



JOINT SDG FUND

ACTIVATE!

Integrated Social Protection and Employment
to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro



Final Evaluation of the Project *Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro*

Evaluation report

**Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic – Team Leader
Jasna Zarkovic- National Expert**

September/2022

Acknowledgements

The Evaluation Team would like to thank all those who have supported and informed this evaluation of ***Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People*** in Montenegro. We are particularly grateful to UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, IOM and UNHCR core UN Joint programme team and UN Resident Coordinator's Office, and their colleagues for sharing insights on the programme in Montenegro, its performance and drivers and hindrances the programme encountered during implementation. Their continuous dedication to the evaluation is highly appreciated. We are very thankful to the Government of Montenegro and their dedicated staff in line ministries, agencies, and institutions; other United Nations agencies and development partners; as well as civil society organizations who took time to meet us and provided critical inputs and reflections on the programme performance and results.

This evaluation report was prepared by Team Leader, Ms Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic and Ms Jasna Zarkovic, National Expert.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed are those of the Evaluation Team, and do not necessarily reflect those of UN Agencies implementing this Programme. Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report rests solely with the authors. Publication of this document does not imply endorsement by UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, IOM or UNHCR of the opinions expressed.

The designation employed and the presentation of material do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UN in Montenegro concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory, or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.

Contents

Abbreviations	5
1. Introduction	7
1.1. Context.....	7
2. Subject of the evaluation	11
2.2. Objectives and Scope of the evaluation	19
Scope of the Evaluation.....	20
3. Methodology	20
Evaluation design and approach	20
Data collection methods and tools.....	21
Documentary analysis – inception and desk review phase	21
Primary data collection	22
Data analysis.....	23
Ethical considerations	24
Protocols for Safety, Confidentiality, and Data Protection.....	24
Limitations and mitigation measures	25
4 Key Findings	26
4.1 Relevance.....	26
4.3 Effectiveness(Q 9)	32
4.4 Efficiency	42
4.5 ImpacT.....	48
4.6 Sustainability	50
5 Conclusions and recommendations.....	51
5.1 Conclusions	51
Relevance	51
Programme design and Coherence.....	51
Delivery of Outputs and contributions to desired outcomes of the Joint Programme	52
Efficiency	53
Impact and sustainability	53
5.2 Lessons learned	53
5.3 Recommendations	54
Annexes.....	57
Annex 1: Terms of reference	57
Annex 2: Evaluation matrix.....	68
Annex 4: Results framework.....	79
Annex 5: List of interviewed persons.....	83

Annex 9: Bibliography	86
Annex 10: List of site visits	87
Annex 11: Interview guides	88

Tables

Table 1: Evaluation key informants	22
Table 2: RCO and PUNOs international exchange of good practice and transfer of knowledge	39
Table 3: Recommendations	54

Figure 1. Budget overview (as of 31 May 2022)	11
Figure 2. Intervention logic of the JP	18
Figure 3. Overview of main results under Output 2	38
Figure 4. Overview of the Joint Programme expenditure	43
Figure 5. Completion rate of 19 th May 2022.....	44

Picture 1. The winning piece of art at the Art competition	37
------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Abbreviations

3Cs	Coherence, communication and complementarity
CODI	Core Diagnostics Instruments
CSO	Civil Society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EC	European Commission
EM	Evaluation Manager
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GD	Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
HCD	Human-centered design
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IR	Inception Report
JP	Joint Programme
KI	Key informants
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
MFSW	Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare
MONSTAT	Statistical Office of Montenegro
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSDD	National Strategy for Sustainable Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PUNO	Participating UN Organization
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RSIA	Rapid Social Impact Assessment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SILC	Survey of income and Living Conditions
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations

UNCT	United Nations County Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

This report presents the end of cycle evaluation of the **Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People** in Montenegro (hereinafter: Activate! Joint Programme (JP)), which is a programme funded by the SDG Fund and jointly implemented by five United Nations (UN) agencies: the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) from December 2019 until 31 July 2022. This report is the result of a summative assessment of the achievements of the JP. The evaluation explored whether the proposed approach was scalable and to determine the extent to which the desired change has occurred. Its formative element was fulfilled by assessing the degree to which the joint programme met its intended objectives and results, as input to derive key forward-looking lessons about successful approaches and operational practices, identifying areas for improvement for future similar programmes.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN agencies, Government of Montenegro, and other social protection actors. It is expected that the findings and recommendations of the evaluation will be used as a basis for discussions, planning for future programming.

1.1. CONTEXT

Montenegro with population of 0.62 million¹ is located in Western Balkans, bordering the five Western Balkans countries and separated from Italy by the Adriatic Sea. Montenegro faces challenges of population ageing, with the population's median age being 38.8². The share of children (aged 0-17) in the total population is estimated at 21.6% in May 2022, while 16% of the total population are aged 65 and above. Two-thirds of the total population are working-age population (aged 15-64 years).³ Most population live in urban areas (67.6% in 2020).⁴

Concerning the accession to the European Union, Montenegro is a candidate country which applied for EU membership in December 2008 and opened the accession negotiations in June 2012. By May 2022, Montenegro has opened 33 chapters, including chapter 19 on social policy and employment, and three are provisionally closed.⁵ Furthermore, Montenegro became NATO's member in June 2017.⁶

The political situation, in the period 2020-2022, was marked by a fragmented and polarised political scene and by tensions between political actors.⁷ As a result of the August 2020 elections, the first change of power in Montenegro happened after almost 30 years. The deep political polarization continued in the post-election period, including within the ruling majority. The government which took office in December 2020, was replaced by the new minority government elected by the Assembly in April 2022⁸. With the Government appointed in December 2020, competency over social and child

¹[https://www.monstat.org/userfiles/file/demografija/procjene%20stanovnistva/2019/n/Estimation%20of%20population%20and%20basic%20demographic%20indicators%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.monstat.org/userfiles/file/demografija/procjene%20stanovnistva/2019/n/Estimation%20of%20population%20and%20basic%20demographic%20indicators%20(1).pdf)

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/528765/average-age-of-the-population-in-montenegro/>

³ <http://monstat.org/eng/novosti.php?id=3504>

⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/528718/urbanization-in-montenegro/>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/montenegro_en

⁶ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_144647.htm

⁷ EC Montenegro 2020 report, EC Montenegro 2021 report.

⁸ <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/04/28/new-government-of-montenegro-elected-by-the-assembly/>

protection was moved to the Ministry of Finance (to become Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare), and it was returned to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in May 2022.

The European Commission (EC) 2021 Report on Montenegro highlight that country is moderately prepared in developing a functioning market economy and coping with competitive pressures and market forces within the EU.⁹ The country relies significantly on the services sector as this sector accounts for around 58% of GDP¹⁰, and 74% of all jobs are in the service sector¹¹. Montenegro is a tourism-dependent economy (more than 20% of GDP), which showed vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, retail and transport sectors were negatively affected by this pandemic.¹² Namely, Montenegro faced a sharp recession in 2020 due to the COVID-19, with GDP growth declining from 4.1% in 2019 to – 15.2% in 2020. GDP per capita stood at some 46% of the EU-27 average in 2020, which is 4% lower than in 2019. To support the economy, several economic support packages were implemented by the government, which amounted to 6% of GDP in 2020 and an additional 7% of GDP in 2021.¹³ Driven by a rapid recovery in tourism and government supporting economic measures, Montenegro's economy began to recover and recorded a very high GDP growth of 12.4% in 2021.¹⁴ Due to a large budget deficit in 2020, the debt ratio increased from 76.5% in 2019 to 105% in 2020¹⁵, and EC estimated its decline at 78% of GDP in 2022¹⁶.

The social protection expenditure of Montenegro was 16.3% of GDP in 2019, which was decreased by 0.4 percentage compared to 2018¹⁷, and lower than the EU average (19.3% in 2019)¹⁸. Out of the total amount of social protection expenditure, 97% was spent on social and child protection benefits.¹⁹ There is evidence that social protection programmes need to be better tailored to the needs of specific vulnerable groups, as programmes do not fully capture and effectively reach families and children who live below poverty.²⁰ EC 2021 Montenegro report suggested that 'based on the Roadmap of Social Protection Reform, continue the evidenced based reform of the social protection system, keeping in mind links to employment activation and social inclusion with an anti-poverty focus.'²¹

Human Development index 2020 was 0.829 for Montenegro, ranking 48 out of 189 countries²², while Gender Inequality Index 2019 was 0.109, ranking Montenegro 26 out of 162 countries.²³ Recent data shows that COVID impacted the growing unemployment trends. In the period 2019-2021, the unemployment rates of Montenegro was ranging from 15.1% in 2019, 17.9% in 2020 to 16.6% in 2021.²⁴ Unemployment was particularly high among young people (the youth unemployment rate in 2020 was 30.7%).²⁵ In 2020, 26.6% of youth (15-29 years) were not in education, employment or training (NEET), which is higher than in 2019 (21.3%), and significantly higher than the EU average

⁹ EC Montenegro 2021 report, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2021-10/Montenegro%202021%20report.PDF>

¹⁰ World Bank, World Bank Open Data (database), <https://data.worldbank.org>

¹¹ EC Montenegro 2021 report

¹² https://www.cbcg.me/slike_i_fajlovi/fajlovi/fajlovi_publikacije/radne_studije/analiza_uticaja_covid-19_na_ekon_i_bank_sistem-cg.pdf

¹³ EC Montenegro 2021 report

¹⁴ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/country/overview_montenegro_en.pdf

¹⁵ EC Montenegro 2021 report

¹⁶ <https://china-cee.eu/2022/02/28/montenegro-economy-briefing-economic-outlook-2022/>

¹⁷ <http://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/espross/2019/Saopstenje%20ESSPROS-%202019-%20eng.pdf>

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/gov_10a_exp/default/table?lang=en

¹⁹ <http://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/espross/2019/Saopstenje%20ESSPROS-%202019-%20eng.pdf>

²⁰ Joint Programme Document

²¹ EC Montenegro 2021 report, page 87.

²² UNDP, Global Human Development Indicators 2020, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/>

²³ <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MNE.pdf>

²⁴ MONSTAT. Labour Force Survey 2019, 2020, 2021, <https://monstat.org/cg/page.php?id=660&pageid=22>

²⁵ <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/8def027b-cd7b-441f-81c5-7ac720c4bfd8?version=1.0>

(14% in 2020, 12.9% in 2019).²⁶ Youth participation in the labour market is marked by disparity between labour supply and demand, as a significant number of university graduates find a job that is not well matched to their level of education (lower qualified jobs).

According to the SILC (Survey of Income and Living Conditions) data for 2020, 22.6% of the population was at risk of poverty, while 32.6% of children lived in income-poor households²⁷. Poor and vulnerable groups are children, young people, migrants and refugees, Roma and Egyptian, people who remain without stable legal status, victims of sex trafficking, returnees under a Readmission Agreement, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, and the rural population. According to available data, children in Montenegro (roughly 14,500) are more likely than adults to live in poverty²⁸. Among former Yugoslav refugees in Montenegro (12,500 persons), Roma minority group is found to be the most vulnerable ones.²⁹ In 2017, there was roughly around 1000 of ex-Yugoslav refugees who remained without stable legal status and excluded from the social protection system.³⁰ As regards returnees under bilateral readmission agreements, there were 104 returnees in 2020, 70 in 2021 and 11 in the period January-May 2022, and majority of them were returned to Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Berane and Rožaje.³¹ Major obstacles that returnees are facing are in the area of further education or employment possibilities. There is a low number of identified cases of victims of trafficking in human beings in Montenegro, as the process of identification of those victims has been challenging.³²

Montenegro has developed various government strategies to ensure the social and child protection of vulnerable groups and the legal framework that guarantees the protection of fundamental rights and is in line with European standards. Some of policies documents are the Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System for the period from 2018 to 2022³³, Roadmap of Reforms on Social assistance and social and child protection services in Montenegro³⁴ (adopted in July 2021), the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2021-2025³⁵, the Strategy for Exercising the Rights of Child (2019-2023)³⁶, the Western Balkans Declaration on ensuring sustainable labour market integration of young people³⁷ (endorsed in July 2021), the Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro for 2021-2025³⁸, Strategy for Combatting

²⁶ Eurostat, Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET), https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsi_neet_a&lang=en

²⁷ [RELEASE Survey on Income and Living Conditions EU-SILC 2020.pdf \(monstat.org\)](https://monstat.org/RELEASE_Survey_on_Income_and_Living_Conditions_EU-SILC_2020.pdf)

²⁸ [RELEASE Survey on Income and Living Conditions EU-SILC 2020.pdf \(monstat.org\)](https://monstat.org/RELEASE_Survey_on_Income_and_Living_Conditions_EU-SILC_2020.pdf)

²⁹ MLSW/UNHCR study: "Overcoming Vulnerabilities, Achieving Sustainability – Socioeconomic Vulnerabilities of Former Yugoslav Refugees and the Way Forward (2018)

³⁰ MLSW/UNHCR study: "Overcoming Vulnerabilities, Achieving Sustainability – Socioeconomic Vulnerabilities of Former Yugoslav Refugees and the Way Forward (2018)

³¹ Data was provided by an interviewee from the Ministry of Interior.

³² The number of identified victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) was three in 2016 (all female children), four in 2017 (all female, two adults and two children), 10 in 2018 (eight male and two female, including four children), and one by October 2019 (a female minor). Source: <https://rm.coe.int/evaluation-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conve/1680a2aefc>

³³ <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?id=55821>

³⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/20781/file/Web%20-%20Roadmap%20ENG.pdf.pdf>

³⁵ https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/IssueLibrary/MONTENEGRO_Strategy%20for%20Social%20Inclusion%20of%20Roma%20and%20Egyptians%20in%20Montenegro%202021-2025.pdf

³⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/11026/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication331.pdf>

³⁷ https://www.esap.online/download/docs/declaration_wb_labour_market_integration_young_people_final_agreed.pdf/1998ef0ac323ee5ca73a589054af1107.pdf

³⁸ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/6231d49e4.html>

Trafficking in Human Beings 2019-2024³⁹, the Strategy for Integration of Persons with Disabilities in Montenegro for the period 2016-2020⁴⁰, Youth Strategy 2017-2021⁴¹.

As regards COVID-19, Montenegro declared an epidemic outbreak on 26 March 2020 which was followed by the introduction of containment measures to mitigate transmission of COVID-19. By 15 May 2021, Montenegro had recorded 236,320 cases and about 2,719 deaths related to the COVID-19 pandemic⁴², around 45% of the population had been fully vaccinated (first and second dose).⁴³ As mentioned above, this pandemic heavily affected the tourism-dependent economy of Montenegro, which was the worst affected country in the region. The UN Socio-economic response plan to COVID-19 in Montenegro (developed in July 2020) noticed that the COVID-19 pandemic particularly negatively affected the most vulnerable groups such as ‘people living in poverty, children, elderly, persons with disabilities, minorities, refugees, asylum seekers and persons at risk of statelessness and migrant workers’, but also ‘have contributed to the emergence of new groups of vulnerable people (“new poor”), whose household income largely depends on the informal economy and who are not covered by social protection and/or eligible for employment benefits’⁴⁴. EC 2021 Montenegro report and the Rapid Social Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 effect outbreak in Montenegro (RSIA) noted that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the living conditions of children and access to education, access to health, mental health and social services of children, those from socially disadvantaged families and children with disabilities.

³⁹ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/d/424622.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.csrcg.me/images/Dokumenti/Strateska%20dokumenta/STRATEGIJA%20ZA%20INTEGRACIJU%20LICA%20SA%20INVALIDITETOM%20U%20CRNOJ%20GORI%202016-2020.pdf>

⁴¹ https://montenegro.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Youth%20Strategy%202017-2021_0.pdf

⁴² <https://www.covidodgovor.me/me/statistika>

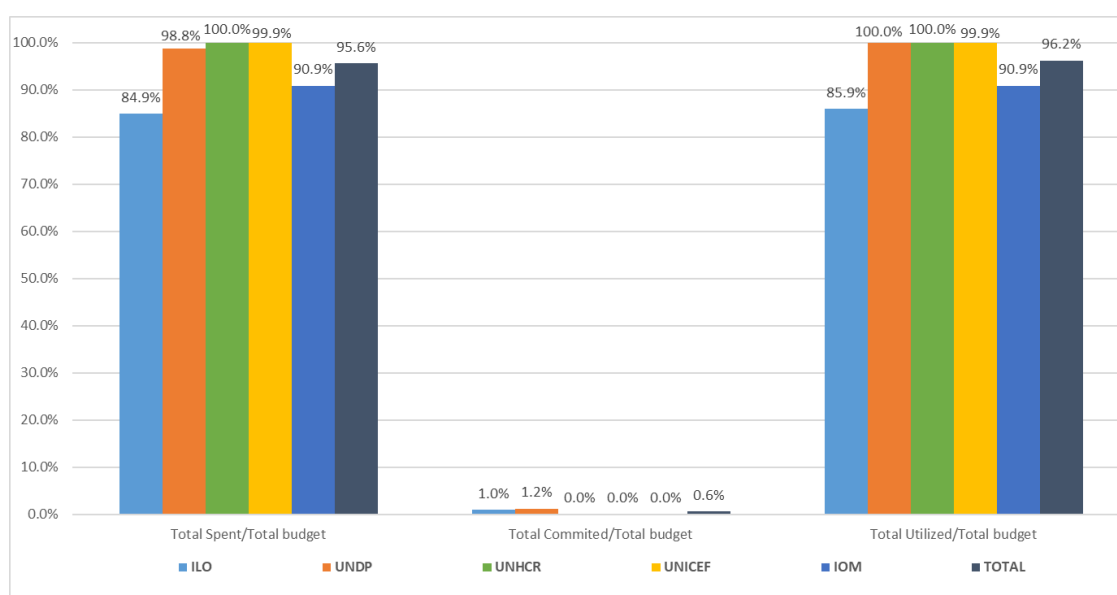
⁴³ <https://www.covidodgovor.me/>

⁴⁴ The UN Socio-economic response plan to COVID-19 in Montenegro

2. Subject of the evaluation

Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro is 32 months long programme, running from December 2019 through July 2022, designed to ‘enhance the capacities of the social protection system to better serve people in need – through a dual focus on improving the effectiveness of social policies as well as delivery of social services’⁴⁵. At the time of the evaluation, no second phase of the programme was planned. This is a Joint Programme (JP) implemented and funded by ILO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM and the Joint SDG Fund, with a total budget of USD 2,689,00.00 (Joint SDG Fund contribution of USD 1,970,000). At the end of the project (31 July 2022), a total 96.2% was utilised (See Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Budget overview (as of 31 July 2022)



Source: UN

The programme has introduced innovative policy making on social protection through applying policy simulations tools which improve targeting, coverage, adequacy of social protection and financing for (related to Outcome 1), and innovative practices in labour activation of vulnerable youth (e.g. NEET) and other vulnerable group through applying human-centred approach (related to Outcomes 2).

Target groups of the JP was adolescents and youth (including NEETS), Roma, people with disabilities, children, ex-Yugoslav refugees, stateless/persons at risk of statelessness, returnees, people living in a risk of poverty (beneficiaries of financial social assistance), and victims of human trafficking. The JP intended to pay attention to cross-cutting needs of women and children within the above categories of right-holders.

The programme had a national coverage, engaging at central and local levels in Montenegro. On the side of duty-bearers, the JP has worked with wide stakeholder groups such as various line ministries - the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Finance (later Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare), the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education,

⁴⁵ Joint Programme Document, page 1

Science, Culture and Sports (later Ministry of Sports and Youth and Ministry of Education); Statistics Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT); Local Employment Offices; and Centres for Social Welfare. During the implementation of activities, the JP collaborated with Civil society organizations (CSOs), various youth organizations/associations, local NGOs working with Roma communities, trade unions, employers' federations, etc; media; international organisations such as World Bank (in the area of job creation) and WHO (in the area of mental health barriers to employment).

The JP also drew on the expertise of other United Nations Country Team (UNCT) members, such as UNCT in Albania and ILO in Western Balkans countries to address cross-cutting issues of improving the work of labour market institutions and of other community level service provisions to better serve people in need. In addition, UNDP Montenegro has collaborated with UNDP Moldova in regard to use of human-centred design (HCD) methodology for co-design of services for labour activation of most vulnerable.

Theory of Change⁴⁶

Programme's Theory of Change was based on three key hypotheses:

If national social protection policies are better informed by updated evidence on poverty, especially related to marginalized groups **and** the impact of these policies can be modelled and predicted before they are submitted for adoption **then** the social protection system can more effectively alleviate poverty and accelerate sustainable human development within existing fiscal space.

If the most vulnerable youth have increased access to social protection services or can co-design programmes/ services targeted to their needs **and** are equipped with relevant skills **then** they will be more resilient, able to lead more productive lives and better fulfil their potential, thus reducing dependency on social assistance and helping to break intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Finally, **if** Montenegro's social protection system can more effectively alleviate poverty and reduce social exclusion, **and** if more young people in Montenegro lead productive lives and fulfil their potential, **then** progress towards more sustainable human development will accelerate.

Intervention logic of the JP - objective, results and activities⁴⁷

The objective is that by 2022, Montenegro has improved capacity to design impact-oriented, evidence-informed social protection policies and deliver integrated human-centred services that reduce poverty and social exclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized, focusing on young men and women, thus accelerating sustainable human development.

Outcome 1: Social policy simulations based on data and evidence, including on the impact of COVID-19, and subsequent scenarios for social protection system reform will result in more just, better targeted and more adequate social protection programmes and services for the most vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, migrants, returnees, refugees, stateless persons, children and victims of trafficking). The programmes and services complement labour market activation for decent work and development of employability skills. This work builds on the international CODI (Core Diagnostics Instruments) Assessment and a UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment (RSIA) of COVID-19, as well as the MAPS SDG acceleration reports and is fully aligned with the national institutional reform approach.

⁴⁶ Joint Programme Document, page 35

⁴⁷ Based on ToR

Output 1.1: New tool supports analysis of poverty-related data and simulation of policy impact. Most of the activities under Outcome 1 were delivered jointly by UNDP and UNICEF.

Planned Activity	Lead PUNO	Achievements⁴⁸
1.1 Provide deeper analysis of poverty data to identify furthest behind	All UN agencies (RSIA) UNDP/UNICEF	Reports of three round RSIA were produced and published. Study ‘Framework for provision of services in the area of social and child protection and the process of deinstitutionalization’. Technical assistance for initiating the development of the Strategy for Development of Social and Child Protection System, and the Deinstitutionalization Strategy.
1.2 Operationalize recommendations from CODI to increase effectiveness, efficiency, capacity to address poverty within fiscal space	UNICEF	Developed tool for planning and implementation of more effective social policies.
1.3 Develop poverty reduction scenarios to target furthest behind	UNDP/UNICEF	Designed three social policy options for poverty reduction (means tested benefits, child allowance and personal income taxation). Supported roll-out of Universal Child Allowance scenario and recommendations for operational strengthening of the scheme.
1.4 Accelerate implementation of optimum scenario(s)	UNDP/UNICEF	Implemented trainings for the MFSW staff to capacitate them for the use of simulation model and present simulation results. Several areas for improvement of SILC data were identified and were shared with the Ministry in order to improve the processes related to overall quality of data collection and processing. UNDP and UNICEF supported the MFSW and MONSTAT Statistical Office to improve SILC data that are needed for simulation and modelling in future period, and to increase capacities to collect and publish SILC data within shorter timeframe.

All activities were completed by 31 July 2022.

⁴⁸ Based on Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report and initial interviews until end of May 2022.

Outcome 2: Innovative skills building, mental health and labour market activation measures will increase the participation of young men and women in education, employment or training, strengthen their resilience, prevent passivation and reduce their dependence on social assistance. The intervention would expand the coverage of children by social transfers by 50% and, combined with labour activation measures and other interventions in social protection, could potentially reduce the national poverty rate by 3 percentage points (compared to the recalculated poverty rate after COVID-19 impact, available once the simulation exercise is completed). Given the expected socio-economic COVID-19 impact in terms of increased unemployment and poverty as well as newly emerging vulnerable groups this target remains important but is also ambitious.

Output 2.1: Human-centred, integrated service delivery at community-level, focusing on youth, to increase their participation in education, employment or training to reduce dependence on social assistance, are rolled-out. As regards people directly reached through Outcome 2, 996 ex-Yugoslav refugees and stateless persons/persons at risk of statelessness resolved their legal status (1000 planned); 1802 people reached by the anti-trafficking related awareness campaign (300 planned); approximately 3000 adolescents benefited through the social-emotional skills programmes and well-being and mental health workshops (1500 planned); 33 returnees received reintegration assistance (planned 30), approximately 150 youth benefited through piloted human-centered and integrated services (planned 100), 80 women benefited through participation in “Activate young women” measure and 19 of them transitioned to work (planned 45) and 55 potential women entrepreneurs trained. Each PUNO delivered activities under Outcome 2 individually, according to its mandate. The table below shows the achievements of each PUNO under this outcome.

Planned Activity	Lead PUNO	Achievements⁴⁹
2.1 Profile NEETs, registered beneficiaries of SP, those without access to SP system, to refine targeting and design an activation programme	ILO	Supported design of a Youth Guarantee Scheme (e.g. mapping NEETs, relevant legal and policy reviews, etc)
2.2. Support “first-time” access to SP system/employment for refugees/persons at-risk of statelessness/readmitted nationals by supporting regularization of legal status and social inclusion and enhancing multi-sectoral coordination and referral mechanisms for vulnerable groups	UNHCR	<p>UNHCR: 996 persons (99,6% completion rate) were supported by UNHCR through 2,171 legal advices towards regularizing their legal status.</p> <p>UNHCR: Organized 3 statelessness workshops in the northern, central and southern part of Montenegro.</p> <p>UNHCR: Supported development of the Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro for 2021-2025 and UNHCR supported strengthening the birth registration and the statelessness determination procedures.</p> <p>UNHCR: Organized an International Conference on Statelessness: Best Practices in Montenegro and France.</p>

IOM

⁴⁹ Based on Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report and initial interviews until end of May 2022.

Planned Activity	Lead PUNO	Achievements ⁴⁹
		IOM: Three Coordination meetings held engaging all relevant actors in the area of reintegration and training for relevant national stakeholders organized aiming to enhance national institutions' capacities to provide integrated reintegration assistance to readmitted nationals ensuring efficient results and more sustainable reintegration processes.
2.3 Increase access to human-centered, effective social support services for targeted groups, including labour market activation	UNDP	<p>Applied Human-centred design (HCD) methodology for co-design of services for labour activation of most vulnerable, especially youth. Challenges and bottlenecks related to labour activation, both on the side of beneficiaries and service providers were identified.</p> <p>Analysis of integrated work under the sector of social protection and employment related to labour activation of able-to-work social beneficiaries.</p> <p>Analysis of system for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Support development of government strategies and programmes for youth, such as digital platform for the government's pilot project digital skills development for youth, youth strategy, and youth card programme.</p> <p>New pilot project in 10 municipalities with 84 participants (56 women, 28 men), focusing on the individualized and tailored support to the unemployed was designed and rolled out in 2022.</p> <p>Pilot project on youth employability in Cetinje (around 70 youth people aged 16 to 35 benefited from training and/or motivational events).</p> <p>Human-centred design online course aimed for 30,000-50,000 public servants, and brief practical guide for Human-centred design for public services.</p> <p>Service design for student employment based on Human-centred design methodology.</p> <p>ILO support implementation of the active labour market measure "Activate young women" resulted in around 80 women activated from the registry of Employment Agency of Montenegro, 19 of them transited to work during the 2022. In addition, ILO in collaboration with the Municipality of Bar and the</p>
	ILO	

Planned Activity	Lead PUNO	Achievements ⁴⁹
		<p>Montenegrin Employers Federation (MEF) supported 55 women that are potential entrepreneurs through training based on 'Gender and Entrepreneurship Together' (GET Ahead) methodology.</p> <p>IOM: Tailored reintegration assistance provided to 33 returnees under readmission agreement. Under this activity, individual reintegration support was provided (in-housing assistance and support for micro-business) to returnees under readmission agreements with the purpose of facilitating their reintegration into society.</p>
<p>2.4 Strengthen resilience through “21st century” skills development, including socio-emotional/self-care skills tailored to unique needs (e.g., mobile-based delivery)</p>	UNICEF	<p>1,572 adolescents have gone through the social-emotional skills programmes which was deployed through a blended approach, using both online tools and face-to-face workshops throughout the country. Workshops were completed in 15 municipalities, as well as 2 summer camps for children from underprivileged backgrounds.</p> <p>Baseline study on youth needs for development of the National Youth Strategy.</p> <p>Mental health portal and workshops on improving well-being and mental health including self-coping mechanisms for more than 1,200 adolescents in partnership with the Association of Scouts of Montenegro.</p>
<p>2.5 Enhance identification of victims of trafficking and raise awareness on the dangers of trafficking, targeting youth with a focus on marginalized groups</p>	IOM	<p>Social workers have gone through the capacity building activities on strengthening competences of professionals in identification, protection, assistance and reintegration of victims of trafficking. In addition, two study visits have been conducted, to Republic of Serbia and Republic of North Macedonia aiming to enhance capacities of National institutions in addressing trafficking in human beings and strengthen regional cooperation in fighting Trafficking in Human Beings.</p> <p>Awareness raising campaign on dangers of trafficking in human beings (e.g. art contest for students (aged 12-18 years), 4 workshops, nationwide survey on Trafficking in Human Beings)</p>

Estimated rate of completion as of 19 May 2022 was 75% (UNHCR 100%, UNDP 80%, ILO 70%, IOM 60%, UNICEF 65%), still PUNOs succeeded to complete all activities by 31 July 2022.

The JP is planned to contribute to an acceleration of progress towards 6 out of 17 SDGs such as Goals 1 - No poverty, 3 - Good Health and Well-Being, 4 - Quality Education, 5 - Gender Equality, 8 - Decent

Work and Economic Growth, and 10 - Reduced Inequalities. In addition, the JP is planned to work towards objectives of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro by 2030 that were focused on improvement of state of human resources and strengthening of social inclusion, support to values, norms and behaviours patterns significant for sustainability of the society, and stimulate employability and social inclusion. Intervention logic of the JP is presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. *Intervention logic of the JP*



2.2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

As stipulated in the TOR, the evaluation was both summative and formative in nature, fulfilling the accountability and learning purpose. The evaluation provided summative assessment of the achievements of the JP by assessing the approach taken by PUNOs, whether the assumptions made in the JP's ToC were appropriate, and whether activities and interventions indeed contributed to progress within the framework of the ToC. The evaluation explored whether the proposed approach was scalable and the extent to which the desired change had occurred. Its formative element included an assessment of the degree to which the joint programme met its intended objectives and results, as input to derive key forward-looking lessons about successful approaches and operational practices, identifying areas for improvement for future similar programmes. It is expected that the information, findings, lessons learned, and recommendations generated by this programme evaluation will be used by the Joint Programme Board and other relevant stakeholders to inform future programming, but also for PUNOs to potentially modify practices and further improve delivering-as-one approach.

Evaluation had the following evaluation objectives:

- To assess the project accomplishments against planned results, objectives, targets and indicators, including the aspects of effectiveness and efficiency of the intervention and sustainability of project benefits beyond the lifetime of the project;
- To assess, to the extent possible, contribution to improving the situation of vulnerable groups identified in the JP, including persons with disability;
- To assess contribution to SDG acceleration;
- To assess contribution to UN reforms (including UNCT coherence);
- To assess contribution to SDG Fund global goals;
- To assess, to the extent possible, contribution to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) of Montenegro;
- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, design, efficiency, coherence and sustainability of the joint programme from its inception to its completion;
- To provide reflections on the previous state of play and capacities of the main actors as compared to the beginning of the project implementation and in relation to that, provide recommendations and guidance for future similar JP initiatives;
- To provide gender-sensitive assessment of the joint programme by maximizing the use of existing data to support mainstreaming of gender analysis across all questions, including those unrelated to gender;
- To identify and consolidate good practices, human stories, lessons learned and make recommendations on processes, management, partnerships and other aspects of project implementation that would benefit future joint programmes agencies in this area.

The evaluation also focused attention on human rights, in particular of the most marginalised groups targeted by the evaluation including persons with disabilities, women, refugees, migrants and stateless persons or those at risk of statelessness, by assessing the extent to which:

- Joint programme design, implementation, and monitoring had been inclusive of persons with disabilities (accessibility, non-discrimination, participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, data disaggregation) and other most vulnerable groups (refugees, migrants and stateless persons or those at risk of statelessness)
- Joint programme effectively contributed to the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups by providing income security, coverage of health care, and disability-related costs across the life cycle.

The primary users of the evaluation were the UN RCO in Montenegro and PUNOs, the Government of Montenegro and its relevant ministries (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sports and Youth), national institutions (Employment Agency of Montenegro, Centres for Social work (CSWs), Office of National Coordinator for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings); Monstat; civil society partners (NGO Pedagogical Center, Defendology Center; Civic Alliance, Association of Scouts, HELP, Montenegrin Employers Federation), and development partners (WHO, EU, World Bank).

Scope of the Evaluation

As stipulated in the ToR and confirmed in the inception phase, the evaluation looked at the entire JP within the broader social protection sector reforms as well as the national and global priorities. However, other similar or interlinked PUNOs' activities implemented through interventions within wider thematic areas were outside the scope of this evaluation.

The evaluation covered the entire programme implementation period (December 2019- June 2022). The geographical scope was nationwide, while three sub-national locations were also included in the evaluation process in addition to the field mission to Montenegro's capital, Podgorica (i.e. Niksic, Berane and Bar).

The evaluation also reviewed the gender and equity focus of the programme by analysing the data collected through assessing gender lens of Programme's focus, mainstreaming and subsequent results. Specifically, gender lens of results was assessed when it comes to access to services, engagement of boys and girls, women and men in consultations and capacity strengthening activities, participation in working groups and decision-making, etc. Besides, assessment of Programme's focus on integrating gender and equity in advisory support for development of legal framework and policy papers was conducted. This was deemed particularly important as the JP was designed with a view of strengthening the social protection system to address the needs of the most marginalized groups of population. Special consideration of the effects of COVID-19 on the original scope of the JP were also assessed.

3. Methodology

EVALUATION DESIGN AND APPROACH

The evaluation was designed as utilization-focused and consultative, maximizing the value of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations for the intended users and supporting lessons learning for future interventions.

The evaluation employed a theory-based approach, whereby the primary focus of the assessment was on understanding cause-effect interactions between individual components and the programme's desired outcomes. The theory-based approach aims to generate both an understanding of what has worked, but also an understanding of why it has worked. The JP intervention logic and a ToC formed the foundation for the qualitative and quantitative research, providing a framework against which collected data were analysed to enable testing the findings against the theories to see whether the hypothesized mechanisms did indeed work, and if so, under what conditions.

As required by the ToR, this evaluation applied a mixed methods approach. The ET combined the use of qualitative and quantitative data and relied on both primary and secondary data sources

throughout the evaluation process. During both the inception and field phases, the ET continuously adapted the techniques and instruments as required to maximize data collection efforts. The evaluation used the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and coherence as its basis. All the evaluation questions were grouped under the OECD criteria within an overarching evaluation matrix (Annex 3).

The main data collection methods included policy review (PUNOs corporate policy and strategic documents, JPs strategic framework, government policies and strategies), documentary analysis (general documentation review, review of secondary sources, reports, analyses, studies) and primary data (interviews).

The evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner and participation of key stakeholders was ensured in all phases of the evaluation, including the planning, inception, fact-finding, and reporting. The Programme team established an evaluation reference group (ERG) that acted as sounding board for the evaluation and was consulted at critical times during the evaluation process. Besides, PUNOs, outsourced consultants, government institutions and service providers, civil society and development partners were consulted, and their views were solicited on the evaluation, as input for analysis and triangulation of findings. ET also collected feedback on experiences and provided benefits from final beneficiaries of the programme (e.g. teachers, young unemployed people, women users of the financial social assistance, Roma)

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TOOLS

The evaluation used an evidence-based approach, combining a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, which helped to ensure that the limitations of one type of data were balanced by the strengths of another. The main quantitative data sources were secondary data and existing documentation, including PUNOs' annual reports and data sources. The ET generated qualitative data through key informant interviews. Triangulation was used to strengthen the reliability and robustness of all findings.

Documentary analysis – inception and desk review phase

Within the inception and document review phase, the ET applied stakeholder mapping and context analysis, as well as in-depth and structured documentary review. The ET reviewed the following types of reports:

- UNICEF's, UNDP's, ILO's, IOM's and UNHCR's organisational policy documents, guidelines; JP framework, monitoring data, reports, and studies as well as other types of documentation that can provide an insight into the Joint Programme focus and results across areas of intervention to extract relevant findings related to the JP performance in Montenegro.
- Analysis of external sources pertaining to the JP focus areas and country context. This group of documents included all other studies, analyses, evaluations, and policy documents produced by non-UN entities (e.g., civil society, academic, think tanks, donor, international organizations' reports etc.). This group of documents was especially important to see how others have researched and assessed UN agencies' support to the social protection sector but also overall country development when it comes to social protection and inclusion.

A list of all the reviewed documents can be found in Annex 4.

Primary data collection

The primary data collection process served the purpose of testing preliminary assumptions, hypotheses and findings resulting from the document review and filling in the data gaps encountered during the document review. For this evaluation, a comprehensive list of potential key informants resulted from stakeholder mapping conducted by the ET. The list was presented and discussed with the Evaluation management group, to agree on the full scope of potential key informants. The ET combined different data collection approaches to ensure that a variety of views are captured. The in-country mission took place between 30 May- 10 June, 2022, followed by remaining meetings held remotely, using Zoom as a main communication tool. During the in-country mission, field visits to Berane, Bar and Niksic were conducted beside meetings in Podgorica, Montenegro's capital. During the primary data collection phase, ET performed:

Key informant interviews- Most of the primary data were collected from prioritized key informants during the field phase. During the primary data collection phase, semi-structured key informant interviews (KII) were carried out with i) Joint Programme implementing partners, and ii) key national stakeholders (key government interlocutors and service providers, implementing partners, civil society). A total of 52 key informants (37 women, 15 men) were interviewed with these stakeholder groups (Annex 5). Table below presents the stakeholder groups interviewed for the purpose of the evaluation.

Table 1: Evaluation key informants

Stakeholder group	Planned number of representatives	Number of representatives interviewed	Number of female representatives	Number of male representatives
PUNO staff members	28 ⁵⁰	18	11	7
RCO	6	4	1	3
Government	23 ⁵¹	15	13	2
Civil Society (implementing partner)	6	8	6	2
Workers organization (implementing partner)	1	2	2	0
Municipality (implementing partner)	1	1	1	0
National and international experts	14 ⁵²	4	3	1
TOTAL	79	52	37	15

In addition, ET organized 15 interviews (14 women, 1 man) with participants of PUNOs activities (Table 2., Annex 5). Following the inception phase discussions with PUNOs, it was decided not to organise FGD as they were not possible to do as participants are from different municipalities, or the same

⁵⁰ 10 PUNO staff members that were only involved in RSIA and/or marked as desirable were not interviewed. All PUNO staff members that were marked as a critical KII were interviewed.

⁵¹ 8 government representatives were not available for an interview or ET was not able to reach them due to changes in their government positions.

⁵² 2 out of 8 UNDP consultants were interviewed as they were marked as critical KII.

municipalities but attended different activities, some of them were still ongoing. During the field missions, ET conducted site observations of IOM and UNICEF’s supported activities in sampled communities. The final beneficiaries of the programme – children and adolescents – were not interviewed as agreed during the inception meeting with the Evaluation Management Group.

Table 2. Interviewed participants of PUNOs activities

PUNOs activities	Number of participants	Number of female participants	Number of male participants
UNICEF, representatives of schools participated in social-emotional skills	2	2	0
UNDP, beneficiaries, and mentors of pilot project	8	8	0
ILO, beneficiaries, and teachers of ‘Activate young women’ measure	3	3	0
IOM, members of the local teams that provided direct support to returnees	2	1	1
	15	14	1

The interview guides for the KII can be found in Annex 6. During data collection, the team strictly adhered to confidentiality rules and data protection, which contributed to greater openness of the interviewees and safeguarded them against possible risks.

DATA ANALYSIS

Once the primary data collection was finalized, the ET embarked on data analysis and synthesis of evidence and findings. The ET applied specific methods for analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected through the document review and stakeholder interviews

Thematic narrative analysis through structured desk review to enable identification of key themes covered by the Joint Programme that are of relevance to the indicators outlined in the evaluation matrix:

- a. **Descriptive quantitative analysis** of quantitative data collected through document review of available monitoring data, reports and external sources with cross tabulation for evaluation indicators, but also criteria of interest (such as gender, equity or disability) where relevant.
- b. **Qualitative iterative data analysis** allowed to connect, and structure key thought units related to each evaluation question (EQ) deriving from stakeholder interviews into clusters and identifying the key themes within each cluster. These formed emergent themes from each category for further analysis. Triangulation of data was conducted determine if inputs were coming from multiple sources and stakeholder levels and multiple stakeholder categories. Observations or comments that only came from a single source or a single category of stakeholder were given less weight during the building of the analysis. Finding

highlighted in the report are those emerging from multiple actors and across multiple stakeholder categories.

- c. The Programme Theory of change formed the basis for the **Contribution Analysis** which assisted in assessing the degree to which the Joint Programme has contributed to the perceived outcomes. Initial document review showed that the programme developed a theory of change for the intervention with key assumptions. The activities in the programme were implemented to a large extent in line with the theory of change. Assessment of performance and achieved results was conducted based on these, accompanied with analysis of external factors influencing results. This type of analysis assisted in interlinking the findings of the above outlined different types of analysis and helped lead to definition of conclusions regarding effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability, as well as connectedness and coverage.

The evaluation utilized two types of **triangulation** that served to highlight any inconsistencies between document analysis and the feedback from key informants, i.e. how external parties perceive the results of the measures undertaken within the Joint Programme. These were: i) **Methods triangulation**, both qualitative and quantitative data was used to elucidate complementary aspects of the same subject; and ii) **Data sources triangulation**, which involves examining the consistency of different data sources within the same methods.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ET members did not have any conflict of interest with the JP and operated with independence and impartiality throughout the evaluation. The team ensured compliance with ethical and moral principles, including the application of the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The ET adhered to the Standard Operations Procedures for Quality Assurance and Ethical Standards in UNICEF-supported Research, Studies, and Evaluations and the Core Commitment for Children in Humanitarian Action.

Given that there were no children or vulnerable groups involved in the evaluation data collection, the evaluation did not go through a formal Institutional Review Board ethics review as part of the design process. However, the evaluation still adhered to the ethical considerations related to safety, confidentiality, and data protection regarding its treatment of participants in the evaluation process.

The ET conducted Stakeholder mapping and analysis to identify and prioritize institutions/organizations to be engaged in the evaluation process. The stakeholder analysis integrated prioritization of those institutions/organizations to be interviewed. This list was further discussed with the Evaluation Management Group to reach agreement on those institutions to be interviewed. Based on the final list of critical and desirable interlocutors, PUNOs oversaw identifying representatives of these institutions/organizations and arranging meetings.

The team applied ethical standards to the data collection process including the protection of rights and dignity of evaluation informants. This included applying the principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, assurances of anonymity and confidentiality and do no harm principles in all parts of a data collection exercise.

Protocols for Safety, Confidentiality, and Data Protection

In line with informed consent principles and confidentiality, interviewees were informed at the start of the interview regarding the purpose of the evaluation, assurances of voluntary participation, and confidentiality of all responses (Annex 7). The ET applied the principle of “do no harm” – both for the

ET and evaluation participants together with the standard ethical requirements of any evaluation data collection process.

Confidentiality: In agreement with PUNOs, all interviews were arranged by ET. The ET did not use audio or video recordings of KIIs. All notes taken by ET have been stored in personal computers with password protection.

No compensation for participation in the evaluation process was provided. The ET ensured that informed consent protocols were verbal, to avoid signing of any type of printed forms that might put participants at risk. For all interviews, personal data, including contact details were stripped from the data before it was shared to ensure further confidentiality. All interview notes from the ET are kept electronically on password encrypted computers. Any potential personal identifiers have been removed from the data prior to analysis. Data analysis was carried out only by the ET members to ensure confidentiality. Data compiled in reporting was aggregated so that individual responses cannot be traced to specific locations or individuals. Both quantitative and qualitative information will be maintained on ET computers only until the finalization of the report, at which time it will be deleted to further protect individuals from possible identification.

Gender Norms: The ET ensured that gender roles were respected and provided space for women to share their views in safe and enabling environment.

LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Besides the in-country mission, the ET arranged longer timeframe for primary data collection to allow wider participation of stakeholders. For example, several Programme activities (e.g. IOM) were not yet finalized at the time of the in-country mission, hence the ET conducted interviews with a few stakeholders at the end of June and the beginning of July 2022.

Another limitation is the constrained institutional memory across partner government institutions following the change of the Government. The Parliament approved a new Government on 28 April 2022, a month before the in-country mission. Several senior management staff of the key line ministries⁵³ were unavailable due to their replacement or personal reasons. To overcome this issue, the ET conducted interviews with a middle management staff that were participated in the JP and still working within the ministries.

The ET could not organise FGDs as the beneficiaries were from different communities. To overcome this, ET conducted interviews with final beneficiaries during field visits to sampled communities.

⁵³ Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

4 Key Findings

This chapter presents the review of the overall performance of UN Joint Activate! Programme in Montenegro from different perspectives: programme relevance, programme effectiveness, impact and sustainability of programme results, coherence, and programme efficiency. The evidence collected and presented as key findings in this report derive from thorough review of documents that were obtained from PUNOs, secondary data sources gathered by the ET throughout the process, and interviews and GDs with key informants. Quantitative and qualitative data was analysed, and findings were triangulated to ensure balanced and evidence-based review of the programme performance and its catalytic potential.

4.1 RELEVANCE

Continued relevance of the programme to the needs and emerging priorities in light of COVID-19 (Q 1, Q 4, and Q12)

Finding 1: The design and development of the Joint Programme was informed by thorough analyses of needs and observed system bottlenecks (supply - government social protection) and analysis of demands (access to rights and services by right holders). The strategic positioning of PUNOs helped capitalise on their continued efforts to support to social policy reforms.

As an EU accession candidate, Montenegro has been advancing its systemic reforms, including reforms of social protection system, since its independence. Analysis of historical records of UN engagement in Montenegro⁵⁴ shows that the UN Country team has been a stable and reliable partner of the government in these reforms, providing technical assistance and advisory to the government to shaping the reforms and their directions. This Joint programme marked another step in the direction of supporting on-going reform processes through sustained support for institution building and capacity development, evidence-based policy making and improved monitoring and evaluation.

A review of programme planning documentation (initial and the revised programme document) shows efforts of PUNOs to base the programme on extensive analysis of Montenegro's strategic framework pertaining social protection system and its needs and bottlenecks. Clear linkages are provided between the identified capacity and system reform needs and a package of programme interventions, based on evidence generated through consultations with national institutions and representatives of final beneficiaries, UN situational analyses and reports and reports of other development partners, notably EU and the World Bank. For example, the UNDP pilot project was designed based on the assessed needs of beneficiaries groups through workshops, which ensured a participatory and human-centred approach in the project design phase.

Specifically, comparative analysis of the JP Results Framework, the national plans, and priorities of the government of Montenegro, as well as the SDG priorities, indicates that the programme was relevant to the national priorities and responded well to critical bottlenecks in the system's targeting and coverage approaches. The programme addressed evidenced bottlenecks stemming from lack of consistent data on the most vulnerable groups by investing in three rounds of Rapid Social Impact Assessment (RSIA), which provided real-time data on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19,

⁵⁴ Review of existing evaluations of UN Agencies' country programmes, available evaluations of EU assistance to social protection, EU progress reports, other reports and studies of the social protection sector in Montenegro.

especially on vulnerable groups. The programme also addressed the issue of targeting by offering models and approaches based on tax-benefit simulations which provided social protection system reform scenarios to ensure more just, better targeted and more adequate social protection cash programmes⁵⁵.

In recognition of the weaknesses of the social and child protection and employment services to the most vulnerable, the Programme provided support to the national institutions (Centres for Social Work (CSW), National Employment Service (NES), regional units of the Ministry of Interior, and other institutions) to improve their targeting and coverage of the most vulnerable. These efforts also addressed the unmet needs and vulnerabilities of the most vulnerable groups, notably, youth and adolescents, women, migrants, returnees, refugees, stateless persons, children and victims of trafficking. Such support aligned well with the national development strategies of Montenegro and inclusiveness agenda of the government and EU (e.g. closing benchmarks of the EU Chapter 19 on Social Policy, the Economic Reform Programme, Western Balkans Declaration on ensuring sustainable labour market integration of young people⁵⁶).

Interviewed stakeholders from UN agencies, national government ministries and public institutions as well as service providers confirm high relevance of the programme to national priorities and bottlenecks in particular in light of parallel crises that Montenegro encountered during the programme implementation (i.e. COVID-19 and the tectonic structural changes across Montenegrin government⁵⁷ and political volatility that ensued from this process). Document review and stakeholder interviews show that the programme was designed in the period marked by stable and proactive government efforts to reform the social protection system, when PUNOs – all in their own mandate areas - were strategically positioned and already achieved strong gains in terms of advancement of reform agenda. As emphasised by interviews stakeholders, the programme was designed at the time marked by strong momentum of the reform, which reflected in a rather ambitious set of interventions, specifically under Outcome 1 (system reform support). However, the actual programme implementation coincided with huge changes and challenges for the social and child protection system in light of government changes and COVID-19, as evidenced by review of contextual framework and stakeholder interviews.

Consequently, the JP design brought together individual agencies' efforts towards more holistic approach to addressing reform priorities based on government's buy in and commitment to reform. The programme showed high level of adaptability to challenges and new working realities arising from combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme political volatility that ensued since 2020, characterised by fast reorientation of main activities and moving to approaches and areas which have had more chances for success given the situation. For instance, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis, the Joint Programme provided real time evidence generation on the impact of COVID-19, consultations with partners and adjustment of programme approaches, preparations for providing technical assistance for effective social policy reform and improved service delivery for the most vulnerable groups. Interviewed stakeholders noted that such adapted approach was valuable at time of crisis to support the need for quick evidence based solutions and services for the most vulnerable. In addition, it was mentioned that the relevance of the Joint Programme support was increased during

⁵⁵ The programme targets/engages with the following most vulnerable groups: youth, women, persons with disabilities, minority groups, internally displaced persons, migrants, returnees, refugees, stateless persons or those at risk of statelessness, children and victims of trafficking.

⁵⁶https://www.esap.online/download/docs/declaration_wb_labour_market_integration_young_people_final_agreed.pdf/1998ef0ac323ee5ca73a589054af1107.pdf

⁵⁷ As a result of 2020 elections, Montenegro faced the first change of power (opposition coalition came to power) in 30 years

the time of COVID, as unplanned social benefits were added to the government budget as part of COVID-19 support packages, without effective targeting and evidence-based.

Finding 2. The Programme addressed inequalities and the principle of Leaving No One Behind (gender, youth and adolescents, PWD, refugees, minorities (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian), stateless persons or at risk of statelessness)

Activities of the Joint Programme are based on the principles of “Leaving No One Behind”. PUNOs were helping the authorities to identify who is being left behind and to provide services defined for them. UNHCR provided legal support to the most vulnerable ex-Yugoslav refugees and persons at risk of statelessness to acquire legal status (e.g. birth registration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, children born to refugees). Interviewed stakeholders from national authorities confirmed that these target groups are invisible to public institutions, therefore it is highly relevant that PUNOs with their implementing partners (e.g. CSOs) identify their issues, provide legal support and connect with the public institutions. IOM was helping national and local level authorities to improve their capacities related to the identification, protection, assistance, and reintegration of victims of trafficking, as well as to improve their capacities for reintegration of returnees (e.g. some of them belonging to minority groups). Initially, the project document envisaged development of skills for young returnees to enhance their employability. Interviewed stakeholders stated that this type of activity was not possible to be implemented due to low interest of returnees for further skills development, or due to their low level of education (e.g., not complemented primary or secondary school). Consequently, this activity was replaced by provision of direct support to returnees in form of purchasing of household appliances, work equipment (e.g. for craftsmen), roof adaptation, etc.

UNDP and ILO implemented their activities (e.g. analytical documents, pilot projects) with the application of a human-centred approach in labour market activation with particular emphasis on gender quality and youth, as well as inclusion of minority groups. UNDP applied human-centred design methodology in a) the analysis of experiences, challenges and bottlenecks related to the labour activation of social protection beneficiaries for mapping service and policy-level solutions and in b) implementing a pilot project for labour activation of the most vulnerable. ILO implemented activities that were focused on strengthening gender dimension of labour activation, through a) supporting women aged 25-34 with pre-school age children (who lost their job due to the COVID-19 crisis; or who are inactive since they do not have access to childcare services but willing to work)⁵⁸ in the labour market activation (the “Activate Young Women” project) and b) supporting women that are potential entrepreneurs through training based on ‘Gender and Entrepreneurship Together’ (GET Ahead) methodology⁵⁹. Due attention was paid to labour activation of Roma minority groups through ILO and UNDP activities.

Adolescents and youth were the focus of UNICEF activities ‘Social-emotional skills workshops’ contributed to skills development (including 21st-century skills) and well-being and mental health support both during and after the pandemic. PUNOs also implemented activities targeting youth, such as mapping of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET), supporting the development of youth strategy and programs (‘Youth Card’, ‘Youth Guarantee’ scheme, measures for youth employment, including the development of digital skills). In addition, UNDP conducted analysis of systems for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

⁵⁸ ILO, Terms of Reference for the Implementation of the Grant Activity: Activate Young Women.

⁵⁹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_762135.pdf

Programme alignment with the SDGs, specifically Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 (Q2)

Finding 3: The programme was aligned to the national SDG priorities and EU accession agenda, as well as the UN Social Economic Response Plan (SERP), the revised 2020 and 2021 UNDAF work plans for Social Inclusion. The programme's studies and results also inform programming of the new cycle of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

Montenegro identified social protection and employment as one of three national key SDG accelerators, which directly aligns the JP's intervention with SDG targets in the country. In response and alignment with SDG priorities, the programme supported the government to move the reform processes forward in the area of social protection and employment in order to reach European and leave no-one behind standards (with focus on fulfilment of requirements stipulated in the EU Chapter 19 on Social Policy and Employment). In particular, technical assistance and support in the areas of evidence generation, policy simulation and studies of universal approach to social protection, as well as modelling approaches in support to fulfilment of rights of the most vulnerable have been relevant to SDG acceleration. The programme modelled its interventions to be aligned with the SDG targets, with the intervention logic within which support is directed towards a better targeted social protection system with expanded coverage, with the aim to strengthen the system that would ensure that those who are most marginalized receive adequate support, while those who are able to work, can find decent employment and thus lift themselves out of poverty and contribute to society and a better funded social protection system. The programme's focus on supporting service providers also provided relevant support to the enhancement of the capacities of the key stakeholders of the national social welfare system to better serve people in need.

The programme has also been aligned and contributed to the fulfilment of the UNDAF and the SERP as well as wider engagement of UNCT in the social inclusion domain, by complementing individual UN Agencies' efforts towards social inclusion and poverty and vulnerability reduction. Document review provided ample evidence of the leverage potential of the JP with individual efforts of PUNOs (e.g. UNDP's support to enhance interoperability within the social and child protection system; UNICEF's work on enhancing social and child protection and efforts towards designing a Child Guarantee Scheme; ILO's efforts towards providing better access to public employment services for vulnerable groups and design a Youth Guarantee Scheme, UNHCR's efforts to support stateless persons and refugees, as well as IOM's efforts to support migrants, returnees to gain access to rights and services. According to the stakeholder feedback, the programme also contributed to more coherent approaches, despite the fact that a certain level of silo approach and fragmentation is still visible, as discussed under Q 3 below.

Interviews with UNRCO and PUNOs also note the relevance of produced analytical documents in light of preparation of the new UNSDCF, which aims to provide stronger focus on emerging priorities of poverty reduction, social inclusion and inclusive economic growth and employment. In particular the RSIA's, the support to the Statistics office in improvement of the SILC indicators and policy simulations have been relevant for this process. Besides, experiences on what works (or not) in terms of active labour market measures, support to refugees, stateless persons and migrants, etc. also helps inform planning of the new cycle, as emphasised by interviewed stakeholders.

Programme Complementarities and Coherence (Q 3, Q 5 and Q8)

Finding 4: The coordination, management and financing arrangements among UN CT (UN RC and PUNOs) have been clearly defined at the design stage. Some fragmentation of support was noted between interventions of individual PUNOs due to inherent specificities of UN

Agencies' mandates and target groups. From that point of view, the programme did not fully succeed to design and implement holistic set of interventions.

Evidence collected through document review and stakeholder interviews point to strong engagement and positive working relations between the UNRCO and PUNOs, characterized by close coordination, and clearly defined roles, management and financing arrangements. The programme focused on three intervention areas: 1) supporting the social and child protection system; 2) enhancing ALMM and entrepreneurship services through human-centred design approach and modelling; and 3) empowerment of the most marginalised and excluded groups by gaining access to rights and legal status. Montenegro's UNCT is rather small in comparison to other countries where SDGF programmes are implemented, and in view of majority of stakeholders this, along with open communication and longer term partnerships, has been a driver of cooperation and joint programmes. The Joint programme integrates contributions of each PUNO from the perspective of their distinct mandates and experience in working with main programme counterparts in Montenegro, which helped strategically position the programme within the realm of social and child protection and inclusion reforms. The role of UNRCO was also prominent, with active engagement in coordination of the programme across implementation.

Fragmentation is visible in the programme design when it comes to individual components though, relating mainly to the difference between the focus and intervention of individual PUNOs. Under Outcome 2, UNDP and ILO worked on supporting the system solutions for social protection and active labour market measures and entrepreneurship modelling for the most vulnerable groups, which has been relevant and cumulatively does support institutional strengthening and local ownership. As shown in document review and as corroborated by stakeholder interviews, UNDP's and ILO's ALMM and entrepreneurship measures were focused on similar, yet somewhat distinct domains – ILO focused on women entrepreneurs after expanding the focus from labour market activation of inactive women aged 25-34 with pre-school age children while UNDP focused on enhancing the nexus between the NES and centres for social work towards activation of the NEET and unemployed people, with focus on the youth. The evaluation found that there could have been more cross-fertilisation and coherence between these two types of interventions towards the benefit for the supported system and final beneficiaries. Even though it was not envisaged in the programme design, some examples of collaboration between these interventions were evident during the implementation, as mentors of UNDP and the HELP pilot program shared information about ILO's training activities. For instance, a mentor of the UNDP and HELP pilot project, who is also a teacher of training on women entrepreneurship, invited a few trainees of previous ILO training to participate in the pilot project and receive mentorship support regarding starting up the business. Moreover, evaluation found that there could have been an opportunity for collaboration with UNICEF as these two interventions focus on youth and mothers of pre-school age children.

UNICEF worked on strengthening resilience through socio-emotional and self-care skills and engaging in mental health issues, which were deemed increasingly relevant especially in light of the COVID-19. Per stakeholder feedback, adolescents are not recognized as a targeted sub-group in the formal social and child protection policy. Review of programme documentation and stakeholder interviews show that these interventions have been relevant to putting these issues on the agenda and internally coherent, though rather detached from the rest of the interventions.

Furthermore, UNHCR focused its efforts on enabling their targeted most vulnerable groups, i.e. ex-Yu refugees, stateless persons or those at risk of statelessness, while IOM focused on returnees to gain basic rights by supporting and representing them in processes to obtain legal documents and status in Montenegro. Per definition, these areas are distinct on their own right, however, looking from the more holistic, meta perspective, their cumulative contributions do materialise towards reaching those

who are left behind and enabling access to services that can assist these vulnerable persons to overcome the challenges of poverty, inequality, unemployment and migration.

Under Outcome 1, UNICEF and UNDP had very good division of tasks and coordination, ensuring complementarities and maximising the potential of both agencies. In particular, the work on system changes in social assistance cash benefits, the SILC and wider RSIA were notable examples. The RSIA was implemented joint by IOM, UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF and UNRCO, with contributions from UNOPS and the ILO.⁶⁰ The RSIA process included quantitative data collected through UNICEF's contract with IPSOS, while UNDP provided administrative data through the national MIS system. Each agency utilised the potential of each agency's target groups to receive feedback for the data collection, so UNDP utilised the potential of its projects with elderly and with PWDs; while UNICEF used UPSHIFT and other projects with the youth to collect data. In addition, UNHCR assessed the needs of refugee and asylum seekers. Evaluation found that this culminated in very good product with good reflection of realities of different population groups. Gender was also well covered, as evidenced by the evaluation. Review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews showed that the RSIA was used as evidence base for the humanitarian aid (100,000 USD) for children and families from most affected groups (e.g. families with 3+ children) distributed by UNICEF.

Finding 5. The role of UNRCO was prominent and the office served as convener.

By bringing PUNOs together under umbrella of the Joint programme stirred by UNRCO did contribute to strengthening links and better familiarity of each PUNO with mandates and activities of individual agencies and better profiling of UNRC role to stir such partnerships, as emphasized by the interviewed PUNO stakeholders. It was also viewed positively by national stakeholders, who raised such efforts as helpful for consolidation of UN efforts in support to the government. However, as visible from the analysis, the evaluation did not find strong cross-PUNO synergies and cross-fertilisation initiatives, except for RSIA and development of the policy simulation tools for redistributive social policy scenarios (UNICEF, UNDP). This is a missed opportunity from the point of this evaluation, despite the fact that the JP provided opportunity to PUNOs to advance their support agendas.

Communicating progress with implementing partners, stakeholders and programme beneficiaries⁶¹

Finding 6: The programme's communication approaches and practices have been proactive and flexible, contributing to increased endorsement for programme interventions and ownership of main partners and beneficiaries.

The programme's comprehensive framework included diverse stakeholders engaging across different components. Each PUNO engaged with national institutions and/or service providers across a number of interventions including capacity strengthening, partnership building, modelling and policy advisory. Interviewed stakeholders from government institutions and service providers noted appreciation of open communication channels and PUNO's flexibility and transparency in implementation of support interventions and consultative process in changing the modalities in light of emerging contextual issues and needs. According to interviewed stakeholders, such approach helped building ownership and buy in for programme's interventions.

⁶⁰ UN (2021) Rapid Social Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Outbreak in Montenegro.

⁶¹ Section responding to Q 7

PUNOs engaged eight implementing partners in implementation of their respective components, comprising civil society organisations and government institutions. For instance, UNDP engaged HELP to implement pilot project for labour activation of most vulnerable, as well as cooperated with NES and CSWs in assessment of their labour activation of social protection beneficiaries. As another example, ILO engaged the Montenegrin Employers Federation and the Local employment partnership from Bar to implement training on women entrepreneurship together with support from the local organisations, and engaged the NES to implement the grant activity ‘Activate young women’. While some partnership agreements were very short-term (e.g. five-month UNDP and HELP pilot project for labour activation of most vulnerable, three-month IOM and NGO “Defendology Center” counter-trafficking awareness raising campaign), the communication channels were open and transparent, as noted by partners across the spectrum of partner groups.

 *“I have participated in a workshop on social-emotional skills in a school in an urban area. As I am also a pedagogue at another school in a rural area, I suggested to them to organize the same workshop in that school. They accepted this idea immediately.”*

Project beneficiary, stakeholder interview

Communication with beneficiaries of ILO, UNDP and UNICEF activities was flexible, frequent and effective. Beneficiaries of IOM and UNHCR activities confirmed that agencies and their implementing partners provided timely information and kept the national beneficiaries informed about the progress.

General communication and promotion of results was coordinated by RCO, under the Joint Communication team, which lead on preparation and distribution of communication products (e.g. human stories and releases, design and layout of the reports) as well as organization of the events, global outreach and social media campaigns. For example, at the end of the Joint Programme, the short movie⁶² was produced which highlight the main achievement of the Programme and was presented at the final conference on 1 July 2022. There are different views to the extent to which CO managed to fully and broadly communicate results. Some PUNOs noted that this work was useful as many agencies do not have developed communication mechanisms. Others raised criticism on the extent of proactive engagement of RCO in this regard, and its efforts to raise the profile and visibility of the programme.

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS (Q 9)

Output 1 New tool supports analysis of poverty-related data and simulation of policy impact.

Finding 7: The Programme developed and shared a model for policy simulations for social assistance which allow to simulate and better understand impact of social policy alternatives. However, their uptake by the government did not materialise, despite their recognised potential and value. The government buy in for such support was high at the onset of the programme, but diminished during the implementation due to political context and changes.


Both UNDP and UNICEF have been working with the Government of Montenegro over the past decade on the social and child protection reform, so both agencies enjoyed strong strategic positioning with the government to work on policy reforms in this field. the JP offered a good framework to extend the policy support to tackle the key challenge of appropriate targeting and coverage of the most vulnerable population by non-contributory social assistance. For this purpose, UNICEF and UNDP

⁶² <https://youtu.be/et39rXOPFig>

undertook policy simulation exercise focusing on three distinct areas (means tested benefit, child allowance and wages/taxation), as input for the government to allow to understand ex ante the implications of social policies and be equipped to perform assessment on its own. The project started off with a premise that the funds for social assistance can be better distributed, if sufficient information is available for evidence based support programmes, so the JP engaged outsourced experts from the Maastricht University and a regional social protection expert to i) develop tool for planning and implementation of more effective social policies, ii) design three social policy options for poverty reduction (e.g. redistributive social policy scenarios) and iii) organize trainings to MFSW employees working on budget and policy definition to practice the use of the model and understand scenarios' effects across the board.

Evaluation provided ample evidence of the potential benefit of simulations to inform the Government of Montenegro about the impact of the different scenarios in terms of addressing/reducing poverty levels and optimizing expenditure. The simulations provide scenarios (that can also serve as policy options) on how to consider evidence based policy alternatives for social assistance. After developing model for policy simulations, trainings were provided to the MFSW to ensure transfer of the model for independent use. The discussions with the MFSW participants (both programme and budget sections) raised the need for further capacity building required to fully capacitate the MFSW to use statistical software and to fully utilize the model, particularly due to its complex data processing approaches. To mitigate the issue, the simulation model was adjusted for use in a simplified excel mode and MFSW was capacitated to use the Excel version

However, stakeholder interviews raise a challenge with utility of simulations despite their recognised added value noting that institutions are still not ready to create policies based on scientifically forecasting approaches. For instance, the expansion of child allowance 0-6 was adopted before simulation on child allowance was finalised. Nevertheless, stakeholder interviews pointed that the Ministry was informed of the Comprehensive assessment results before the CA 0-6 adoption (in summer 2021), presenting fiscal constraints of going for other policy alternatives (e.g. 0-18) from data collected through simulations. However, as noted by UN stakeholders, the CA 0-18 was adopted primarily based on the Parliament initiative and not that of the Ministry. It was presented jointly with the 2022 budget. Interviewed government stakeholders emphasised that, despite the political buy in, further changes to this piece of legislation will not be possible due to political context. Government stakeholders noted that simulations sound good but the key decisions are usually political and depend on individual or group interests, which can diminish possibility to fully utilise them. UN stakeholders note that the solution would be to formally precondition policy adoption on the implementation of robust ex-ante assessment. Specific policy simulation for child allowance which covers all children until age 18 incur significant additional budget costs. Simulations provide some options for coverage and better targeting, and also suggest options for additional fiscal space to cover the reforms costs. If the simulations were done before adoption of the law, they could have informed some diversification of targeted populations (e.g. exclusion of those children from better off families). This brings in a critical element of important and relevant support intervention whose utility is diminished by political turmoil and changes. In specific case of simulations, some key UN stakeholders noted that the initial buy in for such type of support disappeared with government changes, resulting in a good model which encountered lack of interest by institutions to consider results uptake. The simulations can be used any time to inform some new policy alternatives for social protection measures, but it is questionable if this will happen without further UN push.

 *"This is good to know but not applicable due to lack of capacity of government institutions to use such model".*

Project beneficiary, stakeholder interview

Finding 8. Three rounds of the UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment (RSIA) provided real-time data on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, especially on vulnerable groups.

Given its nature, the programme provided a framework for PUNOs to consider and work together on addressing challenges brought by COVID-19 from the evidence generation angle. Given the need to provide prompt and real-time data on socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on Montenegrin citizens and in particular their most vulnerable strata, the programme conducted three rounds of RSIA; two rounds of the RSIA in April – June 2020 and an additional third round in May – June 2021. The PUNOs mobilised a wide range of partners from national authorities and civil society organisations to support data collection, validation and engagement with the most vulnerable groups⁶³. Most importantly, consultations on the RSIA recommendations were held with the most vulnerable groups or intermediaries. The results of the RSIA were presented to the highest level of Government – Deputy Prime Ministers and several Ministers in April as well as the Joint Steering Committee for the UN Development Assistance Framework in Montenegro. RSIA was used as a powerful advocacy tool to inform programmatic response to COVID-19 by UN, Government and civil society organisations. Interviewed stakeholders corroborated documentary evidence of utility and value added of RSIA, noting that the timely data availability helped inform measures to mitigate negative effects of COVID-19. In particular the third round of RSIA informed the government institutions about effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups, including new poor and vulnerable, thus providing an opportunity for more appropriate and informed COVID-19 response by different implementing actors, as well as contributing to the national dialogue on the appropriate response.

Output 2 Human-centred, integrated service delivery at community-level, focusing on youth, to increase their participation in education, employment or training to reduce dependence on social assistance, are rolled-out.


Finding 9: There is evidence of the Project contribution to labour market activation of youth through provided support (e.g. mentoring and on-job training) based on the human-centred design methodology. A significant contribution is visible to evidence-based policy making in youth sector and the regularization of the legal status of ex-YU refugees and people at risk of statelessness. The Joint Programme did not significantly contribute to reducing dependence on social assistance, as produced simulations were not used by the national government in policy planning.

The Joint Program contributed to evidence-based policy making in the area of support to youth, and employment of youth based on the human-centred approach. PUNOs produced various analytical products that have contributed to the preparation of youth strategies and programmes. For example, UNDP and UNICEF have provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Sports and Youth in preparing the new Youth Strategy (e.g. baseline study on youth policies, assessment of youth needs). UNDP also provided analysis of best models for student employment that is expected to contribute to adoption

⁶³ To collect real-time data through the UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment the following partners were engaged: MFSW, the Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, the Ombudsperson's Office, the Police Directorate, the Council for Civilian Oversight of the Police, the Institute for Social and Child Protection, CSW Bar & Ulcinj, CSW Berane, Andrijevića & Petnjica, CSW Bijelo Polje, CSW Cetinje, CSW Danilovgrad, CSW Herceg Novi, CSW Kotor, Tivat & Budva, CSW Mojkovac & Kolašin, CSW Nikšić, Šavnik & Plužine, CSW Pljevlja & Žabljak, CSW Podgorica, Golubovci & Tuzi, CSW Plav & Gusinje, the "Mladost" Children's Home, Bijela, "Ljubović" Centre for Children and Youth, "Grabovac" Nursing Home Risan, Day-Care Centre for Children and Persons with Disabilities Pljevlja, NGO Association of Youth with Disabilities, NGO Phiren Amenca, NGO Centre for Roma Initiatives, NGF Civic Alliance, NGO Juventas, the Red Cross of Montenegro, NGO Parents Association, NGO Family Centre, NGO Centre for Child Rights, NGO Special Olympics, NGO Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro, NGO Psychological Association of Montenegro, NGO Centre for Women's Rights, NGO Helpline Podgorica, NGO Helpline Nikšić, NGO Safe House for Women, UNICEF Youth Innovation Lab, NGO Queer Montenegro, NGO LGBT Forum Progres, NGO Spektra, NGO Stana and NGO My Home – Association of Tenants.

of Law on student jobs, as well as contributed to the design of the Youth Card programme. In addition, ILO has supported the development of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan with four analytical documents and by sharing the experience and approach to the design of the 'Activate young women' programme that was in line with the EU model and guidance.


As regards the labour activation of social beneficiaries, document review shows that UNDP provided policy recommendations for the improvement of integrated service delivery based on the analysis of integrated actions of the system of social and child protection and employment services to labour market activation based on the human-centred design (HCD) methodology. For example, this analysis recommends introducing a differentiated approach to 'able to work' users of the financial social assistance into regulations and practice, with the gradual development of a comprehensive policy of social integration and reduction of poverty, focusing on the activation of those users. This analysis also recommends addressing the issue of CSWs' and the Employment Agency of Montenegro's resources for the implementation of the activation measures for 'able to work' users of the financial social assistance

 *“The ‘Activate young women’ programme was challenging for implementation. NES organized a wider information campaign than usual that involved formal and informal channels of communication with the private sector and the use of social media. In the central and north regions of Montenegro, 25 private enterprises applied on nine calls, NES signed a contract with 10 of them and 8 are on hold. As of the south region, only four private enterprises applied on four calls and NES signed a contract with 2 of them.”*

Project beneficiary, stakeholder interview

Evaluation found that the Joint Program applied innovative and good methodologies in programmes aimed to contribute to labour market activation of vulnerable groups (youth, women, social beneficiaries), however the level of their effectiveness varies. Interviewed stakeholders highly value activities relate to women entrepreneurship implemented in 4 municipalities (with 55 women) based on Get Ahead methodology (ILO). However, 'Activate young women' programme implemented by NES failed to achieve planned results, as 70 women applied for the programme but only 20 private enterprises were interest to provide on-the-job training. This programme was designed in line with EU guidance which means that requires co-financing from the private sector. This was the first time that a programme implemented by NES required co-financing from the private enterprise (30%) and retention of employees for 3 or 6 months. The evaluation found that this programme was less attractive to the private sector, mainly as there were other NES programmes available to them with no obligation to cover employees' salaries and due to narrow target group (young women 25-34 with a preschool aged children). Most of the interviewed stakeholders pointed to the low visibility of this programme, albeit NES conducted a wider information campaign than in its other programmes.

The evaluation found that UNDP's effort to use human-centred, integrated service delivery at the community level, focusing on labour market activation of youth and vulnerable groups based on HCD methodology brought positive results. Document review and interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the HCD applied methodology, which implies getting a deep understanding of the problem and needs of service users and involving them in the design process of the pilot project, resulted in tested tailor-made solutions to activate youth and vulnerable groups (NEETS), which can serve as a human centred design model for local institutions. Albeit with various limitations, the pilot project shows that this problem-solving process that puts users in the centre is more effective than existing labour activation services and programmes offered by local institutions. For example, a project beneficiary pointed to the benefit of this type of service compared to ones provided by local institutions: *'Within this project, we had an opportunity to choose what we would like to do, while in other projects we could only choose from several options offered to us by local employment agencies'*⁶⁴. At individual level, the UNDP – HELP pilot project planned to involve up to 100 NEET persons that are social beneficiaries from 10 municipalities by providing training on soft skills and 3 months' long individualized mentorships. There were 84 beneficiaries⁶⁵ (56 women, 28 men) of mentorship support (not all social beneficiaries), out of which 73 participated until the end of the project. The mentors motivated most beneficiaries to search for employment, skills-building training, or internship (1.5 months). Final narrative report of this pilot project and its internal evaluation with beneficiaries pointed out that this project resulted in activation of most beneficiaries. Stakeholder interviews and project reports shows that the change in attitude and labour activation of beneficiaries was a result of the dedicated work of mentors and offer of supporting activities that meet beneficiaries' needs (e.g., 17 beneficiaries in paid internships, 15 in various professional training, 30 in business mentoring)⁶⁶. The pilot project presented stories of 10 role models, out of which 7 from this project⁶⁷. In addition, the labour activation training provided by a communication expert was assessed by mentors and beneficiaries as valuable for job search process. Interviews with mentors and project beneficiaries point to positive examples of labour activation of beneficiaries, but also to some limitations due to the short timeframe. For example, interviewed stakeholders highlighted the fact that 2-3 months of mentorship support and 1.5 months of internship are limited to motivate NEET social beneficiaries to participate in the labour market and to stop receiving the social benefit. HCD approach and main lessons learnt from this pilot project were presented to 25 representatives of national and local institutions at an online event and will be further

 *"I am 34 years old single mom of a preschool-aged daughter. I have been unemployed for a year and a half. I have a secondary school education and I worked as a sales clerk in a store until mid-2020, after I got fired due to the COVID-19 crisis. Mentorship support through the HELP project helped me to search for job opportunities more proactively. I had regular communication with my mentor who informed me where and how to search for a job. On mentor initiative, I went to an employment fair where I got a 3-month long internship as a kitchen assistant, after which the employer will keep me and pay me for another 3 months. That is a project of NES. In addition, I also applied for the training for teaching assistants for children with a disability which will start at end of June. My mentor inspired me a lot. I got lucky after mentoring support."*

Project beneficiary, stakeholder interview

several options offered to us by local employment agencies'⁶⁴. At individual level, the UNDP – HELP pilot project planned to involve up to 100 NEET persons that are social beneficiaries from 10 municipalities by providing training on soft skills and 3 months' long individualized mentorships. There were 84 beneficiaries⁶⁵ (56 women, 28 men) of mentorship support (not all social beneficiaries), out of which 73 participated until the end of the project. The mentors motivated most beneficiaries to search for employment, skills-building training, or internship (1.5 months). Final narrative report of this pilot project and its internal evaluation with beneficiaries pointed out that this project resulted in activation of most beneficiaries. Stakeholder interviews and project reports shows that the change in attitude and labour activation of beneficiaries was a result of the dedicated work of mentors and offer of supporting activities that meet beneficiaries' needs (e.g., 17 beneficiaries in paid internships, 15 in various professional training, 30 in business mentoring)⁶⁶. The pilot project presented stories of 10 role models, out of which 7 from this project⁶⁷. In addition, the labour activation training provided by a communication expert was assessed by mentors and beneficiaries as valuable for job search process. Interviews with mentors and project beneficiaries point to positive examples of labour activation of beneficiaries, but also to some limitations due to the short timeframe. For example, interviewed stakeholders highlighted the fact that 2-3 months of mentorship support and 1.5 months of internship are limited to motivate NEET social beneficiaries to participate in the labour market and to stop receiving the social benefit. HCD approach and main lessons learnt from this pilot project were presented to 25 representatives of national and local institutions at an online event and will be further

⁶⁴ Source: Filled out a questionnaire by a beneficiary at the end of the pilot project as part of an internal evaluation conducted by HELP.

⁶⁵ Final Narrative Report of HELP stated that '14 participants were 40+ years old, 34 participants were 30-40 years old, 37 participants were between 18-29 years old (one user did not answer). 14 had completed faculty or master's studies, 47 participants had completed high school or professional education, 16 had completed elementary school, while 7 of them had no diploma.'

⁶⁶ Final Narrative Report of HELP, page 15.

⁶⁷ <http://help-montenegro.org/vijesti-2022/kako-je-aktiviraj-se-promijenio-zivot-lejli-i-aleksandri/?lang=sr>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRsk0Q8Q0lc>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILuXUicOQoo>

shared by UNDP with national institutions to discuss what can be improved with existing labour market services. Comment of representative of the Employment Agency of Montenegro after the presentation of the results of the pilot project: *'I was afraid that there would be a withdrawal of project participants and there would be no results, which did not happen. This project showed that it is important for institutions to provide as many options as possible to unemployed persons. If institutions had wider opportunities to offer, then users could see the results of the institutions' work, which would ultimately contribute to building trust between institutions and users. However, the problem is the understaffing issue that would enable local institutions to use a such an approach in their work with service users.'*⁶⁸ Moreover, as part of the Joint Programme, UNDP conducted a pilot project in Cetinje with aimed to improve the business skills of young people and their better preparation for the transition to the labour market. According to the final narrative report of this pilot project 12 trainings were conducted with approximately 11 participants per training, and 3 events with role models (successful entrepreneurs from Cetinje) with approximately 15 participants per event. This evaluation could not establish sound evidence into outcomes of this pilot project as it was implemented after the evaluation field phase, but an internal evaluation of training courses stated that participants acquired appropriate knowledge.

In addition, the UNDP has started to support the development of a digital platform that will link youth with digital skills training possibilities which will be part of youth specific activate labour market programme for 2022. Besides, UNDP has supported development of service design for student employment based on HCD methodology.

Document review and stakeholder interviews confirmed that the Joint Programme had significant achievement in regularization of the legal status of ex-YU refugees and people at risk of statelessness, as well as contributed to social protection of returners and victims of trafficking, as well as contributed to strengthening of capacities of national institutions for protection of these target groups. Interviewed stakeholders highlighted that for a smaller number of beneficiaries, regulation of legal status enabled them to find a job. At the output level, PUNOs data shows that the Joint Programme the legal status of 996 ex-Yugoslav refugees and stateless persons/persons at risk of statelessness was resolved through 2171 legal advice provided (UNHCR), while a few dozen returners (e.g., 5 Bijelo Polje, 5 Berane) were directly supported by procurement of work tools, appliances, or adaptation of space (IOM). Besides, 1802 persons were reach out by anti-trafficking awareness campaign (IOM). The winner of the Art competition on dangers of trafficking in human beings, among 85 candidates, was a 13-year-old boy who, at the award event, acknowledged that he was the victim of trafficking.

Picture 1. The winning piece of art at the Art competition



Sources: Photo taken during the site visit in Niksic

⁶⁸ Record of online closing event organised on 6 July 2022.

The project contributed to continued UNICEF support to building socio-emotional skills ('21st-century) of adolescents and youth, including those from vulnerable groups, as well as providing well-being and mental health support to young people in time of COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the need for such time of support. Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro implemented the Social and emotional skills programme, covering more than 800 adolescents from the central and southern regions of Montenegro (out of which 122 Roma and 20 children with disabilities), and around more than 700 from the north region. Interviewed stakeholders from schools confirmed that such intervention increased awareness of the importance of the development of socio-emotional skills for adolescents. With the support of UNICEF, the Scout Association of Montenegro organized 3 one-day activities (with 200 youth), a camp on the topic of well-being (with over 100 participants) and several podcasts with psychologists and human stories (e.g. Galeb Nikačević author of the Agelast podcast)⁶⁹ that reached out to over 10.000 youth beneficiaries. By the end of July 2022, the programme will reach out to more than 1,200 adolescents directly through well-being and mental health workshops.

Document review and stakeholder interviews emphasised the relevance and utility of such interventions, which provide for additional support to the adolescents who were more exposed and vulnerable to COVID-19 restrictions due to the abrupt withdrawal from school, social life and outdoor activities. Some of them also experienced domestic violence growing. The stress they were subjected to directly impacted their mental health on account of increased anxiety, changes in school dynamics, fear or other challenges. The support to mental health among adolescents was for the first time included in country programme document (CPD) for Montenegro⁷⁰.

Figure 3. Overview of main results under Output 2

⁶⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvRcykkC2ac>

⁷⁰ https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/11636/file/2022-PL26-Montenegro_draft_CPD-EN-2022.06.13.pdf



Source: Based on the stakeholder interviews and document review

Another important aspect of effectiveness is bringing international best practice on labour market activation and social and child protection system that was enabled by RCO and PUNOs engagement (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. RCO and PUNOs international exchange of good practice and transfer of knowledge

RCO and PUNOs	UNCT Montenegro and UNCT Albania organized an event to boost knowledge sharing and exchange of their experience during the implementation of two Joint Programme related to strengthening social and child protection systems.
UNDP and UNICEF	UNDP and UNICEF engaged experts from University of Maastricht and University of Belgrade to provide technical expertise to develop policy simulation tools for redistributive social policy scenarios in Montenegro.
UNHCR	UNHCR, together with the Ministry of Interior, French Embassy and UN system in Montenegro organized the International Statelessness Conference: Best Practices in Montenegro and France on 28 October 2021 where French and Montenegrin experts working in the area of statelessness exchanged their best practices.

IOM	IOM organized study visit to Republic of Serbia and Republic of North Macedonia for representatives of the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare to further strengthen their capacities and share experience regarding combating trafficking in human beings and enhance regional cooperation in combatting trafficking in human beings.
UNDP	UNDP Montenegro together with UNDP Moldova developed an implementation framework for the human-centred design process that was applied during the analysis of experiences and challenges of labour activation of social protection beneficiaries.
ILO	ILO organized the workshop to share best practice of Public Employment Service North Macedonia, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection from Ireland with national institutions (representatives of NES).

Finding 10. Transformative potential of the programme interventions is subdued by political volatility and COVID-19 pandemic, which brought significant changes in the way the government institutions operate or changing priorities. Most significant catalytic potential is noted for individuals participating in piloted models or benefiting from legal and administrative support. However, wider potential is muted by lack of interest or capacity for scale up of models that were piloted.

Outcome 1: Social policy simulations based on data and evidence, including on the impact of COVID-19, and subsequent scenarios for social and child protection system reform will result in more just, better targeted and more adequate social protection programmes and services for the most vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, migrants, returnees, refugees, stateless persons, children and victims of trafficking). The programmes and services complement labour market activation for decent work and development of employability skills. This work builds on the international CODI (Core Diagnostics Instruments) Assessment and a UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment (RSIA) of COVID-19, as well as the MAPS SDG acceleration reports and is fully aligned with the national institutional reform approach.

Document review and stakeholder interviews point to high potential of evidence based social policy simulations to inform just, better targeted and sound social policies. Enhancing the data credibility and utility to inform ex-ante simulations of social assistance measures presents significant contribution to the social and child protection reform but also wider policy making processes. Sound disaggregated data also offers better understanding of multiple deprivations of the most vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, migrants, returnees, refugees, stateless persons, children and victims of trafficking). However, the uptake of the simulations by MFSW diminished the transformative potential of this model. The legislation linked to the simulation models (e.g. Law on Social and Child protection, which was amended to include universal child allowance) were already in place which made for less interest or enthusiasm to amend them based on the result of the simulations as noted by interviewed stakeholders. Such situation was beyond programme's control, but affected its catalytic potential significantly.

Important transformative potential is noted from supporting the most vulnerable groups (stateless persons or those at risk of statelessness, refugees and particularly women belonging to such groups). Assisting members of these groups to obtain basic legal documents brings significant transformative potential for these persons, who can access services and support interventions once they have their documents. For some of these persons, particularly children, this is immense support which can bring life changing potential in terms of access to education, care and protection.

Outcome 2: Innovative skills building, mental health and labour market activation measures will increase the participation of young men and women in education, employment or training, strengthen their resilience, prevent passivation and reduce their dependence on social assistance.

The Programme has provided a framework for testing active labour market measures for young men and women, especially those from the most vulnerable groups. The approach whereby the Programme engaged with national institutions as implementing partners was innovative and provided the opportunity for institutions to be in the lead of implementation ('Activate young women'). A model developed by UNDP showed potential of services developed with HCD process to be more tailor made and effective than existing labour activation services and programmes offered by local institutions. It also provided recommendations for overcoming institutional challenges that enable development of HCD services. However, due to COVID-19 and other challenges (e.g. passivity of potential participants, weak intersectoral links between NES and CSW), the tested model brought moderate results.

Extent to which the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes were brought about by the programme (Q 12)

Finding 11. The programme contributed strongly to increased capacity of MONSTAT to collect more relevant data and process SILC data in more efficient manner ensuring credibility of results. As a result of programme support MONSTAT is able to produce SILC data better corresponding to national non-contributory cash support, much faster and with minimal margin of error thanks to digital data collection and processing using CAPI method.

The process of development of simulations was challenged by the lack of readily available wider data from SILC survey that could inform simulations. In order to have full utility of data to allow informed policy planning and response, scope of collected data and data collection process needed to be improved. To account for the issue, UNICEF and the UNDP agreed with the MFSW to jointly approach the Statistical Office (MONSTAT) to embark in the process of reforming the questionnaire to inform poverty-reduction policies. MONSTAT agreed to cooperate with the UN system and the MFSW to reform the SILC survey. Within scope of this cooperation, the project assisted MONSTAT to create CAPI applications and hardware to enable more efficient data collection and analysis more efficient. As the MONSTAT used to collect data through paper-based questionnaires which had its multiple complexities, the support through supporting CAPI method and provision of IT equipment by the UN (50 laptops and software) resulted in significant time-efficiencies for data delivery, which would not be possible with the old approach to data collection. According to MONSTAT, the time for the data processing was shortened for one year in total. According to interviewed stakeholders, old approach based on paper questionnaires required at least 10-12 months to enter the data into database. For instance, the 2021 SILC research was done in paper form and has not yet been fully processed which makes more difficult data processing for this year. The was considered by all relevant stakeholders from the PUNOs and government institutions (including MONSTAT) as an important and huge contribution, which addressed MONSTAT's human capacity constraints and old paper-based approaches which are time-intensive but also have high potential for margin of error.

Thanks to the new e-approaches, MONSTAT was able to produce more comprehensive data sets. One weakness though that was noted was that the original SILC questionnaire was expanded significantly to better correspond with the national non-contributory social assistance – cash support. This meant adding 40 questions more for year 2022, which significantly extended the questionnaire, which then took over one hour for each household to fill in. Interviewed relevant stakeholders noted that this was unavoidable due to the fact that the basic data required for the simulations needed to be broken down

further to ensure that the questions are posed in sensible manner due to sensitivity of needed data (e.g. some questions deal with sensitive issues such as ownership of land or real estate, etc.).

Finding 12: The Programme contributed to increased awareness of different government institutions of data produced by MONSTAT and their potential to inform policy making processes.

The programme recognized a critical bottleneck in use of MONSTAT data for policy making: i) the process to obtain data from MONSTAT includes complex data request process (from institutions to MONSTAT); ii) strong silos between institutions whereby institutions are not aware of a wealth of data collected by the Statistical Office; iii) human resource challenges within MONSTAT. MONSTAT data is only available per request for licenced agencies dealing with statistics, ministries are also encountering difficulties in accessing data due to the rigid system, so the data is not used. The Programme addressed these challenges by utilizing convenor role of UN to bring together various government institutions, including MONSTAT in trainings. MONSTAT participated in trainings for the MFSW staff on policy simulations and presented the SILC, as well as the process through which data can be obtained by the MoF or other ministries. This opportunity provided mutual benefit for both MONSTAT and for MFSW. MONSTAT had the opportunity to see how the data this institution produces is used. The MFSW had the opportunity to understand what type of data is produced and how it can be obtained. This was crucial contribution as most requests for SILC data come from international actors and not so much by national ministries as emphasized by interviewed stakeholders. Interviewed stakeholders noted that interconnecting MOF and MONSTAT through the project helped the MFSW to capitalise on MONSTAT data for their planning.

4.4 EFFICIENCY

Strategic allocation of financial, human, technical resources to achieve programme results (Q 13)

Finding 13: The main driver of efficiency was the strong expertise of PUNOs and their implementing partners, together with good international collaboration in their field of expertise. RCO and PUNOs applied due diligence in the management of funds. While programme implementation saw a delay in the start of the programme activities along with a low utilization rate of the funding (provided by Joint SDG Fund) at the end of the 2021, the evaluation findings indicate that such delays are justified given the changes in the Government and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme modification did not negatively affect the efficiency and delivery of results.

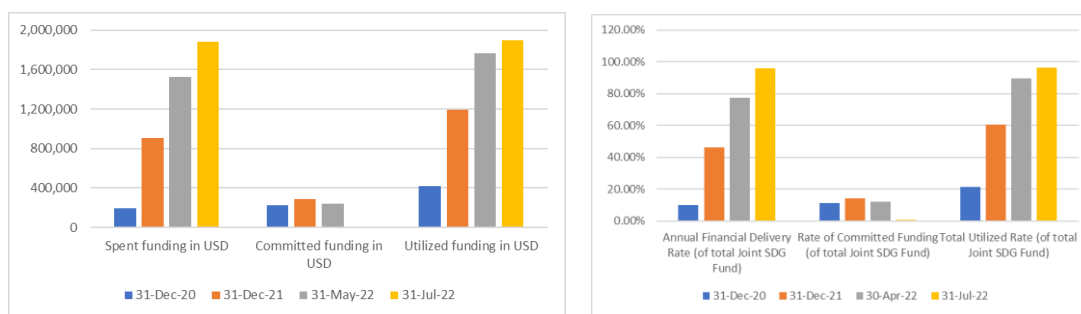
Programme management arrangements among PUNOs were clear and well defined in the design document and further detailed in the Terms of Reference. Each PUNO had a project manager/coordinator and additional staff were available when needed. The composition of PUNOs staffing was stable during the project implementation (with exception of IOM) that contributed to the efficient delivery of results.

High competencies of the Joint Programme staff, PUNOs' implementing partners and consultants were assessed by all stakeholders as drivers of the efficient implementation of the Joint Programme, particularly during times of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the government changes. For example, PUNOs and RCO were able to quickly mobilize a wider range of partners from government and civil sector (over 30 partners supported data collection) to conducted RSIA to provide deep insight into the social impact of COVID-19 crisis to the group that are vulnerable.

As discussed under Q7, the project collaborated with eight different implementing partners to implement different project activities such as activation of women entrepreneurs (Montenegrin Employers Federation and the Local employment partnership from Bar), ‘Activate young women’ programme (NES), and pilot project for labour activation of most vulnerable (HELP), awareness raising campaign on dangers of trafficking in human beings (Defendology Center), social-emotional skills programme (Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro), as well as the mental health activity (Scouts Association) and providing legal advice for regulation of legal status (Civic Alliance). Working with CSOs that are highly competent in their field with well-established links with marginalized and vulnerable groups had advantages in term of efficiency and ability to reach target groups. Collaboration with NES as implementing partner is assessed by stakeholders as hinders to efficiency of the implementation of ‘Activate young women’ programme, due to their lack of skills in conducting outreach activities to attract inactive women and private sector enterprises. In addition, the Joint Project engaged national and international consultant (e.g. consultant team from the University of Maastricht) to conduct different analytical products and capacity building to the stakeholders.

A review of annual and quarterly monitoring reports and available financial information shows that the project saw slow utilization of funds up to the end of 2020, due to the slow start of many activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and institutional/personal changes in the Government. Specifically, 21% of a total Joint SDG Fund budget or 52.9% of transferred funds for 2020 was utilized by 31 December 2020.⁷¹ This low rate of fund utilization caused a delay in transferring the funding for IOM activities that were foreseen to start in January 2021 but were moved to May 2021. In particular, only IOM activities were foreseen to start in 2021, while other PUNOs activities were started in 2020. As other PUNOs recorded a slow utilization of funds in 2020, IOM’ allocated resources could not be transferred as planned, which caused delays in the launching of their activities. The Joint Programme utilized 60.6% of the Joint SDG Fund funding up to 31 December 2021, and 89.7% up to 31 May 2022. In total, 96.2% of the Joint SDG Fund budget was utilized by the end of the project (31 July 2022).

Figure 4. Overview of the Joint Programme expenditure



The Joint Programme allocated 72.8% to Outcome 2 (Outcome 2: Human-centred services for increased participation, empowerment and employment of vulnerable and marginalized groups are piloted, evaluated, and rolled out) and 19.7% to Outcome 1 (Social policies are informed by evidence, tested, and tailored to needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups), while the rest was for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation and joint communication. The allocation of financial resources was found to be adequate to achieve these two outcomes and related outputs.

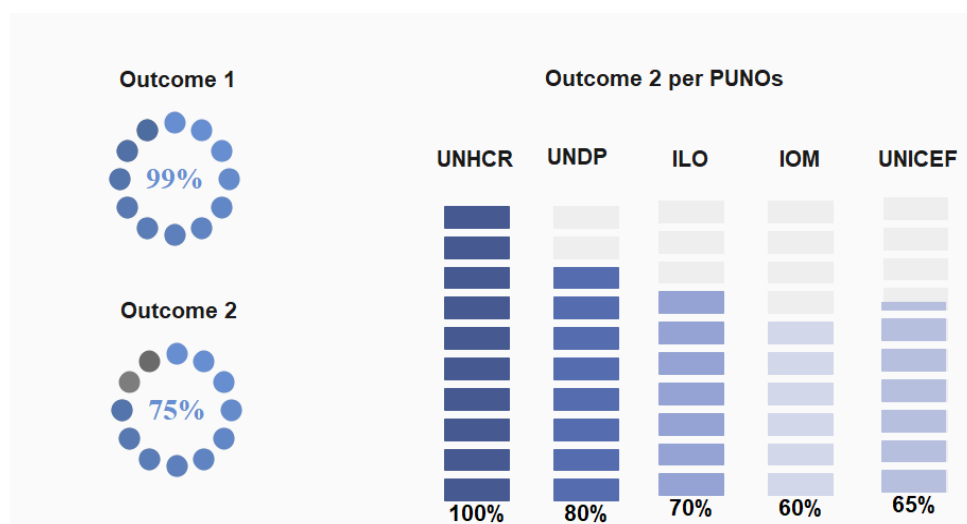
As of 19 May 2022, the estimated rate of completion of planned activities under Outcome 1 was 99% and 75% of Outcome 2 (See Figure 5.). The lowest completion rate was related to activities of IOM (60%), as significant number of activities were scheduled for the last three months of the programme.

⁷¹ A total Joint SDG Fund contribution amounts to USD 1,970,000, out of which around USD 419,000 was spent by end of 2020.

As mentioned above, delays were mainly due to the launching of IOM activities 4 months later than was initially planned and due to a frequent change of the government focal points, as confirmed by stakeholders. IOM, as well as other PUNOs finalized all activities by 31 July 2021. Regarding PUNOs' budget utilization rate, UNHCR and UNDP spent all allocated funds, UNICEF 99.9%, while IOM utilized 90.1% and ILO 85.9% by the end of the Joint Programme.

There were two budget modifications that did not require the change of allocation per PUNO nor the budget allocation per outcomes. The first modification from June 2020 concerned reallocation of funds (the amount of 6% of the total budget)⁷² within the UNHCR budget, and the second one from March 2022 related to revision of UNHCR and IOM budget (the amount of 4.4% of the total budget)⁷³. This revision refers to administrative reallocation of funds and modification of activities (e.g. redefining of activities that were overlapping with another IOM project 'Enhancing Migrant Reintegration and Protection Services in Montenegro').

Figure 5. Completion rate of 19th May 2022



In addition, there was a modification of the formulation of the Joint Programme transformative results in line with the expected socio-economic COVID-19 impact of target groups. The changes refer to including a contribution of the UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment (RSIA) of COVID-19 and redefining the expected transformative results 'Reduced overall poverty rate by approximately 3% and expand the coverage for child social transfer' to 'expand the coverage of children by social transfers by 50% and, combined with labour activation measures and other interventions in social protection, could potentially reduce the national poverty rate by 3 percentage points (compared to the recalculated poverty rate after COVID-19 impact, available once the simulation exercise is completed)⁷⁴.

The last programme modification refers to the approved six-month non-cost extension until 31 July 2022 requested in May 2021. Document review and interviewed stakeholders show that the programme was delayed in its implementation by approximately 9 months due to the long process of setting up the line ministries cabinets after the August 2020 election. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the programme implementation in multiply ways. The PUNOs postponed their activities for several months in 2020 as face-to-face work with national stakeholders was not possible. For example, the fieldwork, as well as procedures related to legal support to refugees and persons at risk of

⁷² UNHCR (2020), Note for the File, Relocation of the Funds for the SDG Project: Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro (Project no. 00118553)

⁷³ UN Montenegro – Joint SDG Fund Budget – revision Q1 2022

⁷⁴ Joint Programme's transformative results, Draft and Final

statelessness, was on hold for several months, as confirmed by interviewed stakeholders. This illustrates that any challenge that arises and necessary changes in the project slow down the process, and effectively reduce the implementation period. This is combined with the fact that such projects encounter limitations to commit funds by certain period, or spend by certain period, and these are difficult to move. This affects the extent to which activities can be implemented to their full potential. Stakeholder interviews revealed that the Joint SDG fund was flexible and there was a no-cost extension, which helped to deliver results.

Interviewed stakeholders from RCO and PUNOs confirmed that the revision of the budget, modification of the transformative results formulation and approval of the non-cost extension did not negatively affect the speed of project implementation.

Programme design, coordination, management, human resource skills, and resources (Q 14)

Finding 14: There was a weakness in the design of a few programme activities in terms of short timeframe that, in some cases, affected the delivery of results. There was no major issue regarding smooth programme coordination and implementation by RCO and PUNOs.

As for programme design, interviewed stakeholders noticed that a few programme activities were hindered by short timeframe that, in some cases, affected the delivery of results. This was particularly during the implementation of 3-month long awareness raising campaign on dangers of trafficking in human beings which consisted of conducting 16 workshops in schools and 4 workshops in Roma and Egyptian settlements, organizing Art competition, and conducting research on perception of the public on the topic of human trafficking (in 6 municipalities face to face and nationwide online). Obtaining approval from the Ministry of Education for conducting activities with students (workshops and Art competition) was an aggravating circumstance regarding the time required for conducting 16 workshops in schools, which was not well considered during the campaign design.

Another example is UNDP and HELP 5-month-long pilot project that had a short period of a communication campaign to reach out and activate unemployed social welfare beneficiaries from 10 municipalities in collaboration with the local Social Welfare Centre in charge of preselection of potential beneficiaries. Interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the communication campaign should be longer to reach target groups, as well as to inform the private sector. Moreover, beneficiaries of the program work with mentors for two-three months, after which they could have on-job training for 1.5 months, which according to some stakeholders was not enough time to achieve sustainable results. However, this pilot project could not be designed and implemented earlier during the JP, as it was developed based on the analysis of experiences and challenges in activation of vulnerable groups (by using the human-centred design methodology) which was implemented with a delay over a year due external factors mentioned below (Finding 16).

The RCO was responsible for external coordination and communication of results, while UNICEF was acting as a convening agency of the Joint Project responsible for the management and coordination of PUNOs. As noted by interviewed PUNOs and RCO, the coordination role of RCO and UNICEF evolved over the period of project implementation. There was staff turnover at RCO at the beginning of the programme, which affected somewhat the extent to which RCO could engage effectively in the first period of project implementation. However, this was resolved during the project implementation and did not influence delivery of results. Communication of the Joint Programme results was well defined and implemented by RCO.

Monitoring of results (Q 15)

Finding 15: There was a regular monitoring of results and ongoing adaptation of the programme to changing circumstances.

Monitoring of results was in line with the standards of the Joint SDG Funds. There was regular quarterly, 6-month, and annual reporting on the Joint Programme implementation with sufficient detailed information and estimated completion rate. These reports provided information on what was achieved in the reporting period, what was expected to be done in the following reporting period, as well as information on risk, challenges and mitigation measures, and strategic communications. The rate of committed funding and utility rate were updated regularly. Results as per JP Results Framework were presented in the annual monitoring reports at the outcome and output level (See Annex 4: Results framework). Monitoring data were not disaggregated by sex and age for each activity but were presented per stakeholder groups (e.g. women, children, adolescents, Roma and Egyptian minorities, ex-Yugoslav refugees and persons at risk of statelessness, returnees). Information on the contribution of the Joint Programme to the implementation principle Leave no one behind (LNOB), contributions to the SDG Goals (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10) and gender equality and women's empowerment were also regularly monitored. For example, as regard to SDG Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere the annual monitoring report for 2021 stated that 'In 2021, the number of children receiving child allowance (CA) increased to 48,745 (approximately 36% of all children) (from 13,149 in December 2020). In relative numbers, 268% additional children receive child allowance. The simulations have shown that the CA 0-5 may cover 50.4% of households with children (from 4.9%). The reformed CA scheme would reduce poverty national by 1.3 pp, from previously 0.2 pp. The announced expansion in October 2022 to cover all children can reduce poverty in total by 3.8pp.⁷⁵ PUNOs and their implementing partners monitored and reported on their activities to UNICEF (as a convening agency), while UNICEF compiled those narrative reports of PUNOs and submitted them to the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, through RCO. The Joint Programme work plan was revised in line with monitored data on implementation and discussed at the Joint Programme Coordination meetings and the Joint Programme Steering Committee meetings, which were regular, organised online and in-person. The Joint Programme Steering Committee meetings were chaired by the RCO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (as the main government counterpart), that ensured efficiency.

External factors influencing programme's efficiency (Q 16)

Finding 16: The Programme was significantly affected by COVID-19 and the high political volatility related to government changes across the programme implementation. The lockdowns, staff turnover across the government institutions and generally weak absorption capacity and lack of inter-institution coordination across the sector caused ripple effects across the programme, resulting in significant changes in the programme approaches and interventions. The programme showcased great deal of flexibility to adapt to the changes and to find windows of opportunity to engage with their partners.

Following a period of stability and clear path to the reform of, inter alia, social and child protection system and EU integration, Montenegro encountered multiple challenges in the period of 2020-2022, coinciding with the implementation of the programme itself. The context in which the programme worked was difficult over the period of the implementation, including the



“The project has been in permanent adaptation”

Interviewed stakeholder

⁷⁵ Final Annual report 2021, page 6.

COVID-19 related restrictions and the related visible limitations in terms of absorption capacity of partners. Notably, the social service providers and the NES were increasingly burdened due to the inflow of new beneficiaries following the economic downturn, as well as government changes.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused worsening socio-economic prospects in the country and high rates of COVID-19 related health issues, prompting significant closures and shifting all activities online. This situation was not very favourable for the programme, and in particular all components that demanded in-person interaction and direct work with beneficiaries (e.g. all components under Outcome 2 suffered significantly due to lack of possibility to interact with beneficiaries. All PUNOs and their implementing partners adapted to the changing circumstances, moving all activities online. The programme also introduced adjustments: 1) ILO component was revised due to the difficulty to work with the NES as implementing partner, expanding the types of activities (e.g. ILO cooperation with the Montenegrin Employers Federation and the Local employment partnership from Bar in support to women entrepreneurship); 2) UNDP HELP project expended the target group to youth that are not social beneficiaries) to ensure most is implemented in light of capacity limitations. As noted by interviewed stakeholders this move has diminished somewhat the outreach and engagement with the planned final beneficiaries, but such challenge was beyond control of the Programme.

Another challenge that critically affected the programme have been structural government changes, moving the country to high political volatility marked by change of government, turnover of staff across all ranks in public administration and instability. During the implementation period, three governments changed, bringing total unclarity and difficulty to understand partners and challenges; or lack of assuming ownership on the side of government partners due to changes and fluctuation. Institutional memory within the government remained a huge problem throughout the programme implementation, affecting the degree to which results could be achieved. In particular UNDP's and UNICEF's work on Outcome 1 was significantly affected by these changes, requiring the team to keep re-establishing the relations and reintroducing the programme to ever changing new staff across the line ministry and related institutions (e.g. Statistical Office of Montenegro). The ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (the sector) have restructured and moved a number of times over the period of implementation, which also affected the extent to which the programme engage with a stable partner. Besides, the lack of communication horizontally and across the policy spectrum and the weak absorption capacity of government institutions remained as crucial issues throughout the programme implementation.

Document review and stakeholder interviews across stakeholder groups note the efforts of the programme partners to adapt to these changing circumstances and fulfil their tasks accordingly. Due to this, a number of changes have been made to the programme structure, including changing the programme orientation and focus.

In light of COVID 19, UNDP and UNICEF decided to postpone the activities related to the simulation of policy options and to focus on the development of the RSIA to produce up-to-date data on the impact of the COVID crisis on the most vulnerable groups. As a response to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare's request to change the design of the welfare-to-work programme (as planned by the programme document) to labour market activation of young women with preschool-aged children, ILO designed and implemented the 'Activate young women' programme. Through the Joint Programme, ILO has also supported the preparation of the 'Youth Guarantee schemes' that become part of the Government agenda after endorsing the Western Balkans Declaration on ensuring sustainable labour market integration of young people on 8 July 2021.⁷⁶ The flexibility of the Joint Programme enabled UNDP to invest part of its funding in the strategic areas requested by the national institutions, such as a digital platform that will enable digital skills training for youth, as well as support

⁷⁶ https://www.ilo.org/budapest/whats-new/WCMS_814788/lang--en/index.htm

for the development of the youth card programme (EYCA) and analytical products relevant for the development of the youth policy. In addition, through the Joint Programme, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Child Allowance Expansion Rollout, and an operational assessment to improve the performance of the Child Allowance (CA) upon the government's decision to expand the current Child Allowance to universal coverage of all children aged 0 to 6.

4.5 IMPACT

Main benefits for the target groups, including for vulnerable groups, and integration of cross-cutting issues (gender equality, disability) (Q 11 and Q18)

Finding 17. The programme effectively engaged and responded to the needs and challenges most marginalised groups encounter (e.g. unemployed and unskilled youth, internally displaced, ex-Yugoslav refugees, persons at risk of statelessness, minorities), providing opportunities for their social inclusion and improved access to services. Gender lens of results is strong but support to persons with disabilities and their empowerment was less pronounced.

As already noted in Finding 2 above, the programme has applied gender-sensitive approaches in its interventions across all programme components. In particular visible was mainstreaming of gender equality in efforts to model interventions and services across the system to ensure they are gender-sensitive. Human centred design of services has involved vulnerable groups in the identification of obstacles for their labour activation, as well as design of more efficient and responsive services for labour activation. For instance, the ILO piloting active labour market measure 'Activate young women' had strong gender lens, with targeted efforts to address multidimensional vulnerabilities of young women (25-34 years) accessing labour market, through additional vocational training, coaching and support in start up activities. In addition, 57% of participants of the UNDP and HELP pilot project were women and 43% were men. As part of the UNICEF social-emotional skills programme, adolescents and youth learn about gender roles, gender violence and similar topics. Other project activities support women and girls that belong to other vulnerable groups (returnees, ex-Yugoslav refugees, victims of trafficking in human beings).

There is evidence of RSIA's utility to generate up-to-date evidence on the needs of the vulnerable groups and in-depth information on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on existing vulnerable groups and pointed to new vulnerable groups (such as children with disabilities, Roma children, children living in single-parent households, children whose parent(s) have a history of substance abuse, children from families which receive social assistance ('family material assistance'), and children in foster care, adolescents and young people, the elderly, persons with disabilities, victims of gender-based violence, children victims/witnesses of violence, domicile Roma, refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons (at risk of statelessness), migrants (seasonal workers, foreigners), people and children in detention, LGBTI population, tenants and disadvantaged persons who are not social assistance beneficiaries). The results were communicated to the government and they use the findings were for response mechanisms in response to the economic and social crisis. Engaging with the most vulnerable and marginalized groups and their intermediaries was critical to ensure their voices are heard and the multidimensional obstacles to their empowerment are recognised and advocated for through promotion of the RSIA recommendations.

Essential empowering efforts were provided by PUNOs (IOM and UNHCR) to enhance access to services for the most marginalised groups (internally displaced, ex-Yugoslav refugees, persons at risk of statelessness, returnees, migrants, minorities, with more than 50% being women and girls) by providing free legal aid and support in the process of obtaining basic legal documents (birth certificate,

citizenship, IDs, residence permits) and to social protection system. Such support interventions bring critical solutions for such groups who otherwise do not have access to basic services and social protection that they need. The acquisition of valid identity documentation and a stable legal status in Montenegro allows refugees and persons previously being in a statelessness-like situation to enjoy variety of rights, including access to education, national social and child protection system and the labour market. Besides, such support also helps empower supported individuals and their families, bringing new momentum for stronger engagement in society.

However, the programme did not invest strongly in empowerment or access to services of persons with disability, beyond consulting with these groups in preparation of RSIA. The programme provided some contributions to analysis of the system for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, providing expert opinion to government related to improving its effectiveness and efficiency. This analysis is conducted to contribute to the ongoing revision of Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, and it was also used as an inputs for the design and implementation of a new joint programme of UNDP and UNICEF, in consultation with government ('Accelerating Disability Inclusion for Children and Adults with Disabilities'). Besides, baseline analysis for youth strategy design also includes youth with disabilities perspective and intersectional inequalities such as those related to women and girls with disabilities.

Simulations' evidence, if taken up and implemented more systematically in selection of policy alternatives, has a potential to contribute to reforming of the poverty-targeted benefit in 2022 and 2023 and to reduce exclusion error, better cover monetary poor and vulnerable coverage, and further contribute to poverty reduction. The assumption for this is available and extended 2022 SILC data in line with the Joint Programme recommendations.

Programme's contributions were found to medium or long-term social, economic, or other results, esp. with reference to SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 and the relevant NSSD chapters (Q 17).

Finding 18. The programme's focus on social and child protection provides impetus for acceleration of related SDGs.

There is evidence of JP's strong rooting on the principles and objectives of Agenda 2030 and SDGs, notably SDGs 1 (End Poverty), 5 (Gender Equality and Women Empowerment), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (Reduced Inequality) and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), as well as the well-being (SDG 3). Evaluation found that the JP actively promoted and pushed forward the social and child protection and inclusion reform agenda, by investing in enhancing capacity for evidence generation and policy simulations; promotion of active labour market measures and providing legal aid to the most marginalized. Evaluation found that produced outputs from modelled services bring results to the most vulnerable groups participating in such services. As found by the evaluation, policy simulations also provide strong input for enhancement of evidence based social policies. However, interviewed stakeholders emphasise that their scale up potential is muted by lack of capacity or in some cases interest of national institutions to take up such models, hence diminishing current buy-in and impact potential in terms of contributions to medium or long-term social, economic change.

4.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Contribution to sustainability and the long-term buy-in, leadership and ownership by the Government and other relevant stakeholders (Q 19 and Q 20)

Finding 19. The Programme has capitalised on partnerships with main national institutions. However, the ownership over the programme interventions and results was partial. This affected the uptake and sustainability of delivered outputs.

The JP built its interventions on long term partnerships and collaboration between PUNOs and main national institutions. Review of historical records of the work of each PUNO shows that the interventions included in the JP were direct follow on previous interventions or supported interventions. This helped the PUNOs to expand and promote modelling of services and engagement of national institutions (e.g. NES) as implementing partner. However, document review and as corroborated by stakeholder interviews, ownership by key national government stakeholders diminished over the time of programme implementation, affecting the JPs sustainability potential. The evaluation found that while there was a joint understanding about where the reform should be going and the commitment to contribute to these reforms at the onset of the programme, the COVID-19 and the political volatility and changes across the government brought new priorities and loss of institutional memory. These challenges were exacerbated by limited absorption capacity, interest or buy in to uptake and/or expand the tested models and services across the social and child protection system. The pace of their uptake also depends on the absorption capacity of national institutions to integrate models and undertake organisational change towards evidence based policy making and human-centred design methodologies and approaches. At present, there is concern about their capacity to move things forward without JP or individual PUNO support.

Some evidence of sustainability is found regarding the development of programmes and strategies (e.g. Youth Guarantee Scheme, the Strategy for Youth) which are expected to be finalized by 2023, and regarding capacity-building activities and support to the Ministry of Interior and the Monstat. In addition, the application of the approach applied in the programme ‘Activate young women’ was replicated in the design of a Youth Guarantee Scheme (e.g. introduction of required co-financing of the private sector). Support for the development of the mental health app by UNICEF will continue with the support of the ECARO Regional Office as part of the well-being and mental health platform. Besides, lessons learnt from the tested model of labour activation of vulnerable groups using the HCD process will be further promoted by UNDP. The Human-centred design online course will be integrated into the Human Resources Management Authority course package and will be available to 30,000-50,000 public servants. UNDP will continue to promote uptake of recommendations for overcoming obstacles for scaling up the model as one piloted through this Joint Programme such as through addressing labour activation issues in new Strategy for Development of Social and Child Protection System and the Deinstitutionalization Strategy. The Universal Child allowance is also considered as a building block of the Child Guarantee scheme also planned from EU Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA).

Without further advocacy and policy advisory support and funding, most of implemented initiatives will remain one-off support interventions, without sustainability potential.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

This section provides a set of conclusions derived from the evaluation process, relating to the relevance of the Joint Programme interventions to national priorities in Montenegro; specific outcome level contributions; efficiency, sustainability, impact, and coherence of the programme.

Relevance

C1: The programme has tackled important unmet needs of the most vulnerable right holder groups and provided relevant support to the social and child protection sector.

The JP capitalised on strong strategic positioning of each PUNO within its programmatic area, and strong relevance of interventions with government priorities, and unmet needs of the most vulnerable groups. The selected policy advisory areas focusing on the support to the design of evidence-based policies and human centred design methodologies remains relevant to Montenegro's desire to promote and implement strong social and child protection and inclusion social policies.

The Programme works to address the government social and child protection and inclusion reform priorities which are in close alignment with the vision of the SDG Fund goals and also align with Montenegro's EU accession, Agenda 2030 and SDG goals.

Programme design and Coherence

C2: The programme design did not fully manage to overcome siloed approaches by individual PUNOs. The collaborative and flexible programme approach helped PUNOs to share information but collaboration and synergies could have been promoted more strongly across different programme areas to maximize the JP's potential.

In line with the SDG Fund vision, the JP was designed as joint effort of five PUNOs, each bringing its own expertise and positioning to the JP under one umbrella. The JP's intervention logic envisaged holistic approach to bringing together evidence based policy making, modelling of non-contributory social protection benefits and services and active labour market measures and supporting the most marginalised groups to obtain legal status to be able to access such services. Such intervention logic is sound and in theory it provides opportunity for holistic approach to empowerment and social protection of duty bearers. The programme support to social and child protection system adopted a multi-dimensional approach operating at different levels (national and local level – policy and programme design, service level and direct support) and through different pathways (advocacy, policy, technical and material support). However, the silos between different components is starkly visible, with each component operating as separate project under wider umbrella. One exception is UNDP-UNICEF collaboration under Outcome 1/Output 1, where joint efforts contributed to stronger and more coherent output level results. The JP provided opportunity for exchange of information and enhancing familiarity between PUNOs and their intervention areas. The programme would have benefited from stronger efforts to seek synergies and cross-component leverage and cross-fertilization opportunities, beyond general coordination and partnership. This has been a weakness of programme design and implementation.

Delivery of Outputs and contributions to desired outcomes of the Joint Programme

C3: Advisory, capacity strengthening and modelling interventions have brought some positive models and approaches to informing policy design and service provision. Yet, the challenge is to ensure that investments across the targeted thematic areas transform into more sustainable outcome level results within volatile political context.

As noted above, the programme intervention logic provided framework for holistic and strategic approach to social and child protection reforms by investing in capacity strengthening, modelling and advocacy interventions with engagement with all relevant national actors in such process. Interventions were logical continuation and/or expansion of PUNOs long term support to national institutions, which was a driver of delivery of output level results. In each programme area, PUNOs managed to deliver their outputs with good quality and in timely manner. The policy simulations provided the Government of Montenegro with the necessary tool to assess impact of the different social policy options which offer possibility for informed selection of most viable policy alternative. Programme's flexibility to tackle the discovered limitations of SILC to provide more diverse data necessary for such simulation, brought unintended positive effects in terms of expanded MONSTAT's capacities and credibility of data. Evidence generation through RSAs, other studies and lessons learned generated through modelling that was conducted brings important evidence base on the challenges and needs of the most vulnerable in light of COVID-19 and access to social and child protection.

The investment in modelling human centered methodologies in development and delivery of social services and active labour market measures brought direct effects on the participants of such models, but provided limited scalability potential due to weak absorption capacity and weak intersectoral links between targeted national institutions.

Provided free legal aid and support to obtain legal status to the most marginalised and excluded groups (ex-Yugoslav refugees, stateless or persons at risk of statelessness) has resulted in momentous lifechanging results for the targeted persons and their families. The successful cases resulted in improved access to services and empowerment of these groups.

UNICEF support for well-being, self-care and mental health of adolescents and youth brought direct benefits to participants but also increased the awareness of the importance to further investments in these areas and recognition of adolescent needs in wider policy.

However, transformative potential is still pending the adoption and integration of such generated evidence and models. The evidence and models, if adequately used, can bring important trigger effects in improved targeting and coverage of the most vulnerable groups. However, there is little interest of the government institutions to integrate such model in their social policy processes.

C4: The Programme interventions provided effective support to the most vulnerable, with integration of protection and gender principles. Disability focus was less pronounced.

The PUNOs invested efforts to invest in and adhere to gender and inclusion principles. The programme tackled the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded groups paying strong attention to gender dimension of vulnerability and access to services and protection. The programme paid significant attention to protection and/or support to minorities groups (e.g. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian) across different PUNOs activities. However, the programme did not have strong disability focus.

Efficiency

C5: Programme efficiency was ensured due to the strong expertise of PUNO and their implementing partners, albeit it was hindered by COVID-19 and the high political volatility.

The strong expertise of PUNOs and their implementing partners, as well as RCO and PUNOs' due diligence in finance and implementation management, and monitoring of outputs, worked well to secure programme efficiency. The programme efficiency was challenged by slow budget utilization during the first year of programme implementation affected by COVID-19 and the change of the Government. This challenge is overcome by the ongoing adaptation of the programme to changing circumstances. The project underwent several modifications that did not affect overall efficiency, but the short timeframe of a few activities, to some extent, affected the delivery of results.

Impact and sustainability

C6: Impact and sustainability of achievements of the JP are weak.

Investment in capacity strengthening and modelling of innovative approaches and systems has resulted in a number of tested scalable solutions and models. However, their scale up has not materialised at the time of finalisation of this evaluation, mainly due to lack of interest/commitment or weak absorption capacity or awareness of targeted national institutions in many cases. Some exceptions are noted in case of MONSTAT which shows commitment to continue upgrading its data collection and processing approaches. Another exception is support to development of programme and strategies and capacity building activities to the Ministry of Interior. The diminishing ownership, where noted, happened due to significant political volatility and staff changes within given institutions or changing of priorities due to government change and/or COVID-19. There is continued need for PUNOs to continue advocating positive potential of tested models. This is for the fact that, if scaled up and implemented, such models (policy model upgrade and follow up simulations, active labour market measures, mental health services etc.) would bring significant changes in terms of adequate coverage and targeting, addressing the needs, enabling access and empowering the most vulnerable groups.

Due to the short JP implementation timeline, the programme as a joint PUNO effort is not in position to offer more sustained systematic, concerted efforts targeting multiple institutional bottlenecks and incremental system changes simultaneously. However, each PUNO is in position to continue reform support for full institutionalization, which is a prerequisite for sustainability.

5.2 LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson learned 1. The programme needs sufficient level of flexibility to be able to respond to significant contextual changes and political volatility. The experience of this JP in Montenegro showcases the importance of a good balance between keeping the overall vision and openness and flexibility to adjust programme approaches in light of strong political volatility and emerging crises. The experience of implementing this JP during the tectonic government change and COVID-19 demonstrates that flexibility is key to ensure that the programme delivers what is realistic in light of such external hindrances.

Lesson learned 2: Investment in and access to credible evidence base is critical prerequisite for strong policies. As showcased by this programme, discovering data limitations and addressing them in appropriate manner by investing in institutional capacity strengthening and improving data collection instruments, helps enhance quality, depth and credibility of evidence. The investment in SILC showed

the need to introduce similar systems for other similar research (e.g. Labour force survey, SDG indicators and other EU related NEAT indicators, youth unemployment, etc.) and use data to inform policy and programme design.

Lesson learned 3: Human centered design and methodology can serve as driver of institutional change. The experience from this programme implementation shows that insisting on human centred methodology and design of social services adds value in promoting human rights based approaches and participation. Introduction of such approaches be difficult as they require organisational change, but once institutionalised, they can promote and stir more inclusive and consultative design approaches.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The JP supported comprehensive reforms of the social and child protection sector, which continue to require engagement of UN in support to Government of Montenegro to fulfil its priorities. The recommendations for the programme derive from extensive consultations with key stakeholders across the evaluation process, analysis of documentation, and the findings and conclusions of this evaluation. The ET used interviews and group discussions to generate ideas for potential future joint and/or individual PUNO’s strategic directions in support to the social and child protection. Evaluation recommendations will be presented and validated through interactive discussions with EMG members during interviews and during the evaluation de-briefing meeting to be held in July 2022. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this evaluation will further be disseminated by PUNOs.

In light of voiced recognition of the role and added value of UN engagement in the reform of social and child protection, the evaluation recommendations (Table 4) are directed to PUNOs to assist them to further strengthen the support to the reform.

Table 4: Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe	Priority
Strategic recommendation				
1	<p>The design of Joint programme has to be based on strong foundations of synergies and cross-component integration</p> <p>Partners in a joint programme need to invest all genuine efforts to seek and promote synergies to make sure that the holistic approaches are implemented to the extent possible. Bringing together individual siloed interventions under joint programme umbrella without cross-component synergies does not add value beyond any classical single agency-implemented intervention.</p>	UNCT	Potential new joint programme	High
1a.	<p>Consider integrating a requirement for the design of indicators measuring cross-cooperation between UN Agencies</p> <p>SDG Fund has supported joint UN interventions globally, and this programme showcases value</p>	SDG Fund	New cycle of SDG Fund support	Medium

#	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe	Priority
	added of such support. However, it also revealed that, despite the joint programme framework, UN Agencies do still implement their components in silos. In order to further nurture (and request) joint interventions and collaboration. SDG Fund could consider placing a requirement that PUNOs design and monitor indicators that pertain their cross-agency synergies and cooperation. This could help make synergies and joint initiatives more visible and meaningful.			
Thematic recommendations				
2	<p>Promote and advocate for integration of policy simulations as wider good governance input across wider sector policies</p> <p>UNDP and UNICEF should build on the policy simulation support by promoting it as good governance mechanism across social and child protection and other sector policy processes. In particular, UNDP's and UNICEF's strategic positioning as advisor of the central government institutions for wider governance reform within which policy dialogue and policy processes are tackled could be utilised to promote this model as good governance input and best practice for evidence based policy making.</p>	UNDP and UNICEF	Next cycle of country programme	High
3	<p>Keep promoting and advocating for human centred methodologies and design of social services, such as labour market activation of 'able to work' vulnerable groups.</p> <p>PUNOs should embrace and promote human centred methodologies in the design of social programmes, measures and services related to labour market activation of 'able to work' persons belonging to vulnerable groups (e.g. NEET, women, people with disabilities, Roma). This can be done by advocating for application of this methodologies and by providing support in drafting government programmes and strategies in line with this methodology. However, this will required further push for the increased collaboration among the key institutions in labour market activation, and their further capacity building.</p>	PUNOs	Next cycle of country programme of each PUNO or potential new JP	High
4	<p>Keep investing in social and child protection and labour activation of vulnerable groups based on the principle Leave no one behind</p>	PUNOs	Next cycle of country programme of each PUNO or	High

#	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe	Priority
	PUNOs should further support vulnerable groups such as people at risk of statelessness, returnees, and victims of trafficking as they are often not visible to national institutions or not sufficiently supported.		potential new JP	
Efficiency recommendations				
5	<p>Due consideration should be given to defining the timeframe during the design of activities and programmes that should be implemented by partners.</p> <p>In this regard, PUNOs should plan proper time for activities preparation when there is a need for getting the permission of the government (e.g. Ministry of Education), as well as for information sharing events that target potential programme beneficiaries.</p>	PUNOs	Next cycle of country programme of each PUNO or potential new JP	High
6	<p>Management of a Joint programme requires a clear definition of external and internal coordination roles and framework among RCOs and PUNOs.</p> <p>The Project Document and other management documents should have the coordination role and implementation role of RCOs and PUNOs defined in a narrow way.</p>	UNCT	Potential new joint programme	High

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of reference

Background and context of evaluation subject

Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro is a Joint Programme (JP) implemented and funded by ILO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM and the Joint SDG Fund in the total amount of USD 2,689,00.00, with the aim to enhance the capacities of the social protection system in Montenegro to better serve people in need. The programme applies advanced methodologies (foresight, human-centred design, policy simulation tools, etc.) in order to improve targeting, expand coverage, and address adequacy of social protection, but also activate Montenegro's youth who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) and other vulnerable and marginalized groups through enhanced labour activation.

The JP aims to enhance the capacities of the key stakeholders of the national social welfare system to better serve people in need, regardless of their citizenship status. It strives to render policy making evidence-based and policies cost-effective, while ensuring service provision is well-targeted and user-centred. In order to reach vulnerable and marginalized groups, the JP focuses on the most pressing problems of the current social protection system, including targeting, coverage, and adequacy of social assistance and effectiveness of services. Programme's theory of change rests on three key hypotheses:

If national SP policies are better informed by updated evidence on poverty, especially related to marginalized groups **and** the impact of these policies can be modelled and predicted before they are submitted for adoption **then** the SP system can more effectively alleviate poverty and accelerate sustainable human development within existing fiscal space.

If the most vulnerable youth have increased access to SP services or can co-design programmes/ services targeted to their needs **and** are equipped with relevant skills **then** they will be more resilient, able to lead more productive lives and better fulfil their potential, thus reducing dependency on social assistance and helping to break intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Finally, if Montenegro's SP system can more effectively alleviate poverty and reduce social exclusion, and **if** more young people in Montenegro lead productive lives and fulfil their potential, **then** progress towards more sustainable human development will accelerate.

Accordingly, programme entails the following objective, outcomes and related activities:

Objective: By 2022, Montenegro has improved capacity to design impact-oriented, evidence-informed social protection policies and deliver integrated human-centred services that reduce poverty and social exclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized, focusing on young men and women, thus accelerating sustainable human development.

Outcome 1: Social policy simulations based on data and evidence, including on the impact of COVID-19, and subsequent scenarios for social protection system reform will result in more just, better targeted and more adequate social protection programmes and services for the most vulnerable

groups (e.g. youth, migrants, returnees, refugees, stateless persons, children and victims of trafficking). The programmes and services complement labour market activation for decent work and development of employability skills. This work builds on the international CODI (Core Diagnostics Instruments) Assessment and a UN Rapid Social Impact Assessment (RSIA) of COVID-19, as well as the MAPS SDG acceleration reports and is fully aligned with the national institutional reform approach.

Output: New tool supports analysis of poverty-related data and simulation of policy impact.

Activities:

1.1 Provide deeper analysis of poverty data to identify furthest behind

1.2 Operationalize recommendations from CODI to increase effectiveness, efficiency, capacity to address poverty within fiscal space

1.3 Develop poverty reduction scenarios to target furthest behind

1.4 Accelerate implementation of optimum scenario(s)

Outcome 2: Innovative skills building, mental health and labour market activation measures will increase the participation of young men and women in education, employment or training, strengthen their resilience, prevent passivation and reduce their dependence on social assistance.

The intervention would expand the coverage of children by social transfers by 50% and, combined with labour activation measures and other interventions in social protection, could potentially reduce the national poverty rate by 3 percentage points (compared to the recalculated poverty rate after COVID-19 impact, available once the simulation exercise is completed). Given the expected socio-economic COVID-19 impact in terms of increased unemployment and poverty as well as newly emerging vulnerable groups this target remains important but is also ambitious.

Output: Human-centered, integrated service delivery at community-level, focusing on youth, to increase their participation in education, employment or training to reduce dependence on social assistance, are rolled-out.

Activities:

2.1 Profile NEETs, registered beneficiaries of SP, those without access to SP system, to refine targeting and design an activation programme

2.2 Support “first-time” access to SP system/employment for refugees/persons at-risk of statelessness/readmitted nationals by supporting regularization of legal status and social inclusion and enhancing multi-sectoral coordination and referral mechanisms for vulnerable groups

2.3 Increase access to human-centred, effective social support services for targeted groups, including labour market activation

2.4 Strengthen resilience through “21st century” skills development, including socio-emotional/self-care skills tailored to unique needs (e.g., mobile-based delivery)

2.5 Enhance identification of victims of trafficking and raise awareness on the dangers of trafficking, targeting youth with a focus on marginalized groups

By the end of the JP, both outputs will have been embedded in Government processes, after an iterative process of piloting, testing, user feedback and monitoring. Consequently, the most vulnerable women, men, boys and girls will benefit from:

- Laws designed to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion,
- Cash transfers that are well-targeted, adequate and cover all those who are in need of social assistance,
- Labour activation and other related services which respond to the specific needs of users,
- Innovative skills and resilience building programmes,
- Inclusion into the social protection system of those previously invisible.

As a result, those who are most in need will be protected by the social protection system and have the skills and support that enable them to lead independent, productive lives. By producing such impact, the programme helps the country in direct achievement of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

1.1. By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere

1.2. By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

1.b. Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.4 By 2030 substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training

Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other

Expected SDG impact

In 2019 and 2020, there was a unique window of opportunity to integrate SDG acceleration – specifically Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10. An important entry-point was a first-of-its-kind comprehensive SP system assessment using Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI). The key objective was to break the vicious cycle of inter-generational poverty by turning it into a virtuous cycle. The mutual reinforcements between the SDG targets are obvious: A better targeted social protection system with expanded coverage will ensure that those who are most marginalized receive adequate support, while those who are able to work, can find decent employment and thus lift themselves out of poverty and contribute to society and a better funded social protection system (double win).

Relevant objective/s from the national SDG framework

National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030 (NSSD):

- 4.1 Improvement of state of human resources and strengthening of social inclusion
- 4.2 Support to values, norms and behaviour patterns significant for sustainability of the society -
- 4.2.5 Stimulate employability and social inclusion

The evaluation will also take into account overall result framework, including programme result framework as well as Joint SDG Fund Outcome and Output indicators, and operational performance indicators.

Target groups

The Activate! JP targeted the most vulnerable and marginalized people focusing on youth (including NEETs), Roma, people with disabilities, people facing mental health challenges, persons at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation or exclusion (e.g., due to ‘invisibility’ in the current system), ex-Yugoslav refugees, asylum seekers, stateless/persons at risk of statelessness, migrants, returnees, people living in poverty and others. Particular attention was paid to cross-cutting needs of women and children within the above categories, e.g., the capacity of children to access cash transfers and improved protection services, thus contributing to alleviation of long-term and inter-generational poverty. Target groups and proposed programme approaches have been selected based on key data and the most pertinent recommendations of human rights mechanisms.

Partner organizations and other stakeholders

- Line ministries and other relevant public bodies - Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare, Employment Agency, and other key Ministries (governing the departments of Education, Interior, Youth and Sports, Human and Minority Rights-Department for Gender Equality, Health). Local service providers have also been engaged, such as local employment bureaus and Centres for Social Welfare.
- Civil society organizations (CSOs) - Red Cross, various youth organizations/associations, local NGOs working with Roma communities, trade unions, employers’ federations, as well as NGOs licensed to provide shelter to victims of trafficking is an important asset of this JP.
- IOs - World Bank which in Montenegro is focusing on the Jobs and Growth agenda, and WHO which contributes with technical expertise on mental health barriers to employment.
- Montenegro Statistics Office (MONSTAT), to provide data concerning disaggregation of poverty related data and to participate in data processing.
- Media engaged in trafficking awareness raising campaign and in other relevant communication endeavours.

Timeframe

The initial timeframe of the Activate! Joint Programme was December 1st, 2019- November 30th, 2021 (24 months). However, the Joint Programme has been granted a non-cost extension, duly justified by external constraints causing nearly nine-month delay in its implementation. This was

primarily due to prolonged process of the new Government being formed following the August 2020 national elections in Montenegro, and the majority of the Government cabinets being in place only at the end of Q1 2021. In addition, during the implementation period, the Activate! Joint Programme has been prudently managed with timely adjustments to account for the Covid-19 emergence and its aftermath by prioritizing workplan readjustment, implementation and continuation of cooperation with the new Government once in place.

For these reasons, and upon granted non-cost extension, the updated implementation timeframe of the Activate! Joint Programme is **1st December 2019- 31st July 2022 (32 months)**.

II. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of this Final Evaluation is to provide summative assessment of the achievements of the

Joint UN Programme Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro (short- Activate! Joint Programme (JP)). The Final Evaluation will be participatory, involving relevant stakeholders, and in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, using the guidance on Joint Evaluation and relevant UNDG guidance on evaluations.

The evaluation will provide an independent and equity, age and gender-sensitive assessment of the joint programme. In particular, it will assess the approach taken by PUNOs, whether the assumptions made in the JP's ToC were appropriate, and whether activities and interventions indeed contributed to progress within the framework of the ToC, i.e. whether the proposed approach was scalable and to determine to what extent the desired change has occurred. The evaluation will also be forward-looking by reinforcing good practices, identifying areas for improvement for future similar programmes, and providing conclusions and recommendations on potential further areas of intervention.

In assessing the degree to which the joint programme met its intended objectives and results, the Final Evaluation will provide key lessons about successful approaches and operational practices, as well as highlight areas where the programme performed effectively than anticipated. In that sense, this Final Evaluation is equally about impact and accountability as it is about learning. The information, findings, lessons learned, and recommendations generated by the programme evaluation will be used by the Joint Programme Board and other relevant stakeholders to inform future programming, but also for PUNOs to potentially modify practices and further improve delivering-as-one approach.

III. Evaluation scope and objectives

Evaluation scope

The independent and equity, age and gender-sensitive evaluation will be undertaken for Activate! Joint Programme's interventions across Montenegro in the period between December 2019 and April

2022, bearing in mind that the final evaluation must be completed three months prior to the JP's implementation end date - July 31, 2022. The evaluation will be conducted in close consultation with the JP Programme team (Joint Evaluation Management Group), led by UNDP, throughout the process to ensure the principles of national ownership, transparency and mutual accountabilities are followed. The evaluation process will be participative and will involve all relevant programme's stakeholders and partners, as well as final beneficiaries. Evaluation results will be disseminated amongst government, development partners, civil society, and other stakeholders.

The evaluation will comprise the following key stages:

Desk review: The Evaluation Team will conduct a detailed review of the programme materials and deliverables including but not limited to the Project Document, theory of change and results framework, monitoring reports, annual workplans, consolidated progress reports, relevant national surveys and data, knowledge products, as well as policy and legal documents.

Finalization of evaluation methodology and work plan: In consultation with the Joint Evaluation Management Group, the Evaluation Team will finalize the appropriate methodology to address the key objectives of this evaluation. The methodology will entail a participatory process for data collection, generating an evidence base to substantiate all findings while ensuring that the data collection methods and data analysis is of high quality and that stakeholders are involved in data collection processes and debriefed on regular basis to address any unforeseen challenges requiring support or clarification. Data collected should be disaggregated by age, gender, disability status, site, etc. where relevant.

Data collection - field visits, focus groups and key informant interviews: The Evaluation Team will conduct field visit supported by UNDP and collect data from the representatives of main institutional partners and implementing partners, as well as final beneficiaries, using a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. For the interviews, the Evaluation Team is expected to design evaluation questions around relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability criteria, tailored to different stakeholders to be interviewed. In the occurrence of Covid19 travel and meeting restrictions, the Evaluation Team will conduct the interviews remotely when necessary, using virtual technological solutions.

Preparation of the draft evaluation report and finalization of the report: The Evaluation Team will prepare the draft evaluation report, submit it to the Evaluation Management Group for comments and final approval upon addressing the comments provided.

Debriefing: The Evaluation Team will debrief the Evaluation Management Group about the findings including key observations and recommendations based on verifiable facts and figures.

Evaluation objectives:

- To assess the project accomplishments against planned results, objectives, targets and indicators, including the aspects of effectiveness and efficiency of the intervention and sustainability of project benefits beyond the lifetime of the project;
- To assess, to the extent possible, contribution to improving the situation of vulnerable groups identified in the JP, including persons with disability;
- To assess contribution to SDG acceleration;
- To assess contribution to UN reforms (including UNCT coherence);
- To assess contribution to SDG Fund global goals;
- To assess, to the extent possible, contribution to the National Strategy for Sustainable

Development (NSSD) of Montenegro;

- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, design, efficiency, coherence and sustainability of the joint programme from its inception to its completion;
- To provide reflections on the previous state of play and capacities of the main actors as compared to the beginning of the project implementation and in relation to that, provide recommendations and guidance for future similar JP initiatives;
- To provide gender-sensitive assessment of the joint programme by maximizing the use of existing data to support mainstreaming of gender analysis across all questions, including those unrelated to gender;
- To identify and consolidate good practices, human stories, lessons learned and make recommendations on processes, management, partnerships and other aspects of project implementation that would benefit future joint programmes agencies in this area.

As persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups across the evaluation will therefore assess to what extent:

IV.

Joint programme design, implementation, and monitoring have been inclusive of persons with disabilities (accessibility, non-discrimination, participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, data disaggregation)

Joint programme effectively contributed to the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities by providing income security, coverage of health care, and disability-related costs across the life cycle.

Guiding questions on Persons with Disabilities will be provided to the consultant.

Evaluation questions

The Evaluation is to answer the following questions, based on the identified main objectives, to determine the Joint Programme's relevance, performance, results, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, including lessons learned and forward- looking recommendations.

The Evaluation questions proposed below are not limited. Evaluation questions will be further refined by the evaluation team during the desk review phase and in consultation with the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) – to focus on the questions that, if well answered, have the greatest potential to impact on policies, strategies, and future programming. The Evaluation Team is expected to offer a final set of evaluation questions and tools and include them in the Inception report.

Relevance

- - Were the programme's objectives relevant to the needs of the programme beneficiaries, having in mind political, social and institutional context of the country where the programme is implemented?
- - Was the programme relevant to the SDGs, specifically Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10?
- - Were coordination, management and financing arrangements clearly defined at the design stage and did these support institutional strengthening and local ownership?
- - Was the programme successful in adjusting its implementation strategy and approach to the new circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Effectiveness

- - To what extent were the programme activities implemented and intended results achieved? What are the main programme accomplishments, with reference to the Results framework but also SDG Fund global goals?
- - What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the programme?
- - How well did the programme collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to manage the programme?
- - To what extent has the programme effectively identified, outreached, and engaged target groups, as well as marginalized groups (i.e. youth, persons with disabilities, returnees, internally displaced, ex-Yugoslav refugees, persons at risk of statelessness, minorities...) and supported gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment?
- - To what extent complementarity of agency-led activities was achieved?
- - How effective was the programme's interaction with other complementary projects/programs (including implemented by the UN) in order to trigger synergies

maximizing development results?

- - Was the programme well-timed to capitalize on a specific window of opportunity?

Efficiency

- Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically to achieve the programme results?

- Were there any weaknesses in programme design, coordination, management, human resource skills, and resources?

- - How well did the programme team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders and programme beneficiaries on its progress? In what aspects and to what extent did the programme contribute to UNCT coherence? To what degree did the political developments in the country, as well as COVID-19 pandemic, influence the programme's efficiency?

Impact

- - Has the programme contributed or is likely to contribute to medium or long-term social, economic, or other results, esp. with reference to SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 and the relevant NSSD chapters?

- - What are the main benefits (qualitative and quantitative) for the target groups, including for vulnerable groups? How have cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, disability, and reaching the most vulnerable, been effectively taken up?
- - To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the programme implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support and what are specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance?
- - What are the key lessons to be drawn at this point of the joint programme implementation? What are the main recommendations for the remainder, as well as for future programming?
- - What is the impact of COVID-19 on the programme implementation and how the limitations imposed by the pandemic were lifted?

Sustainability

- - To what extent are the programme outputs sustainable? How could the programme results be further sustainably projected and expanded?
- - To what extent has the programme approach (intervention strategy) managed to create ownership of the key national stakeholders?
- - At this stage of programme implementation, what could be possible after- programme priority interventions and general recommendations, which could further ensure sustainability and scaling up of programme achievements?
- - What would be future priority interventions to ensure long-term sustainability of the programme achievements, having in mind the current COVID- 19 related context?

V. Methodology

The Evaluation Team will propose an adjusted evaluative approach/ methodology that will be used to conduct the evaluation effectively in the COVID – 19 pandemics circumstances, including application of safety guidance, extended desk reviews and virtual stakeholder meetings and interviews by evaluators and agree on a detailed plan for the assignment as part of the evaluation Inception Report. The proposed methodology may employ any relevant and appropriate quantitative, qualitative or combined methods to conduct the programme evaluation, exploring specific, gender sensitive data collecting and analytical methods and tools applicable in the concrete case. The Evaluation Team is expected to creatively combine the standard and other evaluation tools and technics to ensure proper triangulation, maximum reliability of data and validity of the evaluation findings.

At a minimum, the evaluation will draw on the following methods:

Literature review and desk review of background documents and other relevant data, including review and analysis of secondary quantitative data;
Key Informant Interviews with the stakeholders and partners;
Review of programme documentation in each site;

Focus Group Discussions with relevant stakeholders at the national and sub-national level; In-depth interviews with local service providers and other relevant institutions/organisations and beneficiaries regarding new and/or improved services resulting from the programme; Cost analysis of the implementation of the joint programme;

Collation of existing statistical data, where available, and quantitative data relevant to the evaluation questions;

Collected data should be disaggregated by age, gender, disability status, legal status (where relevant) and site (where relevant).

Evaluation team and evaluation management

The Activate! Joint Programme will be subjected to a joint final independent evaluation managed jointly by PUNOs¹ as per established process for independent evaluations. The evaluations will follow the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, using the [guidance on Joint Evaluation and relevant UNDG guidance on evaluations](#).

From UN side, the Evaluation will be overseen by Evaluation Management group (EMG), consisted of PUNOs implementing the programme (UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, IOM, UNHCR) and UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). The EMG will be Co-chaired by RCO and UNDP as Evaluation implementor.

The management and implementation of the joint evaluation will have due regard to the evaluation policies of PUNOs to ensure the requirements of those policies are met and the evaluation is conducted with use of appropriate guidance from PUNOs on joint evaluation.

The Final Evaluation will be conducted by the Evaluation Team composed of an International Evaluation Consultant/Team Leader and a National Evaluation Consultant. The International Evaluation Consultant will lead the evaluation process and decide on planning and distribution of the evaluation workload and tasks among the evaluation team. She/he will closely collaborate with the National Evaluation Consultant who will provide support throughout the evaluation process.

The International Evaluation Consultant/Team Leader will be responsible for the overall design and writing of the Final Evaluation Report, preparing the methodology, assessing the collected data, drafting the report and participating in the reviewing and debriefing with the Joint Evaluation Management Group.

The National Consultant will be responsible for compilation of data via desk research and interviews, assist in translation of key information data, assess emerging trends with respect to regulatory framework and overall provide support to the Evaluation Team Leader.

VII. Evaluation deliverables

Under the supervision of the UNDP Programme Manager, and in close cooperation with Joint Evaluation Management Group, the Evaluation Team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverables:

- **Inception Report** to be presented before the Final Evaluation starts, showing how evaluation objectives will be met, proposing the final list of evaluation questions and how they will be answered, proposing methods, sources of data and data collection procedures. The Inception Report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with Joint programme team after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits). It should also elaborate an **evaluation matrix** for the programme and propose a schedule of tasks, activities, and evaluation deliverables. The Evaluation Inception Report

should follow the structure/guidelines proposed in the [UNEG Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations p. 101-105](#).

- **Data collection:** Upon the approval of the Inception Report, the Evaluation Team is expected to carry out the programme evaluation, based on the approved methodology. The proposed data collecting methodologies presented in the Evaluation Inception Report should limit the exposure of any consultant, team member, beneficiary or stakeholder to the pandemic.
- **Draft Final Evaluation Report:** Based on the findings generated through desk review and data collection process, the Evaluation Team will prepare and submit the Draft Evaluation Report to the Evaluation Management Group for review.
- **Final Evaluation review:** Comments, questions, suggestions and requests for clarification on the evaluation draft will be submitted to the Evaluation Team Leader and addressed in the agreed timeframe.
- **Final Evaluation debriefings:** will be held with implementing UN Agencies and other key stakeholders to present main findings and recommendations either face-to-face or in a form of an online briefing. In addition, short briefings on immediate findings with Joint Programme Team will be considered after completion of the initial assessment.
- **Final Evaluation Report** to be submitted to and approved by the Evaluation Management Group includes executive summary, evaluation methodology, analysis and findings, good practices, human stories & lessons learnt and recommendations. It should be logically structured, contain data and evidence-based findings provided by stakeholders and partners, and be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. In addition, based on the evaluation findings and in a distinct report section, the Evaluation Team will provide **forward-looking actionable recommendations**, outlining key strategic priorities to be addressed in the potential next phase of the programme.²

Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

The purpose of the evaluation matrix is to provide a clear analytical framework that helps to reduce subjectivity in the evaluative judgement identifying for question: i) Evaluation questions; ii) indicators; iii) data sources; and iv) data collection and analysis methods

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
RELEVANCE				
Q1	Were the programme's objectives relevant to the needs of the programme beneficiaries, having in mind political, social and institutional context of the country where the programme is implemented?	Degree to which the objectives and results of the Joint Programme were aligned with national social sector priorities and frameworks Objectives and results of the Joint Programme are responsive to observed critical bottlenecks to social protection, the realization of rights and meeting the needs of the vulnerable groups targeted by the programme– in terms of the enabling environment, supply and quality of services and demand factors. Perceptions of stakeholders on the relevance of measures included within the Joint Programme with the needs of vulnerable groups	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes and comparison between JP and national level documentation Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q2	Was the programme relevant to the SDGs, specifically Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10?	Degree of relevance and alignment of the Programme with SDGs (specifically Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10)	Programme documentation National SDG framework PUNO's corporate documents External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes and comparison between JP and national level documentation Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
			Development partners	Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q3	Were coordination, management and financing arrangements clearly defined at the design stage and did these support institutional strengthening and local ownership?	Extent to which the UN RCO and PUNOs jointly established and utilised clear coordination, management and financing arrangements Degree of involvement of national / subnational Government in the preparation of the JP The degree to which the JP arrangements provided for holistic approach to support institutional strengthening and local ownership	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes and comparison between JP and national level documentation Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q4	Was the programme successful in adjusting its implementation strategy and approach to the new circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic?	Objectives of JP are adapted to the arising needs under COVID-19 (e.g. in terms of adaptation of support intervention in response to arising needs and restrictions relating to COVID-19) based on comprehensive analysis of context and needs in specific areas of interest of the JP	Programme documentation UN Agencies' and other national or international studies and reports on impact of COVID-19 in Montenegro Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Coherence				

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
Q 5	To what extent complementarity of agency-led activities was achieved?	Degree to which the joint programme approach presented added value to the results of the programme vs. if components were implemented in isolation	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes and comparison between JP and national level documentation Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q6	How effective was the programme's interaction with other complementary projects/programs (including implemented by the UN) in order to trigger synergies maximizing development results?	Evidence of synergies between the JP and other complementary projects/programmes implemented by UN Examples of areas/opportunities where complementary approaches between JP and UN agencies were/were not exploited and their reasons Evidence and examples of partnerships that contributed to development results	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' and other UN studies, reports and other monitoring data UN RCO documents and reports External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes and comparison between JP and national level documentation Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
Q7	How well did the programme team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders and programme beneficiaries on its progress?	Evidence and examples of communication strategy and practices to inform implementing partners, stakeholders and programme beneficiaries on its progress	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' and other UN studies, reports and other monitoring data UN RCO documents and reports External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes and comparison between JP and national level documentation Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q8	In what aspects and to what extent did the programme contribute to UNCT coherence?	Degree to which the objectives, results and thematic contributions and mandates of the five UN Agencies contribute to the achievement of the Joint programme's results in terms of addressing the country's development priorities and challenges	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' and other UN studies, reports and other monitoring data UN RCO documents and reports External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document review, KII interviews, group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes and comparison between JP and national level documentation Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
EFFECTIVENESS				
Q9	To what extent were the programme activities implemented and intended results achieved? What are the main programme accomplishments, with reference to the Results framework?	Evidence from pre-existing and quantitative data regarding sufficient achievement of intended outputs Evidence of application by Joint Programme and individual agencies of equity, disability and gender-based	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews and group discussions

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
		<p>programmatic approach in design and implementation of interventions</p> <p>Degree of change in government capacity to design social policies that are informed by evidence, tested, and tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups and impact-oriented in terms of reducing poverty and dependency on social welfare.</p> <p>Degree to which t human-centred services for increased participation, empowerment and/or employment of young people in Montenegro are piloted, tested, and rolled out to inform social policies</p> <p>Degree of change in terms of delivery of effective, tailored-to-needs social protection to</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions regarding programme results as having been achieved and contributing to overall positive change in Montenegro</p> <p>Degree and type of drivers that promoted programme implementation</p> <p>Degree and type of hindering factors affecting programme implementation</p>	<p>PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector</p> <p>External sources</p> <p>Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs</p> <p>Other UN Agencies</p> <p>Government stakeholders (national and subnational level)</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Development partners</p>	<p>ToC analysis and contribution analysis tracing activities to results.</p> <p>Qualitative Iterative Data Analysis</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
Q1 0	What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the programme?	<p>Examples of unexpected positive results of the programme.</p> <p>Examples of unintended negative results.</p> <p>Evidence of strategies to mitigate potential risks</p>	<p>Programme documentation and monitoring data</p> <p>PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector</p> <p>External sources</p> <p>Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs</p>	<p>Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison</p> <p>Semi-Structured Interviews</p> <p>Group discussions</p> <p>Document review identifying iterative themes</p>

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
			Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q1 1	To what extent has the programme effectively identified, outreached, and engaged target groups, as well as marginalized groups (i.e. youth, persons with disabilities, returnees, internally displaced, ex-Yugoslav refugees, persons at risk of statelessness, minorities...) and supported gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment?	Evidence that integration of <u>equity principles</u> in targeting and implementation of interventions reaching the most vulnerable persons to food security adds value in terms of outreach, coverage and fulfilment of results Evidence and examples of measures taken by the programme to identify, outreach, and engage target groups, as well as marginalized groups (i.e. youth, persons with disabilities, returnees, internally displaced, ex-Yugoslav refugees, persons at risk of statelessness, minorities...) Evidence and examples of supported gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment Evidence and examples of integration of issues of disability in JP interventions	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews and group discussions ToC analysis and contribution analysis tracing activities to results. Qualitative Iterative Data Analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q1 2	Was the programme well-timed to capitalize on a specific window of opportunity?	The degree to which the Programme was strategically positioned to achieve set results The degree to which the timing of the programme created opportunities to achieve results	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation UNICEF's, UNDP's and ILO's studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
			Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Semi-Structured Interviews and group discussions ToC analysis and contribution analysis tracing activities to results. Qualitative Iterative Data Analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Efficiency				
Q 13	Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically to achieve the programme results?	Degree of adequacy of: Budgets Material Human resources à-vis the volume of tasks carried out Disbursement rates (expenditure vs. planned) per component and activity, per year Proportion of JP interventions that demonstrate implementation on schedule and per planned budget Stakeholder perceptions that the implementation of activities is sufficiently timely, efficient and appropriate to context requirements.	Programme documentation and monitoring data PUNOs' reports and other monitoring data External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Implementing partners donor	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews Qualitative Iterative Data Analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q 14	Were there any weaknesses in programme design, coordination, management, human resource skills, and resources?	The degree to which the programme design, coordination, management, human resource skills, and resources were sound and resilient to weaknesses	Programme documentation and monitoring data PUNOs' reports and other monitoring data External sources	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
		The role of UN RCO in ensuring smooth implementation	Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Implementing partners donor	Qualitative Iterative Data Analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q 15	How well did the programme collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to manage the programme?	Existence of mechanisms for ongoing, periodic collection, documentation, analysis and utilization of gender- and equity- sensitive monitoring data to inform programme adjustment and planning Existence of system and framework and reporting within the JP and individual agencies	Programme documentation and monitoring data PUNOs' reports and other monitoring data External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Implementing partners donor	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews Qualitative Iterative Data Analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q16	To what degree did the political developments in the country, as well as COVID-19 pandemic, influence the programme's efficiency?	Evidence of application of efficient procedures to mitigate negative effects of COVID-19 crisis on programme implementation Evidence of achievement of output level results planned despite the COVID-19 crisis	Programme documentation and monitoring data PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews Document review identifying iterative themes Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
Impact				
Q17	Has the programme contributed or is likely to contribute to medium or long-term social, economic, or other results, esp. with reference to SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 and the relevant NSSD chapters?	Stakeholder perceptions regarding programme results as having been achieved and contributing to overall positive change in Montenegro across sectors to leave no one behind. Evidence and examples where JP's results contributed to the achievement of UNDAF outcome/s, national development and SDG priorities	Programme documentation National social protection strategies and legislation PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs UNRCO Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews and group discussions ToC analysis and contribution analysis tracing activities to results. Qualitative Iterative Data Analysis Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Q18	What are the main benefits (qualitative and quantitative) for the target groups, including for vulnerable groups? How have cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, disability, and reaching the most vulnerable, been effectively taken up?	Evidence of (qualitative and quantitative) benefits for the target groups, including for vulnerable groups Evidence that the JP maintained strong adherence to principles of accessibility, non-discrimination, participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, data disaggregation Evidence from pre-existing and quantitative data regarding progress towards achievement of intended results in terms of social protection and activation of persons with disabilities	Programme documentation and monitoring data PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector External sources Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs UN RCO Other UN Agencies Government stakeholders (national and subnational level) NGOs Development partners	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews Group discussions Document review identifying iterative themes Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
Sustainability				
Q19	To what extent are the programme outputs sustainable?	Evidence of: <u>Concrete changes in national policies, regulations, and plans</u> that can sustain achieved JP results	Programme documentation and monitoring data	Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison Semi-Structured Interviews

Evaluation Questions		Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information	Data collection and analysis methods
		<p><u>Institutional capacity</u> in place to sustain levels of achievement or a strategy/plan exists and funded</p> <p>Perceptions on sustainability by community and government representatives</p>	<p>PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector</p> <p>External sources</p> <p>Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs</p> <p>UN RCO</p> <p>Other UN Agencies</p> <p>Government stakeholders (national and subnational level)</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Development partners</p>	<p>Group discussions</p> <p>Document review identifying iterative themes</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
Q20	To what extent has the programme approach (intervention strategy) managed to create ownership of the key national stakeholders?	<p>The degree of participation of national government stakeholders in the programme</p> <p>Evidence of ownership of key national stakeholders over programme results</p>	<p>Programme documentation and monitoring data</p> <p>PUNOs' studies, reports and other monitoring data regarding the social protection sector</p> <p>External sources</p> <p>Qualitative data from KIIs from PUNOs</p> <p>UN RCO</p> <p>Other UN Agencies</p> <p>Government stakeholders (national and subnational level)</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Development partners</p>	<p>Document Review to identify themes among documentation sources for comparison</p> <p>Semi-Structured Interviews</p> <p>Group discussions</p> <p>Document review identifying iterative themes</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>

Going forward – lessons learned and recommendations (EQs moved from sustainability)

What are the key lessons to be drawn at this point of the joint programme implementation? What are the main recommendations for the remainder, as well as for future programming?

How could the programme results be further sustainably projected and expanded?

At this stage of programme implementation, what could be possible after- programme priority interventions and general recommendations, which could further ensure sustainability and scaling up of programme achievements?

What would be future priority interventions to ensure long-term sustainability of the programme achievements, having in mind the current COVID- 19 related context?

Annex 4: Results framework

1. JP contribution to global Fund’s programmatic results⁷⁷

Global Impact: Progress towards SDGs

Select up to 3 SDG *indicators* that your Joint Programme primarily contributed to (in relation to SDG targets listed in your JP ProDoc)

SDG Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

- 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

SDG Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training

Global Outcome 1: Integrated multi-sectoral policies to accelerate SDG achievement implemented with greater scope and scale

Outcome indicators	Expected 2021 target	2021 result	Reasons for variance from planned target (if any)	Expected final target
1.1: Number of integrated multi-sectoral policies that accelerated SDG progress in terms of scope ⁷⁸ <i>List the policies: n/a</i>	1	0	n/a	1
1.2: Number of integrated multi-sectoral policies that accelerated SDG progress in terms of scale ⁷⁹	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

⁷⁷ Presented results are as of 31 December 2021, Annex 1: Consolidated Annual Results of Final Annual Progress report for 2021, page 16-19

⁷⁸ Scope=substantive expansion: additional thematic areas/components added or mechanisms/systems replicated.

⁷⁹ Scale=geographical expansion: local solutions adopted at the regional and national level or a national solution adopted in one or more countries.

Global Output 3: Integrated policy solutions for accelerating SDG progress implemented

Output indicators	Expected 2021 target	2021 result	Reasons for variance from planned target (if any)	Expected final target
3.1 Number of innovative solutions that were tested (disaggregated by % successful-unsuccessful)	3	2	Pilot service for labour activation will be rolled out in 2022, since the activity timeline was extended	3
3.2: Number of integrated policy solutions that have been implemented with the national partners in lead	2	1	Evidence for reforming the poverty-targeted benefit and its means-test could not be obtained due to the need to improve SILC data. Next round of SILC data is expected in December 2022, after which the model can be utilized to provide evidence to the MFSW on the effects of the means-test reform and variables that are correlated to poverty. This would allow means-test reform in 2023.	3
3.3: Number and share of countries where national capacities to implement integrated, cross-sectoral SDG accelerators has been strengthened	1	0	n/a	1

2. Results as per JP Programmatic Results Framework

Result / Indicators	Baseline	Expected 2021 target	2021 Result	Reasons for variance from planned target (if any)	Expected final target
Outcome 1: Social policies are informed by evidence, tested, and tailored to needs of vulnerable [...]					
New policies for social protection/inclusion are informed by the latest poverty data	No	Yes	Yes	One reform scenario (CA) has been informed by poverty data. It is likely that another reform (poverty targeted Family Material Allowance) will be influenced by the scenario in 2022 and 2023.	Yes

				The UN system should strive to further establish ex-ante simulations as standard practice before any social protection reform which related to poverty (in agreement with CODI analysis recommendations) and to enable the MFSW to independently implement policy simulations	
Output 1.1 New tool supports analysis of poverty-related data and simulation of policy impact					
Availability of a tool to ex-ante simulate policy impact	No	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes
Number of poverty reduction scenarios developed for the consideration of the Government	0	3	Yes	n/a	3
Output 2.1. Human-centered, integrated service delivery at community-level, focusing on youth, to increase their participation in education, employment or training, including reintegration assistance, to reduce dependence on social assistance, are rolled-out.					
Employment agency applies gender sensitive and innovative services and tools for increased youth participation in the labor market	No	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes
Reduction in the number of NEETs in Montenegro	28.900	28.322	Data for 2021 is not yet available	n/a	Yes
Output 2.1. Human-centered, integrated service delivery at community-level, focusing on youth, to increase their participation in education, employment, or training, including reintegration assistance, to reduce dependence on social assistance, are rolled-out					
Number of service providers applying HCD in service (re)design	0	5 (EA local branches) 2 (CSWs)	9 local, 1 central 9 CSWs	More towns than planned were targeted	9 local, 1 central 9 CSWs
Number of people benefiting from piloted human-centered and integrated services, disaggregated by gender and municipality	0	100, out of which at least 50% women (UNDP) 30, out of which at least 30% women	28 beneficiaries were involved in HCD process	up to 100 beneficiaries are expected to benefit from rolled out pilot service in 2022, since the activity timeline was extended	130

		(IOM)			
Number of identified victims of trafficking, disaggregated by gender	8	12, out of which 8 women/girls	5, out of which 4 women/girls	Delayed start of activity implementation due to COVID-19	12, out of which 8 women/girls
Number of ex-Yugoslav refugees with unresolved status and stateless persons/persons at risk of statelessness benefiting from assistance in resolving their legal status	0	1,000, out of which is women/girls	996	N/A	1,000
Number of persons reached by the anti-trafficking related awareness campaign, disaggregated by gender	0	300, out of which at least 50% women (IOM)	No	Delays of activity implementation due to COVID-19	300, out of which at least 50% women
Availability of an assessment of welfare/inactivity traps	No	Yes	No		Yes
Number of young long-term unemployed transitioned from welfare to work	0	72 young long-term unemployed (at least 35 of which women)	42 young women employed 9 young women transitioned to work		
Number of vulnerable young men and women benefitting from the skills building programme at municipal level	0	1500	823	COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions (movements restrictions and group gathering)	1500
Number of municipalities where skills building programmes for vulnerable youth are provided	0	8	4		8
Availability of a mobile-based tool for mental health support, targeting vulnerable young men and women	No	Yes	No	n/a	Yes

Annex 5: List of interviewed persons

Note: the names removed to protect confidentiality

Stakeholder position	Main points of engagement in the JP (how/when they were engaged with the project)
Head of RCO	Head of RCO
ex-Head of RCO, Development Coordination Officer	RCO Main JP Focal Point
RCO, Communications and Advocacy Officer	Contact person for Joint Communications
UNDP Assistant Resident Representative and Social Inclusion Team Leader	Team member in Outcome 1
UNDP, Programme Manager	Team member in project monitoring and coordination (Outcome 2) Also focal point for UNDP activities under Outcome 2, HCD-piloting integrated services for activation, digital skills platform pilot, integrated activation analysis, youth strategy activities.. Also RSIA implementation
UNDP, Project Coordinator	Team member in project monitoring and coordination (Outcome 2)
UNDP, Programme Manager	Team member in RSIA implementation, also focal point for UNDP Activity on persons with disability, short expert opinion on the institutional set up in the area of professional rehabilitation of PWD
UNICEF Deputy Representative	Lead Agency Main JP Focal Point
UNICEF JP Activate Coordinator	UNICEF JP Activate Coordinator
UNICEF Social Policy Officer	UNICEF team member in project monitoring and coordination
UNICEF Adolescent Development Officer	UNICEF member of the team (Outcome 2)
UNHCR, Protection	UNHCR team member in project implementation, monitoring and coordination
UNHCR, External Relations Officer	UNHCR team member in project development, monitoring and coordination
UNHCR, Senior Protection Associate	UNHCR team member in project implementation, monitoring and coordination
ILO, National Project Coordinator	ILO member of the team in times of project development
ILO, Project Coordinator	ILO team member in project monitoring and coordination
IOM, acting Head of Office	IOM acting Head of Office in time of project implementation
IOM, Project assistant	IOM team member in project monitoring and coordination
IOM, Project Assistant	Team member in RSIA implementation
Consultant for component of UNDP and UNICEF	Lead Expert -Simulations, Outcome 1
Consultant for component of UNDP and UNICEF	Individual International Consultant-Simulations
Implementing partner of ILO	Lead Coordinator - Grant Agreement MEF
Implementing partner of ILO	Teacher – Grant Agreement MEF
Implementing partner of ILO	Lead Coordinator - Grant Agreement Municipality Bar
Implementing partner of UNDP	NGO HELP is implementing UNDP pilot project for labour activation
Consultant for component of UNDP	UNDP, consultant for integrated work on labour activation
Consultant for component of UNDP	UNDP, consultant for ethnographic research and integrated work on labour activation
Implementing partner of UNHCR	Support regularization of legal status and social inclusion of statelessness and persons from the former Yugoslavia
Implementing partner of UNHCR	Support regularization of legal status and social inclusion of statelessness and persons from the former Yugoslavia

Implementing partner of UNHCR	Support regularization of legal status and social inclusion of statelessness and persons from the former Yugoslavia
Implementing partner of UNICEF	Implementing partner for social-emotional skills development
Implementing partner of UNICEF	Implementing partner for mental health activities
Implementing partner of IOM	Conducting counter-trafficking awareness-raising campaign
Ex Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare	Outcome 1, policy simulations and modelling for poverty reduction (UNDP and UNICEF)
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, ex Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare	Outcome 1, policy simulations and modelling for poverty reduction (UNDP and UNICEF)
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, ex Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare	Outcome 2. integrated labour activation, HCD, now mentor on the pilot project implemented by Help (UNDP consultant)
	Outcome 1. RSIA implementation, contacts for CSWs (UNDP and UNICEF)
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, ex Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare	Contact person for Activate, integrated labour activation, HCD and HELP project, also integrated labour activation analysis (UNDP)
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, ex Ministry of Economic Development	Outcome 2. Director General for Labour and Employment, integrated labour activation, HCD and HELP project, also digital skills platform focal point (UNDP)
Ministry of Interior, Podgorica	Outcome 2. Related to support to stateless and persons from the former Yugoslavia (ILO)
Ministry of Interior, Berane	Outcome 2. Related to support to stateless and persons from the former Yugoslavia (ILO)
Ministry of Interior, Directorate for Administrative Affairs, Citizenship and Foreigners	Outcome 2. identification, protection, assistance and reintegration of victims of trafficking (IOM)
Ex ministry of education, culture, science and sports	Outcome 2. youth strategy design process and youth benefits card programme development (UNDP)
Employment Agency of Montenegro	Outcome 2. active labour market measure "Activate young women" (ILO)
Employment Agency of Montenegro	Outcome 2. active labour market measure "Activate young women" (ILO)
Employment Agency of Montenegro	Outcome 2. contact person for Activate, integrated labour activation, HCD and HELP project (UNDP)
MONSTAT	Outcome 1, improvement of SILC data (UNDP and UNICEF)
Participant of UNICEF activity	UNICEF, beneficiaries of social-emotional skills programme
Participant of UNICEF activity	UNICEF, beneficiaries of social-emotional skills programme
Participant of ILO activity	Participant of ILO activities for supporting women entrepreneurship in collaboration with the local partnership for employment in the municipality of Bar
Participant of ILO activity	Participant of ILO activities for supporting women entrepreneurship in collaboration with MEF
Participant of ILO activity	Participant of ILO activities for supporting women entrepreneurship in collaboration with MEF
Participant of ILO and UNDP activity	Participant of ILO activities for supporting women entrepreneurship in collaboration with the local partnership for employment in the municipality of Bar, mentor of UNDP and HELP project
Participant of UNDP activity	Mentor of UNDP and HELP project
Participant of UNDP activity	Mentor of UNDP and HELP project
Participant of UNDP activity	Mentor of UNDP and HELP project

Participant of UNDP activity	Beneficiary of UNDP and HELP project
Participant of UNDP activity	Beneficiary of UNDP and HELP project
Participant of UNDP activity	Beneficiary of UNDP and HELP project
Participant of UNDP activity	Beneficiary of UNDP and HELP project
Participant of IOM activity	Participant of IOM activities
Participant of IOM activity	Participant of IOM activities

Annex 9: Bibliography

Background:

- China – CEE Institute, Montenegro economy briefing: Economic Outlook 2022 (<https://china-cee.eu/2022/02/28/montenegro-economy-briefing-economic-outlook-2022/>)
- Demography, Labour Market Statistics and Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2019 published by MONSTAT (www.monstat.org)
- EC Montenegro 2021 report
- EC Montenegro 2020 report
- EC website (https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/montenegro_en)
- European Western Balkans portal (<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/04/28/new-government-of-montenegro-elected-by-the-assembly/>)
- Eurostat, Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET), https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsl_neet_a&lang=en
- Government of Montenegro, Information on Youth Employment Programme in Montenegro for 2022 (<https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/8def027b-cd7b-441f-81c5-7ac720c4bfd8?version=1.0>)
- <https://www.covidodgovor.me/>
- NATO website (https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_144647.htm)
- National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) of Montenegro
- Roadmap of Social Protection Reforms
- Roma inclusion strategy for 2021-2025
- Statistical data on average age population, urbanization from www.statistica.com
- Strategy for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2019-2024
- Strategy for Integration of Persons with Disabilities in Montenegro for the period 2016-2020
- Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System for the period from 2018 to 2022,
- Strategy for the Realization of Child Rights (2019-2023)
- Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro for 2021-2025
- The UN Socio-economic response plan to COVID-19 in Montenegro
- UNDP, Global Human Development Indicators 2020, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/>, <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MNE.pdf>
- Western Balkans Declaration on ensuring sustainable labour market integration of young people
- World Bank, World Bank Open Data (database), <https://data.worldbank.org>
- Youth Strategy 2017-2021

UN Joint Programme related documents

- UN Joint Programme Document
- Terms of Reference for Evaluation of Activate! Joint Programme
- Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report
- Joint Programme 2020 Annual Progress Report
- LNOB portfolio questionnaire 2020-21, quarterly checks
- Rapid Social Impact assessment of the COVID-19 Outbreak in Montenegro (September 2020)
- Rapid Social Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 outbreak in Montenegro (April–June 2020)
- International institutional consultancy to provide technical expertise to develop policy simulation tools for redistributive social policy scenarios in Montenegro, draft report
- JP Concept Notes and ToRs for different activities
- JP various policy and legal analysis related to labour market in Montenegro, draft versions
- JP Presentations

Annex 10: List of site visits

- Podgorica, 30th May 2022-10th June 2022
- Niksic, 2nd June 2022
- Bar, 7th June 2022
- Berane, 9th June 2022

Annex 11: Interview guides

The following text shall serve as basis for interviews and discussions with Key informants

We are an evaluation team commissioned to carry out a summative evaluation of the Joint programme **Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People** in Montenegro. The evaluation offers the opportunity to critically assess the joint programme contribution to social protection sector reforms and provision of more equitable and quality services in the country. The findings of the evaluation will be used as a basis for discussions, planning and programming between UN, Government of Montenegro and other key national and international stakeholders.

We are asking you to participate in the evaluation because you are in a position to contribute a relevant and valuable perspective on the functioning of this program. If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by members of the evaluation team for a duration of approximately 1 hour.

Participation is voluntary: Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You can withdraw from the interview after it has begun, for any reason, with no penalty. Participating or not in the interview will not affect the benefits to the organizations or communities from the Joint Programme.

Risks and benefits: This review is designed to help improve the program by learning from the perspectives of everyone involved. You may not benefit personally from being in this research review. There may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to [_____].

Confidentiality: The reports from this and the other meetings will collect and summarize the views and opinions of participants without connecting them to specific individuals and without using names at any time. Any report of this research will be presented in a way that makes it as difficult as possible for anyone to determine the identity of individuals participating in the evaluation.

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may call _____

Are you willing to be part of this discussion? (verbal response only requested)

Respondent: _____

Title and Function: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

KII- Interview Guide PUNO Representatives

Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions	Interview Questions ⁸⁰
0.0 GENERAL Questions - What have been the most noted results, successes, challenges, and comparative advantage of JP	
0.1 Role and Connection	1. What is your current position and in what ways have you interacted with the JP? 2. How long have you been connected to JP?
0.2 Results	3. Thinking back to when JP began implementation, what changes have you seen in the system as a result of JP support ?
0.3 Strengths and weaknesses	4. What do you see JP as being particularly good at in this intervention? 5. What do you see JP as being particularly weak at in this intervention?
1.0 RELEVANCE and COHERENCE	
6. To what extent the objectives and results of the JP were aligned with the national social sector priorities and frameworks? a. Has this remained appropriate through any changes in context? 7. What actions have you seen JP take to ensure that its strategic positioning remains fit for purpose ? 8. To what extent is JPs strategic positioning in line with Montenegro Institutions' priorities ? 9. In your experience, what do you see as JPs primary comparative advantage for supporting the mix of stakeholders in Montenegro?	
10. To what extent the objectives, results and thematic contributions and mandates of the participating UN Agencies contribute to the achievement of the Joint programme's results? 11. How aligned were the three organization in terms of addressing the country's development priorities and challenges? 12. Were their implementation strategies relevant to the context in Montenegro? If not, why were they not relevant? 13. Which implementation strategies supported by JP do you see as having been the most useful?	
14. Were the objectives of JP adapted to the arising needs under COVID-19? 15. What adjustments were needed to be made to JP to keep it relevant to the changing needs of its target population?	
16. How did JP ensure coherence and synergies across components?	
17. To what extent did PUNOs actively participate and promote coordination mechanisms with government, development partners and other UN agencies to avoid overlaps, leverage contributions and catalyse joint work? 18. Have you encountered any overlaps? Do you have an example of successful synergies?	

2.0 EFFECTIVENESS	
19. What were the key programme results achieved under the programme priorities?	
20. How did JP contribute to the design of an integrated social protection entity/mechanism?	
21. What were the driving factors that promoted programme implementation? What were the hindering factors affecting programme implementation?	
22. How have Gender or equity issues been integrated into the implementation of the programme models? What could be done to better integrate these issues?	
23. To what extent did the programme effectively contribute to accelerating the SDGs at the national level? What is missing?	
24. To what extent do you assess programme results as having been achieved and contributing to overall positive change in Montenegro across sectors to leave no one behind?	
25. To what extent did the programme effectively produce a catalytic effect in terms of generating systems change across sectors to leave no one behind? What is missing?	
26. To what extent were the planned output level results achieved despite the COVID-19 crisis and political/government changes?	
27. What have been some important unintended consequences from JP programming?	
28. If there were any unintended negative outcomes, which were the three most important ones? How were they handled?	

⁸⁰ Not all questions can be asked in all interviews. Different sections will need to be prioritized from different stakeholders. Blue coded questions should be prioritized in any section

29. If there were any unintended positive outcomes, which were the three most important ones? How were they handled?
30. What do you see as some of the key **internal factors** that promoted or inhibited achieving the programme outputs? (in the respective priority areas)?
31. What do you see as some of the key **external factors** that promoted or inhibited achieving the programme outputs (in the respective priority areas)?

3.0 EFFICIENCY

32. Were the available financial, material and human resources **adequate** to meet the set objectives, including in times of the pandemic?
33. To what extent were planned activities and outputs delivered within the **intended timeframe**?
34. To what extent were planned activities and outputs **efficient and appropriate** to context requirements?
 - a. Are there particular **types of planned activities** that have struggled with timeliness or efficiency more than others? Which ones?

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY

35. What was the **envisioned sustainability** in the short and in the long term? What can promote sustainability in the short and in the long term?
36. What were some of the **concrete changes** in national policies, regulations, and plans that can sustain achieved JP results? Are there any concrete plans to scale up the interventions?
37. Can you offer any examples of change in Government's **allocations of national budget** and/or other donor resources towards better supply of services?
38. Can you offer any examples of **change in Institutional capacity** in place to sustain levels of achievement or a strategy/plan exists and funded?
39. What is the progress towards ensuring the **LNOB principle** and enhancing the social protection system?

40. What are some of the comparative **evidences of change** in Government's Legislative and policy framework in the social sector prior and post programme implementation?
41. To what extent did the JP has facilitated **participatory and inclusive** programme and national planning processes?
42. How likely will the results be **sustained** beyond the JP through the action of Government and other stakeholders and/or UNCTs?

5.0 IMPACT

43. How have **vulnerable groups**, including women, children and persons with disabilities benefited (directly and indirectly) from the JP?
44. To what extent have the intended outcomes and overall goals of the Programme **contributed to the changes** in terms of achievement of integrated and sustainable social protection system?
45. To what extent have the intended outcomes and overall goals of the Programme **contributed to the capacity of the government** to improve social protection coverage for all citizens, in particular the most vulnerable, across Montenegro?
46. To what extent, JP design, implementation, and monitoring have been inclusive of persons with disabilities (i.e. accessibility, non-discrimination, participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, data disaggregation)?

KII- Interview Guide- government institutions and civil society at central level

Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions	Interview Questions ⁸¹
0.0 GENERAL Questions - What have been the most noted results, successes, challenges, and comparative advantage of JP	
0.1 Role and Connection	1. What is your current position and in what ways have you interacted with the JP? 2. How long have you been connected to JP?
0.2 Results	3. Thinking back to when JP began implementation, what changes have you seen in the system as a result of JP support ?
0.3 Strengths and weaknesses	4. What do you see JP as being particularly good at in this intervention? 5. What do you see JP as being particularly weak at in this intervention?
1.0 RELEVANCE and COHERENCE	
6. To what extent the objectives and results of the JP were aligned with the national social sector priorities and frameworks? a. Has this remained appropriate through any changes in context?	
7. In your experience, what do you see as JPs primary comparative advantage for supporting the mix of stakeholders in Montenegro?	
8. To what extent the objectives, results and thematic contributions and mandates of the participating UN Agencies contribute to the achievement of the Joint programme's results?	
9. How aligned were the three organization in terms of addressing the country's development priorities and challenges?	
10. Were the objectives of JP adapted to the arising needs under COVID-19 and political changes?	
11. What adjustments were needed to be made to JP to keep it relevant to the changing needs of its target population?	
12. How did JP ensure coherence and synergies across components?	
13. To what extent did PUNOs actively participate and promote coordination mechanisms with government, development partners and other UN agencies to avoid overlaps, leverage contributions and catalyse joint work?	
14. Have you encountered any overlaps? Do you have an example of successful synergies?	

2.0 EFFECTIVENESS	
15. What were the key programme results achieved under the programme priorities?	
16. How did JP contribute to the design of an integrated social protection?	
17. What were the driving factors that promoted programme implementation? What were the hindering factors affecting programme implementation?	
18. How have Gender or equity issues been integrated into the implementation of the programme models? What could be done to better integrate these issues?	
19. To what extent did the programme effectively contribute to accelerating the SDGs at the national level? What is missing?	
20. To what extent do you assess programme results as having been achieved and contributing to overall positive change in Montenegro across sectors to leave no one behind?	
21. To what extent did the programme effectively produce a catalytic effect in terms of generating systems change across sectors to leave no one behind? What is missing?	
22. To what extent were the planned output level results achieved despite the COVID-19 crisis and political/government changes?	
23. What have been some important unintended consequences from JP programming?	
3.0 EFFICIENCY	
24. Were the available financial, material and human resources adequate to meet the set objectives, including in times of the pandemic?	
25. To what extent were planned activities and outputs delivered within the intended timeframe ?	
26. To what extent were planned activities and outputs efficient and appropriate to context requirements?	

⁸¹ Not all questions can be asked in all interviews. Different sections will need to be prioritized from different stakeholders. Blue coded questions should be prioritized in any section

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY

27. What was the **envisioned sustainability** in the short and in the long term? What can promote sustainability in the short and in the long term?
28. What were some of the **concrete changes** in national policies, regulations, and plans that can sustain achieved JP results? Are there any concrete plans to scale up the interventions?
29. Can you offer any examples of change in Government's **allocations of national budget** and/or other donor resources towards better supply of services?
30. Can you offer any examples of **change in Institutional capacity** in place to sustain levels of achievement or a strategy/plan exists and funded?
31. What is the progress towards ensuring the **LNOB principle** and enhancing the social protection system?

32. What are some of the comparative **evidences of change** in Government's Legislative and policy framework in the social sector prior and post programme implementation?
33. To what extent did the JP has facilitated **participatory and inclusive** programme and national planning processes?
34. How likely will the results be **sustained** beyond the JP through the action of Government and other stakeholders and/or UNCTs?

7.0 IMPACT

35. How have **vulnerable groups**, including women, children and persons with disabilities benefited (directly and indirectly) from the JP?
36. To what extent have the intended outcomes and overall goals of the Programme **contributed to the changes** in terms of achievement of integrated and sustainable social protection system?
37. To what extent have the intended outcomes and overall goals of the Programme **contributed to the capacity of the government** to improve social protection coverage for all citizens, in particular the most vulnerable, across Montenegro?
38. To what extent, JP design, implementation, and monitoring have been inclusive of persons with disabilities (i.e. accessibility, non-discrimination, participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, data disaggregation)?

KII- Interview Guide Institution - Local Level

Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions	Interview Questions ⁸²
0.0 GENERAL Questions - What have been the most noted results, successes, challenges, and comparative advantage of JP	
0.1 Role and Connection	1. What is your current position and in what ways have you interacted with the JP? 2. How long have you been connected to JP?
0.2 Results	3. Thinking back to when JP began implementation, what changes have you seen in the system as a result of JP support ?
0.3 Strengths and weaknesses	4. What do you see JP as being particularly good at in this intervention? 5. What do you see JP as being particularly weak at in this intervention?
1.0 RELEVANCE	
6. To what extent the objectives and results of the JP were aligned with the national and local social sector priorities and frameworks? a. Has this remained appropriate through any changes in context?	
7. To what extent is JPs strategic positioning in line with Montenegro's Institutions' priorities ?	
8. Did the programme respond to your institutions' / beneficiaries' needs? What was missing?	
9. To what extent the objectives, results and thematic contributions and mandates of UN Agencies contribute to the achievement of the Joint programme's results?	
10. Were the objectives of JP adapted to the arising needs under COVID-19? What adjustments were needed to be made to JP to keep it relevant to the changing needs of its target population?	
2.0 EFFECTIVENESS	
11. To what extent were the planned programme results achieved? Which factors promoted implementation? Were there factors hindering implementation?	
12. How did JP contribute to the design of an integrated social protection/ALMM/process for legal status for migrants/refuges/stateless persons or those at risk?	
13. How have Gender or equity issues been integrated into the implementation of the programme models? What could be done to better integrate these issues?	
14. To what extent do you assess programme results as having been achieved and contributing to overall positive change in Montenegro across sectors to leave no one behind?	
15. To what extent were the planned output level results [note to interviewer: mention which ones] achieved despite the COVID-19 crisis?	
3.0 EFFICIENCY	
16. In your opinion, did PUNOs implement efficiently the activities in which you engaged in terms of time management, accuracy, quality? What was missing?	
8.0 SUSTAINABILITY	
17. What was the envisioned sustainability in the short and in the long term? What can promote sustainability in the short and in the long term?	
18. What were some of the concrete changes in national policies, regulations, and plans that can sustain achieved JP results? Are there any concrete plans to scale up the interventions?	
9.0 IMPACT	
19. How have vulnerable groups , including women, children and persons with disabilities benefited (directly and indirectly) from the JP?	

⁸² Not all questions can be asked in all interviews. Different sections will need to be prioritized from different stakeholders. Blue coded questions should be prioritized in any section

- | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>20. To what extent have the intended outcomes and overall goals of the Programme contributed to the changes in terms of achievement of integrated and sustainable social protection system?</p> <p>21. To what extent have the intended outcomes and overall goals of the Programme contributed to the capacity of the government to improve social protection coverage for all citizens, in particular the most vulnerable, across Montenegro</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>22. What are some examples of main results achieved by the JP and most salient success stories?</p> <p>23. Why were these activities successful/what were the enabling factors?</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

10.0 SYNERGIES

- | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>24. Have you encountered any projects implemented by other donors/partners on the same subject? Do you have an example of successful synergies?</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|