legislators, senior officials and managers, percent of total</p> <p>33% of total</p> <p>(UNECE)</p>	<p>Rule of Law Index: 0.49</p> <p>83/140</p> <p>(regional 9/14; 2021; World Justice Project, 2022)</p>
		<p>Corruption perception index: score</p> <p>36/100</p> <p>(Transparency, 2022)</p>

THE UN TEAM IN SERBIA SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

2.1. Executive Summary

In 2022, the UN Country Team in Serbia continued its efforts towards a green transformation, reducing inequalities, promoting human rights, democracy, and gender equality, and upholding the values of the common good. The team focused on supporting the country's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The crisis in Ukraine brought further strain to the economy and social systems, and the UN team responded by adjusting its programming to address these challenges. It also strengthened its efforts to increase socio-economic resilience and improve the country's shock-responsive system.

Efforts were increased towards the green transformation vision, building the necessary capacities to implement it in line with the updated Nationally Determined Contribution submitted in the summer of 2022.

Support to the strengthening of the legislative and regulatory framework expanded, while the concept of Just Transition was successfully mainstreamed into strategies on the energy transition, with emphasized efforts to adopt Just Transition and the Leave No One Behind approach in key future investments. The UN agencies worked together on issues including air pollution, energy efficiency, energy poverty and circular economy initiatives. Consultations at the local and central levels were organized in preparation for Serbia's participation in COP27, with the goal of increasing the government's ambition to fully implement the EU Green Agenda for Western Balkans with support from the community, private sector, state and civil society.

With the new government in place, the UN continued to support the development and implementation of human rights reforms, including approval of The tool for mainstreaming the Leave No One Behind principle

in policy development, and continued to support the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue as a focal point for ensuring policies that align with human rights and Leave No One Behind values and methodology.

The UN also supported global initiatives, such as the advancement of the food systems pathway, in an effort to find solutions, coordinate cross-sectoral coordination and allocate resources and capacities towards the sustainable transformation of food systems. The UN joined forces to prepare Serbia's commitment to transforming its education system and ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education by 2030. Prior to the World Urban Forum 11, Serbia was one of only thirteen countries globally to organize a National Urban Forum to review key topics and activities in urban development and related policies.

Further prioritization was given to data and evidence collection for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as support to the National Statistical Office of Serbia in SDG data reporting, resulting in an increase in the number of reporting indicators. The UN in Serbia volunteered as an early adopter of contributing to the measurement of 22 global SDG indicators, which will be reported in the 'Annual reporting on system-wide support to the Sustainable Development Goals' to the UN Economic and Social Council in May 2023.

UNCT 2022 Cooperation Framework Outcome expenditure focus on SDGs

PRIORITY 1

Green economy and climate change

- 1.1 Environment and climate change
- 1.2 Natural and cultural resources
- 1.3 Economic opportunities, labour and agriculture

PRIORITY 2

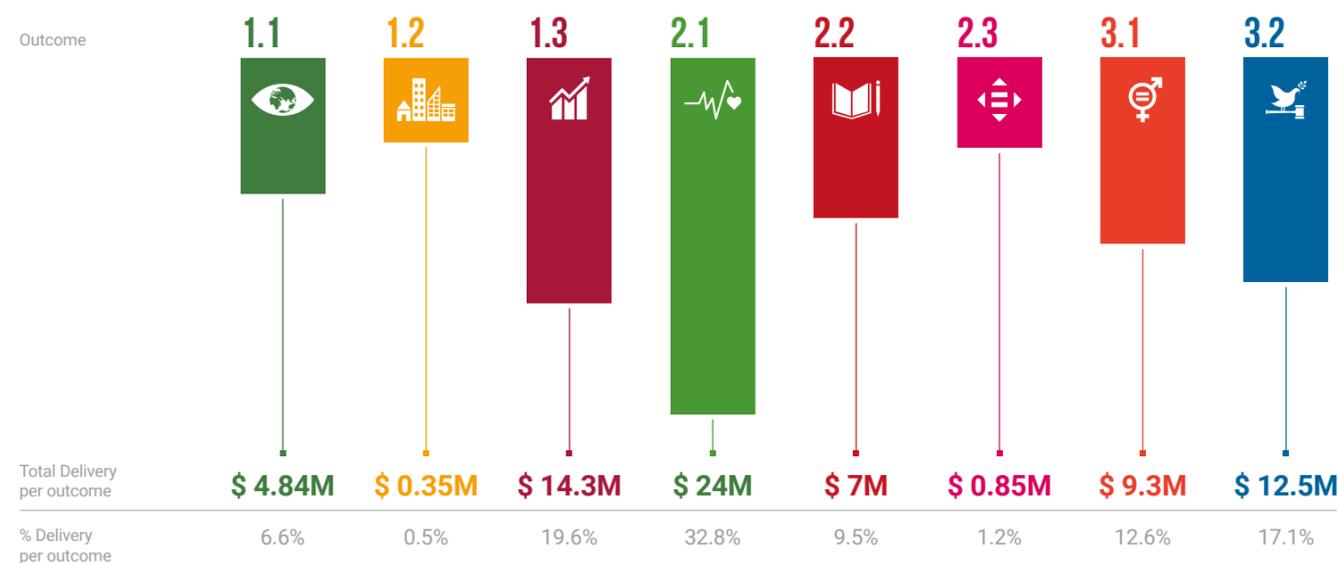
Well-being, social equity and human capital

- 2.1 Health and social protection
- 2.2 Skills and education
- 2.3 Mobility and demographic transition

PRIORITY 3

Rule of law, human rights and gender equality

- 3.1 Human rights, rule of law
- 3.2 Effective governance and civic engagement



2.2. Overview – Achieving results for Serbia

In its second year of implementing the Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, the UN Country Team remained committed to supporting Serbia's sustainable development and path towards EU integration. The Cooperation Framework remained the cornerstone of the UN's coordinated efforts with the government, with a strong emphasis on achieving the SDGs. The Team worked closely with government institutions, guided by the UNSDCF Joint National Steering Committee, which is chaired by the Minister of European Integration, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Resident Coordinator, and gathers together 23 line ministries and government institutions.



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Multiyear Funding Overview (Year 2021– 2025)

Yearly funding overview in 2022

1.1 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Output 1.1.1	83%
Output 1.1.2	78%
Output 1.1.3	100%
Output 1.1.4	100%

1.2 NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Output 1.2.1	44%
Output 1.2.2	83%

1.3 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, LABOUR AND AGRICULTURE

Output 1.3.1	100%
Output 1.3.2	100%
Output 1.3.3	33%
Output 1.3.4	58%

2.1 HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Output 2.1.1	74%
Output 2.1.2	91%
Output 2.1.3	100%

2.2 SKILLS AND EDUCATION

Output 2.2.1	73%
Output 2.2.2	80%
Output 2.2.3	100%

2.3 MOBILITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION

Output 2.3.1	88%
Output 2.3.2	100%
Output 2.3.3	100%

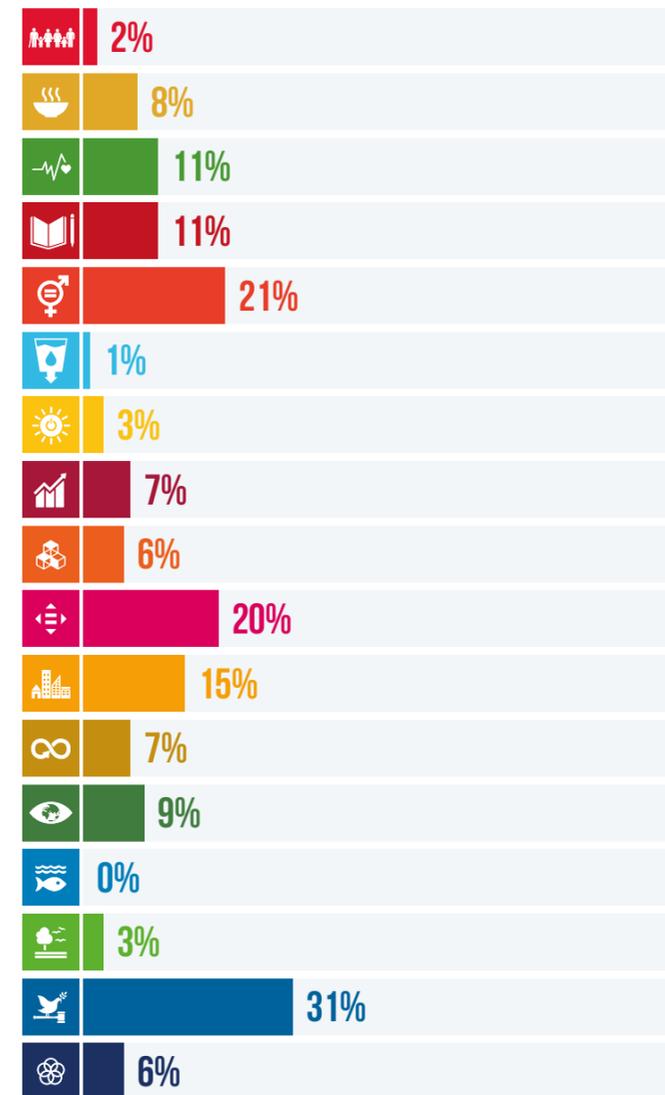
3.1 HUMAN RIGHTS, RULE OF LAW

Output 3.1.1	90%
Output 3.1.2	100%
Output 3.1.3	72%

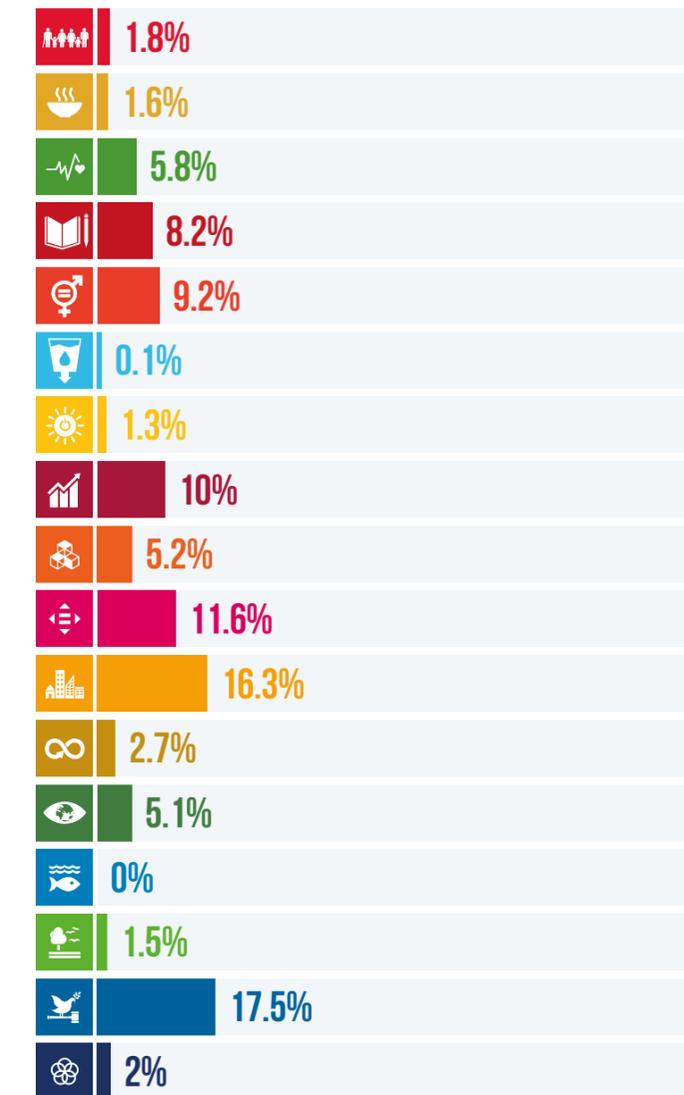
3.2 EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Output 3.2.1	92%
Output 3.2.2	93%
Output 3.2.3	68%
Output 3.2.4	33%

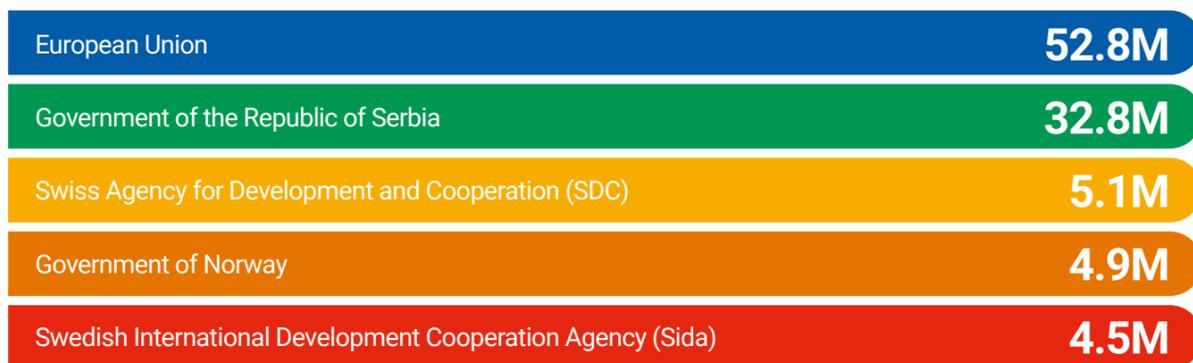
Achievement of Cooperation Framework indicators in 2022 Outcome & Output Results Framework



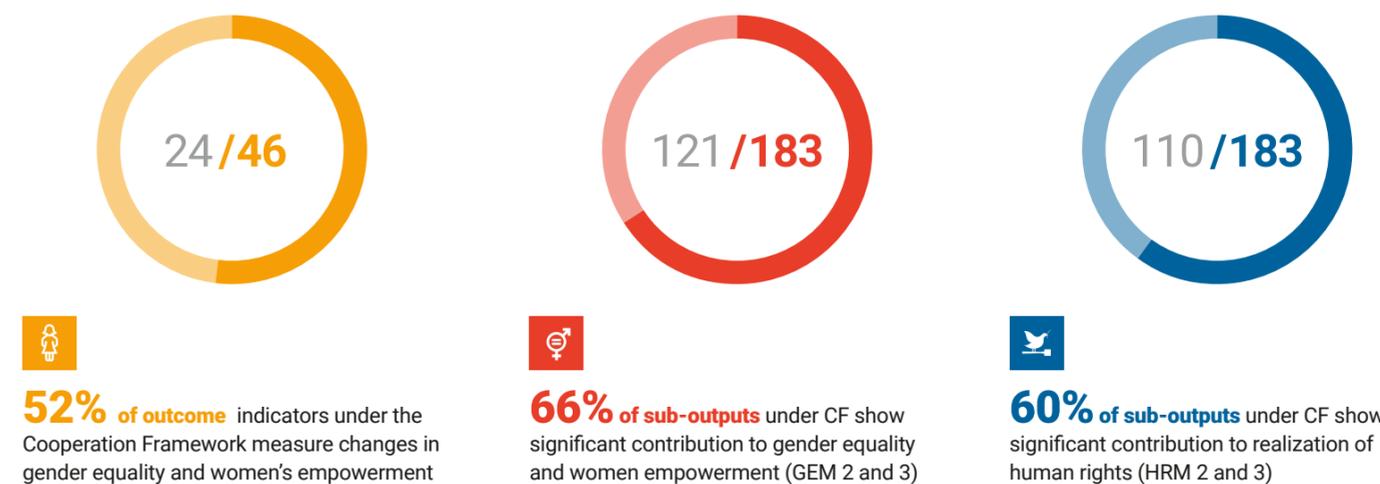
% of Suboutputs tagged to SDGs



How the UN contributes to Sustainable Development Goals in 2022?



Top 5 contributing partners to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in 2022



Serbia is an early adopter of the Global Output Indicator Framework for UNCT Reporting to ECOSOC 2023. This section provides a snapshot of the results achieved in 2022 at country-level for 22 out of 64 indicators of the UNSDG Output Indicator Framework.



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TARGET 8-1
A legal framework giving effect to international human rights norms and standards in work is developed



TARGET 8-2
410 private sector entities (including MSMEs)

have improved performance and income generation



TARGET 8-3
2 workers organizations

have increased capacity to promote employment and decent work



TARGET 10-3
At least **6,700** internally displaced, migrants, refugees benefited from integrated and targeted interventions, including on strengthening social cohesion



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TARGET 3-3
616 Women

benefited from UN supported sexual and reproductive health services



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TARGET 11-1
National urban policies (NUP) to support sustainable cities and communities are formulated and resourced. Implementation in progress.



TARGET 11-2
UN supported government

enhanced participatory urban planning



TARGET 13-1
Work started on policy measures and implementation of National Determined Contributions (NDC) under Paris Agreement



TARGET 13-3
Draft Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management 2022-2027 prepared



TARGET 4-1
Extent to which the education system is inclusive and gender equitable for access to learning opportunities (scale 0 -7): 4



TARGET 5-1
Access to SRH care: 9-valent HPV vaccine (9vHPV) included the list of drugs covered by health insurance for boys and girls aged 9-19

TARGET 5-4
National mechanism to address discriminatory gender and social norms is in place

TARGET 5-7
Mechanisms are in place to advance women's and girls' decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care



TARGET 4-3
830 people

benefited from access to skills and lifelong learning



TARGET 5-2
18 measures

implemented with UN support to address discriminatory gender and social norms, stereotypes and practices



TARGET 5-8
129,769 children and adults

have access to safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian, development, protection personnel



TARGET 16-2
Oversight, accountability, or protection mechanisms conforming to international human rights standards are partially in place with work remaining on their functioning



TARGET 16-3
4 initiatives implemented

to end all forms of violence and promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice



TARGET 16-4
Progress made in meaningful participation of rights holders (especially women) in public processes



TARGET 16-6
UN supports access

to justice for vulnerable groups



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TARGET 9-2
161 private sector entities (including MSMEs)

innovated business practices by mainstreaming environmental sustainability elements



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TARGET 17-3
Data collection and analysis mechanism

providing disaggregated data to monitor progress towards the SDGs in place

2.3 Achieving results for Serbia – detailed analysis

PRIORITY 1

GREEN ECONOMY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGS



28 large central government buildings rehabilitated
totalling 208,000 m2, with 50% being heritage buildings with energy



Updated Nationally Determined Contribution approved

31 local self-governments

and **1.6M inhabitants** benefit from territorial instruments



Artificial Intelligence Institute and Centre for the 4th Industrial Revolution established

1.600 participants

employed in the information technology sector in Serbia due to programming languages and in soft skills training

8



3.9M

9



7M

10



3.3M

11



7M

OTHER

7.3M

DELIVERY
28,5M

CONTRIBUTING UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES:



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Serbia takes step closer to achieving climate change goals, boosting quality of life for citizens

Ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference COP27, a National dialogue on climate change was held in Serbia.

The United Nations and its partners reaffirmed its commitment to working with Serbia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 13.2 percent compared to 2010 level, creating a low carbon society with a competitive, resource-efficient economy. This will improve the quality of life for citizens and create a climate-resilient society, unlocking multiple opportunities for businesses, creating benefits for the wellbeing of citizens, and rallying the power and energy of the youth to build a new future.

OUTCOME 1.1

Serbia adopts and implements climate change and environmentally friendly strategies that increase community resilience, decrease its carbon footprint and amplify equitable benefits of investments



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Marking the World Bicycle and Environment days with partners. ©UN Serbia/Jadranka Ilic

In 2022, the Government of Serbia, with the support of the UN and partners, made efforts to address the impacts of climate change and increase the country's resilience. These efforts focused on several key areas, including the transition to clean energy and energy efficiency, reducing air pollution through pilot projects, financing green initiatives, raising public awareness of climate change, strengthening the country's infrastructure to better withstand its impacts, and improving community resilience through disaster risk reduction and climate-smart agriculture.

Serbia is taking a comprehensive approach to climate action and transitioning towards a low-carbon economy, guided by the [EU Green Agenda for the Western Balkans](#) and in accordance with the three Rio Conventions. The country has also taken a number of legislative steps to upgrade its energy sector, combat climate change and pollution, and protect the environment. In September 2022, government launched the development of the National Environmental Protection Strategy. An updated Nationally Determined Contribution has been approved, and the development of a greenhouse gas monitoring system initiated.

Output 1.1.1. Clean energy and energy efficiency

The UN continued to support energy efficiency in buildings in the public, corporate and industry sectors through policy improvement and pilot investments. Support was provided to the Ministry of Mining and Energy in implementing an energy management information system and drafting two energy efficiency regulations aligned with the EU acquis. This important policy framework was supported by the preparation of an ex-ante analysis and a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Study for the National Climate Change Adaptation Programme and implementation of a EUR 40 million sovereign loan and a EUR 0.9 million grant from the Central European Bank. This financing will serve the energy rehabilitation of 28 large central government buildings, totalling 208,000 m2, with 50 percent comprising heritage buildings. Assistance was provided in setting minimum energy efficiency requirements, conducting detailed energy audits and preparing feasibility studies and design documents for the rehabilitation efforts (UNDP).

A [Nexus Roadmap for the Drina basin](#), including 10 key objectives for coordinated cross-sectoral policy and transboundary governance, was approved contributing to Assessment of energy-water nexus synergy opportunities, including renewable energy (UNECE).

Output 1.1.2. Clean air

UN agencies worked together to support implementation of clean air strategies in Serbia. Joint work results included improved policies and legislation, supporting pilot projects, financing green initiatives, and collecting data on, and raising awareness of, the effects of air pollution. UNDP launched a [challenge for innovative solutions for cleaner air](#) and selected fourteen innovations for acceleration. A total of 29 local self-governments increased their capacities to improve air quality through direct support and training. Schoolchildren, adolescent girls and boys, and their parents in 15 municipalities have increased knowledge and information on air pollution due to training provided by UNICEF. Youth, a key player in action for climate change, drafted a [Youth Declaration on Air Pollution](#) further to consultations held across the country. Capacities of stakeholders to design and implement nature-based solutions to mitigate air pollution were strengthened in the framework of a joint project implemented by UNEP in partnership with UN-Habitat. Two assessments supported by UNEP addressed the impact of landfill fires on air pollution and health, as well as the impact of individual residential heating on air quality and health. Air quality guidelines prepared and translated into Serbian through WHO support are expected to save lives by reducing preventable air pollutant deaths.

Output 1.1.3. Climate change, infrastructure

In the summer of 2022, the updated Nationally Determined Contribution was approved and submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, with ambitious commitments. In partnership with the UN, the Ministry of Environmental Protection held a [dialogue on climate change ahead of the UN Climate Change COP27](#) to engage relevant actors, including several consultations with youth. A series of dialogues were held in support of the country's participation in the "Stockholm+50" conference, enhancing the general public's awareness of the interlinked challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Serbia, as party to the Convention on Trans-boundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, has received support in implementing the National Policy Dialogue for Industrial Safety. A [Steering Committee meeting took place in March 2022](#), resulting in agreement on a common approach



Support **29** local self-governments to improve air quality:

12 local self-governments receive direct support in the development and improvement of local action plans for air quality management, while an additional **17** local self-governments have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills through training, so that they can better plan and implement air protection measures.



Ex-post regulatory impact analysis of the Law on Air Protection is under way as a first step in the preparation of a new law.

15 municipalities in central and south-west Serbia were provided with opportunities to learn about air pollution in their local communities, with

135 low-cost air pollution sensor devices installed in

45 schools.

An Internet of Things platform was developed to handle the data, and a website designed to present the platform.

Zero-setting and calibration of devices was completed, and quality assurance procedures were developed.

and development of a draft National Programme on Industrial Safety. Synergies were identified between risk mapping, local level resilience and the urban development strategy (UNECE).

The [Digital Climate Atlas of Serbia](#), based on the latest climate data, is fully operational and linked to the country's Disaster Risk Registry. The Ministry of Environmental Protection initiated development of an Information system for monitoring, reporting and verifying greenhouse gas emissions (UNDP).

Serbia made the most of its participation in the 11th World Urban Forum in 2022, showcasing its achievements in sustainable urban renovation and holding a National Urban Forum to review key topics in urban development (UN-Habitat).

EUR 40M

SOVEREIGN LOAN

EUR 0.9M

GRANT FROM THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN BANK

Output 1.1.4 Community Resilience

With UN Serbia support, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management has taken significant steps to improve disaster risk reduction and climate smart agriculture. A comprehensive capacity development programme was developed and implemented, with 50 staff participating. The Ministry established a working group for climate change, comprising representatives from various sectors, to address climate risks affecting agriculture. As a result of FAO support, 23 local self-governments possess strengthened capacities to map the main risks and develop plans for improving resilience and address risks affecting the sector, while new training modules on climate smart agriculture and disaster risk reduction were developed and included in the Annual Programme for development of advisory services in agriculture for 2022. Some 300 agricultural advisors participated in implementation of the programme.

The first draft of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy was prepared by the Sector for Emergency Management at the Ministry of Interior and includes a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment methodology, while a Disaster Risk Register of Serbia was developed and launched, including data on specific risks: floods, landslides, fires and earthquakes (UNDP and UNDRR). The register is modular and can add new risks, such as those to health. Work was done to support disaster resilience and risk management for small and medium-sized enterprises. An international Disaster Risk Reduction conference was organized jointly with the Faculty of Security Studies, University of Belgrade, and the Sector for Emergency Management in the Ministry of Interior. Efforts are under way to capacitate various government actors on climate change adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in selected UNESCO designated sites.

As part of the [EU for Resilient Serbia programme](#)

900 LOCAL LEVEL ACTORS in 14 districts of the country will use their strengthened knowledge and skills in disaster risk reduction, civil protection, post-disaster recovery, and climate change adaptation (UNDP).

28 local self-governments were engaged in the framework of the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative, and nine local governments conducted baseline resilience assessments (UNDP and UNDRR).

OUTCOME 1.2

Natural and cultural resources are managed in a sustainable way

The Innovation Challenge Call for Solutions for forest ecosystem restoration and greening (green infrastructure) was launched with **26** applications received

EUR 3.2M TOTAL INVESTMENTS

The projects will contribute to increasing carbon sinks through afforestation, increasing surface areas under green infrastructure with multiple benefits from a reduction in wind erosion, landslides and floods (UNDP).

Output 1.2.1 Cultural and historical resources

The UN supported Serbia's cultural and historical resources areas among those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme [Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans](#) is in a preparatory inception phase with focus on fostering intercultural dialogue and reconciliation in the region by strengthening the cultural and creative sectors for an increased socio-economic impact (UNESCO).

Output 1.2.2. Ecosystems and biodiversity

The UN provided support to the forestry sector, particularly to the Directorate for Forestry at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Water Management, aiming at improved capacities for the management of sustainable forests. To support the process of stocktaking for the national forest inventory methodologies and field manuals were developed, relevant staff trained at the national level and field measurements conducted. Meanwhile, demonstration plots and 20 guidelines for management practices in different forest types were established (FAO).

UNDP and UNEP, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, began implementation of a new project funded by Sweden 'EU for Green Agenda in Serbia: Protecting and investing in biodiversity and water for enhanced climate resilience'. The project will strengthen the implementation of the fourth pillar of the Green Agenda in Serbia related to nature and biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration in direct coordination with the ministry.

Serbia actively participated in the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) held in December 2022 in Montreal, Canada. The country's efforts in preserving mountain ecosystems, for example by expanding tree cover and revitalizing pastures in protected areas, were recognized under Multi-country Mountain Initiative - one of ten pioneering efforts to revive the natural world (UNEP).

OUTCOME 1.3

Equitable economic and employment opportunities are promoted through innovation



Output 1.3.1 Local development strategies

UN agencies continued to support local development strategies that adopt an area-based approach in addressing challenges for the development of rural areas, and to develop economic opportunities outside of urban centres.

A total of twelve selected local self-governments strengthened their capacities and are in the process of developing territorial strategies in line with the [Strategy of Sustainable Urban Development of the Republic of Serbia until 2030](#) and the [EU Cohesion Policy objectives](#). Some 31 local self-governments with a population of approximately 1.6 million inhabitants will benefit from this process, which will bring these territories closer to the EU through the use of territorial instruments in line with the EU Cohesion Policy. Further to the approval of the strategies, implementation of projects will be supported through a grant scheme of EUR 10 million planned to be launched in late 2023.

Under the [EU for Local Development Programme](#), implemented by UNOPS:

120 PARTICIPANTS (including 74 women; 61.7%) from

51 local self-governments and

10 Regional Development Agencies

BENEFITED FROM THE CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES.

Output 1.3.2 Economic transformation

In the agriculture sector, Serbia is promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, such as water management, soil conservation and the use of renewable energy sources. These practices not only help reduce emissions, but also improve the resilience of farmers and the local community to the impacts of climate change. As part of its support to the implementation of the Food Systems pathway, the UN provided ongoing policy advice and technical assistance to the national convener, the Ministry of Agriculture. The aim was to enhance the Ministry's capacities and facilitate greater coordination through the inter-ministerial technical working group that was recently established. Through dialogue sessions held at both the central and local levels, a roadmap for food system transformation for the 2022-2024 period was developed.

To increase the level of economic activity – by improving competitiveness and productivity – a number of actions were taken by the UN both in the field of policy and for capacity building, as follows:

- Ministry of Environmental Protection integrated circular economy principles into local waste management plans, and a draft law on organic farming was developed, aligned with EU legislation (UNDP).
- In cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and the Green Climate Fund a roadmap was drafted for scaling up private sector participation in climate action. The roadmap proposes targeted action on how to enable and actively involve the private sector in climate financing, and is followed by a communication campaign with the aim of raising awareness in the private sector and general population on climate change issues and climate financing (FAO).



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Output 1.3.3.

Science, technology and innovation

UN agencies have been promoting a change in attitudes of public servants towards citizens, enhancing the understanding of the needs and expectations of those they serve, as well as engage with them to gather feedback. This is also crucial for a successful implementation of the digital transformation in the country. In support, the UN developed a new [e-Government programme](#) with an accompanying action plan, a training programme for civil servants, a service design manual, methodology for measuring the uptake of e-Services and ethical guidelines for artificial intelligence.

The UN provided support for the establishment of the [Artificial Intelligence Institute](#) and the [Centre for the 4th Industrial Revolution](#), as well as the development of the [BioTech ecosystem](#). This will enable Serbia to harness the potential of emerging technologies and address challenges in the health, environment, energy, public and education sectors. Additionally, the first [National Centre for IT Competences](#) was launched to attract skilled and talented students to public institutions.

Common e-Government platforms such as the government network, government cloud and government service bus were established to improve security, optimize human resources and reduce costs while providing rapid access to integrated e-Government services. The [Open Data Hub](#), a virtual resource centre, was launched, providing support to various stakeholders including media, academia, start-ups, small and medium enterprises and CSOs for innovative use of open data and capacity building. Thanks to these efforts, Serbia has improved its ranking in the UN e-Government Survey 2022, moving from the high to the very high category. The growing demand among citizens for open data on health, finance and the environment requires increasing accountability and transparency in the decision-making process.

Output 1.3.4

Decent employment

The UN's main focus remained in promoting job creation and in strengthening the decent work framework and the attainment of fundamental labour rights.

To achieve results, assistance was provided to the Ministry of Labour, the employment, veteran and social policy and the National Employment Service with regard to two measures – the Youth Guarantee and progressive labour income taxation – of the Employment Action Plan 2021–2023. The Inter-ministerial working group was capacitated for design of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (ILO).

An IT retraining programme for people with disabilities was offered. Some 1,255 participants (30% women) had better employability in this, the fastest growing, sector in Serbia due to training provided in both programming languages and soft skills. In addition, a new phase of the [National IT Retraining Programme](#) started in the autumn, with 350 participants enrolled across the country (UNDP)

The EU for Local Development Programme ([EU PRO Plus](#)), implemented by UNOPS, made strides in promoting investment and job creation through various initiatives.



>400 small and medium enterprises were supported through



16 grants awarded to Business Support Organizations

226

ENTERPRISES RECEIVED SUPPORT IN DIGITALIZATION, RESULTING:

- 81 were supported in Greening and Circular Economy
- 303 improved their resilience
- 176 were supported in marketing and internationalization
- 82 received support in standardization
- 132 were supported in access to financial instruments

980

participants attended **68** training events organized by Business Support Organizations, resulting:



38

small and medium enterprises received new equipment



36

introduced new standards or certifications



In December 2022,

120 micro and small enterprises were endorsed for [financing](#), receiving

EUR 3M

IN GRANTS

to be used for procurement of equipment and introduction of services.



This support is projected to create at least

271 new jobs in 2023 and more than

400 jobs over the next three years



The average annual income for these enterprises is also expected to increase by

EUR 10M with a rise in exports of

EUR 3.3M in the next three years

In September 2022, EU PRO Plus launched a [Call for Economic Infrastructure Projects](#) aimed at creating conditions for new investments of at least

EUR 25M

IN INDUSTRY AND TOURISM

contributing to the creation of hundreds of new jobs. The technical documentation developed through this support is expected to establish a pipeline of economic infrastructure projects that will further drive investment and job creation.



© UNOPS / EU PRO Programme

“Thanks to the EU donation I bought sewing machines and my hobby grew into a real small business and eventually became the brand that Heli Handmade is today, said Snežana Kocanović, owner of the Heli Handmade enterprise from Kragujevac, supported by the EU through the UNOPS-implemented EU PRO programme.”

Snežana's enterprise is one of 203 micro and small enterprises (33% female-owned) supported by the EU through the programme.



HEALTH FIRST

©UNICEF Srbija / Shubuckl

Innovative teleworking and video counselling for home visit nurses and early childhood intervention practitioners were introduced during the pandemic.

40 relevant local institutions and **33** home visit nurse were equipped with digital devices services

3,105 families were supported by home visit nurses including **3,406** mothers and **1,282** fathers



PROTECTING PEOPLE

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Serbia's first mental health and psychological support package, piloted in three municipalities prepared by UNICEF Serbia with the Ministry of Health, Institute for Mental Health, and NGOs to develop.

The Institute of Psychology in Belgrade was supported in conducting a qualitative study with:

+400 students from primary and secondary schools and **90** interviews with students from vulnerable groups, their parents and teachers

Child Rights Impact Assessment related to COVID-19 prepared (UNICEF and Serbia's Ombudsman) two key child rights:



Right of the child to maintain personal relationships with non-custodial parents



Right of children with disabilities to access social protection services



UN agencies further strengthened the health system's COVID-19 vaccination delivery through provision of additional healthcare equipment, vaccines and supplies, training of healthcare professionals and increased awareness raising and communication campaigns.

BOX 1 – UN SERBIA SUPPORT TO COVID-19 RECOVERY EFFORTS

The joint UN efforts to fight COVID-19 continued with strengthened community engagement on the importance of vaccination and support to the government's focus on economic recovery. Agencies maintained flexibility to adjust their programming to continue and implement the socio-economic response plan developed in 2020.

As a result:

3.2M people have been vaccinated

2.5M people have been diagnosed and treated for COVID-19

12M COVID-19 tests have been performed



168,000 vaccines

procured through Global Access mechanism



1 cold room

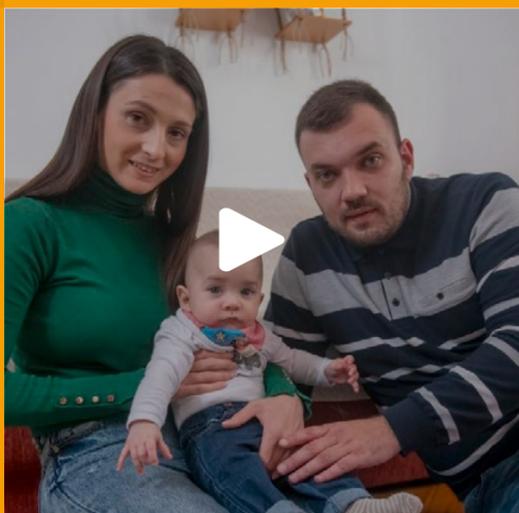
provided for vaccine storage in the Institute of Public Health in Nis



5 hospital pediatric departments supplied with protective equipment

UNICEF has supported 10% of the population with:

- 769,200** vaccines procured in Q1 2022
- 350,000** masks
- 80,000** pairs of gloves
- 18,000** overalls
- 10,000** gowns
- 1,330** face-shields
- 890** pairs of glasses
- 510** pairs of boots



Support was provided through a home visit nurse for a mother and father helping them to overcome a **34 day separation** from their premature baby as a result of COVID-19 that had caused a high level of stress for the family, breastfeeding challenges and increased health and developmental risks for the baby.

As an integral part of the COVID-19 response, support to Child Helpline services continued in 2022.



+30,000 children reached through phone and chat counselling



118 professionals were trained in online counselling

Child protection and education



Focused learning support was provided to **30** schools with a significant number of students at risk of drop out and digital divide.

1,103 children were benefited from learning support in learning clubs

605 children borrowed tablets from digital technology libraries

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic:



192 children participated in learning programs in the Akelius Digital Language Initiative



148 children were engaged in English courses



156 children were provided with online tutoring learning support in three residential centers



140 children and youth participated in summer English workshops



Educational programs for refugee and migrant children, and children from the general population were developed in **11** schools to be delivered during the winter holidays.

Social protection and inclusion



600 households with children expected to stay vulnerable due to the economic effects of pandemic were provided with one-off humanitarian cash transfers.

In **45** municipalities with the smallest vaccination coverage

34,000 people were supported by **10** CSOs, the Red Cross and chambers of pharmacists and nurses



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Two studies on GBV were conducted



1) mapping of housing solutions and other resources for Roma women and children affected by such violence due to COVID-19; and



2) attitudes of older Roma women towards sexual and gender-based violence. Results showed significant gaps in support available and will inform policymaking and advocate for intervention to change social norms and gender stereotypes.

"We have ambulances that have travelled up to a million kilometres; our day record is 982 km with one ambulance. On that day, during COVID-19, we drove patients from Smederevo to hospitals in Belgrade six times. On the same day, we transported 48 patients to the outpatient clinic in Belgrade,"

said Milos, an ambulance driver. The Primary Health Care Centre in Smederevo, where Milos works, received a fully equipped ambulance vehicle as a donation from USAID.

Donations to Public Health Institute 'Batut' and three Primary Healthcare Centres in Serbia are part of the 'Together against Covid' project, funded by USAID and implemented by UNDP.

PRIORITY 2

WELL-BEING, SOCIAL EQUITY AND HUMAN CAPITAL



UNHCR high profile supporter, Branka Katić with internally displaced Roma children. ©UNHCR / Igor Pavicevic

A child's strengths are reflected in the strengths of their parents

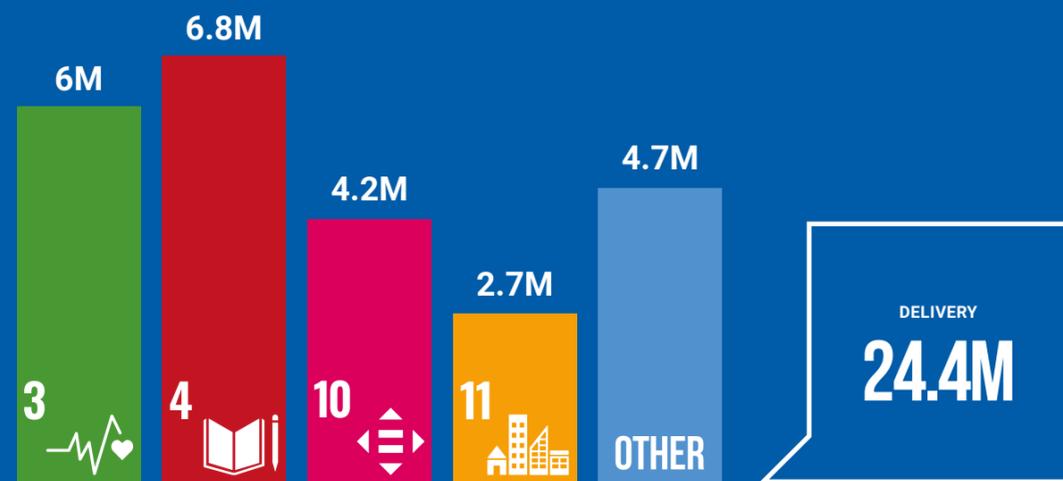
Previously, Masa could only use five to ten words, says her mother, Sanja. Despite our efforts, she often forgot words and gave up on them after a single failed attempt. The Caregiver Skills Training came at the right time. It empowered me, restored my confidence, and gave me faith that my child and I could do better and achieve more. As the sessions progressed, Masa showed progress in speech, communication, self-care and undesirable behaviours, and improved interactions with people. She became more present and interested in her surroundings, making it easier for her to adapt to changes and accept new people.

[Read more.](#)



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CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGS



CONTRIBUTING UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES:



2,400 children and their families were supported by early childhood intervention services

60,000 parents or caregivers in a total of **34** municipalities

were provided with the scaling-up parenting support model

11,285 families received support for early childhood development through tele-video counselling

250 workshops for **500** Roma women

and girls of various ages were held to support their digital literacy programme

10 resource centres were established to support the education of children with disabilities

50,000 rural women

received information on mechanisms against GBV while the coalition 'Youth Against Violence' was established

The quality of life of **4,353** beneficiaries (2,580 women) was improved through inclusive access to social protection services

1.8M people were reached with **7.8M** views

on social networks with the mental health awareness campaign 'How are you? Really?'

3,934 migrants were supported with more than 35,000 social protection services

OUTCOME 2.1

Universal and inclusive access to quality health, social and protection services is improved



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The innovative practices focusing on playful and responsive parent–child interaction and support for gender-balanced parenting and caregiver mental health have positively impacted more than

20,000 / **30%**
young child caregivers being fathers



11,285 families

received support for early childhood development through tele–video counselling, including

10,888 mothers and **3,563 fathers**

This helped them stay connected with families during COVID-19 isolation or when in need of more support.



The Bebbo mobile app

was advanced to enhance child and family support and has been adopted by **>44,000 users** in Serbia

Output 2.1.1 Health and social protection

In the area of health, significant progress has been made in addressing Non-Communicable Diseases and improving primary healthcare. Serbia was selected as a WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC2030) country and received support to strengthen its tobacco control laws and develop an online tobacco cessation programme. To address the disruption of routine immunization due to COVID-19, a joint effort with the Institute of Public Health was initiated to conduct supplementary mumps, measles and rubella vaccinations for children who missed their shots, and 120 health professionals were trained in communicating with hesitant parents. Jointly with the Institute of Public Health, guidance on the immunization campaign and on the prevention of substance use in the migrant population was finalised.

Community mobilisation activities resulted in greater engagement of pre-schools in promoting immunisation and closer collaboration between health and education systems in addressing immunisation coverage. An online school for parents on immunization reached 9,700 viewers (UNICEF).

In an effort to move toward Universal Health Coverage, WHO continued to work on a financial study and strengthened the capacities of national counterparts. UNOPS continued to assist the Ministry of Health in raising tertiary healthcare infrastructure to EU standards, with the Clinical Centre Serbia in Belgrade reaching a level of 98 percent completion. The Ministry of Health is addressing issues of perinatal health by conducting an analysis of the causes of perinatal deaths and training of 220 health professionals in the presence of parents in Neo-Natal Intensive Care Units. The system for monitoring breastfeeding practices is fully operational. In partnership with five relevant ministries, the Parenting Support Model (Playful Parenting) was extended to 29 additional local governments and engaged more than 100 health, pre-school and social welfare institutions, as well as more than 1,200 early childhood development practitioners and local decision makers. This effort aims to introduce innovative policies and practices for building capacity to promote child development, gender-balanced parenting, and caregivers mental health, with the goal of reaching approximately 60,000 parents and caregivers (UNICEF).

The UN, jointly with the Ministry of Health and in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs has made significant efforts in scaling up cross-sectoral Family-Centred Early Childhood Intervention services. These services have been expanded to fourteen additional municipalities, covering 56 percent of all the districts. This effort has involved 56 local institutions, including primary healthcare centres, pre-schools and social welfare centres. A total of 266 professionals from the health, education and social welfare sectors in these municipalities have used their strengthened knowledge, resulting in improved Early Childhood Intervention services for more than 2,400 children and their families. Of the 18 services, six are also implementing group-based parental education programmes, such as the WHO 'Autism Speaks' Caregiver Support Training. The national campaign for investing in early childhood intervention services has been successful due to the wide mobilization of private and individual donations and engagement from companies of all sizes. The recommendations for by-law changes have been prepared in cooperation with relevant ministerial working groups, to further support the scaling, quality and sustainability of these services.

In the area of mental health, UN agencies have worked together to strengthen community-based mental health services, including online services, in line with international standards and the Agenda 2030. A partnership with [Orygen](#), a world-leading expert organization on youth, and the Institute of Mental Health of Belgrade has been established to provide expertise and training programmes. Ten trainers and 15 mentors have been trained, who will supervise the training of an additional 150 professionals.



To raise awareness about the need for mental health services for young people in Serbia, UNICEF has launched the [How are you? Really?](#) awareness campaign, reaching **>1.8M people with 7.8M views** on social media

The Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support website has reached

>16,000 young people

and been integrated with NADEL online chat to increase access to services.

Nearly **7,000 telephone counselling sessions**

and **1,300 chat counselling sessions**

have been conducted, and the introduction of online video call counselling has further strengthened the system

UNICEF has also partnered with the business sector to amplify the campaign and pilot innovative online counselling services. Through cooperation with the local NGO OPENS, the non-governmental sector was capacitated to provide:

2,350

individual mental health and psycho-social services during 2022

Some 10,000 active users used the first mobile phone application for psycho-social and mental health support based on the methodology prepared by the 'Dr Laza Lazarević' Clinic for Psychiatry (WHO). In the area of maternal health, research was initiated about conditions and perception of obstetrics violence perceived by mothers who had delivered a baby in the previous twelve months (UNFPA).

Improvement efforts of cervical cancer prevention and control continued. In partnership with Institute of Public Health, UNFPA Serbia facilitated expert analysis of the current cervical cancer screening capacity and practices and possibilities to introduce Human Papillomavirus typing as a screening method. An International symposium 'Improvement of Reproductive Health – Primary and Secondary Prevention of Cervical Cancer' was organized to review the current situation in Serbia and selected countries regarding primary and secondary prevention of cervical cancer, and to present good practices from Europe.

In the area of family planning, the new strategic document for increasing access to contraceptives in the entire Europe and Central Asia region will be followed up with strong advocacy. Jointly with the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, a serial of the podcast [Take care of me](#) (11 episodes) reached more than 16,000 people via social media, and more than 1,600 listeners through various channels (UNFPA).

Reaching full national coverage in mid-2022, 36 school psychologists and teachers from nine school districts used knowledge gained through training on how to support parents and their children in overcoming the stresses that adolescence brings and what it means to be an effective facilitator and mediator, illustrated with practical sessions. The training was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, and the OSCE Mission in Serbia. An online [e-Learning platform](#) on Strong Families was developed in Serbian to further support the facilitators during the implementation and scaling-up phases (UNODC).

Output 2.1.2. Innovative social care services

With UN support, the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography endorsed a new by-law on foster care, including improved regulations of relevance for child and family matters.

The UN's efforts have contributed to significant improvements in the efficiency and quality of services in 25 local governments, resulting in the establishment of twelve innovative social protection services requiring fewer resources. These services have positively impacted the lives of 4,353 people (2,580 women), including 992 persons with disabilities.

As a result of the joint efforts of UNOPS and UNFPA, the local regulatory framework related to social housing was improved with active inclusion in five local governments, introduction of holistic integrative housing and inclusion support to new vulnerable groups, and the establishment of inter-sectoral cooperation mechanisms in three local governments. A total of 203 families with 722 members (351 males; 371 females) in ten LSGs were selected as beneficiaries for housing support, and three sustainable institutionalised intersectoral mechanisms are now established in the municipalities of Kula, Raška and Svilajnac.

Support continued for older persons and Roma women and girls, including workshops on inter-generational cooperation and solidarity and support to 500 older households with hygiene products in Bosilegrad, Babusnica, Bela Palanka, Svrljig and Golubac (UNFPA).

Two grant support programmes are set to improve social infrastructure and services in 34 municipalities and cities, and capacity building of healthcare facilities and local youth offices is under way. Some 2,000 disadvantaged citizens will access improved functioning of healthcare, educational and social protection institutions and better quality of services. Efforts continued in capacity building for healthcare facilities for a strengthened response to GBV and of local youth offices to promote gender equality and prevent such violence among youth (UNOPS).



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UNFPA prepared analysis and recommendations on social protection, ageing and human rights for policy makers, supported by roundtables and social dialogue organized with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue.



50 ministry staff

were trained and equipped to provide services to asylum-seeking and refugee children in accordance with the best interests of the child (UNHCR).



1.583 unaccompanied and separated children were identified among newly arriving refugees and migrants in Serbia and were provided with psychological first aid and referred to authorities for specialized assistance.

131 refugees (8 from Ukraine)

290 internally displaced Roma children

were supported with school enrolment, attendance and learning.

480 participants took part of **290 group activities** in six government centres



8 workshops

on prevention of child, early and forced marriage were organized for



172 pupils

with four cases identified and legally addressed with support from authorities (UNHCR)

A total of 3,934 vulnerable migrants received social protection services from social workers, including 500 guardianship decisions for unaccompanied and separated children. Most (85%) of the 20 institutions working with mixed migration flows were supported, resulting in improved quality and accessibility of services for vulnerable migrants, including unaccompanied and separated children, and victims of violence and exploitation. The operation of three centres for unaccompanied and separated children was supported, with accommodation provided for 55 minors and small infrastructure upgrades in the centres in Nis and Belgrade (IOM).

Support was provided to the needs of refugee and migrant children in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration who co-chair the Child Protection Sub-Working Group.



70 child protection professionals

applied strengthened skills in providing psycho-social support and child protection activities to



3,531 children

including creative and recreational activities, information dissemination and referrals for the most vulnerable cases.



Support was provided to prevent and respond to GBV for:

1,886

refugees and migrants

To support families and reduce protection risks, UNICEF provided humanitarian cash transfers to

123 families

and hygiene kits, clothing and shoes to

2,830

individuals in need

Government, through the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, joined the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move and actively worked to establish global standard indicators for such children.

Output 2.1.3

Gender-sensitive services for victims of violence and abuse

UN agencies made continuous efforts to advance gender equality in Serbia, leading to the key results laid out below.

The Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography adopted early in the year a new general protocol for preventing and protecting children from violence (UNICEF).

UN Women partnered with the Commissioner for Equality to strengthen the capacities of CSOs run by and for women resulting:



19 CSOs



7 women's CSOs awarded with new grants to support

300 rural women

economic independent by launching their own agricultural businesses

50,000 rural women

informed about violence against women, and gender-based discrimination

300 professionals were capacitated to deal with victims of specific forms of violence:

4 hospitals providing specialized services for

>180 women survivors of sexual violence

A 'Youth Against Violence' coalition was established in cooperation with the National Youth Council of Serbia, consisting of:

25

selected youth representatives who are now empowered to recognize, report and advocate against GBV and influence policymaking and planning systems in Serbia.

100

health professionals were trained through an online programme on the role of the health sector in the prevention and response to GBV. The capacities of local youth offices in Belgrade, Nis and Subotica were also strengthened to promote gender equality and combat GBV among youth.

A model for the economic reintegration of Roma women from marginalized groups who have experienced violence was developed and presented in five local self-governments. Collaborative efforts with the Roma Women's Centre Bibija resulted with:

100

Roma women trained in human, minority and women's rights

50

Roma women survivors of violence improved their employment opportunities

The independent mid-term report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the SOS Vojvodina Network was prepared, focusing on four priority recommendations from the concluding observations of Serbia's 4th periodical report.

A comprehensive programme continued to promote non-violent disciplining of children, partnering with the Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Faculty of Political Science to capacitate:

320 professionals from > **60 social work centres**

Awareness raising and communications

A successful global bodyright campaign was launched, followed by a regional campaign in the Western Balkans aimed at raising awareness of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence and its consequences. The campaign received more than 630,000 views and 3,500 likes on social media (UNFPA).



Bodyright campaign launched in Serbia.
©UNFPA Serbia

The rising issue of violence against women and girls in public spaces and obstetric violence was tackled through several initiatives. Such initiatives involved conducting research on the treatment of women during the implementation of the induced abortion procedure in

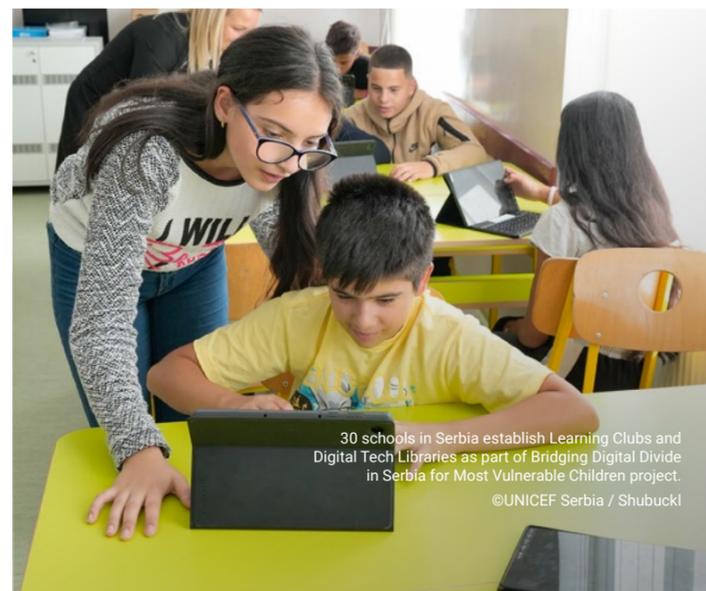
healthcare institutions in Serbia in collaboration with the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights; a study on violence in public spaces, a guide for safety assessment, a women safety audit tool and a campaign for ethical reporting of violence against women. An awareness raising campaign "I take care of myself" was launched on the importance of screening to prevent cervical cancer (UN Women).

To mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the #BezbednaSvuda (safe everywhere) campaign was conducted. A regional campaign 'Embracing positive masculinities' was also launched with six footballers sharing their views on positive masculinity, violence against women and the harm caused by unhealthy masculinity. The campaign reached more than seven million people and was broadcasted on three national television stations (UN Women).

The Sound of Soul mobile app for violence reporting was upgraded to be accessible to women with hearing and visual impairments and is currently being used by 800 women across the country (UN Women).

Some 2.6 million people were reached through the national media campaign 'Be the hand that loves and the word that guides' to promote non-violent disciplining of children, and more than 10,000 parents benefited from a dedicated webinar (UNICEF).

Thirty-three survivors of sexual and gender-based violence among refugees and asylum seekers were monitored and assisted, and 80 empowerment workshops were organized to raise awareness about of the phenomenon and its consequences (UNHCR).



30 schools in Serbia establish Learning Clubs and Digital Tech Libraries as part of Bridging Digital Divide in Serbia for Most Vulnerable Children project.

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OUTCOME 2.2

Skills, education and capabilities are enhanced to ensure equitable outcomes for all



OUTPUT 2.2.1

Formal education

During the period, the UN in Serbia supported significant progress in improving quality and inclusive pre-university education, including early childhood education and care. Key results from UNICEF and UNDP include the following:

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT AND INVESTMENTS

10 resource centres established

to support the education of children with disabilities by assistive technologies and educators' professional development

5/10 resource centres

designated as assistive technology hubs.

During the 2022–2023 school year:

200 children and youth were supported by school kits and

96 with textbooks supporting their education

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A Learning Passport Platform was developed and tested in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and various education organizations, providing 4,943 pre-school professionals with continuous professional development opportunities in all areas of pre-school quality.

2 non-formal education programmes were delivered to

114 children and youth in

3 centres in Belgrade, Krnjaca, Sid and Vranje

These programmes were delivered by young volunteers, student teachers and English language students, in partnership with the Faculty of Philosophy Nis, in hands-on workshops and courses to support children and youth's growth and development.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING: ACHIEVING IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL (UNICEF)

A comprehensive national report was developed on inclusive education for the period 2019–2021, incorporating recommendations for improvement of the legal and policy framework to increase accessibility to education for students with additional learning needs.

Through training in inclusive pedagogy, positively impacting the quality of inclusive education

3,786 teachers were boosted in **200** schools

900/3,786 teachers enhanced skills in teaching a diverse range of different students

100/3,786 teachers were capacitated for differentiated quality teaching including digital tools

6 schools

were enrolled as candidates for model institution for inclusive education, offering comprehensive capacity building programmes to **150+** teachers

10 resource centres

were trained in assistive technology, including the role of such technology in education, management and assessment of children's needs, and matching them with optimal products.

A comprehensive capacity building programmes was delivered to:

>500 members of

161 local intersectoral committees responsible for assessing children's learning needs.

Mentor support was delivered jointly with the Institute for the Improvement of Education, and the Ministry of Education by providing:

>900 primary schools for them to become digitally competent organizations.

5 kindergarten cluster centres were capacitated in Belgrade, Čačak, Loznica, Novi Sad and Pirot to share best practices for the new pre-school curricula framework.

1,103 students in **> 30** elementary schools were supported with high learning needs **> 661** of them came from the Roma community

605 students rented donated tablets for use at home **> 392** of them were from the Roma community

OUTPUT 2.2.2

Informal education and life skills

The UN has taken steps to enhance the employability, decision making and digital skills of various populations, with a focus on young people and older adults. To support young people, the platform Biramuspeh was created to offer online training and match them with businesses. The platform provides five modules that help develop in-demand skills, and encourages young people to explore non-traditional careers. A total of 1,880 people registered, with 700 completing all five modules. To increase youth participation, the UN provided technical support for the development of a law on volunteering, trained a group of youth advisors for climate action and supported the Belgrade International Model UN. To improve the status of people with disabilities, the UN trained eleven women to become trainers for advocating for sexual and reproductive rights, and initiated research to map the needs of young people with autism.

To support older adults, digital literacy programmes were organized for 100 seniors in rural areas and 79 residents of long-term care institutions in Belgrade. The UN also conducted 250 workshops on sexual and reproductive health for Roma women and girls, reaching 516 participants. UNHCR supported the integration of refugees and asylum seekers by facilitating access to the country's labour market, providing financial support and offering Serbian language classes and reskilling opportunities. As a result of these efforts, four non-Yugoslav refugees successfully enrolled in state universities and are progressing well in their studies.

OUTPUT 2.2.3

Women and girls' empowerment

The Centre for Human Trafficking Victims Protection social workers improved their abilities to assist victims by enhancing their cultural competencies. The centre also increased its case management capabilities by introducing new software that streamlined its case work, enabled prompt actions and quicker identification processes, boosted its response capacity and coordinated protection more effectively.

To support the empowerment of women and their representation in Serbia's cultural and creative industries, in partnership with the Association Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia, a study was conducted to identify the mechanisms behind gender inequalities in the sector. The research was undertaken with an online survey of 200 women working in the cultural and creative industries that was followed by four capacity-building activities. As a result, a strategy was developed to promote long-term gender equality in cultural life, using the research findings as a guide (UNESCO).

Transforming Education in Serbia: Bringing society together for education that leaves no child behind

"We have opinions that should be considered when making decisions, about maintaining school premises, improving classroom teaching, organising extracurricular activities. Our school life matters a great deal to us. This is where we spend most of our time."

– says Milica, a student at Nikola Tesla Primary School in Belgrade"

To ensure that no child is left behind in Serbia, UNICEF, and UNESCO consulted with more than 1,100 teachers, youth, parents, civil society advocates, and academics from April to June 2022. The recommendations from these consultations call for an inclusive, accessible, and relevant education system that leaves no child behind through increased public investment, and for all of society to work together to reorient education towards the future.

[Read more.](#)



OUTCOME 2.3

Mobility and demographic transition become vectors for positive change and prosperity for all people

OUTPUT 2.3.1

Depopulation and local governance

UNDP and UNFPA, in partnership with the Prime Minister, launched a series of initiatives to enhance awareness of the impact of demographic trends on the country's development. These initiatives resulted in the creation of a national human development report that specifically addresses the pressing issue of Serbia's population decline. In May 2022, [Human Development in Response to Demographic Change](#) was presented at the National Assembly with the attendance of high-level government officials, showcasing the outcome of the initiatives.

299 YOUTH

were trained in Ivanjica for computer skills and business development, and received support to access internships or work placement, or start their own businesses.

80 YOUTH

were trained in Knjazevac for computer numerical control and tailoring, aimed at providing local youth with more employment opportunities.

124 ROMA

returnees into the local community were enabled in Prokuplje by creating conditions for employment through training and job placement support.

OUTPUT 2.3.2

Mobility of skills, knowledge and capacities

The National Statistics Office successfully completed the 2022 Census. Video tutorials, training materials and lectures on speaking to the public were delivered to:



20 supervisors



135 instructors and



260 municipal coordinators

equipping them with the necessary skills to train others at all levels.

Preparation of the national report for the 4th Review and Appraisal Cycle of Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging and its Regional Implementation Strategy 2018–2022 was supported. The report was presented by the Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran, and Social Affairs during the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Aging in Rome in July 2022 (UNFPA).

To improve the socio-economic well-being of local communities, three project initiatives focusing on labour market integration and skills development were implemented in Knjazevac, Ivanjica and Prokuplje. The projects aimed to mitigate the negative effects of internal migration, and received financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and local self-governments (with co-funding from IOM).





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Leave No One Behind- from development moto to policy transformation

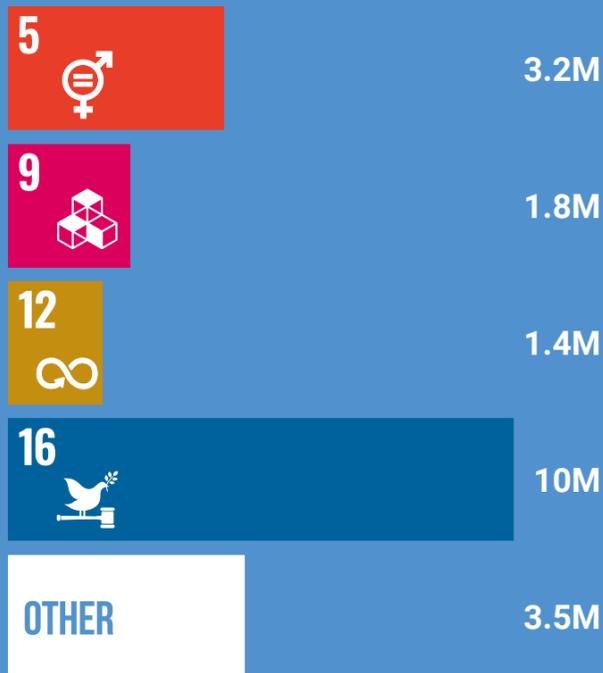
Tomislav Žigmanov, Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue says:

"Human rights are a fragile creation that necessitates constant improvement. The LNOB tool aims to ensure that no-one is left behind and serves as the primary objective of our endeavours, along with the cultivation of a human rights culture and the enhancement of continuous dialogue with diverse social groups."

PRIORITY 3

RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGS



DELIVERY
19,9M



Leave No One Behind tool
integrated into legislature and policymaking



UNCT report to the 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Serbia submitted

2M

women and men

reached through implementation of a campaign on women's rights with regard to inheritance and disposal of property



Gender Equality Test
made mandatory to systematically measure effect of the legal and strategic framework on gender equality



4,800
asylum seekers and refugees
783 people at risk

of statelessness received legal counselling

>1,000
women

directly benefited from local initiatives through increasing their capacities and skills in various areas

48

local self-governments (94%) achieved improvements in the e-Government index score



CONTRIBUTING UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES:



Young people discussing peace at Youth Rights Talks in Belgrade. / @UN_Serbia/Nabajsja Petrovic

OUTCOME 3.1

All people, especially the more vulnerable, benefit from the realisation of human rights, gender equality, social cohesion and enhanced rule of law in line with international commitments

Output 3.1.1

Policymaking and implementation

Government continued strengthening its human rights framework with the support of various UN agencies. Collaboration with the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue resulted in the adoption of an Anti-discrimination Strategy and Action Plan, as well as the development of the tool for introducing Leave No One Behind principle into legislative and strategic acts. Serbia is now a leader, being the first country to develop such a tool. The ministry marked Human Rights Day with the launch of a year-long campaign to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In partnership with the Republic Institute for Social Protection, efforts continued to strengthen capacities for an improved application of diversionary measures and alternative sanctions through the establishment of inter-sectoral teams in five more municipalities and the signing of eleven new protocols with local actors and institutions. A total of 150 professionals from 34 towns were trained in children's rights in civil court proceedings and a guide was published to help decision makers apply the best interests of the child and their right to participation (UNICEF).

UN Women provided support for the development and adoption of the National Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan and supported development and piloting of the mandatory Gender Equality Test which systematically measures the effect of the legal and strategic framework on gender equality.



100 civil servants

trained in gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment



10 local mechanisms

for gender equality received direct grant support



6 women's CSOs

supported to implement community-based initiatives



>290 civil servants and members of Gender Equality Mechanisms

learned more on impact of gender equality on daily lives of women and men, and particularly multi discriminated groups



>2,500

rural, Roma and/or unemployed women across Serbia increased knowledge on entrepreneurship, innovation, organic production, and increased their digital skills and skills for sewing, weaving, cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants etc



>160

women entrepreneurs exchanged knowledge at the Women's Entrepreneurship Expo. Knowledge and communication products were developed, including an ex-post analysis of the second National Action Plan for the implementation of UN SC Resolution 1325, the draft Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan, and surveys on the economic value of unpaid work and on women entrepreneurs

In partnership with the Women's Association of Kolubara District, two million individuals were reached, both men and women, through a campaign on women's rights to inheritance and property ownership, entitled 'How much is my share (Koliki je moj deo)?' Through the documentary **theatre play 'Girls', 1,410 individuals, predominantly youth and adolescents**, in five cities were impacted with a powerful message on gender roles and stereotypes. A Women in Sport campaign, in collaboration with the Institute for Women in Sport, reached more than two million individuals of all genders, delivering the message of gender equality through sports.

Gender responsive budgeting

Advancing gender responsive budgeting (GRB) remains a critical priority. The efforts were spearheaded towards improving governance systems for planning, budgeting, and monitoring of gender equality at national and local level. According to the SDG5c1 report, Serbia has been recognized as one of seven European countries that has successfully implemented GRB. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance and the Provincial Secretariat of Finance, GRB continues to progress, in line with the Budget System Law.



As a result, women and men across Serbia, especially those from multi-discriminated groups, will benefit from 2023 budgets of:

73 institutions
108 programmes
253 activities and projects

399 budget objectives and
>750 gender responsive indicators



9 local self-government units improved their local procedures and policies related to GRB implementation, resulting in gender perspective being included in their 2023 budgets

State Audit Institution contributed to further institutionalization of GRB through conducting GRB audits as part of the financial audits resulting:



13 line ministries and institutions budgeted

19 local self-government audited to check GRB implementation.

The UN contributed to strengthening justice and social welfare systems to divert children away from conflict with the law, implement early rehabilitation programmes and ensure that court proceedings are child sensitive.



In partnership with the Juvenile Justice Councils a two-day national conference (24–25 February) was gathering of

>150 participants from justice and social welfare systems.

The right-based analyses were developed on the right to adequate housing and a human rights-based approach and Leave No One Behind training sessions were conducted to help local governments align their housing policies with human rights standards (OHCHR).



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Serbia has made significant progress in reducing statelessness over the past decade, reducing the number of at-risk individuals from tens of thousands to approximately 2,000 resulted (UNHCR):

**783**

persons at risk of statelessness received legal advice

**71**

persons had their Serbian nationality granted or confirmed in 2022

**159**

obtained personal documents, housing and social welfare

UNESCO worked to strengthen the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property. A toolkit and e-Learning training tool will be produced in Serbian and distributed to cultural heritage practitioners and law enforcement forces.

Output 3.1.2

Oversight and independent bodies

In October 2022, the joint UN Country Team submitted its report to the 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Serbia, led by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The UN provided support to two CSOs' joint reports, including a joint Universal Periodic Review report from the Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms (21 member organizations).

In November–December 2022, the [Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence](#), Mr Fabian Salvioli, visited Serbia. Meetings were held with relevant state authorities, independent institutions, CSOs, media representatives and academia, along with site visits (OHCHR).

The development of three key policy documents for parliamentary services (capacity building, communication and digitalization strategy) has been completed in 2022. In February 2022, the National Assembly adopted a set of five electoral laws aimed at improving transparency and democratic practices during election campaigns and the electoral process. UNDP supported the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in establishing a network of local assemblies' secretaries as part of its sectoral networks.



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Shutterstock / ©Visual Intermezzo

Output 3.1.3

Home affairs

UN agencies successfully advanced their efforts to enhance institutional and operational capacities in the area of home affairs.

The support of the UN ensured that refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless individuals had access to an improved and systematically implemented legal framework and could exercise their rights in line with international standards. In response to arriving refugees from Ukraine, temporary protection support, refurbishing the Vranje asylum centre accommodation, inclusion in services and information were provided (UNHCR).

>22,000 INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED INFORMATION, AND COUNSELLING ON ASYLUM

230 were represented during asylum procedures
99 were supported in their integration into Serbian society
6,900 refugees and asylum seekers benefited from cultural mediation and orientation

The conditions in reception and asylum centres were monitored to ensure that they met EU and Sphere standards, and persons with specific needs were identified and referred for assistance.

A specialist course on international refugee protection was piloted, targeting

40 POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS FROM EIGHT COUNTRIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS REGION AND BEYOND.

Capacity-building activities conducted for

>250 PUBLIC SERVANTS TO IMPROVE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF ASYLUM AND REFUGEE PROTECTION (UNHCR).

Conditions were improved in facilities for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, including regular maintenance, the delivery of non-food items, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) upgrades. UN efforts continued to fight human trafficking and smuggling, including through training local counter-trafficking teams, organizing meetings for anti-smuggling task forces from the Western Balkans and supporting peer exchange and capacity building between EU border officers and their Serbian counterparts.

The President of the Supreme Court of Serbia endorsed the UNODC Global Firearms Programme publication of a case law collection of firearms cases, empowering criminal department judges to address the cases effectively. Strong partnership with the Judicial Academy of Serbia ensured the collection's long-term availability and alignment with local firearms case law through inclusion in the academy's online library.

Efforts made in 2022, resulted in the preparation of a national paper on media freedom and journalist safety in Serbia, serving as a foundation for a regional consultative meeting attended by journalists and media activists from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, the UN continued its support for the search for missing persons in Serbia by organizing a workshop with 20 representatives of Serbian and Kosovo missing persons families' associations, aimed at engaging youth members and increasing their involvement in the associations' efforts.



OUTCOME 3.2

All people benefit from effective governance and meaningful civic engagement

Output 3.2.1

SDGs and governance systems

The support of UN agencies for national and local development governance systems is aimed at improving efficiency and alignment with the SDGs. The efforts delivered significant results, including the following:



Increased Transparency in Public Finance: The publishing of external audit recommendations from the Supreme Audit Institution made it easier for the public to access information on the management of public funds. Local civil servants received training in public sector accountability and internal control, leading to the creation of six new local development plans and improved capacities for project preparation and management (UNDP).



Human Capital Review: In partnership with the World Bank, a Human Capital Review of the social sectors (health, education, social protection) was prepared and launched with the Serbian Association of Economists in June 2022. The report highlights the potential impact of Serbia's successful fiscal consolidation on the social sectors and long-term prosperity and resilience.



Advocacy for Costed Options to Increase Spending: The analysis proposed options to increase the adequacy and coverage of cash benefits, which were supported by the Fiscal Council (UNICEF).

Accelerating Change in Public Administration

The e-Library software was successfully developed to enhance the modern learning environment and serve as a platform for disseminating knowledge and creating new required skills in an innovative and user-friendly manner.

Local self-government capacities were strengthened and e-Parliament introduced in two cities (Čačak and Kraljevo) and three municipalities (Mionica, Sjenica and Trstenik). Migration councils and local action plans on the social and economic integration of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons were approved in three local governments (Bujanovac, Novi Sad and Valjevo) (UNDP).

SDG Acceleration Framework

Government aimed to implement a set of citizen-centric policy measures and interventions through the administration of government units for accelerating citizen-centric measures in six areas: agriculture, public administration reform, education, IT and entrepreneurship, infrastructure and creative industries (UNDP).

Excellent institutional data collection capacity in cultural participation was demonstrated in the city of Leskovac. Data were provided for all cultural participation activities, disaggregated by gender, age and income, with data series for the past decade made available. At the local level, six cities have a valid strategic document on culture, and most local governments in the country have city and municipal sustainable development strategies that recognize culture as a key factor in improving social and economic conditions (UNESCO).

Output 3.2.2

Civic engagement

The UN Country Team provided support to child-rights CSO networks to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recommendations and advocate for changes to policy. The Network of Organizations for Children was involved with effect in public and bilateral consultations, leading to the inclusion of recommendations on the Convention in the draft Economic Reform Programme. Additionally, baseline measurements for indicators were prepared to monitor implementation of the Convention and will be reported in the next UN Child Rights Committee of the State Party session (UNICEF).

The Country Team and its partners made a significant impact on advocating for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex rights and ensuring the successful holding of EuroPride 2022 in Belgrade. This work included co-organizing coordination meetings, conducting social media campaigns and issuing press statements to raise awareness.

The Team also supported creation of the 2022 Annual Report on human rights of youth, using participatory methods such as focus groups, interviews and online surveys. The report was launched online and reached nearly 100 youth organizations, decision makers, the international community and CSOs. Additionally, the Team supported the Mental Disability Rights Initiative of Serbia to create the Zero Report on the status of individuals with disabilities in the country (OHCHR).

The National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up continued its operations with meaningful participation from CSOs and implementation of recommendations targeting the most vulnerable groups, including Roma, women, persons with disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex persons and youth (OHCHR).

A total of 30 projects were awarded through seven public calls, aimed at strengthening the partnership between CSOs and local authorities and improving services for the local community (UNDP).

Output 3.2.3

Emergency preparedness and response

Four agencies – WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNOPS – continued interventions aimed at emergency preparedness and response guarantees that all lives are equal. The UN's results on the COVID-19 response are presented in Box 1.

The capacities and capabilities of disaster risk reduction actors at the local level were strengthened to integrate vulnerable and at-risk groups in prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from crises and disasters, leaving no one behind. This was achieved by developing and adopting relevant local policies that introduced elements of inclusive, human rights-based disaster risk management in the practices of prevention, response and recovery. Additionally, 30 local self-governments improved their capacities for increasing participation of all stakeholders, improving transparency in emergency response provision, publishing emergency management information, improving communication, efficiency and effectiveness of responses in emergency situations, and delivery of e-Services related to recovery and rehabilitation. Furthermore, the intervention to improve e-Government in 51 local self-governments generated significant results in establishing e-Services, developing regulations for addressing the process of establishing those services, and improving municipal websites. Public e-Services were made accessible to citizens and businesses, and access of people with disabilities to local government websites was increased. As a result, 48 local governments (94%) achieved improvements in the e-Government Index score.

With financing from the Joint SDG Fund, in a joint initiative with central government and multiple ministries, UN agencies carried out several surveys and analyses, as well as poverty projections showing that both absolute and relative poverty have increased in Serbia. Further to the findings, UN agencies are working closely with government to strengthen the shock-responsive social protection system, fast-track actions for the poorest and most marginalized people, and narrow the gaps with the rest of society.

At greater risk of poverty: children and older people

Persa, as she is known to her friends, is 83 years old and has difficulty moving around because of poor vision. How can I walk when I can't see. And I can't have surgery due to high blood pressure. I'm old; It's really hard! Now, help has arrived. And Persa needs help: her pension is only 7,000 dinars (EUR 60) per month. What can I do with seven thousand? asks Persa. Nothing, to tell you the truth. I'm lucky that I've got this, so I can buy something to eat. Seven thousand is nothing. I have to pay for the electricity, phone, water. Persida received a one-off humanitarian cash transfer from UNFPA, as part of the UN Joint Programme funded by the Joint SDG Fund, which is being implemented by UNICEF and UNFPA, with the participation of UNHCR, state institutions and the Red Cross.

[Read more.](#)



©UNICEF Serbia / Živojinović



Members of Regional Network of Western Balkan Gender Military Trainers. | ©UNDP / SEESAC

Output 3.2.4

Regional and trans-border cooperation

The UN in Serbia has successfully implemented regional and national projects, resulting in improved regional and trans-border cooperation, trust-building and security.

The Regional Programme on Local Democracy (ReLOaD2) successfully prepared, coordinated and executed:

-  **7 public calls for CSOs** in
-  **7 partner local governments** within the reporting period.

The process also included information and open day sessions attended by:

 115 CSOs and	 5 two-day Project Cycle Management trainings held for	 35 staff from the local self-governments.
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As a result:

 30 CSO projects were approved for funding and	 23 young people from
 7 partner local governments were engaged in a	 6 month internship programme

In 2022, the UN (UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Women) initiated a regional project to strengthen the role of youth in promoting increased mutual understanding, constructive narrative, respect for diversity and trust in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,¹ North Macedonia and Serbia funded by the Peacebuilding Fund. The project made significant progress by achieving key results through constructive planning and partnerships. A coordinated approach was taken to successfully implement activities involving youth, institutions and the civil sector. As a result, the regional activities led to a notable increase in the knowledge and capacity of young people to combat hate speech. Moreover, institutional linkages were strengthened through the production of targeted trust building manuals for university curricula and the organization of local events in municipalities, with support provided to authorities to draft a strategy for youth. These achievements signify a strong and effective initiative that is having a tangible impact on the target audience and contributing towards positive social change.

 Another regional project continued implementation to address trafficking in persons in South-eastern Europe. In close partnership with government, the judiciary and CSOs, the gaps and weaknesses in the response to trafficking in persons at the national and regional levels are being identified in order to develop and provide sustainable and targeted capacity-building support to relevant stakeholders in Serbia (and also Albania, Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia), and improve regional cooperation (UNODC).



Also, regionally, the UN is continuing its work in implementation of the roadmap on anti-corruption in Serbia and identifying opportunities to support long-term and sustainable anti-corruption efforts.

TARGET 16-10  **UNESCO has been contributing to SDG Target 16.10** on ensuring public access to information by developing Massive Open Online Courses to share content on media and information literacy competencies, information verification and dialogue.

¹ Reference to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Through the South-eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), regional cooperation and capacities of key stakeholders to conduct effective, evidence-based Small Arms and Light Weapons control work have been strengthened.

Regional meetings provide a platform for the exchange of information, lessons learned and best practices, planning of joint activities, resulting in increased capacities and standardization of practices throughout the region. The Arms Violence Monitoring Platform managed by SEESAC has provided relevant data and informed the understanding of firearms-related trends. Capacities of Border Police and Criminal Police services to counter illicit arms trafficking in the region were also strengthened, with the finalization of Needs Assessment Report, development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and provision of equipment. The operationalization of the Firearms Focal Points in Serbia has also been significantly advanced through development of SOPs, the provision of expert advice and IT equipment, enabling the execution of operational tasks, including data collection and automated information exchange.

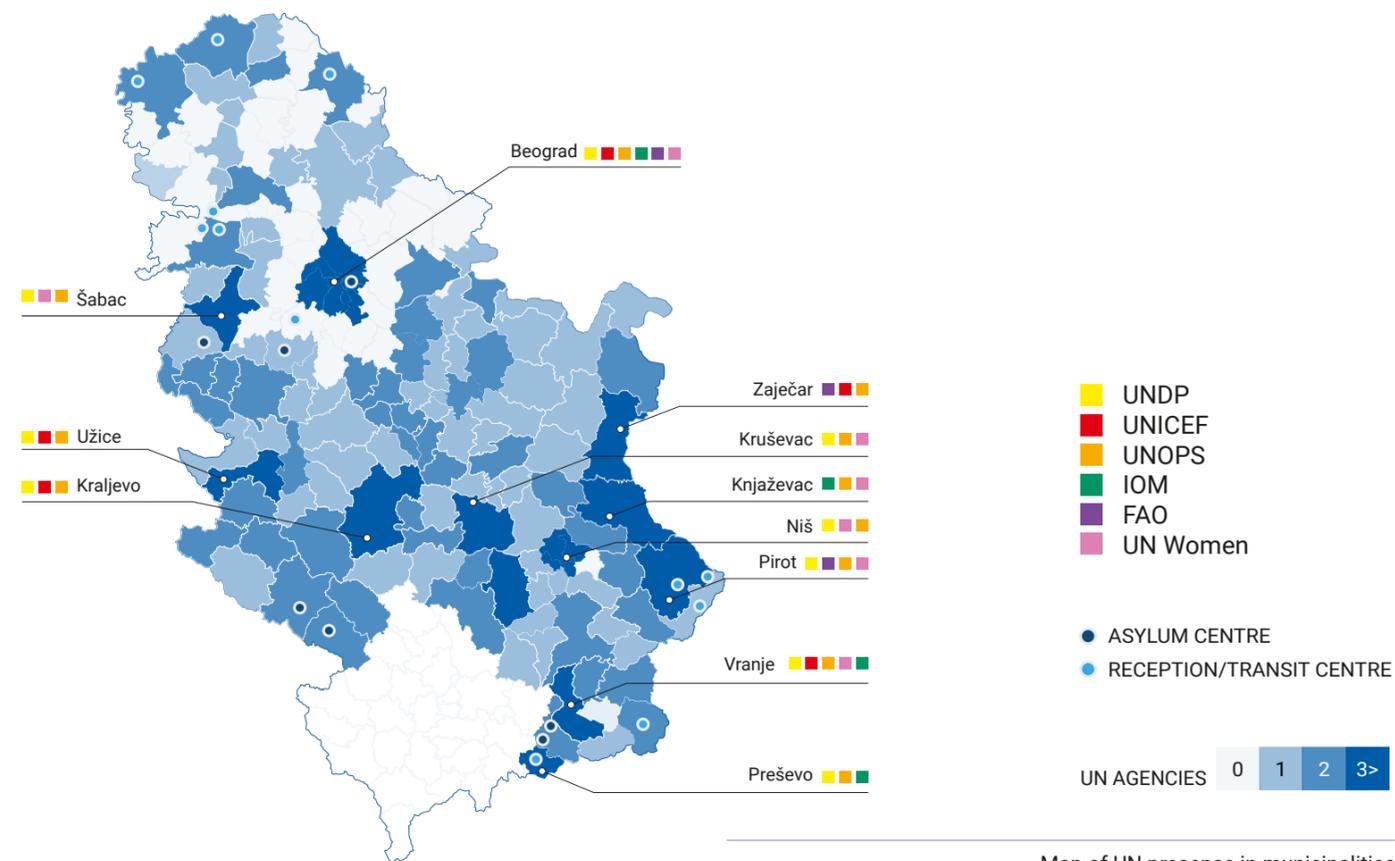
SEESAC has further strengthened the harmonization of arms control legislation with that of the EU, provided technical support and ensured effective coordination and monitoring of implementation of the Western Balkans Roadmap. The programmatic coordination and monitoring of fourteen projects, funded through the Western Balkans Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Multi-Partner Trust Fund and the Funding Windows Regional Project mechanisms, was also ensured. SEESAC's Gender Equality in the Military project has been successful in gathering representatives of Gender Equality Mechanisms, decision makers and military commanders to enable regional information exchange and knowledge sharing on integrating gender in military practice. It also advanced work on integrating gender perspective in military education and strengthening network of gender trainers.



The third generation of gender trainers from the Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces from the Western Balkans completed the 3rd Regional Gender Training of Trainers Course. ©UNDP SEESAC

2.4. Support to partnerships and financing agenda 2030

In 2022, the UN in Serbia made significant efforts to strengthen its partnerships and mobilize resources to accelerate achievement of the SDGs. A Partnership and Resource Mobilisation Strategy was developed that outlines the UN Country Team's coordinated engagement with government, the EU and member state development partners, international organisations, international financial institutions and the private sector to advance financing for sustainable development. The country's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on the economy.



Government

The Government of Serbia remained the main UN counterpart in implementing the priorities of the Cooperation Framework. Coordination was anchored in the Joint Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Resident Coordinator, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of EU Integration. UN agencies in the country worked with all levels of government – central, provincial and local – and with all other branches of the state, including independent oversight institutions, in advancing the principled requirements of ratified international conventions and treaties. Legislative activities and capacity building were supported to ensure that new legislation, policies and strategies are in line with international standards, with targeted measures for vulnerable groups and women's empowerment (Leave No One Behind Tool and Gender Equality Test). The digitalisation agenda was further strengthened through e-Government and the National Data Centre, as well as through the establishment of the Centre for the 4th Industrial Revolution in partnership with the World

Economic Forum, with the aim of creating a platform for the development and promotion of innovative policies and technologies.

Furthermore, with UN support, the government improved delivery of SDG-aligned financial resources, in the following areas: 1) improved accountability and effectiveness of public spending within the Public Procurement Agency, the Tax Administration, the Central Harmonisation Unit of the Ministry of Finance and the State Audit Institution, 2) strengthened efficiency and effectiveness of public procurement in the health sector for renovation of four main clinical centres in Serbia, 3) embedded SDG visions in public building reconstruction investments through integration of energy efficiency principles, and 4) further broadened implementation of gender-responsive budgeting at national, provincial and local levels.

The government is the major donor to the UN system in Serbia. In 2022,

USD 18.9M IN GOVERNMENT CO-FINANCING

was provided in support of the UNSDCF's strategic priorities (26% of total annual delivery).

Partnerships with International Finance Institutions

Serbia's sustainable development has been supported by innovative partnerships, particularly with international financial institutions, and partnerships that foster South-South cooperation. These partnerships have already yielded remarkable financing.

Under the Team Europe approach, the UN has established cooperation with the French Development Agency and the European Investment Bank, with the aim of ensuring maximum sustainable impact and transformation through the pooling of resources by the European Commission, EU member states and international financial institutions. Two notable initiatives are the following:

- The PRO-Good Governance for People and Nature Acceleration of the Agenda 2030 is a flexible mechanism that was established to enable and scale up partnerships on good governance, social inclusion and environmental governance. This initiative received blended finance of USD 9 million, including from the French Development Agency and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It is a joint endeavour of four UN agencies – UNOPS-led, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNEP – in 99 cities and municipalities across Serbia.
- The Green Agenda for Serbia is based on the European Green Deal and the related Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. It addresses challenges of climate change and the green transition, and helps Serbia align its environmental legislation with the European acquis. This initiative received blended financing of USD 8.7 million from the EU, Switzerland, Sweden and the European Investment Bank. The intervention – led by UNDP with the engagement of other UN agencies – will ensure that the costs and benefits of the green transition and decarbonisation are just and inclusive.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The National Stocktaking on South-South, East-East and Triangular Cooperation¹ report has, among other findings, identified that Serbia's development cooperation activities are not formalized or easily identifiable, resulting in the country not receiving recognition from taxpayers and the international community. In response, the UN supported the government in codifying Serbia's existing lessons learned and good practices in managing official development assistance and developing a guidance document that will be the basis of future decision making and implementation by the government's General Secretariat, in partnership with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation.

Serbia has demonstrated its commitment to development by donating

EUR 3M

to UNICEF and UNHCR for the crisis in Ukraine, and in providing

USD 600,000 OF HUMANITARIAN AID

to Somalia and Sao Tome and Principe, due to the shortage of many products caused by severe drought in those countries.

The Country Team has also engaged in several notable examples of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, including the South-eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Serbian Challenge Call for Albania and North Macedonia with COVID-19 relief efforts (recognized as a global best practice of UNDP), and the Youth Guarantee through the Economic and Social Platform in cooperation with the EU and the Western Balkans (ILO).

Other examples include the promotion of protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans (IOM), cooperation between Greece and Serbia on migration, asylum, and related legislative and naturalization best practices (UNHCR), and integrated expertise to support the Law on the establishment of resource centres for inclusive education by Bulgaria, Norway and Serbia (UNICEF).

Moreover, UNICEF received Israeli expertise to support youth mental health and well-being, while integrated expertise on early childhood development by Portugal, Serbia and Slovenia was provided to assist the Republic of Srpska (UNICEF). Finally, WHO has been supporting health systems responsive to health emergencies in the Western Balkans.

¹ National stocktaking exercise on South-South, East-East and Triangular Cooperation was conducted in Serbia in the last quarter of 2022. The stocktaking is a result of a tripartite partnership between government, UNDP and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).



Private Sector

The private sector continued to be a trusted and valued actor and stakeholder for the UN in 2022. Our engagement with the Global Compact Chapter in 2022 was designed to support the preparations for the Chapter's independent functioning from April 2023, in line with the Global Compact's three-year expansion strategy.

Examples of project-based collaboration include initiatives with:



15 major private sector companies in piloting, developing and scaling up innovative solutions that contribute to following SDGs:

	Eradicate hunger and poverty
	Increase responsible use of resources
	Promote a circular economy
	Reduce pollution and harmful greenhouse gas emissions
	Improve gender equality and women's economic empowerment
	Include people with disabilities in the labour markets
	Increase employment opportunities for refugees in Serbia in the tourism and hospitality sector
	Provide access to online IT courses to increase digital literacy and access to knowledge, as well as opportunities and pathways for refugee integration

Advancing partnerships with private sector:



CSOs, Media and Academia

CSOs are core partners for the UN in its efforts to support the most vulnerable. Around one-third of all programme support is delivered in collaboration with CSOs. In 2022, we maintained our focus on working with women NGOs through open-door and high-level engagement, and with human rights NGOs, youth platforms, Roma organisations and environmental NGOs. Through such partnership the following results were achieved:

1. Monitoring of human rights violations during presidential, parliamentary and local elections, with increased reporting from the perspective of youth, women and marginalized groups. This also led to advanced interaction between CSOs and UN human rights mechanisms, such as the 4th Universal Periodic Review Cycle, Zero Report on disability rights, Annual report on youth rights;
2. Enhanced services for women experiencing violence and combating gender-based discrimination;
3. Economic empowerment of rural women, Roma women and elderly women;
4. Accelerating access to sexual and reproductive health, as well as population dynamics;
5. Legal support and integration of refugees and asylum seekers;
6. Youth engagement in creating circular and more sustainable opportunities for development;

Overall, our partnership with CSOs was crucial for achievement of our goals in 2022, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration in the future.

Collaboration with academia led to the establishment of a regional academic network among the faculties of Political Sciences of the universities of Belgrade, Sarajevo and Montenegro. The primary goal of this network was to promote **media and information literacy and cultural diversity**, with particular focus on strengthening youth's resilience to potentially harmful content spread online. In addition, several MoUs were signed with academia and educational institutions **to advance the position of refugees**, such as with the Faculty of Political Science on refugee protection, Faculty of Philology on joint courses on intercultural mediation, Technical School Obrenovac and Hospitality and Tourism School Belgrade on joint social cohesion events and refugee education, while collaboration with the Faculty of Applied Arts on refugee education, and the faculties of law in Belgrade and Novi Sad on courses in Refugee Law, continues.

Work with the media continued, including efforts to combat violence and discrimination of women through ethical reporting on **violence against women and girls**. These efforts include improving the media's capacity to counter misinformation and disinformation, strengthening media accountability and enhancing good media governance towards users by supporting the sustainability of self-regulatory mechanisms.

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

In 2022, all UN agencies in Serbia continued joint efforts towards achievement of coherent results, streamlined interventions, enhanced accountability, pooled their strengths on operations and strengthened advocacy and joint communication. private sector to advance financing for sustainable development. the country's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on the economy.

A. Planning and implementing together

In 2022, all UN agencies in Serbia continued joint efforts towards achievement of coherent results, streamlined interventions, enhanced accountability, pooled their strengths on operations and strengthened advocacy and joint communication.

The Results Groups served as the main mechanism for identifying synergies and fostering cooperation among the agencies. The UN in Serbia increased its pool of ongoing joint programmes to eleven initiatives in 2022, with committed funding with a value of USD 21.2 million, through enhanced access to global pooled funds (UN Peacebuilding Fund, SDG Fund, UN Disability Fund, UN Road Safety Fund), the commitment of member state donors to support coherent actions of the UN system through interventions in the health sector and socio-economic development (EU, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland), and the Secretary General's thematic support for developing the food systems pathways and commitment to transforming education. Additional emphasis was placed on the regional level work on strengthening the role of youth in promoting increased mutual understanding, constructive narrative, respect for diversity and

trust in the Western Balkans region through a regional project supported by the Peacebuilding Fund.

Thematic groups (Gender, Leave No One Behind) and sub-groups dedicated to air pollution, refugee and migrants, and food systems continued better coordination and more strategic analysis and actions. A series of thematic updates were developed by the UN in Serbia with the intention of informing our programming, sharing comprehensive data and complex information with the wider development community in a fast-changing context, and jointly advocating towards our national and local counterparts in the areas of **food systems, just transition and gender**. The UN Team commitment to gender mainstreaming, youth and disability was further strengthened through Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Scorecards, Gender and Human Rights markers, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. The UN Team records constant progress in its annual System-wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard Reports with an achievement of indicators at 100 percent.

Gender Scorecard



■ Meets or Exceeds Minimum Requirements

Youth 2030 Scorecard



Disability Scorecard



Funding available for joint programming for youth

4 youth groups were engaged in UNCT processes/programmes/initiatives

- Network of youth formal/informal
- Youth within the UN
- Gender balanced young leaders, influencers, entrepreneurs, academics and advocates
- Wide engagement of youth (through various platforms, online and face-to-face)

B. Operating together

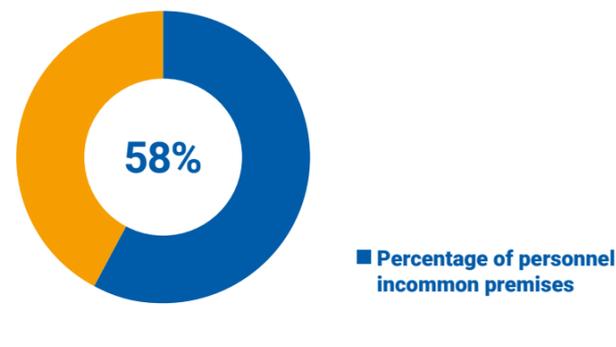
The Operations Management Team in Serbia worked diligently to improve the joint operations of the UN team, with the goal of eliminating duplication, maximizing economies of scale and leveraging the common bargaining power of the UN agencies in the country. Through the Business Operations Strategy, the Operations Management Team focused on five of the six core service lines, with the aim of reducing costs by approximately

25%, and enabling higher efficiency gains and quality improvements in the Country Team's common services.

In addition to these joint operational efforts, several efficiency projects took place in UN House. For example, an upgraded heating substation was recently installed, resulting in an annual reduction of 36% in CO2 emissions compared to the previous year.



Efficiencies from country-level collaborations (BOS) (Resources are in USD Million)



Percentage of personnel in Common Premises

C. Communicating together

Communications and Advocacy initiatives continued throughout 2022 in accordance with the Joint Communications strategy 2021–2025, with the aim of increasing the visibility of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The joint UN voice was spearheaded by the Resident Coordinator and the UN Communications Group, augmenting the activities of multiple agencies in joint endeavours.

The UN Country Team and staff in Serbia were actively engaged in a wide range of advocacy efforts, such as attending conferences, running working groups, delivering keynote speeches, appearing on television programmes and writing op-eds. These interventions took place in a range of different settings, including Parliament and the Palace of Serbia, universities, civil society events, both printed and online media, and UN-organized events, as well as economic commission and regional offices. These meetings provided an ideal platform to publicize the objectives of Agenda 2030 and reach a broad audience.

The main topics throughout the year included tackling the climate emergency and air pollution, regional communication efforts to tackle hate speech, fighting violence against women, and human rights and support within the Free & Equal campaign and Belgrade Pride Week. Examples of key events in 2022 that involved more than one agency include:

1. The 16 Days of Activism campaign with joint efforts from the UN Communications Group, UN Gender Theme Group and government, featuring a series of activities with more than nine events, videos, speeches and video messages, and a special poetry event and related video and campaign that reached more than 300,000 people across all social media channels;
2. A pre-COP27 climate change event;
3. Human Rights Day, jointly with the prime minister and the Ministry of Human Rights;
4. UN Free & Equal campaign with a series of advocacy interventions, high-level speeches and joint statements on the government's ban of the Euro Pride event;
5. UN Day, with a Music for Peace concert and campaign calling for peace in the world, nurturing diversity and solidarity, while tackling the triple planetary emergency;
6. The first International Day for Countering Hate Speech marked at a sub-regional level with the launch of a two-month campaign, and the Resident Coordinator's op-ed for the daily Politika;
7. A ten-day campaign on World Bicycle Day and Environment Day, with the UN and partners reaching more than 203,000 people through various channels on the urgent need to address the triple planetary crisis and promote sustainable urban transport, climate action, ecosystem restoration and individual responsibility in climate action.



To showcase joint efforts, UNCG also launched the first two issues of the [UN Serbia Newsletter](#).



2.6. Evaluations and lessons learned

In 2019, in collaboration with government and stakeholders, the UN Country Team conducted a final evaluation of the UN Development Partnership Framework 2016–2020 that led to several key recommendations, as follows:

- Development of a new Cooperation Framework ought to be guided by a solid theory of change, rather than individual agency country programmes.
- It is essential to involve partners during preparation of the strategic framework.
- Providing technical support, as well as financial support, to implementing partners to increase their capacities to design and implement specific interventions has proven to be beneficial and should be the modus operandi for the UN system.
- A more developed evidence framework and database is necessary for systematic monitoring and evaluation of a complex system such

as the UN Country Team, which involves numerous and diverse agencies, programmes and projects.

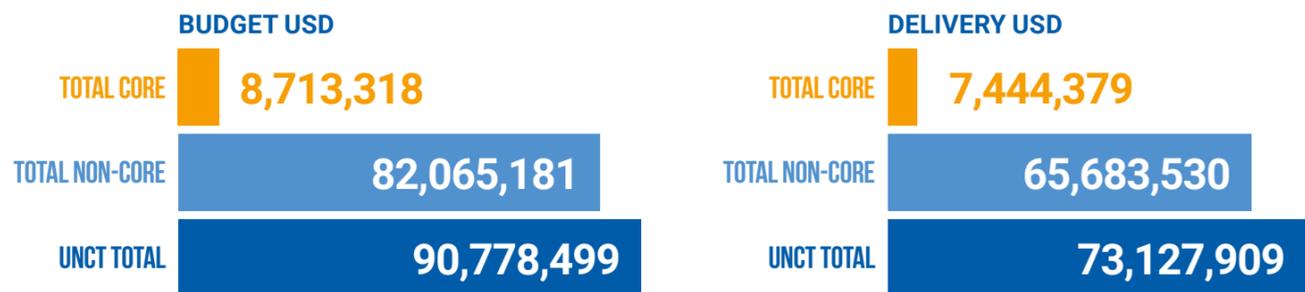
- It is important to have a human rights scorecard similar to the gender scorecard to identify areas of the Cooperation Framework that lack a human rights perspective and are more system-focused than people-focused.
- There ought to be more internal Country Team learning of innovative forms of cooperation among UN agencies and cooperation with the corporate sector to replicate or scale up successful practices.

In the new Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, we followed up on all the recommendations by strengthening the management architecture, joint work and advocacy, and partnership with implementing partners, including a systematic monitoring and evaluation system. In 2022, we focused on mainstreaming human rights principles in Joint Work Plans and strengthening cooperation between the Country Team and the corporate sector (detailed in the Partnership section).

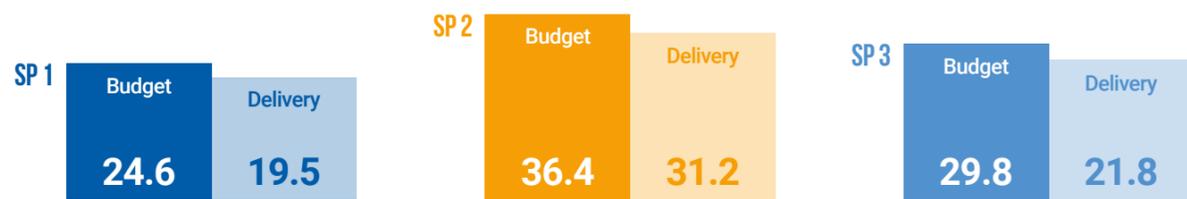
2.7. Financial overview and resource mobilisation

The UNCT in Serbia allocated \$90.7 million in 2022 across three strategic priorities of the UNSDCF. By the year-end, the delivery rate was 80.4%, with \$73.1 million utilized. Strategic priority 1 accounted for 26.7%, strategic

priority 2 for 43.5%, and strategic priority 3 for 29.8% of the total delivery. Eighteen UN agencies utilized the resources in 2022.



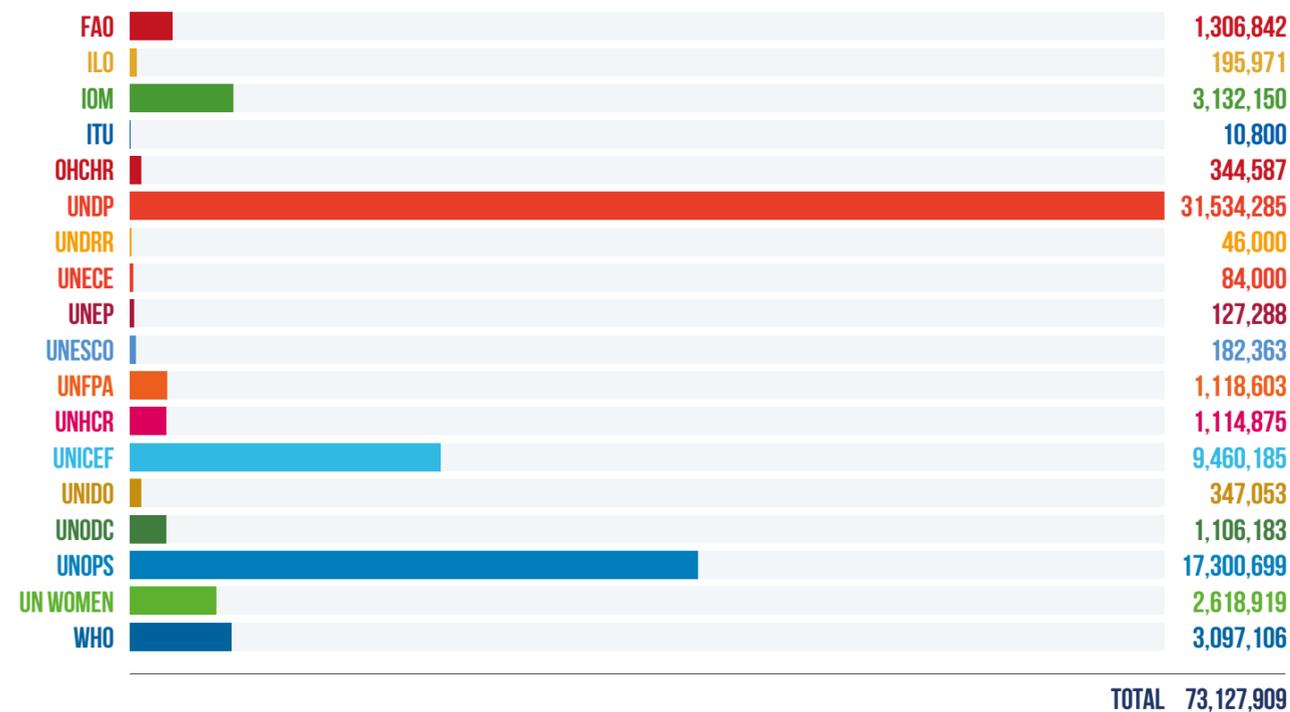
Total budget (core & non-core) vs. delivery (core & non-core)



Total budget and delivery for strategic priority in USD million



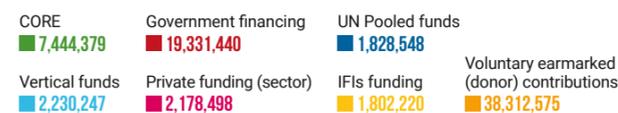
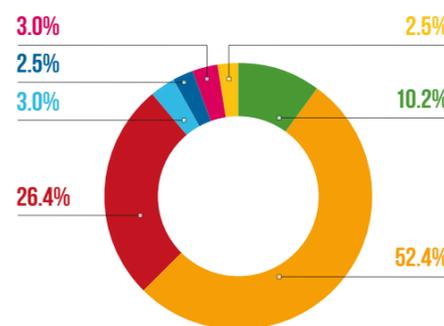
Budget delivery for strategic priority in percentage



UN Agencies delivery in USD

The diverse sources of financing were accessed in 2022. Some 52% of the funding came from locally raised earmarked donor contribution. The EU was the largest single donor accounting for 38.2%, followed

by the Government of Serbia with 26.4% percent. UN Core resources accounted for 10.2%, pool and thematic funds 5.5%, while IFIs and private funding accounted for 2.5% and 3%, respectively.



Delivery by funding source

Delivery by donor

INTO THE FUTURE

2023 will be an important year for the United Nations in Serbia, as it pursues several critical objectives with a key focus on implementing the Cooperation Framework in its third year. The UN will strive to strategically position itself based on needs on the ground and in response to global and regional crises, while aiming for greater coherence and collaboration in the three main priorities of the Cooperation Framework agreed upon with the government of Serbia: the green transformation, building on human capital, and strengthening the rule of law and human rights agenda.

As the country advances further in the EU integration process, the UN Country Team will support the development of the **Sustainable National Development Plan** - a full vision for the country's future towards EU accession and achievement of the 2030 Agenda. This will be a critical step forward in supporting the country's participation with a strong commitment in the upcoming SDG Summit 2023.

The **Green Agenda** will remain a top priority, and the UN will continue to support shaping the full vision of green transformation, normative framework implementation, and building necessary capacities at central and local levels for effective implementation of the National Determined Contribution. Engaging all stakeholders - community, private sector, IFIs, youth - and shifting the narrative towards a sustainable future remains the UN's call.

Significant progress was achieved in 2022, and the UN will continue to **support social protection and agriculture**, promoting a comprehensive approach, with both government counterparts and development partners, moving away from a silo approach. Implementation of the **food systems pathway** and working with various stakeholders will remain a focus to promote sustainable and resilient food systems that can contribute to food security, nutrition, and livelihoods for all.

The UN will celebrate the **75th anniversary of the UN Human Rights Declaration**, providing an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to protecting and promoting human rights. An annual roadmap will be prepared with the Ministry of Human Rights to mark Human Rights 75, with one of the common aspirations being to push for full implementation of the entire legislative framework related to human rights, gender, discrimination, and minorities. The UN will continue to advance key principles of Agenda 2030 through the development of the **Leave No One Behind** tool, in an effort to fight inequalities more systematically. In 2023, the UN Country Team will launch a comprehensive initiative on **transitional justice and social cohesion**.

Unpacking global initiatives such as the **Transforming Education**, the UN in Serbia will continue to prioritize education, ensuring all children have access to quality education. The UN will also give a special focus on **youth**, engaging with the ECOSOC Youth Forum and Youth Advisory Group to ensure their perspectives are taken into account in decision-making processes.

Serbia has established itself as a trailblazer in **digital transformation** within the region and has set clear goals for its advancement. According to the United Nations eGovernment Development Survey 2022, Serbia has, for the first time, been included in the group of countries with the highest eGovernment development index globally. To build upon this momentum, the UN in Serbia will remain a reliable partner to the government in 2023 and beyond, working to enhance the capabilities of the Serbian economy and administration towards achieving full digital transformation.

The UN in Serbia will give a stronger impetus to **data monitoring**. As an early adopter of the SDG Global indicators, Serbia will report on its progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in ECOSOC 2023. The UN will work with relevant authorities to collect and analyze data, ensuring progress towards the SDGs is tracked effectively.

Together with national counterparts, the UN will continue to advance the full realization of Agenda 2030 with a people-centered approach to development, promoting values of solidarity, unity, and equity. More than ever, a renewed commitment to multilateralism is essential to tackle global and regional threats, restore peace, and guide the course of our common destiny with hope and perseverance.



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