**Response to COVID-19**

**Emergency and early recovery support**

**Country:** Kosovo[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Duration**: 24 months from start

**Estimated start date**: October 2020

**Est. budget**: EUR 4,999,284.00

1. **Background and Situation Analysis**

As of 29t August, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected 213 countries, with 25,410,2786 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 850,917[[2]](#footnote-3). While the pandemic began as a health crisis, it has how turned into a multi-dimensional crisis with far-reaching socio-economic implications. The speed and scale of the spread, the severity of cases, and the societal and economic disruption is dramatic for both developed and developing countries. At the same time, gaps in institutional set-up, effectiveness and capacities were exposed.

The effects on people and the formal and informal economy is worsening an already weak and fragile world economy. A new “underclass” has emerged - individuals and families who were able to get by and who now are unable to secure their living. With an estimated 55 per cent of the global population having no access to social protection, these losses will reverberate across societies, impacting education, human rights and, in the most severe cases, basic food security and nutrition[[3]](#footnote-4). The COVID-19 infection curve has not flattened in some of the most populous countries (Brazil, Mexico, India, Pakistan, Iran, Russia) and is, in fact, accelerating, with resurgence in some countries. There will be more socio-economic hardship of a scale and magnitude we have not seen.



High-frequency data from China (where the pandemic began) point to an unprecedented 40% reduction in Chinese real GDP during the first quarter of 2020 (compared to the previous quarter)..[[4]](#footnote-5) IMF reassessed the prospect for growth for 2020 and 2021 reporting[[5]](#footnote-6) that world economy is in recession. While recovery is projected for 2021, it is dependent on the ability to contain further contamination, policy responses of national governments, and on economic recovery trajectories. ILO estimates a loss of between 5 million and 25 million jobs and losses in labour income in the range of USD 860 billion to USD 3,4 trillion. Small and medium enterprises, the self-employed, and daily wage earners are the most affected.

These “sudden stop” declines in economic activity (which have large implications for household incomes, employment, and welfare) reflect two interlinked shocks which are applicable to Kosovo as well, especially due to government’s suppression measures:

1. Supply shocks as a result of disruption of global value chains due to government efforts to suppress the spread of the virus by closing borders, cities, and workplaces;
2. Demand shocks as a result of reduced spending on trade, tourism and travel, due to loss of jobs and limited disposable income.

A concern about a long-lasting impact of the sudden stop of the world economy is the risk of a wave of bankruptcies (preventing liquidity problems from becoming a solvency issue) and redundancies that not only can undermine the recovery but can erode the fabric of societies. The scale of the pandemic was reiterated by the WHO Director General who launched the Global Humanitarian Response Plan[[6]](#footnote-7) setting a six-point action plan for how to respond to this emergency.

A recent address by Achim Steiner noted the severity of not just addressing the pandemic but also in planning for recovery. Securing enough international liquidity for recovery, the limited reach of stimulus programmes to MSMEs and informal sectors; the limited effectiveness of social protection policies which are not reaching the middle class; middle income countries who are not getting concessional finance; addressing the needs of countries and regions with fragilities – are key challenges. The current lack of global policy coordination may lead to longer hysteresis effects of the crisis, prolonging the recovery process. UNDP’s recent report “Temporary Basic Income: Protecting Poor and Vulnerable People in Developing Countries”[[7]](#footnote-8) estimates that it would cost from $199 billion per month to provide a time-bound, guaranteed basic income to the 2.7 billion people living below or just above the poverty line in 132 developing countries. The immediate introduction of a Temporary Basic Income (TBI) for the world’s poorest people could slow the current surge in COVID-19 cases by enabling nearly three billion people to stay at home, safeguarding their health and ensuring livelihoods.

The EU response to the pandemic in the western Balkans has been swift. It has mobilized a package of over €410 million in reallocated bilateral financial assistance addressing the most pressing medical equipment and protection needs; medium term assistance to support the social and economic recovery of the region; ensuring the flow of essential goods, expanding Green Lanes within the region. Kosovo is benefiting from €5 million of immediate support for the health sector, a loan in the amount of EUR 100 million dedicated for the economic recovery; a new budget support programme of EUR 26.5 million; and a range of other projects dedicated to social protection, small support to businesses, and emergency needs, in the amount of EUR 23 million. The overall funds provided to Kosovo amount to EUR 160 million.[[8]](#footnote-9)

* 1. **The Effect of the Pandemic in Kosovo**
		1. ***An update of COVID-19 spread in Kosovo and ability of the health sector to respond***

On 13 March 2020, Kosovo’s former Minister of Health confirmed the first two cases of COVID-19 infections and the government declared a public health emergency on 15 March. The Ministry of Health has created a special website https://www.kosova.health/en/ with relevant information, including preventive measures on COVID-19 and current ofﬁcial statistics. It has also introduced an emergency phone line: 038 200 80 800.

As of 31 August, Kosovo has 13,454 confirmed[[9]](#footnote-10) cases of COVID-19, including 525 deaths, the first one reported on 22 March. The latest data indicate that the highest single increase in positive cases, by 216, was recorded on 12 July and that approximately 450 patients are hospitalized; cases are register in all Kosovo’s 38 municipalities and Prishtina/Pristina continues to have the highest infection rate, standing at 3,094, followed by Ferizaj/Uroševac at 609, and Vushtrri/Vučitern at 567 COVID - 19 cases. [[10]](#footnote-11)The most affected age group is the 35–44 whereas only 1.61% of the population is tested while the case fatality rate stands at 4.00%. The four northern municipalities, while initially observing the instructions of the Government of Serbia on the containment measures, are now cooperating with Kosovo institutions. [[11]](#footnote-12) On the 8 July, on the request of the Ministry of Health, the inhabitants of Mitrovica North, Zubin Potok, Leposaviq/Leposavić and Zveçan/Zvečan must observe the re-instated restriction of movement. In May the Ministry of Health published a temporary guidance for the application of prevention measures and fight against COVID-19 in public and private institutions[[12]](#footnote-13).

The University Clinical Centre in Prishtina is equipped[[13]](#footnote-14) to handle COVID-19 cases, and despite increased capacities through additional hospital beds, ventilators, and equipment, its capacities in the long term are insufficient to manage the demand for healthcare at the current infection rates. The hospital in Vushtrri/ Vučitern is now being equipped to accept and treat patients infected with COVID-19 additional 50 new healthcare staff have joined the Infectious Clinic in Prishtina to help treat patients with COVID – 19. However, this still leaves regional hospitals vulnerable and unable to address the outbreak due to lack of adequate equipment and supplies.

Despite the gradual, three-stage opening plan[[14]](#footnote-15), the outbreak of cases and the associated risks – despite awareness raising and repeated calls to respect preventive measures, has required a new set of preventive measures which were introduced during 5 and 6 July, and updated[[15]](#footnote-16) on the 13 July. Key measures include 1) creation of additional capacities, space, and beds at the University Hospital and Clinical Service of Kosovo (UHCSK) , regional hospitals and private health institutions; 2) licensing of private health institutions to carry out tests for COVID-19; 3) allocation of budget for the purchase of virologic tests, engagement of new medical and other personnel; 4) mandatory wearing of masks in public spaces and maintaining a physical distance. Closed cultural and sport activities are banned as are religious ceremonies and gatherings of more than five people in public squares/parks. The Law No.07/L-006 on the prevention and fight of COVID-19 pandemic was approved in August by the Assembly of Kosovo, defining roles and responsibilities of central institutions and those of public and private healthcare providers in the fight against the pandemic. The law also specifies measures and sanctions for physical legal persons who are in breach of measures including fines.[[16]](#footnote-17)

The pandemic has also affected the civil service including the functioning of institutions. The seemingly high number of affected civil servants means that all governing bodies are now operating with critical staff only; other than the Kosovo Police and the Ministry of Internal Affairs it is unclear if any other institutions have business continuity plans in place. The severity of the situation is best described by the KP which currently has 124 active cases, 9 fatalities, and 237 members in self-isolation, with a total 580 infected individuals.

Media coverage on COVID-19 is channelled through TV, radio and internet portals. With 98% of adult population owning mobile phones health institutions use text messages to inform the population on health emergency measures in line with WHO guidelines on precautionary measures. While 96% of population has access to internet, fake news is largely contained, and the reporting is largely accurate and fast. The “#Rri n’shpi” (stay at home) is visible on all major TV stations as well as a range of other informative video-animations and educational messages from several international organisations, including UNDP. The Radio Televizioni i Kosoves (RTK), namely RTK4 broadcasts the distance learning in Albanian, from 09:00 to 16:00, while RTK2 broadcasts the lessons in Bosnian and Turkish languages. For Serbian children, the lessons were provided through Serbia’s TV and radio stations.

* 1. **Government priorities and response strategy**

The caretaker government imposed strong measures to identify, prevent infection and control the pandemic including restricting movement of citizens and private vehicles. These measures inﬂuenced public life, e.g. closure of education institutions at all levels, suspension of public and private gatherings including cultural, sport, and other events, closure of bars, cafes, restaurants, pubs, clubs, nurseries, shopping centres and public parks. As part of institutional campaign to stem panic buying of basic staples and curb increase of prices, the Competition Authority aired a public awareness campaign on the national TV.

Ministry of Health has a 24h Operational Centre and testing is stepped up particularly of the families with cases. Municipalities are taking measures to re-allocate existing budgets to the emergency response and Municipal Emergency Councils are operational.

Following the initial ban on all travel and closing of borders for non-essential travel, as of 23 June 2020 flights have resumed at the Prishtina International Airport “Adem Jashari” and crossing points, unless closed by neighbours, are now accessible.

The Inter-institutional Group for Incidents Management (IGIM), led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is responsible to plan and coordinate activities in response to the pandemic, guided by the National Response Plan,[[17]](#footnote-18) drafted in 2010; Kosovo also has a law on civil emergencies which is currently implemented only by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At the IGIM meeting held on 27 March, the following priorities were reiterated:

* **Contain the spread of pandemic** through properly equipped health institutions and health-care workers;
* Immediate need for **intelligence/data collection, analysis and forecasting** which will guide the Group in decision-making;
* **Crisis communication** particularly towards citizens on the need to strictly observe movement restrictions;
* **Maintain law and order** through safety and security institutions;
* **Reduce economic fall-out** through a stimulus package for the emergency phase (this measure requires a budgetary review and approval by the Assembly.

The Ministry of Health has organized the Committee for Coordination and Situation Evaluation on COVID-19, now attended by the Prime Minister as well, and has taken a lead role in the process. The focus of work of the Committee is the assessment of health situation and coordination of actions.

In March the caretaker government also introduced the emergency fiscal package[[18]](#footnote-19) consisting of eight objectives and fifteen measures, costing EUR 190 million, for the April – June period. Among the beneficiaries were 100,564 individuals already benefiting from social schemes and 167,768 beneficiaries of pension schemes. With the approval of the 2020 budget (currently awaiting the final vote from the Assembly), over EUR 600 million are mobilized of which EUR 232 million to cover the lack of tax revenues and EUR 285 million for the full implementation of the Emergency Fiscal Package and the Economic Recovery Package.

* + 1. ***Political developments***

The power struggle between coalition partners and the President presented as a dispute on how to tackle coronavirus and the removal of the Kosovo tariff towards Serbia, brought down the government on 25 March. The collapse left Kosovo without a formal leadership at a critical time.

Following the ruling of the Constitutional Court, the new government was established on 3 June by a simple majority of Kosovo’s 120 MPs who voted in favour of a coalition led by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). The new coalition government includes the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), NISMA, Lista Srpska and other parties representing minority communities.

While the pandemic is undoubtedly affecting the effectiveness of the governing bodies, political schism – even within political parties, is further straining their functioning. New challenges in the form of the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office proposed indictment, Prishtina – Belgrade dialogue which managed to frost the EU and USA rapports, the highly political statement by Lista Srpska in support of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, have polarized the political debate within the Assembly 4 and delayed the ratification of international agreements.

On a positive note, the Assembly of Kosovo approved, in principle, the draft law on the review of the Budget 2020 and has prepared the draft law on economic recovery which as of 31 August was not yet approved; the law foresees benefits for citizens and businesses valued at EUR 470 million for 2021. The approval of the law will allow the use of funds from the Privatization Agency ensuring that all measures foreseen in the Economic Recovery Plan will be implemented.

The Donor Coordination Forum for Economic Recovery was held on Friday, 28 August 2020, chaired by Prime Minister Hoti and by the Minister of Finance, Hykmete Bajrami. The event aimed to coordinate Kosovo’s institutional efforts, resources and expertise with those of international partners, as a means of overcoming the current health and socio-economic crisis. The focus of discussion centred on sector approach and long-term sector targets to be achieved by Kosovo by 2030 as part of the National Development Strategy 2021-2030, indicative support from donors for 2021-2025 which will contribute to Investment Plan 2021-2025, and identification of sources of financing with a focus on the programming of IPA III. Minister Bajrami reported that EUR 365 million were distributed among line ministries and other budgetary organizations as per the Plan for the Implementation of the Economic Recovery Programme. At the time of the meeting the Ministry of Finance was revising the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to reflect the current situation.

* 1. **Socio-economic context and impact on social cohesion**

The COVID-19 crisis is having a significant impact on people’s lives at the global level – in terms of jobs, livelihoods, delivery of basic services – and particularly for those already in vulnerable situations who will be hit the hardest. Short to medium term socio-economic implications on vulnerable group’s resilience and ability to cope is already evident particularly from already exposed groups. For less developed countries the strain of the pandemic and the recovery phase will be that much harder.

Kosovo’s economic growth has not reduced the rates of unemployment; created quality jobs, particularly for women and youth, or reversed the trend of migration, as reported in the WB in Kosovo Country Snapshot for 2018[[19]](#footnote-20). An estimated 18% of Kosovo’s population live below the poverty line, and 5% live in extreme poverty.[[20]](#footnote-21) Women and girls comprise 60-65% of household members reliant on social assistance from 2013 to 2016. Women’s low employment rates and/or work in the informal economy also contribute to lower pensions, as unpaid labour is not considered when calculating pensions.[[21]](#footnote-22) Children have higher rates of poverty at 23% but households with 3 or more children have a poverty rate of 26.3% and extreme poverty rate of 8%.[[22]](#footnote-23) Currently there are 24,689 families in Kosovo who receive social assistance and this number will increase considerably as the pandemic spreads.

The SMEs account for 99.9% of all companies, generate 81% of total value added and account for 76.2% of total employment[[23]](#footnote-24) with a per capita GDP of $4,108[[24]](#footnote-25). Of the 20,783 registered active businesses[[25]](#footnote-26) approximately 11% are owned by women, predominantly in the MSME sector. At around 18%, Kosovo has one of the lowest female labour force participation[[26]](#footnote-27) rates in the world. Women’s high unemployment can contribute to the feminization of poverty. Non-tradable sectors dominate output and employment in Kosovo and services represented the largest sector, with a share of value added at 54% of GDP during 2009–2017; the industry is small by regional standards at 17.5% of GDP, of which manufacturing is 11%. The agriculture sector remained relatively large at 8.3 percent of GDP in 2018[[27]](#footnote-28).

The pandemic has also uncovered the unequal effect on women; economic consequences of the pandemic are disproportionally affecting women as their capacity to absorb economic shocks is lower than that of men. Approximately 30% of women employed in the private sector in Kosovo work informally, and are unable to benefit from social security support, and are more likely to experience financial distress.[[28]](#footnote-29)

The consequences of the pandemic on Kosovo’s economy are expected to be severe. GDP growth forecasts for Kosovo for 2020 were reduced to -5%, economic activity is close to paralysis and domestic and foreign demand has come to a standstill. Balance of payment challenges, lack of fiscal resources to mitigate the worst effects of the crisis and rising unemployment have not only shaken the social contract, but they have created a sense of economic volatility that undermines future economic confidence. The inability of businesses to conduct their work has affected employment and income of citizens, thus directly impacting consumption, which is in sharp decline. It is estimated that 200,000 workers will be directly affected by the crisis through redundancies, unpaid leave, or reduced salaries, not counting the grey economy. Moreover, the flow of remittances is expected to reduce considerably which will further weaken the ability of citizens to finance consumption. In turn, many SMEs will face bankruptcy pressures; micro enterprises that rely heavily on discretionary, in-person consumer spending facing the greatest risks.

In response, central institutions have increased access to financing by firms, reduced the tax burden, put in place temporary employment support measures, increased budgetary spending on the expansion of agriculture and returned a percentage of pension funds (Euro 170 million) to its contributors. It has also provided greater support to sustain critical public enterprises, eased fiscal restrictions, suspended the budget deficit rule, alongside a set of reforms to the budget prioritization and public finance management system. Central institutions also aim to increase lending and deposits, reviewing market capitalization and liquidity rules.

The costs of these measures are substantial and although an Economic Recovery Fund is being established with Euro 1.2 billion to support policy measures in the period 2020-2021, the reality is that access to financial support will continue to be tight; as strong economic headwinds seem set to continue. If the pandemic is prolonged, leading to a deeper recession within the European Union, new external and domestic shocks could emerge. In this context, in July 2020 the World Economic Forum noted a 68% probability of prolonged crisis, a 56.3% probability of more bankruptcies and consolidation, a 55.9% probability that industries fail to recover and a 49.3% probability of continued heightened unemployment.

In Kosovo’s context, the “Economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Hospitality Sector in Kosovo”[[29]](#footnote-30), published on 27 March2020, notes that a two months economic hiatus in the hospitality sector will have the following impact:

* + More than 12,000 employees became inactive, without income and at risk of losing their jobs, with a loss of over €6 million in wages;
	+ 3,683 SMEs are directly impacted with costs of around €13 million loss in turnover;
	+ The inactivity of the hospitality sector’s impact in interlinked sector could be more than €10 million.

Even under normal circumstances, the labour market in Kosovo is volatile: a high unemployment rate (25.7%), a low employment rate (30.1%), exceptionally high rate of working age population who are not economically active (59.5%), a high youth unemployment rate (49%), a very low employment rate for women (14%), and long-term unemployment where 62% of those registered have been unemployed for more than 12 months.[[30]](#footnote-31) The World Bank’s “Jobs Diagnostics Kosovo” paper[[31]](#footnote-32) (2017) noted the high degrees of informality, the general agreement with respect to the importance of informality in Kosovo, and lack of systematic estimates of the size of the informal sector noting that over a quarter of Kosovo’s workers are engaged in the informal sector.[[32]](#footnote-33) The paper notes that informal employment in Kosovo is higher than in most EU states, behind only Greece and Cyprus. The data show that youth, males, the less educated, and rural residents show a higher rate of informal employment. Almost half (48.2 percent) of employed youth (15–24-year-old) are in the informal sector. The informal sector affects the competition between formal and informal companies which can led to undesirable outcomes: both use public services however only formal companies pay taxes which can lead to suboptimal service levels of all companies. The report also notes the need to create a conducive environment for women to take advantage of employment opportunities through improved skills; the need to increase labour force participation for both men and women; easing the burden of women to access jobs through systems of care for children and elderly; address the need of availability, affordability and quality of care, amongst other. EBRD’s Transition Report[[33]](#footnote-34) 2019-2020 also notes the challenge of informal economy despite the adoption of the strategy against informality covering 2019-2023.

In view of the current crisis, the findings from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo states that 45 percent of businesses in Kosovo have stopped operating or have been directly impacted by the anti-COVID measures with businesses losing up to €10 million a day as a result of the pandemic while the compensation for damages caused in agricultural households as a result of natural disasters occurring during January-June 2020 will cost EUR 1,867,107.

* + 1. ***Social Cohesion in times of crisis***

Inhabitants of rural areas and female-led households are disproportionality affected by poverty, indicating that these groups are at risk of being left behind on SDG1.[[34]](#footnote-35) Groups subject to discrimination, especially the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, as well as youth, women and disabled people, are also facing greater risks either through long-term unemployment, participation in the grey economy, low salaries, and lack of opportunities to generate alternative income sources. Furthermore, among women participating in the labour market, unemployment rates are higher than those of men. These problems are well recognized and increasing women's participation in the labor market should become a public policy priority.

At the household and individual level, stresses will accumulate as people use existing assets. The short-term fiscal shocks and behavioural changes that affect the consumption patterns will start showing the longer-term negative impact to economic growth, as will the impact on remittance flows. Poverty and vulnerability can increase significantly especially due to food security concerns.

The impeding domestic economic crisis will be transmitted to the household economy through the following main channels:

1. Higher costs for basic goods, such as food and energy products, medicines and agricultural inputs, among others, with the highest declining purchasing power of the poorest households;
2. Fewer jobs, wage cuts, redundancies, especially in the informal sector;
3. Diminished assets and reduced access to credit.

COVID-19 will intensify existing socio-economic inequalities and vulnerabilities not just world-wide but in Kosovo too. The costs of institutional response to the crisis (e.g. self-isolation, social distancing, restricting movement and economic activities) are not equally distributed amongst the population, and are affecting social groups differently. While policy responses must be just, fair, and equal for all, they should also attempt to address diverse needs be it of women, youth, minority communities, or disabled individuals. The ensuing economic crisis has worsened and deepened gender and social inequality, and, in particular, gender-blind measures to respond to the pandemic are exacerbate inequalities.

The impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion, especially in fragile political situations or post-conflict settings, should not be underestimated. Depending on the perceived effectiveness of institutional response to the crisis, trust in the governing structures and the political leadership may be eroded. Several attacks took place during April: one on the house of Kosovo Serb (in Cernica/Crnica, Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality) and another one in Novake/Novakë (Prizren municipality), one of the oldest mosques in Kosovo, in Vërboc (Drenas/Glogovac) was burned down, the desecration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities’ graveyard in Rahovec/Orahovac, the graffiti on a school in Gojbulja (Vushtrri/Vučitrn). These examples demonstrate that regardless of the context (ethnically motivated, acts of vandalism, intentional) or the fact that the KP, Majors and international organisations have taken action to solve these cases and have publicly condemned them, they cause distress among local communities in this multi-ethnic environment.

At the intersection of health, peace and security, particularly in situations of frozen conflict and aiming to minimize risks there is a need to:

* 1. (at the very least) maintain social cohesion;
	2. ensure inclusive crisis communication to prevent division through misinformation and perceptions of exclusion;
	3. address concerns of vulnerable groups particularly regarding access to health care, food, and protection;
	4. address and monitoring hate speech and fearmongering against vulnerable populations.

As economic and social conditions deteriorate, the risk of social disorder is a potential risk, particularly in situations where social relationships are already strained by persisting (real or perceived) inequalities.[[35]](#footnote-36)

* 1. **Social Services System in Kosovo**

The existing institutional social safety net is inadequate to respond to the needs of vulnerable people; a significant proportion of the poor already fall through the safety net. The inadequacy of the system has become more evident with the sharp increase of social vulnerability as a result of the pandemic. The Social Assistance Scheme (SAS) absorbs approximately 88% of the budget for social assistance with the relative total spending on SAS declining over the last decade. Spending rose most for pensions for the elderly and war veterans. At the same time, between 2009 and 2016, spending on SAS fell by 12.3%, from 19% of total social protection spending to 8.13%, or from 0.69 to 0.48% of GDP.

Kosovo has a solid legal and institutional framework for decentralized social service delivery which must be complemented with adequate funding and resources[[36]](#footnote-37). The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW)[[37]](#footnote-38) is responsible for organizing the provision and development of social and family services and municipalities are responsible for delivery of social services which are funded from the central budget[[38]](#footnote-39). At the local level the Municipal Directorates for Health and Social Welfare (MDHSW)[[39]](#footnote-40) oversee the planning and development of services. The Centres of Social Work (CSW) are responsible for service delivery to all 38 municipalities through 40 CSW. However, because many staff cover multiple tasks to fulfil the responsibilities of vacant positions, existing human resource are insufficient.

While the parameters for a specific financial formula for social services funding was developed, its implementation is not foreseen in the next two years, which poses a challenge for the provision of social services by CSWs. There is little central-level guidelines and instructions for municipalities on budget preparation and planning. This is exacerbated by lack of municipal planning based on statistical data, although a system is in place[[40]](#footnote-41), on the most vulnerable groups (Ministry of Finance requires municipalities to plan based on the aggregated data and the identified needs in the municipality, and not on the basis of previous years’ planning).[[41]](#footnote-42) This results in a poor provision of social services to the most vulnerable groups.

The work of CSW is augmented through licensed NGOs who cooperate with CSWs, municipal departments and MLSW. While NGOs are operational and provide adequate services, a key challenge is their financial sustainability. Most provide project-based services that are mainly complementary services to support beneficiaries with education activities, health support, alleviation of poverty, psycho-social activities and other community-based services. However, there is a limited number of NGOs that can support the CSWs and beneficiaries with sheltering, longer term support and emergency support services—which is what the CSWs need the most. CSWs report the need for services for victims of domestic violence, children with disabilities, the elderly, and youth in conflict with the law (street children, drug users) requiring term sheltering, rehabilitation, stimulation, reintegration services[[42]](#footnote-43). The government has allocated funding for the shelters’ regular operations however not for the long-term rehabilitation programmes. This requires strengthened and increased human resources at CSWs including capacity development in the design of victim-centred rehabilitation and reintegration services. component.

***1.4.1 The agility of Social Services System in Kosovo in the wake of COVID-19***

The pandemic has exposed a series of gaps in the governance system and has affected the work of institutions and service delivery not least in provision of social services; it has directly affected the work of CSWs as they are also engaged in other activities to help their citizens - despite limited capacities - either through the provision of professional social services, administering measure 15 of the emergency package, or through direct assistance in providing food and hygiene packages.

UNDP undertook a series of consultative meetings with CSW in seven municipalities[[43]](#footnote-44) to gather first-hand information how the pandemic has affected their work and the people they serve. The findings from all CSW point to centrality of issues which stem from inadequate policy and legal framework and limited budget. In turn these affect the quality of services, and operations of the CSWs. Key constraints are listed as:

* Staff: CSWs have a significant shortage of support staff for the provision of social assistance and social services, affecting field verifications and processing of cases;
* Service providers: there is a limited number of professional and licensed NGOs in support of the CSW for providing direct services and the extreme difficulty in contracting services for vulnerable groups
* Budget and logistic: there is a lack of budget for supporting high-risk families and lack of material condition. Budget constraints also affect the update and upgrade of technological equipment which, especially in the current situation, is more than necessary to allow for virtual working, digitalization of services, including personal protective equipment (PPE) for CSW staff. Budgetary constraints[[44]](#footnote-45) also affect the provision of sustainable social housing while none of CSW (with whom UNDP consulted) are accessible for people with disabilities;
* Coordination, Cooperation, Communication: is identified as a serious issue in the wake of the pandemic as it effects activities between municipal emergency councils and CSW officials; between humanitarian organization and CSWs in harmonizing the lists for material support of families in need of social needs; between the Employment Offices and CSW as well as the lack of coordination for employment engagement with main focus from second category of SAS beneficiary. A further issue, which has become more prominent is the lack of harmonization between database systems from the CSW, the Employment Office, Tax Administration, property, vehicle registration and other municipal directorates.

From a service provision lens, key constraints are focused on the provision of are as follows:

* Support for individuals and families in need: food and hygiene packages are standardized, and they do not reflect the number of family members nor of specific needs (families with young children, teenagers, or elderly members). At the same time there is insufficient support for single parents with special emphasis on single mothers;
* Lack of shelters: municipalities noted that there is insufficient number of shelters and institutions for abused children[[45]](#footnote-46). On a related note there is an increased number of children engaged in heavy and dangerous work which also requires adequate treatment;
* Information and outreach: CSW lack a range of manuals, information and awareness raising materials which would inform citizens and guide the work of professional staff, who also lack knowledge on the use of various online platforms for communication between institutions. More problematic is the difficulty in evaluating and verifying SAS criteria.[[46]](#footnote-47)

These findings are in line with the assessment in Kosovo Report 2019, section 6.11 on Social Policy and Employment. According to the report, Kosovo has a legal and institutional framework for social service delivery in place but limited financial resources and human capacities and a lack of proper planning by public institutions resulting in an inadequate provision of social services to the most vulnerable population. This is aggravated by a general lack of data collection on population numbers broken down by gender, age groups, ethnicity, ability and vulnerability.

* 1. **UNDP’s Corporate Response**

UNDP’s experience in building resilience to crisis and eradicating poverty, including its established partnerships, spans global, regional and local levels.

Recovering from disasters is a challenging process as it creates greater pressures on already limited human, institutional and financial resources. As part of Disaster Management phases, in the current context, UNDP can offer tailored macro, meso and micro tools that can be deployed at regional, national and sub-national levels, focusing on response, mitigation and recovery. Safeguarding human rights in times of crisis becomes a challenge, especially in the current circumstances, with a confluence of health, economic and political crisis. The obligations to protect economic and social rights, avoid the erosion of these rights and prevent disproportionate impacts on parts of the population through principles of non-discrimination, equality, participation, transparency and accountability have a specific significance in responses to any crisis.

The UN launched the framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 plan[[47]](#footnote-48) to counter the potentially devastating impacts of the pandemic. At the “Recover Better Together” Action Forum (June 26) $16m was pledged to the UN COVID-19 MPTF, bringing the total amount of commitments (including pledges) and contributions to $64.3m out of the $1b funding target for 2020. UN Kosovo Team under the strategic leadership of the UN Development Coordinator and technical leadership of UNDP finalized a comprehensive UN Socio Economic Response Plan (SERP) to guide joint UN family efforts for the post COVID-19 recovery phase. At the same time UNDP Kosovo, with inputs from UN Women and UNFPA, conducted the first Rapid Socio-economic Impact Assessment[[48]](#footnote-49) (SEIA). The Rapid Socio-economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Kosovo examined the impact of the pandemic on households and businesses in Kosovo. The assessment utilises a combined approach of two separate surveys in providing key findings on the COVID-19 impact on employment, income and revenue changes, implications based on gender, access to basic services, coping mechanisms, business performance, and outlook. Specifically, the report presents findings from two surveys: (1) A rapid assessment of the socio-economic impact of the crisis on Kosovan households, with special focus on vulnerable groups (i.e. financial losses, the effect of the quarantine in social dynamics, educational and gender gap burden, etc.), (2) Short-term impact assessment on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises, opportunity losses and business recovery needs. The findings provide a baseline for developing targeted support by central and local institutions, and development partners, to buffer the effect of the crisis and increase community resilience. Two more follow-up SEAI’s are planned, one to be initiated during September 2020 and the third one during late December 2020/early January 2021, providing comparable data and a trend.

UNDP’s recovery[[49]](#footnote-50) guiding principles focus on the most vulnerable, building resilience, use of gender and human rights-based approach, the application of do no harm/conflict sensitive recovery, transparency and accountability, partnerships and sustainability. As a global pandemic that threatens to profoundly deepen inequalities and undo progress on sustainable development, COVID-19 is already devastating individuals, families, communities, economies and infrastructure. The second phase of UNDP’s COVID-19 crisis response (UNDP Offer 2.0 – Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030) is designed to help decision-makers tackle the immediate crisis while looking beyond recovery making choices and managing complexity and uncertainty in four main areas: governance, social protection, green economy, and digital disruption.

* + 1. ***UNDP in Kosovo – A Comparative Advantage***

UNDP, as the custodian of SDG 16 has a track record of working with both the legislative and executive bodies, at central and municipal levels, in support of democratic, accountable and functioning governance systems. UNDP has comparative advantage and extensive experience in both governance and in supporting livelihoods, in targeting the most marginalized communities in urban and rural areas, while simultaneously strengthening the leadership of local institutions in order to ensure sustainability and meaningful dialogue between actors crucial to local development. In the context of the pandemic and in line with UNDP’s COVID-19 integrated response offer, UNDP Kosovo is focusing on strengthening the first line of response, supporting the health-care system, crisis management, public outreach and awareness, and minimizing SDG regression.

Over the past 20 years in Kosovo, UNDP has established strong partnerships with central and municipal institutions, including CSOs/NGOs and grass-root/community level organisations. UNDP has level been working in emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation, assistance to disadvantaged communities, governance, rule of law, and promotion of employment generation.

UNDP in Kosovo is contributing to achieve sustainable development of local communities through governance projects and enhanced cooperation between municipalities and civil society (ReLoad [[50]](#footnote-51)). The work on improving interethnic dialogue and cooperation through cultural heritage, funded through Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), addressed the needs of communities to exercise their rights in respect to cultural heritage. Strengthening access to justice and promoting human rights as the cornerstones of achieving sustainable human development, particularly for the most vulnerable, UNDP has established support services, in partnership with both central and municipal institutions, as well as NGOs/CSOs, to address the needs of women, minorities, and other disenfranchised groups. Furthermore, UNDP has built important working relations with stakeholders engaged in dealing with the past as means of addressing the needs of families of the missing persons irrespective of their ethnicity.

Active in employment and livelihood interventions, in cooperation with the central institutions, UNDP has been instrumental in designing strategic, evidence-based policies and programmes which provide services on skills development and employment opportunities. Since 2005, over 14,000 women and men, repatriated Kosovars and other marginalized groups have benefited through jobs or establishing new ventures. The latest initiative, which addresses the long-term institutional needs, supports the digitalization of service provision, and allows improved support to job-seekers is the development of the web application platform “Kosovo Job Portal“; the portal will be linked to the Employment Management Information system (EMIS ) in order to provide on-line, multi-dimensional employment services.

UNDP has also created an environment in which youth, especially the vulnerable ones can develop skills, increase employability through volunteering, gain work experience, and train. This is contributing to increased trust between youth and public institutions, particularly those from minority communities.

Linking the environment and health agenda in Kosovo, through a well-established partnership with central and local institutions, UNDP has initiated inter-institutional coordination on the subject. A coordinated agenda for environment and health will support the reduction of environment related burden of disease for people, especially the marginalized groups who tend to be the most affected ones. Efforts in addressing environmental health issues have been put in educating local communities on the importance of living a sustainable life and embracing preventive measures to protect their health.

Engaging individuals and communities in remote hard-to access and high-risk areas to reduce risks is at the forefront of UNDP’s Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery offer. UNDP’s mandate is drawn from the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) which aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries. Since 2010 UNDP in Kosovo has supported the most vulnerable groups to develop preparedness and response plans, build local awareness, train local volunteers as first responders, and the application of the build back better concept.

UNDP Kosovo’s response to the COVID-19 is coordinated with UN Kosovo Team, and is in line with UNDP’s integrated response offer to COVID-19, and the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, including safeguarding progress on the SDGs and delivering on the leave no one behind approach. The focus of interventions which are currently in preparation include minimising SDG regression, strengthening the first line of defence, public outreach and awareness, socio-economic recovery, as the key focus areas.

* 1. **The Impact of the Pandemic on Women: using a gender lens in responding to the crisis**

UNDP globally is addressing the pandemic as a multidimensional crisis – health crisis, care crisis and economic crisis – and is rapidly developing a response that addresses these various dimensions. Gender responsiveness requires acknowledging how household dynamics are changing because of the crisis. Women become even more vulnerable in emergencies because of limited access to health services, depend heavily on the informal economy, have inadequate access to social services, have limited decision-making influence, have limited capacities and opportunities to cope and adapt, and limited access to technology. A failure to adopt a gender lens will have an impact on the effects of the crisis and future recovery with potential to exacerbate existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, since the cost of the response is not equally distributed, aggravating human conflict. It is critical that any response for women and girls who have experienced violence adopts the basic principles of a survivor-centered approach. This should include considering their multiple needs, assessing risks and vulnerabilities, keeping them safe and secure, adhering to principles of confidentiality and privacy, and doing no harm.

Globally, women make up [70%](https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/gender_equity-health_workforce_analysis/en/) [[51]](#footnote-52) of workers in the health and social sector, and they do [three times](https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/womens-rights-in-review-2020) as much unpaid care work at home as men. On average, men spend 83 minutes in unpaid care work while globally, women spend 265 minutes in unpaid care work, more than three times the time spent by men[[52]](#footnote-53). Where healthcare systems are stretched by efforts to contain outbreaks and schools preventatively close, care responsibilities are frequently “downloaded” onto women, who usually bear responsibility for caring for ill family members, the elderly and children. In addition, most women work in the informal economy, where health insurance is likely to be non-existent or inadequate, and income is not secure. The situation is more difficult for single parents, especially when options for informal childcare are unavailable.

Women are on the frontline of this pandemic – through health care, maternal care, elderly care, online teaching, child - care, social work and volunteering. However, in times of crisis women are left out of the decision-making process and policy development – they are left out from shaping the decisions that affect their lives. Because they are not well targeted for bail outs, they are financially on their own[[53]](#footnote-54). Increased social protection measures are essential, such as income support for households experiencing a drop in financial resources; measures to protect informal workers and small-scale enterprises to prevent long-term impacts on livelihoods.

Domestic abuse also increases in times of crisis as shown by the latest data from the KP on domestic violence for January – July 2020, compared to the same period for 2019 clearly show a 22% increase in violence:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **January** | **February** | **March** | **April** | **May** | **June** | **July** |
| **2020** | **160** | **149** | **171** | **167** | **174** | **179** | **185** |
| **2019** | **147** | **112** | **124** | **130** | **123** | **156** |   | **178** |

Evidence shows that only 40 % of women who experience violence seek help of any sort and many do not report their experiences. In Kosovo there are no official services on the reintegration of survivors of gender-based and domestic violence, including economic empowerment initiatives that address their access to property rights, and treatment and rehabilitation services of perpetrators. The Security and Gender Group (SGG) issued two joint statements, one calling for the prevention of domestic violence amid the pandemic, and another addressing the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Development, with specific recommendations on how to tackle the economic effects of the pandemic on women and girls.

UNDP Kosovo’s rapid socio-economic impact assessment (SEIA) of COVID-19, conducted in May 2020, identified direct and indirect socio-economic impact, the nature and extent of the crisis. A gender lens was applied to the assessment, with inputs from UNFPA and UN Women, since women are predominantly employed in the informal sector making them vulnerable to financial, emotional and physical risk.[[54]](#footnote-55) The assessment found that 54% of men and 29% of women were employed and working at least a week prior to COVID-19 pandemic. After the outbreak 65% of women had to reduce their working hours; 52% of men and 46% of women had their level of income decreased. For men, engaging in domestic work and family care was not a barrier to employment, which could only be said to 21% of women. 15% of men and 5% of women claimed to have been self-employed or owning a business.53% of women and 46% of men have claimed difficulties in accessing food, whereas 57% of women and 51% of men have experienced difficulties accessing medical supplies for personal use. When it comes to psychological or emotional effects, 25% of men and 31% of women claimed to have personally experienced some sort of psychological or emotional effects due to the pandemic, while about 2% of men and 3% of women have had their physical health affected. The gender impact of the pandemic was further elaborated through UN Women’s Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA)[[55]](#footnote-56) in Europe and Central Asia, highlighting the different ways the pandemic is affecting men and women. The report, amongst others, notes that women’s economic security has been greatly affected, impacting employment and income. Considering the increased incidence of domestic/gender-based violence as a result of the pandemic, the ending violence against women (EVAW) Regional Assessment[[56]](#footnote-57) highlighted the following recommendations for service providers in Kosovo:

1. All women´s CSO working directly on EVAW must have an increase in their digital resources and skills for using online tools and technologies to provide content for advocacy, awareness-raising and campaigning;
2. regarding helplines, financial support must always be enabled for improving professional capacities and staff engaged in service provision;
3. shelters should be able to ensure health safety equipment and product for staff and beneficiaries. Protocols for referral of shelters to humanitarian aid organizations when needed for the provision of food, clothing, and other necessities for their beneficiaries should also be implemented.
4. Ensure health safety equipment and product for staff and beneficiaries.

At strategic decision making level the absence of women is evident and Kosovo Women’s Network policy recommendation for addressing COVID-19 from a gender perspective[[57]](#footnote-58) notes that *“The Special Commission for Prevention of the Spread of COVID-19 and that of the Interinstitutional Group for Incident Management in Kosovo involves minimal participation of women. Moreover, few women leaders are seen in the media and in public pronouncements; only men seem to be addressing the situation in Kosovo from a gender-neutral perspective. The unequal representation of women in decision-making processes can contribute to the creation of gender-blind policies.29 The omission of women in designing policies that affect women themselves in epidemic situations means that the needs of women may not be identified and addressed.”*

1. **Strategy**

**2.1. Strategic approach**

The first step in recovery planning is the reflection on what this implies. It relates to a concept that is more humanistic, focused on rights, and which seeks to attend to not only the mere physical rehabilitation and reconstruction. Equally, it is a non-linear process that depends to a great extent on the preventative actions to reduce vulnerabilities and the emergency attention phase: many decisions taken without due consideration can have negative impacts during posterior recovery processes.

Current analysis points to a an emerging path to recovery which is *people-centred* – requiring investments in capabilities and institutional mechanisms such as Universal Health Coverage and Universal and/or Temporary Basic Income Schemes; *green* - arresting the damage to the planet and biodiversity, which currently seems to be underfunded; and *digital* - going beyond our analogue way of operating, while investment in social protection will continue to be a major action point.

An Inclusive Global Social Contract is needed for the re-setting of the world emerging after COVID-19. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, eight are directly linked to socio-economic well-being: zero poverty and zero hunger (SDG1 and SDG2), good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), quality of education (SDG4) , gender equality (SDG5), clean water, sanitation and affordable clean energy (SDG 6and SDG7) with – perhaps – the most important one being SDG 8 which focuses on decent work while maintaining economic growth. The other relevant goals (SDG9 - SDG 17) have indirect influence on the socio-economic stability, growth and development. Complementary to UN’s and UNDP’s approach to gender mainstreaming, equality and empowerment of women and girls is the EU’s Gender Action Plan (GAP) II. Of the four thematic priorities, two support the project activities in their entirety: i) promoting the economic and social rights/empowerment of girls and women; and ii) strengthening girls’ and women’s voice and participation.

The project’s gender responsive approach will be guided by the UN’s Eight Point Agenda – SC 1325, Transform Government to Deliver for Women and Gender Equality. Interventions will take into consideration the disparate impacts of the pandemic on women and men, how it affects service delivery and access to services, areas where women are particularly marginalized including access to justice (such as property ownership, inheritance, access to finance, family law). The project will attempt to deconstruct gender-based discrimination that hinders women’s access to services, contributing to creating an environment that embraces women’s rights and addresses their needs in an equitable manner.

Governance, in the context of crisis management, refers to (1) government capacity to deliver services and manage crises and (2) cross-sector collaboration and interorganizational networks.[[58]](#footnote-59) While governance capacities are required during crisis the post-crisis stage requirements for good governance - through fair processes and timely responses, are even greater. They avoid possible misuse of (often) limited resources, support transparency of decisions and actions, which contribute to re-establishing regular functioning of services, re-establishing economic and social conditions, ultimately re-building trusts in institutions. In Kosovo’s case this may be that much more difficult due to the current state of social services. Ombudsperson’s ex officio report on delivery of social services[[59]](#footnote-60) is damning; it lists major issues of governance nature, human capacities, and financial means.

This action will aim to address these interlinked challenges at the local level focusing on service delivery for the most vulnerable. It will also provide support for front-line workers to discharge their duties and responsibilities. The cooperation with institutional actors and the NGO sector will ensure a coherent, coordinated, needs-driven support for the most vulnerable, across 38 municipalities. The level of support for each municipality will be determined based on pandemic’s impact on already poor and vulnerable, identified needs by CSW, NGOs, and assessment reports.

* + 1. ***Alignment of the Action with Kosovo’s strategic objectives***

At a fundamental level, the action will have a direct impact on the most vulnerable groups and individuals throughout Kosovo who will be identified in close coordination with municipal Departments of Health and Social Welfare and CSW. The primary target group are people and individuals living in poverty or at risk of socio-economic marginalization; the primary target group will be further stratified to include single mothers/women heads of households, minority communities particularly Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, women victims of or at risk of gender based violence, abuse or domestic violence; people living in remote rural areas who experience difficulties to access social facilities and services.

The Action directly contributes to the Strategic Objective 3 of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Sector Strategy 2018-2022, which aims to increase social welfare through expanding and raising the quality of protection and social and family services, with a special focus on groups in need and gender equality. Furthermore, the action is in line with the situation analysis of the capacities of Social Service Providers in Kosovo , published in 2018, and financed by the EU which notes key challenges of social service delivery in Kosovo such as insufficient financing for social services, insufficient capacities of CSW, and limited financial sustainability of NGOs providing social services. These finds are also confirmed through formal, consultation meetings, organized by UNDP, with select CSWs. Planned interventions are also in line with the several sectoral strategies: Strategy on Employment and Social Inclusion, 2014-2020; National Strategy for Protection from Violence in Family 2016-2020; Priorities of the Government Programme 2020-2023.

The action is linked with EU’s Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020 (section five of part IV) which tackles Education, Employment and Social Policies, on assisting the most marginalised groups; it also addresses the findings from the Kosovo Report 2019, section 6.11 on Social Policy and Employment. As noted in the Action Document (Kosovo) IPA II – 2019 – EU4 Social protection following the coronavirus, the action will also contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy, Flagship Initiative: “European Platform Against Poverty” which aims to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society.

This Action, also noted in the Action Document (Kosovo) IPA II – 2019, will contribute to several objectives of the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP), including Objective 7 “Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them”, Objective 9 “Protection for all women and men of all ages from sexual and gender based violence in crisis situations”, Objective 10 “Equal access to quality and preventive, curative and rehabilitative physical and mental health care services for girls and women” and Objective 14 “Access to decent work for women of all ages”. Additionally, the Action supports EU policies on the protection of Human Rights in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the commitment to “leave no one behind”. The widespread prevalence of gender-based violence and various forms of discrimination against women in Kosovo are a matter of concern and Kosovo needs to strengthen the implementation of the Law on gender equality, at both central and municipal levels.

* 1. **Theory of Change**

UNDP’s programme for 2021-2025 will be guided by Kosovo’s development priorities and UN Kosovo Team (UNKT) Cooperation Framework. The upcoming programme cycle will build of results of the current cycle, focusing on improved accountability and responsiveness of governance, more sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth as well as social cohesion and trust building among communities and towards public institutions.

The overarching goal of the programme, reflecting stakeholder concerns, is to accelerate human development that leads to sustainable growth in Kosovo. UNDP will contribute to the goal through development of human and institutional capacities to strengthen the governance accountability systems, through provision of opportunities for improved livelihoods, and support to climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction. In addition, social cohesion and trust between communities will have a special focus and be mainstreamed throughout UNDPs programme areas. Supporting emergency response to the pandemic, UNDP will continue engagement in the recovery from the impact of COVID-19 as per its comparative advantage.

At the Action level the overall theory of change is based on the premise that **if** humanitarian support is provided to vulnerable individuals and families **then** the pandemic’s effect on their resilience will be reduced and **if** the system of providing social services is functioning more efficiently through improved financing, infrastructures, digitalization and technological upgrades, and human capacities are strengthened for a more effective and efficient service delivery, **then** its responsiveness to the need of vulnerable groups will improve.

The ToC at output level is presented as follows:

* *Output 1: Improved socio-economic support system for the most vulnerable groups:*

The output’s ToC is that **if** governance aspects of service provision are addressed through legal provisions, increased capacities and system development **then** CSW will demonstrate improved effectiveness and efficiency leading to improved service delivery for vulnerable groups **because** their needs will be identified and addressed in a systematic manner. From a gender perspective of the output, **if** vulnerable women and girls have access to integrated, quality, essential services - including legal, employment and health – that promote economic empowerment and sustainable income generation **then** vulnerable women and girls will gain legal and economic independency from their perpetrators and can prevent violence from re-occurring, because women and girls, including most vulnerable, will be empowered and able to sustain themselves legally and financially and will not have to return to the perpetrators.

* *Output 2. Strengthening front-line response services to mitigate the effect of the pandemic:*

The output’s ToC is that **if** relevant institutional service providers continue to operate without interruption and front-line responders are protected from infection **then** the social system will be buffered (at least in the short-term) and vulnerable groups will continue to access essential services **because** there will not be a reduction of access to public goods and services. From a gender perspective, the ToC is based on the premised that **if** favourable gender equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours are promoted at institutional, community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), **and** women and girls who experience violence can use available, accessible and quality essential services so the impacts of violence are addressed and perpetrators of VAWG are duly prosecuted, **then** there will be a substantial reduction in VAWG, **because** when better preventive measures, responses and services to VAWG are available, violence is prevented before it happens, or before it reoccurs, and those experiencing violence, as well as their dependents, can recover and rebuild their lives with appropriate assistance and support.

* 1. **Project outputs and interventions**

The outcome level objective of this Action is to **enhance the provision of social services by CSW and improve access to equitable, qualitative, integrated social protection for the most vulnerable groups, including women and girls.** The objective will be achieved through two interlinked Outputs which address both the humanitarian aspect of support and improved governance.

***Output 1: Improved socio-economic support system for the most vulnerable groups***

The pandemic is already exacerbating existing structural imbalances in terms of labour markets and inequalities. In Kosovo’s context, the already fragile systems coupled with the ensuing political crisis means that the levels of depravation for the at-risk groups will increase exponentially. While food supplies and prices currently remain stable, lack of income generation opportunities, despite institutional measures, will curb the ability of vulnerable households to access food and health services. Women, the elderly, adolescents, youth, and children, persons with disabilities, regardless of their ethnicity, will experience the highest degree of socio-economic marginalization.

During March 2020, 24,168 families benefited from the Social Assistance Scheme[[60]](#footnote-61) (SAS) and will continue to benefit from the same support over three months; the emergency fund for SAS allocated by the government is EUR7,6 million. The 40 CSW[[61]](#footnote-62) employ just over 403 workers of whom, approximately, 180 are engaged in professional social services, 180 in the social assistance scheme, and the rest in administration. This number is insufficient to meet the minimum standards for providing a professional service, as required by laws, administrative guidelines, regulations, procedures and professional and structural standards. The Department of Social Assistance Scheme usually has the largest number of beneficiaries. This number is set to increase during the pandemic due to loss of jobs and other sources of income, including from the informal economy. The situation will continue to persist during the recovery period since many MSMEs will not be able to recover and resume their activities.

From a governance context there is a need to strengthen the capabilities of CSW to manage, in a timely manner, the influx of demands; to adequately address the needs of beneficiaries, improve case management practices, conduct field work, and develop appropriate guidelines. There is also a need to address the lack of experienced social workers especially since it is expected that over 100 employees will retire soon[[62]](#footnote-63).

Despite its obvious negative impact, the pandemic has provided an opportunity to critically think about the quality of service delivery and modalities of such services. Virtual working and digitalization are quickly becoming a permanent feature of daily life which also expands to social services. This trend was noted in late 2019 by the European Social Network (ESN)[[63]](#footnote-64) who explored common challenges and opportunities posed by digitalisation in social services (artificial intelligence, digital case management systems, assistive technologies and other). The subsequent press release “Public Social Services are Essential for Europe’s Recovery”[[64]](#footnote-65) ESN states that “*Social services are essential to address the impact of the crisis as they are needed to support individuals and communities, …, ensure that people have access to basic needs, and to support the recovery process. However, public authorities and organisations providing social services are facing increasing challenges to support those in need and to do so in the safest and most adequate way. Ensuring the resilience of social services will in turn safeguard the resilience of the people who are supported by social services*.”

***Activity 1.1. Improved governance system supporting the work of CSW and NGOs***

This activity will address governance issues aiming to improve operational and procedural aspects (timeliness of processes, accuracy, follow-up on cases, verification, provision of adequate support), capacity, in coordination closely with the MLSW– Department of Social and Family Policy, municipalities and CSW. The focus is on upgrading the existing system into an innovative one for effective targeting and provision of the right level of support in a gender equitable manner. The approach will identify more effective means of reaching out to vulnerable groups and individuals and those harder to reach.

It is expected that the revised Law on Social Services will be approved towards the end of 2020 with the drafting of approximately 17 new Administrative Instructions to take place during 2021, which would allow for the implementation of the law as of early 2022. As part of the process the Department for Social Policies and Family has foreseen the functionalization of the existing database by expanding its functionality to include digitized case management modules. Successful implementation of the new law will require capacity development activities for both central and local level institutions.

Capacity development activities and technological upgrades which support a more effective and efficient system are also part of the intervention.

*Action 1.1.1. Review and upgrade the existing system for needs assessment of beneficiaries[[65]](#footnote-66) and introduce a digitalized service-based case management* : the introduction of the new law will require a review of and an update of needs assessment for beneficiaries, alignment of processes between CSW and NGOs, including coordination and information sharing between municipal and central levels. Individual and institutional capacity development is an integral part of the process to ensure the adoption of possible new methodologies or streams of work. Currently case management in CSW is manual and relies on physical paper trail; the antiquated manner of work hinders the effectiveness and efficiency of social workers. Cases are not classified and there is no specified number of cases that a social worker must complete on weekly/monthly basis. The increase of people relying on social assistance as a result of the pandemic and the requirement to verify, cross-check and monitor cases, affects the timeliness of providing support to the neediest. The existing database servers only for recording of cases and generating statistical data despite the potential to develop into a modern case management system with digitalized processes. The digitalization will enable timely response, tracking of cases, recording of client needs, type of service, duration of support, and recording the cost of support; the information will also be disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity. The action comprises of a series of interlinked interventions:

1. Identify legal changes which affect the existing system for needs assessment;
2. Identify the most effective modality for addressing potential challenges including institutional and/or individual gaps through technical/advisory support;
3. Develop and implement actions to address the challenges and gaps;
4. Development of a service-based case management module;
5. Drafting and digitalization of work forms for the service-based case management;
6. Drafting of Administrative Instructions[[66]](#footnote-67), Guidelines and provision of continuous professional development for social workers.

*Action 1.1.2. Technical and capacity development support to central and municipal institutions on the development and implementation of COVID-19 response measures*: the onset of the pandemic caught large sectors of governing structures unprepared to manage the pandemic, provide uninterrupted services, and implement emergency relief measures. Social services providers were required to deal with the influx of demands, the implementation of emergency packages, monitoring the process, and provision of humanitarian support. The planned technical support and capacity development is of a demand-driven/needs-based, specialized nature, focused on the Department for Social and Family Policies, Divisions of Social Assistance and the Social Assistance Sector (CSW) to design programmes and measures to support a range of social categories affected by the pandemic. It is expected that a total of 100 staff from DSFP, CSW and municipal Social Welfare unit will be supported to discharge their duties in implementation of programmes and measures of the Economic Recovery Package. The action comprises of a series of interlinked, indicative, interventions:

1. Technical support of specialized nature in addressing immediate needs in implementing policies, designing programmes and measures for vulnerable groups in response to COVID-19, as a result of institutional response to the pandemic;
2. Identify technical gaps of social workers engaged in the implementation of the Economic Recovery Package and Municipal Emergency Packages and provide training, skills development, best practices, mentoring, as means to increase their knowledge and improve the quality of services.

*Action 1.1.3. Develop a Manual for service providers*: provision of social services spans beyond the work of a social worked. Dependent on the case, there may be a need to involve probation services, child protection services, legal expertise, psychologist, counsellor or a sociologist. In absence of a unified approach to manage cases, particularly from the legal perspective, there is an explicit need to link social services with legal services, thus, unifying the approaches for social workers, legal actors, psychologists, sociologists, and other professional staff. The Manual will accompany the recently prepared beneficiary list and list of services[[67]](#footnote-68) and provide clear definition of each category/type of beneficiary, related legal provisions, standards and procedures, the link between the beneficiary and services. The Manual will be developed in a gender equitable manner for provision of services since current institutional emergency support was gender-blind and there are concerns that similar recovery and fiscal packages will not incorporate the needs of women and girls. The development of the Manual provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that the needs of women and girls, including women from marginalized groups are clearly addressed and institutionalized in all processes. In the process of developing the Manual technical expertise will be provided to mainstream gender, in line with international norms and standards.

*Action 1.1.4. Women’s economic engagement in response to the pandemic*: as identified in the SEIA report, the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) led by women are mostly affected by the pandemic. While 56% of businesses reported in May 2020 as ceased to operate during the period of restricted movement and economic activities, leading to about half of households (49%) experiencing declining incomes, the economic crisis has affected disproportionately self-employed women (71%). Despite current limited economic opportunities, the engagement of women, especially those fleeing from domestic violence (DV) shelters and organizations working with conflict related sexual violence, will provide them with a much-needed stimulus and a lifeline. The Action aims to create opportunity to develop new skills, generate income, and diversify existing businesses. To achieve this the Action will engage with long-established partners and civil society organizations, to offer women DV/GBV survivors, CRSV survivors, women from RAE communities, rural women and women with disabilities, tailor made online training opportunities to gain the right skills sets required for the labor market during the pandemic, including in the areas of technology and science, and they will be linked to the right networks in these areas.

The action will work with existing women self-help groups to be mobilized and find solutions based on the local context, such as by seeking new areas / opportunities responding to newly emerging demands and to diversify their economic activities. Tailor-made training sessions and mentoring support will be undertaken for women to improve their self-confidence, innovative ability, financial management, and entrepreneurship for business development. Based on needs assessment and existing capacities, the action will provide financial support with an emphasis on creating jobs for women in vulnerable situations. Engagement with the private sector is also foreseen to generate meaningfully, environmentally sustainable and opportunity stimulating employment for marginalized women. All interventions aiming women’s economic empowerment will be implemented in line with the Beijing Platform for Action and the CEDAW convention while observing the basic principles of a survivor-centred approach. This will include consideration of their multiple needs, assessing risks and vulnerabilities, keeping them safe and secure, adhering to principles of confidentiality and privacy, and doing no harm. The consultation process will expand to Chambers of Commerce, women’s business organization/networks, municipal directorates and central institutions, community-based groups, and other stakeholders to identify the most pressing needs as a result of the pandemic. The consultation will be followed by a mapping of needs and risks to allow for designing and prioritisation of support. While the needs for such support are great, the action will focus its interventions in three municipalities to provide focused support. A set of selection criteria shall be developed to ensure just and transparent selection of beneficiaries and municipalities. The action will contribute to strengthening of community-based activities, socialization, training, and community outreach. This action comprises of a series of interlinked interventions:

1. Conduct consultations with partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries to identify the most pressing needs arising as a result of the pandemic;
2. Mapp the needs of MSMEs owned by women, potential risks, and priorities areas of support;
3. Design interventions based on the consultation and mapping process and establish selection criteria for both municipalities and beneficiaries; equip the identified MSMEs lead by women in urban and rural areas with tailored support;
4. Women and girls in vulnerable situations benefit from targeted business, digital and STEM skills to access/adapt to changing markets in the COVID-19 context.
5. Provide capacity development for women benefiting from the action on technology and digital skills, online entrepreneurship and management, processing, branding, certification and marketing.

*Action 1.1.5. Prepare a new generation of certified social workers*: social work requires appropriate academic preparation, work experience and expertise, which is in a relatively short supply across social services sector. Preparing a new generation of social workers who can seamlessly engage in the system will, at the very least, maintain timely service provision. To this end, an internship scheme for the newly graduated psychologists, social workers, sociologists, or other relevant profiles, will be initiated. The scheme’s dual benefit will provide immediate relieve, through additional capacities, for CSW, and for the interns to gain professional experience. To support the licensing of interns as social workers UNDP will provide them 12 months internship contracts. An agreement with the MLSW should be put in place stipulating the role, responsibility and supervision of the interns. The process of selection and recruitment of interns will be conducted in cooperation with the Employment Agency/Employment Offices and UNV office, as per UNV’s rules and regulations, with full transparency of the process. At least 50% of qualified interns will be women. The action comprises of a series of interlinked, indicative, interventions:

1. Establish a cooperation agreement with relevant institutional partners on the provision of interns including terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, and duties and responsibilities for all parties;
2. Conduct a campaign to inform recent graduates to register with Employment Offices and the opportunity to join the scheme;
3. Initiate and complete the selection and recruitment process of interns and conduct regular performance monitoring as required by UNV rules and regulation.

***Activity 1.2. Humanitarian support for vulnerable households***

Social protection responses must consider differentiated impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups, women and men and those surviving on income from the informal sector, the newly created “underclass” of vulnerable people and families, minorities, as well as those who now shoulder additional unpaid care work. Therefore, the scope of the challenges ahead requires an extraordinary scale-up of support.

The *leave no one behind approach* obligates UNDP, sister agencies, and partners, especially in times of crisis, to focus on people — families, women, children, youth, persons with disabilities and the elderly, low-wage workers, small and medium enterprises and the informal sector, as the first step. The second step is to work on cushioning the knock-on effects on millions of people’s lives, their livelihoods and the real economy. That also means designing fiscal and monetary responses to ensure that the burden does not fall on those countries who can least bear it.[[68]](#footnote-69) In Kosovo’s context and as related to this Action, the first intervention step means direct support for individuals and households and scaling-up of social protection, especially since Kosovo’s institutions’ emergency package was limited to end of June 2020.[[69]](#footnote-70) This activity will focus on close work with CSW and NGOs to partially and temporarily support families and individuals living in extreme poverty. In addressing these needs, women heads of households and single mothers will benefit from affirmative measures. Attention will also be given to the needs of women and girls when providing access to justice services.

UNDP has developed an Operational Manual for Implementation of the “Support Programme for Marginalized Families Beneficiaries of Social Assistance through Direct Financial Support”[[70]](#footnote-71) which is now approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The Manual lists and defines step by step regulations which ensure smooth implementation of the support with explicit assessment criteria for identification of beneficiaries and the set amount based on the number of family members. The same approach will be used through this Action in ensuring transparent and equitable provision of services, not least since currently there are just under 25,000 families with approximately 100,000 members who benefit from social assistance schemes.

*Action 1.2.1. Temporary support for families living in extreme poverty:* This action will focus on temporary support for approximately 6,500 vulnerable families living in extreme poverty by providing monthly vouchers for food, hygiene and other essential items, for six months. Target groups will be families with no income/benefiting from SAS, female-headed households, families with members with special needs and poor families living in rural areas. Identification of eligible families will be conducted in cooperation with CSW in all 38 Kosovo municipalities. Vouchers can be distributed to families in municipalities, subject to the lists with details of families in need extracted by CSWs. This approach is considered efficient and with immediate impact in the families that will be able to purchase items as per their specific needs, excluding alcohol and tobacco. UNDP will reach an agreement with supermarket chains with best presence on the ground for implementation of this activity. The activity will be closely coordinated with other UN agencies and organizations working at municipal level supporting vulnerable households to ensure that families benefit from one support scheme (i.e. not to receive food and hygiene packages for the duration of the scheme). The action comprises of interlinked, indicative, interventions:

Initiate and complete the procurement process of companies (supermarkets) who will accept the voucher system;

Identify, jointly with CSWs, beneficiaries of the scheme as per the established criteria.

*Action 1.2.2.* *Partial support to cover utility costs for vulnerable families*: while food, hygiene products, and clothing are usually provided for vulnerable individuals and families, other necessities such as cost of utilities, rent, basic transport, emergency shelter, or heating supplies, are usually relegated as less important. For families living in extreme poverty these costs are an additional burden, especially in times of crisis. CSW and municipalities cover a set amount, per household, for electricity and rent respectively. However, costs of water supply, heating, and rubbish collection remain the responsibility of the individual or the household. Financial support for the most vulnerable 1,100 families to cover at least 50% of these costs will lessen the financial burden. UNDP will identify the most effective method of covering these costs, either through a voucher scheme or through direct agreements with utility companies. This support will be offered to individuals and/or households who benefit from SAS but were not eligible for support under Action 1.2.1. The action comprises of interlinked, indicative, interventions:

Establish agreements with utility providers;

Jointly with CSW identify beneficiary households, ensuring priority support for households who do not have additional support (i.e. benefiting from other interventions of this Action).

N.B. UNDP is currently conducting consultations with utility providers to assess the possibility and technical aspects of covering these costs without VAT. An update on the process will be available during 1st week of October 2020.

*Action 1.2.3. Support the functioning of residential centres:* residential services such as emergency shelters, homes of the elderly or abandoned children, women’s refuge, provide a much-needed support for those at risk, particularly in times of crisis. Equally, at times of crisis it is these institutions that are affected by an increase of those who seek their services which is not followed by an increase of financial means, risking their closure. The support to residential centres and facilities provided by public institutions and NGOs will be provided on a need to basis, to ensure continuity of their regular operations and service delivery. The action foresees support for up to 10 residential centres.

*Action 1.2.4. Support service providers from institutional mechanisms and NGOs with gender responsive training*: provide specialist technical support and capacity development for the Domestic Violence Coordination Mechanisms in municipalities in providing qualitative essential services for Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence survivors in line with international norms and standards. Interventions will take place in Gjakovë/Djakovica, Dragash/Dragaš, and Mitrovica North municipalities as they have functional Coordination Mechanism[[71]](#footnote-72)*.*

*Action 1.2.5. Promote community actions to change gender-discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes:* changing pervasive gender stereotypes and discriminatory narratives, requires a change in attitudes and behaviour, not just by men and boys, but by women and girls as well. Communicating the positive benefits of family members’ (particularly men and boys’) involvement in equal redistribution of caregiving, care work and domestic work will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of such work and its value. In order to tackle these issues, several activities and campaigns to address gender equality gap and to encourage women victims/survivors of domestic violence to speak up and reach out for help will be implemented. The action will roll out a set of tailored activities aimed at improving equality of opportunities and the realization of women's rights by tackling gender stereotypes, including men's responsibility for domestic work and child-care, and women's empowerment in general, by identifying communities and specific groups where behavioural change are required the most. The focus will be on public audiences through a set of strategies to change behaviour and that are likely to generate lasting attitudinal modifications to shift gender stereotypes and discriminatory gender roles and values. This work will target younger and older generations of men and women, both at the community and individual levels, on the issues shaping the perceptions of the role of women and girls, men and boys in society, and how they can work together during the pandemic to eliminate biased norms, attitudes and practices, eradicating gender discrimination and promoting equality. The action is comprised of a set of interlinked interventions:

1. Working with boys to educate them from an early age on non-violent expressions of masculinity, oriented towards equality and respect by promoting sustained school-based, sports-based or peer-to-peer education interventions that promote life skills and support healthy and caring ways of being a man;
2. Launch a community level advocacy campaign to reach women and men, boys and girls on addressing gender stereotypes related to unpaid work using media and ICT;
3. Building the capacity of partners, but also women and men/boys and girls through online trainings and webinars on the causes of gender discrimination and advocating for strengthening male involvement in responsible fatherhood, while also increased male involvement at the household level, sharing domestic responsibilities, childcare and the care for the elderly and/or sick. Men are thus provided with relevant support, guidance and means to get involved in caretaking and advocacy of gender transformative approaches.

***Output 2. Strengthening front-line response services to mitigate the effect of the pandemic***

Reduced access to public goods and services, particularly social protection and employment services and programmes requires immediate action if the effects of the pandemic are to be managed and the disruption to the social systems is buffered, at last in the short-term. Despite functional font-line and emergency services - response mechanisms are already straining to maintain the level of services.

UNDP recognizes the role of civil society and community-based organizations at the local level, especially in times of crisis. In assisting the most vulnerable populations, they bring economic and livelihood opportunities to the community context. These organizations are the first, or only, point of reference for individuals and families; they perform public services, including delivering food and medical services to at-risk and low-income individuals and families, CSOs also work to maintain social cohesion amongst individuals and families during the mandated periods of social distancing. Women’s organizations, and other grassroots organizations, are often on the front line of community response – supporting those most affected economically by the crisis, ensuring shelters remain open for domestic violence victims, and channelling public health education messages.

This output will contribute to an improved work environment for men and women, and implementation of basic health and safety measures for front-line workers, ensure continuity of service delivery from residential centres, provide a range of services which are not part of social services, and promote the change of attitude towards gender discriminatory practices.

***ACTIVITY 2.1. Improved work environment and continuity of service delivery***

*Action 2.1.1.* *Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for front-line workers:* the provision of services is dependent not just on financial means but also on the availability of human resources. The recent pronouncements from institutional actors note that certain sectors of civil service were also greatly affected by the pandemic, which has necessitated reducing staff to critical level. Providing PPE for front-line workers will reduce the risk of infection and continuous provision of services. Main beneficiaries of this action will be social services, emergency response, prison services, and family health centres, where the risk of infections is that much greater. It is estimated that up to 1,800 front-line workers will benefit from this action. UNDP will ensure economies of scale through bulk purchase and use of existing Long-Term Agreements (where possible) to procure PPEs.

*Action 2.1.2.* *Establish mobile clinics to facilitate and increase access to rights based services and to social, health and employment benefit schemes particularly for women and children and those from minorities, who are not officially registered :* the span and effect of the pandemic has created new challenges, emerging social needs, generated by the crisis, especially from the vulnerable, disenfranchised groups, require coordinated institutional support beyond current social services. Humanitarian support should incorporate provision of additional services which people need even in times of crisis such as access to justice (through mediation and legal aid) or psycho-social counselling. The effects of the pandemic have also greatly affected youth who are already unemployed (15-24-year-old). While the current crisis has reduced their opportunities even further, municipal employment offices have proven to be effective for addressing this issue by delivering consultancy services and self-employment grants to youth. This action foresees the establishment of 4 new mobile clinics to conduct social, legal, counselling and/or health assessments, employment consultancies on job opportunities and self-employment grants, and registration of jobseekers in rural/hard to reach areas. These services can be best provided through specialized NGOs, in cooperation with CSW, Employment Offices, healthcare facilities, and other partners. At the conclusion of the Action the four mobile clinics[[72]](#footnote-73) will be handed over to Centres for Social Work in municipalities to continue to reach out to vulnerable groups who do not have easy access to such services. The action comprises of a set of interlinked, indicative, interventions

1. Identifying and establishing agreements with institutional and NGO/CSO actors for provision of specialized support;
2. Purchase and retrofit vans transforming them into mobile clinics;
3. Engage professional profiles (healthcare, legal aid, counsellors, career advisors,) and technical staff to provide services;
4. Jointly with municipalities and CSWs identify primary groups of beneficiaries who’s needs must be met first, including the mapping and needs assessment of the most vulnerable women’s and other beneficiary groups;
5. Capacity development of the healthcare providers in gender sensitive service provision.

*Action 2.1.3*. *Improve physical accessibility to CSW*: the provision of services has an additional dimension which is not always considered fully and that is the psychological aspect of the environment where the service is provided, accessibility, and accompanying facilities, amongst others. This action will address some of these issues through small interventions such as access ramps, Braille print of materials, creating or renovating family/contact rooms and furnishing them with necessary items (for children whose parents are in the divorce process or have divorced). Based on preliminary estimates[[73]](#footnote-74) 40 CSW will benefit from small scale intervention. The action comprises of a set of interlinked, indicative, interventions:

1. Assessment of conditions in all 40 CSW and identification of emergency and priority interventions;
2. Preparing technical drawings/documentation, Bill of Quantities, costing, and prioritization of interventions;
3. Purchase of furniture and other items for family rooms or other spaces for service provision;
4. Completion of physical works.
5. **Results and Partnerships**

The Action seeks to address immediate COVID-19 related challenges for vulnerable groups through humanitarian support and contribute to improved social services delivery through capacity development and digitalisation of processes.

The provision of humanitarian relief for the vulnerable population will provide a temporary cushion from the ravages of the pandemic. While the resilience of benefiting individuals and families will not be affected in the long run, the support during (what may be considered) the most difficult and risky period (the second wave of the pandemic and the winter season) will provide some respite for those most in need. In a mid to long term, planned interventions which target service delivery are expected to contribute to the development of a modern, functional, case management system.

The Action contributes to UNDP Kosovo’s programme for 2021-2025, the UN Kosovo Team’s Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and EU’s Gender Action Plan (GAP) and policies on the protection of Human Rights, in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the commitment to “leave no one behind” as well as Kosovo’s strategic documents.

With a corporate-wide framework on national post-disaster recovery planning and coordination, a UNDP specific “Women Economic Empowerment Roadmap for Western Balkans” (currently draft, in response to COVID-19), a conceptual framework to strengthen social cohesion, the leave no one behind concept and the human rights-based approach, as some of key policy guidelines, UNDP’s work is grounded on theory, experience, and good practices.

* 1. **Resources Required to Achieve Expected Result(s)**

The Action will establish an implementation unit comprised of national staff and shall engage specialized technical expertise on a need to basis. Governance and Peacebuilding Portfolio Manager will provide quality assurance and technical oversight to ensure timely, effective and efficient implementation of the Action, as per work plan and available financial resources.

When required, the Action will also draw from resources available in the Istanbul Regional Hub and expertise available through UNDP’s global policy network platform.

For the Action to contribute at impact level, cooperation with central and municipal institutions, international organisations, NGOs/CSOs, is a pre-requisite. Institutional mandates, comparative advantages, areas of expertise, building on previous results – all are resources which contribute to the achievement of expected results, in addition to financial and human capacities.

* 1. **Partnerships**

The Action is part of IPA II - 2014-2020 EU4 Social protection following the coronavirus. Other development agencies and CSOs will contribute to the implementation of the Action Document which has led to a series of consultations to ensure complementarity of interventions and coordination. Joint and bilateral consultations have taken place with IOM, UNICEF, Save the Children, ILO, UNWOMEN, selected CSWs, and the Department for Social Policy and Families.

Throughout the consultation process, UNDP and other organisations, not least other UN agencies, have identified areas of interventions as specified in concept notes/project proposals, areas where potential overlaps may happen and how to eliminate them, and areas which require regular information sharing and cooperation for the greater benefit of institutional partners.

**UN Women** has an explicit mandate to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, strengthen gender responsiveness of humanitarian action, prevention, recovery and resilience, under existing partnerships and in close collaboration with and in synergy with UN agencies, national actors, civil society and strategic partners. To this end, UNDP will closely coordinate the project activities with UN Women for the implementation of interventions that require gender expertise.

UNDP will extend the cooperation to **United Nations Volunteers (UNV)[[74]](#footnote-75)**, who are mandated to leverage the power of volunteerism and volunteers as a means of implementation and people engagement for attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNV’s added value rests in the straight-forward procedures for selection and recruitment process of graduate students who will benefit from internships, and the appropriate criteria which allow for recruitment of graduates without professional experience.

**ILO**, as part of a global project, is supporting DSFP in updating case management forms for child victims of severe forms of work. These forms/templates were originally developed by ILO in 2007, however, the legal and policy changes have required the updating of the same. These forms/templates will be used by CSW to manage the cases of child labour engaged in severe forms of that work; as part of this support, ILO is also developing the case management module for the same. UNDP has actively engaged with ILO to better understand the process, potential challenges, financial implications, and duration of intervention, to inform the process of developing additional four service-based case management modules.

**IOM** will continue to implement its EU funded interventions in the context of IPA 2019 and aims to address the social, psychosocial and economic impact of COVID-19 in vulnerable communities though initiatives that help to follow prevention recommendations to preserve public health and help reduce the damage caused by the epidemic. Priority will be given to initiatives that assist vulnerable groups such as migrants, minorities, particularly Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, the elderly (65+), women and children victims of domestic violence, rural population, people with disabilities and other socially disadvantaged groups. While some beneficiary categories are the same, the approaches and types of intervention between UNDP and IOM are different. Coordination shall be ensured through regular UNKT and bilateral meetings.

**UNICEF** and UNDP have a long-standing experience in developing and implementing joint projects tackling youth engagement and social cohesion. Bilateral consultations were held with UNICEF with the aim of ensuring complementarity of interventions as part of UNKT and, where possible, to organise joint activities. UNICEF’s earlier EU funded work on Juvenile Justice in Kosovo (February 2018) and the analysis of the situation of children and women in Kosovo (September 2019) also provided valuable insights.

**Save the Children** (StC) in Kosovo will also work closely with the EUOK in the context of IPA 2019 Social Protection programme, whose overall goal is to enhance the quality and availability of social services for vulnerable groups; their programme also included technical assistance and capacity building for public institutions mandated with social service delivery in Kosovo. UNDP held consultations with StC with the aim of coordinating respective interventions and to identify synergies. While planned interventions from StC are focused at policy level and support for NGOs/CSOs which provide social services UNDP will coordinate closely on Action 2.1.2. Facilitate access to supplementary services so as not to target the same beneficiaries.

UNDP conducted a mapping of the needs for **CSW**s through consultative meetings in Prishtina, Prizren, North Mitrovica, South Mitrovica, Lipjan, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje to assess their needs and understand the challenges they face as a result of the pandemic. These municipalities were selected as a representative sample size (small, medium, large) and the presence of non-majority communities. The findings from these meetings are now integrated into this Action and they have informed the development of interventions.

A series of consultations with **Department for Social and Family Planning (DSFP)**also took place with DSFP providing inputs on the initial activities and proposing additional ones. DSFP recommendation were incorporated in the current Action to extent possible and in compatibility with the overall concept of the Action.

Partnership and cooperation will also be established with **utility providers** (regional water companies; municipalities and/or garbage collection companies, and heating provider/s) through Letters of Agreement or other appropriate agreements, as per UNDP rules and procedures, to enable the payment of utilities for vulnerable groups.

* 1. **Risks and Assumptions**

The current political and socio-economic environment may pose a challenge to the successful implementation of interventions which support institutional stakeholders and partners. At a civil service level, changes are possible - despite the uncertainty caused by the pandemic – if dedication and willingness is demonstrated from senior leadership.

It must be noted that from the initial drafting of the concept note for the Action, political leadership in Kosovo has changed. However, there are expectations that the Assembly will be able to review, approve and ratify several international agreements including draft laws.

An off-line risk log elaborates key risk as identified during the development of the Action (following page).

Offline Risk Log

| **#** | **Description** | **Category** | **Impact &****Probability** | **Countermeasures / Management response** | **Owner** | **Author** | **Date Identified** | **Last Update** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Changes in political leadership may affect the speed of adoption of the legal framework and may re-direct institutional arrangements | Political | P = 5I = 3 | Advocacy with key government interlocutors on the importance of addressing issues related to social services policies and delivery | UNDP  | Portfolio Manager | April 2020 |  |
| 2 | CSW are unwilling or unable to cooperate in improving service delivery | OrganisationalOperational | P = 2I = 4 | Project interventions support CSW capacity development to improve operational capacities, based on pre-existing needs | UNDP  | Portfolio Manager | April 2020 |  |
| 3 | Assistance does not reach the most needy and vulnerable groups | Operational | P = 1I = 4 | Use existing institutional mechanisms and systems, including those from CSOs, to identify the most vulnerable groups in need of support  | UNDP | Portfolio Manager  | April 2020 |  |
| 4 | Potential overlap/duplication of activities from national and international organisations | Operational | P = 2I = 4 | Coordination and consultation meetings were held with partners to align activities during the design phase. Periodic meetings and regular sharing of information by all is required to maintain coordination of activities | UNDP | Portfolio Manager | April 2020 |  |
| 5 | Lack of overall policy and financial environment favouring the advancement of Gender Equality and Women Economic Empowerment Agenda in Kosovo | Political | P = 3I = 5 | Active lobbying and promotion of Gender Equality and Women Economic Empowerment in Kosovo, including the need for a strengthened gender mainstreaming mechanism, in cooperation with UNKT, Agency for Gender Equality, Office for Good Governance/National Roma Contact Point-NRCP | UN Woman | UN Woman  | April 2020 |  |
| 6 | Effective cooperation modality with utility providers may not be possible | Operational | P = 3I = 2 | Identify alternative means of covering costs of utilities for vulnerable groups who can benefit from the intervention | UNDP | Portfolio Manager | July 2020 |  |

N.B. Rating: 1 being low risk and 5 being high risk.

* 1. **Stakeholder Engagement**

The intended beneficiaries of this Action and individuals and families who benefit from SAS, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, dwelling, or other classification. To reach out to the most vulnerable groups, UNDP will work closely with CSW to identify beneficiaries in an equitable and transparent manner.

Other stakeholders who may contribute to the successful implementation of the Action include:

* **Municipalities** are important partners in implementing the provision of social and family services as well as supporting NGOs/CSOs and social enterprises during the implementation of the Action;
* **Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare**, Department for Social and Family Planning;
* **Ministry of Finance and Transfers** and the **Ministry of Local Governance Administration** whose role in the designing of mechanisms and financing formula for social services will enable and ensure the sustainability of services and the complete financial allocation for the provision of social services after completion of the project;
* **Ministry of Communities and Return** and the **Office for Community Affairs** who’s focus is in policymaking and ensuring communities’ rights and interests;
* **Agency for Gender Equality** due to its responsibility for promoting, protecting and advancing equal participation of women and men in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life in Kosovo;
* **Ombudsperson Institution** **of Kosovo** to ensure increased enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation and revision of structurally discriminating administrative requirements preventing the most vulnerable from accessing social, health, education and employment benefit schemes;
* **Specialised and licensed CSOs/NGOs** and social enterprises due to their role in providing and increasing the quality of social and family services for the beneficiaries which need to be addressed by both the municipal and central level authorities.
	1. **Knowledge**

The Action foresees the development of a range of products which will serve CSW at institutional level, social workers, other professionals who provide expertise related to social services and specialised NGOs/CSOs.

UNDP shall draft four Administrative Instructions which will enable the development of service-based case management modules with accompanying digital templates/forms and Guidelines, a Manual for service providers which unifies aspects of social work, information material for visually impaired people.

All planned activities will provide maximum visibility to the EU as per the Contribution Agreement (Annex II - General Conditions, Art. 8) and the “Joint Visibility guidelines for EC-UN Actions in the field”. As part of the Action a range of visibility activities will be undertaken, aimed at building strong awareness among relevant audiences about the objectives, activities and accomplishment of the project, the role of EU, partner organizations and the impact of this cooperation.

Delivery of main message will be carried out in three different forms:

* Direct communications with primary and key stakeholders including local and national authorities and local population in keeping with the main focal areas of the project;
* Publicity/public information outreach including press, media conference upon major initiatives/milestones of the project, press releases, media interviews, photo opportunities, newspaper and other features- especially of the beautification and rehabilitation of selected sites;
* Web-based communications through UNDP Kosovo’s website and other UNDP platforms such as Community of Practice, Exposure Story, FB, twitter, Instagram.

All visibility outputs will be shared with the EUOK communications team for their feedback prior to publication. A detailed Communication and Visibility Plan is laid down in Annex 6 to the present EU-UNDP Contribution Agreement.

1. **Sustainability and scaling-up**

The project will lay the ground for the sustainability of results through a demand-driven approach, aligned with the needs of individual beneficiaries and institutional partners. Planned interventions will respond to the needs and priorities identified through existing institutional mechanisms, related research and data collection, including consultations with partners and stakeholders.

During the design of the Action, several rounds of consultations were organized with key partners and stakeholders on the most pressing needs from the institutional point of view (service delivery) and end beneficiary point of view (vulnerable groups most affected by the crisis). The tripartite consultation process between the EUOK as the donor, institutional representatives, and participating UN Agencies and other stakeholders, has contributed to the alignment of interventions. All interventions are complementary, tailor-made, addressing the effects of the pandemic on vulnerable categories, as well as contributing to the improved governance structure of social services provision. This approach, geared towards institutional sustainability through capacity development, creates a positive environment both at the output level and contributes to the outcome.

In general, the provision of assistance will be guided by the principle of national ownership. Activities will be implemented under the full leadership of responsible institutions with direct support from UNDP. Building strategic partnerships has been a crucial factor in ensuring impact and sustainability of interventions as stakeholder engagement is key to success of the project, institutional change will be locally driven and owned, through regular consultations and substantive inputs which are approved by beneficiary institutions. The conduciveness for policy level change is - to a large extent - driven by the EI process. As such, it is embedded in Kosovo’s strategic framework, which will contribute to the sustainability of actions and established processes in the long run.

The project will build on UNDP’s experience and partnerships both at global, regional and local levels, leveraging international experience and lessons learned which can be adapted to Kosovo’s context. Responding to local stakeholders and institutions to strengthen their ability to deliver effective and timely remedies will contribute to individual and institutional capacity development, which will contribute to the sustainability of interventions.

In the context of sustainability from the institutional perspective, i.e. the ability to absorb the support, adapt it to their needs, and apply it on regular basis, requires that interventions are flexible enough to allow for adjustment, in response to the changing environment. Furthermore, initiated processes in updating the legal framework should create better conditions for continuing with the maintenance of results. A specific illustration is the approval of the laws which enable the development of a funding formula: this will ensure that future planning and budgeting is evidence based. Equally, the approval of the additional budget to expand human capacities means that several interns, at the end of the Action, may secure employment either within CSW, NGOs or related service delivery bodies. Equally, women who benefit form support schemes have a good opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty, escape violent relationships, and integrate into the society. From the humanitarian point of view, the support to vulnerable families and individuals will provide immediate relief, however, it may not be enough to radically change their circumstances.

1. **Results Framework**[[75]](#footnote-76)

| **Intended Outcome as stated in the UNSDCF Programme Results and Resource Framework:** Outcome 2: By 2025 all girls and boys, women and men, particularly the most marginalized have improved access to and utilize equitable, qualitative, integrated social protection, universal health services and quality education |
| --- |
| **Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets:** Number of people benefiting from Socio-Economic recovery measures; Target:9,000 individuals (30% Women) and 10% non-majority beneficiaries (2023) |
| **Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan: 1 – Advance poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions; 3 - Build resilience to shocks and crises** |
| **Project title and Atlas Project Number: Response to COVID-19 - Emergency and early recovery support** |
| **EXPECTED OUTPUTS**  | **OUTPUT INDICATORS[[76]](#footnote-77)** | **DATA SOURCE** | **BASELINE** | **TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)** | **DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS** |
| **Value** | **Year** | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **FINAL** |
| **Output 1: Improved socio-economic support system for the most vulnerable groups** | **1.***# of families who receive humanitarian support in a timely and gender equitable manner*  | *UNDP* | 2,500 | 2020 | 6,500 | *0* | *9,000* | *UNDP report**CSWS report(s)* |
| *2****.*** *# of service-based case management modules developed* | *DSFP* | 1 | 2020 | *2* | *2* | *4* | *UNDP report**CSWS report(s)* |
| *3.# of women who benefit from financial/economic engagement in response to the pandemic* | *UN Women* | 0 | 2020 | *25* | *25* | *50 (expected)* | *UNDP report* |
| *4****.*** *# of interns engaged in support of CSWs* | *UNDP/**UNV* | 0 | 2020 | *20* | *20* | *40 (of which at least 50% are women)* | *UNDP-UNV report**Employment Offices* |
| *5.# of CSW staff improving technical capacities on service provision*  | *UNDP* | 0 | 2020 | *55* | *55* | *110 (of which at least 50% are women)* | *UNDP report**Data from CSW, MLSW* |
| *6.# of women and men reached on promoting community actions to change gender stereotypes* | *UN Women* | 0 | 2020 | *200* | *200* | *400 (of which at least 50% women and girls including from marginalised groups)* | *UNDP report**UN Women report* |
| **Output 2. Strengthening front-line response services to mitigate the effect of the pandemic** | *1 # of vulnerable individuals who benefit from facilitated access to services through mobile clinics* | *UNDP* | 0 | 2020 | 500 | *500* | *1,000 (*of which 50% are girls or women including women beneficiaries from minorities) | *UNDP report**Mobile clinic reports* |
| *2 # of front-line workers equipped with PPE* | *UNDP* | *1,500* | *2020* | *1,700* | *0* | *3,200 (of which at least 50% are women* | *UNDP report* |
| *4.# of CSW and/or residential centres with improved accessibility* | *UNDP* | *0* | *2020* | *20* | *20* | *40* | *UNDP report**CSW reports* |

1. **Monitoring And Evaluation**

In accordance with UNDP’s programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring plans:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monitoring Activity** | **Purpose** | **Frequency** | **Expected Action** | **Partners** **(if joint)** | **Cost** **(if any)** |
| **Track results progress** | Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs. | Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator. | Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management. | N/A | Part of Quality Assurance (QA) |
| **Monitor and Manage Risk** | Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP’s audit policy to manage financial risk. | Quarterly | Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken. | N/A | Part of QA  |
| **Learn**  | Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project. | At least annually | Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions. | N/A | Part of project implementation |
| **Annual Project Quality Assurance** | The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP’s quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project. | Annually | Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance. | N/A | Part of project implementation and QA |
| **Review and Make Course Corrections** | Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making. | At least annually | Performance data, risks, lessons and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections. | Through the Project Board |  |
| **Project Report** | A progress report will be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk long with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.  | Annually, and at the end of the project (final report) |  | N/A | Part of project implementation and QA |
| **Project Review (Project Board)** | The project’s governance mechanism (i.e. project board) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In the project’s final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences. | At least annually | Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.  |  | Part of project implementation and QA |

# Multi-Year Work Plan

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **YEAR 1** | **YEAR 2** | **Implementing body** |
| Q4 2020 | Q1-Q4 2021 | Q1-Q4 2022 |
| M1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| ***A0 - Start-up, Inception and Implementation***  |
| A0.1 Signature of contract and official start of action implementation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.2 Establishment of the Project Board (Focal Points nominated) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.3 Staff Recruitment |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.4 Procure necessary office equipment |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.5 Project Inception |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.6 Official Launch-event (public event) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.7 Development of ToRs for implementing partner(s) and experts. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.8 Monitoring  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A0.9 Prepare procurement documents and initiate the process |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A0.09 Final Evaluation  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| ***A1 - Component I**Result 1:* Improved socio-economic support system for the most vulnerable groups** |
| **A1.1 Improved governance system supporting the work of CSW and NGOs** |
| A1.1.1 Review and upgrade the existing system for needs assessment of beneficiaries and introduce digitalized service based case management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.1.2 Technical and capacity development support to central and municipal institutions on the development and implementation of COVID-19 response measures |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.1.3 Develop a Manual for service providers |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.1.4 Women's economic engagement in response to the pandemic |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.1.5 Prepare a new generation of certified social workers |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.2 **Humanitarian support for vulnerable households** |
| A1.2.1 Temporary support for families living in extreme poverty |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.2.2 Partial support to cover utility costs for vulnerable families |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.2.3 Support the functioning of the residential centres |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.2.4 Support service providers from institutional mechanism and NGOs with gender responsive training and technical support |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A.1.2.5 Promote community actions to change gender discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| ***A2 – Component II******Result 2:* Strengthening front-line response services to mitigate the effect of the pandemic** |
| ***A2.*1 Improved work environment and continuity of service delivery** |
| A2.1.1 Provide Personal Protective Equipment |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A2.1.2 Facilitate access to supplementary services through mobile clinics  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |
| A2.1.3 Improve physical accessibility to CSW |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | UNDP |

1. **Governance and Management Arrangements**

The action will be executed directly by UNDP according to the General and Special Conditions of the Contribution Agreement between the EU-UNDP and applying UNDP’s rules and procedures for project management and a result-based management approach. UNDP uses International Public-Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) standards for management of finances and follows internationally recognized procurement standards.

The management of the project will be carried out by UNDP within the overall framework of the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan via the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). UNDP shall be responsible for the overall management and administration of the project, primarily the responsibility for the achievement of the outputs and the stated outcome. UNDP shall have full financial responsibility towards the Contracting Authority for all funds, including those unduly paid to or incorrectly used by Contractors or Grant Beneficiaries. Furthermore, in line with article 2 of the EU’s General Conditions UNDP will ensure that specific provisions are respected by grant beneficiaries, namely *“2.4 The Organisation undertakes to ensure that the obligations stated in this Agreement under Articles 2.6, 5-Conflict of interests, 7-Data protection, 8-Communication and Visibility, 16-Accounts and archiving and Article 17-Access and financial checks apply, where applicable, to all Contractors and Grant Beneficiaries”.*

UNDP will establish a Project Board to provide overall guidance and strategic direction to the project management unit (PMU). Board members include the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Kosovo (or a designated representative), representing the collective position of all relevant EU bodies, a senior representative from the Ministry of labour and Social Welfare, and the Resident Representative of UNDP Kosovo; the Board will be chaired by UNDP.

The Board is the group responsible for reaching consensus-based strategic decisions for the Action when guidance is required, including recommendation for approval of project revisions (if any). Reviews by the Board are made at designated decision points during the implementation of the Action or as necessary when raised by one of the parties. The Board will monitor progress, decide on strategic decisions to ensure continued coherence between implementation and goals and objectives, and when tolerances (i.e. constraints normally in terms of time and budget) may need to be exceeded. The Board will hold meetings at least twice a year or more often if required.



**6.1. Project Management Unit**

The management of the project will be carried out by UNDP within the overall framework of the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan via the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). UNDP shall be responsible for the overall management and administration of the project, primarily the responsibility for the achievement of the outputs and the stated outcome. UNDP will delegate managerial duties for the day-to-day running of the project to the Project Manager, selected by UNDP through a competitive and transparent selection process.

The project team, based in Prishtinë/Priština, will carry out all necessary tasks, such as technical assistance, administration, management, and implementation, that are directly attributable to the implementation of the project. It will comprise of full-time dedicated and part time specialized project staff. The latter will be charged through direct project costs for the time spent directly attributable to the implementation of the project. The project team, fully engaged by and charged to the Action, will consist of the following staff:

* Project Manager – is responsible for managing the project implementation on a day-to-day basis, establish and strengthen cooperation with institutions/partners at the national and local levels, provide guidance and inputs into all components, achieving the overall project outputs as per the work plan and budget;
* Project Officer (Output 1) – is responsible for the timely implementation of the activities through direct communication and cooperation with implementing partners including regular contact with central and municipal representatives;
* Project Officer (Output 2) – is responsible for the timely implementation of the activities through direct communication and cooperation with partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.
* Project Associate – is responsible for daily administrative, financial, organisational, and logistical needs in direct relation to the project.
* Programme Officer (Portfolio Manager UNDP Governance and Peacebuilding) – is responsible for providing strategic guidance, quality assurance, technical inputs and direction to the project team, while ensuring effective linkages with other similar initiatives and projects. The Programme Officer will be charged through direct project costs for the time spent directly attributable to the implementation of the Action, not exceeding 15% of the working time.

In implementing this project, there are several categories of costs that are envisaged for the functioning of the Project Management Unit, including:

* General expenses: The project office will be based in Prishtinë/Priština and rented as per the same terms and conditions applicable for all other projects. To functionalise the work of the project management unit there is a need to purchase equipment such as laptops, desks, chairs, and shelving units. Other related costs include office supplies, other services (tax, electricity, internet, maintenance, security, etc.) and mobile phone charges, as listed in Annex 3 and in compliance with Article 18.1 of the GCs noting the direct eligible costs.
* Materials expenses: All materials or services required for the implementation of the Action will be subject to UNDP rules and regulations for procurement. Activities include expert inputs, validation workshops, systems development, capacity development interventions, humanitarian support, grants and outreach events. This include sourcing, procurement and purchase of services, including venues, training materials, lunches, transportation costs, contracting of experts, production of learning and outreach material, etc.
* Transportation and related expenses: The Action will be implemented in all 38 Kosovo municipalities, in cooperation with 40 CSW, with an expected total of 9,300 beneficiaries (7,500 families and 1,700 front-line workers) in addition to social workers who will benefit from capacity development interventions. The team will be required to conduct regular monitoring visits, not least during the physical intervention works in up to 40 CSW. Appropriate, estimated, costs are calculated for field visits in all 38 municipalities.
1. For UNDP references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://covid19.who.int/> 10:21 am CEST, 29 August 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/COVID19_Crisis_in_developing_countries_threatens_devastate_economies.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Source: JPMorgan Global Data Note, 20 March 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/03/27/sp032720-opening-remarks-at-press-briefing-following-imfc-conference-call> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-remarks-launch-of-appeal-global-humanitarian-response-plan---25-march-2020> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/transitions-series/temporary-basic-income--tbi--for-developing-countries.html [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The EU Office representative, Deputy Head of Cooperation, at the Donor Coordination Forum for Economic Recovery, 28 August 2020, as per Minutes of the Meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. https://kosova.health/ [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. https://opendatakosovo.org/covid-19/ [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Following the joint call by the former caretaker Minister Arben Vitia and the deputy leader of the Serbian List Dalibor Jevtic, who is also a caretaker minister of Ministry of Communities and Returns, to the people to use all possible services in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. http://niph-rks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/UDHEZUES-I-PERKOHSHEM-APLIKIMI-I-MASAVE-COVID-19-INSTITUCIONET-PUBLIKE-E-PRIVATE.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. The EU’s and other international partners’ financial support to Kosovo for specialised laboratory equipment, beds, testing kits, and goods for protection from/treatment of COVID-19, has boosted the capacities of the University Clinical Centre in Pristina although currently they are working at capacity. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. The third phase began on 18th June 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. https://kryeministri-ks.net/en/the-government-adopts-decisions-on-new-measures-to-combat-and-prevent-covid-19/ [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. https://msh.rks-gov.net/ministri-zemaj-falenderon-deputetet-dhe-te-gjithe-kontribuesit-per-ligjin-kunder-covid-19/ [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. <https://ame.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Files/Plani%20Reagimit%20Kombetar_14_01_11.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. <https://mf.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/8810F09D-B3C7-4E09-9BD1-0E2B0B2AF5CB.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/724601555342519395/Kosovo-Snapshot-Apr2019.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Kosovo Agency of Statistics & World Bank Group, Consumption Poverty in Kosovo. May 2019. Available at https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4901/poverty-statistics-2012-2017.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Kosovo Gender Analysis 2018, [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Kosovo, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. 2019 SBA Factsheet by the European Commission, data for 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/724601555342519395/Kosovo-Snapshot-Apr2019.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. [http://biznesetehapura.com/en/vizualizimet](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fbiznesetehapura.com%2Fen%2Fvizualizimet&data=02%7C01%7Cmarta.gazideda%40undp.org%7Caa89fa2672704cec0f2b08d7d763e8be%7Cb3e5db5e2944483799f57488ace54319%7C0%7C0%7C637214696429101754&sdata=sRLayRvL2gh4mW0xx17YnkHKq0fNHfl94JlJqsfAejA%3D&reserved=0) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/brief/promoting-women-employment-in-kosovo> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/222151539289515672/Kosovo-Snapshot-Oct2018.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Kosovo’s Women Network. (2020). Addressing COVID-19 from a Gender Perspective: Recommendations to the Government of Kosovo. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. https://ppse-kosovo.org/file/repository/COVID\_19\_Impact\_on\_Hospitality\_Sector\_ENG.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. “Labor Force Survey 2019.” Kosovo Agency of Statistics [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/814361497466817941/pdf/Kosovo-Jobs-Diagnostic.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. There are multiple concepts of informality and the WB’s definition is based on unpaid family workers, self-employed workers in small firms, self-employed workers in non-professional occupations, workers in small firms (five or fewer employees). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. <https://www.ebrd.com/transition-report> [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. SDG1: End poverty in all its forms. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/COVID19_Crisis_in_developing_countries_threatens_devastate_economies.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Save the Children in Kosova/o and European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. The names, terms, and expressions used in this section are based on the Law no. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services, April 2005, and do not reflect the initiated re-formatting of ministries of the Kurti government. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. <https://kosovo.savethechildren.net/sites/kosovo.savethechildren.net/files/library/edited_PolicyBrief-ENG_0.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Of the 38 municipalities only 3 have separated social service from health services (Prishtina, Prizren, and Mitrovica South). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. CSWs have a system in place to collect data on beneficiaries and the services provided which are reported to the Social Services Information System (SSIS). The limited access to the SSIS by CSW and MDHSW staff as well as the missing quality control and accuracy of the data are among the biggest challenges for adequate planning. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Save the Children in Kosova/o and European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Prishtina, Prizren, North Mitrovica, South Mitrovica, Lipjan, Vushtrri and Fushë Kosova were interviewed during 6-12 June 2020. These municipalities were selected as a representative sample size (small, medium, large) and the presence of non-majority communities. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. CSW do not manage their budgets which also affects their work as they are not always clear on the available resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. The nature of abuse was not specified however that must be a consideration when deciding to address the issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. CSW indicate suspicion that there are families who do not meet the criteria and are beneficiaries of SAS especially during the pandemic. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. https://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/poverty/rapid-socio-economic-impact-assessment-of-covid-19-in-kosovo.html [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. UNDP’s mandate to conduct operational activities in disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness was laid out by the United Nations General Assembly in 1997 (A/RES/52/12B, paragraph 16, December 1997) and an additional mandate to ensure inter-agency recovery preparedness was added by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator in 2006. Within the scope of these mandates, UNDP has provided sound leadership in assessment, planning, programming, coordination and capacity development. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. A regional, EU funded project. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. <https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/gender_equity-health_workforce_analysis/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Harman, Sophie (2015). Ebola, gender and conspicuously invisible women in global health governance. Third World Quarterly 37(3). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. Kosovo Women’s Network, Kosovo Gender Analysis (2018), https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. UN Women Rapid Gender Assessment in Europe and Central Asia - https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/the-impact-of-covid19-on-womens-and-mens-lives-and-livelihoods [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Part of the regional programme “Ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds,” managed by UN Women and funded by the European Union, https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2020/06/kosovo%20covid-vaw\_report2.pdf?la=en&vs=1823 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. https://womensnetwork.org/kwn-proposes-measures-addressing-covid-19-from-a-gender-perspective-recommendations-to-the-government-of-kosovo/ [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Demiroz F. (2018) Governance in Crisis Management. In: Farazmand A. (eds) Global Encyclopaedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance. Springer, Cham [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. Raporti me Rekomandime Ex officio nr. 59/2019 Lidhur me vleresimin e sistemit te ofrimit te sherbimeve sociale ne Kosove, 17 dhjetor 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. Gani Smakaj, Division of Social Assistance Scheme 10 April 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. The Centres for Social Work consist of three departments: Professional Social Services, Social Assistance Scheme, and Administration [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. The draft laws on social assistance, and on social and family services will address the gap in the long run. Nevertheless, the laws are yet to be approved, with an additional six months for drafting the secondary legislation. In the best case, the government will be able to contract additional staff after 12 months. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. https://www.esn-eu.org/latest-esn [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. https://www.esn-eu.org/news/public-social-services-are-essential-europes-recovery [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. This Action is dependent on the approval of the new law and will not start until mid to late 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. The AI will enable the implementation of the new law; of the 17 expected AI, ILO will draft one, Save the children four and UNDP 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. This is the first time such a list was prepared. The Department for Social Policies and CSW in Lipjan, Podujeve and Obiliq municipalities were part of the process. This initiative was co-financed by EUOK. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. At the time of elaborating this project, on 22 July, the Council of Ministers approved the draft Law for Economic Recovery COVID-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. Funded by the Government of Luxembourg, the support is limited to three months only. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. The Coordination Mechanisms were established as part of earlier, joint, UNDP – UN Women – UNFPA project. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. The concept is based on UNDP’s model for provision of access to justice services to vulnerable groups. One van used for access to justice (legal aid and/or mediation) is already available and will be re-functionalised through this action. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Preliminary estimated cost per intervention is EUR 5,250. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. UNV Office in Kosovo operates within UNDP and there are no transactional costs for the Action. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. UNDP publishes its project information (indicators, baselines, targets and results) to meet the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards. Make sure that indicators are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound), provide accurate baselines and targets underpinned by reliable evidence and data, and avoid acronyms so that external audience clearly understand the results of the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. It is recommended that projects use output indicators from the Strategic Plan IRRF, as relevant, in addition to project-specific results indicators. Indicators should be disaggregated by sex or for other targeted groups where relevant. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)