

RESULTS REPORT 2024



UNITED NATIONS
SERBIA



Foreword by the UN Resident Coordinator



As the United Nations Country Team in Serbia enters the last year of its Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, we are reminded of the many successes that we have had the privilege of accompanying in these last few years. Development indicators highlight advances with regard to the economy, society and environment, and show significant progress in sustainable development.

Of the 60% of Sustainable Development Goal indicators being measured at the national level, more than half have either been achieved or are in progress, with notable strides made in, for instance, poverty reduction and maternal and child health.

In September 2024, world leaders adopted a Pact for the Future that includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations. The Pact is a strong statement of the commitment of countries to the United Nations, the international system and international law. It calls for accelerated action on Agenda 2030, climate and financing for development. The Global Digital Compact is the first comprehensive global framework for digital cooperation and governance, covering areas such as connectivity, online safety, Artificial Intelligence and data access. Meanwhile, the first-ever Declaration on Future Generations emphasizes the importance of providing meaningful opportunities for young people to participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Finally, the Pact calls for the strengthening of our work on human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women.

Serbia is firmly committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Country Team is proud to be a dedicated partner in this endeavour. In 2024, we continued our collaboration with national institutions, the private sector, academia and civil society partners on the green transition and climate action; transformation of economic sectors and a resilient agriculture; human well-being and the development of the country's human capital; and strengthening of the Rule of Law and the capacities of local self-governments. Our focus on the principle of Leave No One Behind compels us to continually review and refine our actions to best support the most vulnerable.



Throughout the year, we championed gender equality and combated gender-based violence. We worked for and with women, children, Roma populations, refugees and migrants, and people with disabilities. It is not a coincidence that a large portion of our work was in collaboration with youth, who are key agents in shaping a sustainable future. Young people contributed to environmental and climate initiatives, developed solutions for social cohesion and influenced local planning on a diverse range of issues. Likewise, in line with the Pact of the Future and among many initiatives, the United Nations in Serbia is systematically advancing digitalization, supporting digital literacy, improving access for various users and sectors, and enhancing e-Government measures.

In 2024, the Cooperation Framework underwent a comprehensive evaluation to assess the Country Team's results and efficiency. The evaluation confirmed that we remain a valued partner, achieving impactful results thanks to our technical expertise, operational capacities, a wide range of partnerships, and the generous support of our contributors.

I am delighted to present our key achievements in 2024 in this annual report and take this opportunity to congratulate the UN Country Team and extend a heartfelt thank you to our partners and donors for their collaboration and support throughout the year. Reflecting on these accomplishments, let us advance with determination and amplify our impact, united by our shared commitment and vision.

Matilde Mordt
Resident Coordinator

United Nations Country Team in Serbia

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Serbia comprises 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes, with 12 operating within the country and eight providing support as non-resident agencies. The Team is led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) and guides implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021–2025, the key UN Strategy in the country. This effort is overseen by a Steering Committee chaired by the RC, alongside the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of European Integration.

In partnership with the government and various stakeholders, UNCT is committed to fostering green and inclusive development, reducing inequalities, enhancing well-being, promoting social equity and unlocking human potential. By building mutual trust and accountability, we work with partners to advance sustainable development in Serbia, in alignment with Agenda 2030 and the EU Accession process.



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International
Labour
Organization



IOM
UN MIGRATION



UNDRR
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



UNECE



UN
environment
programme



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



unicef



UNIDO



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



UNOPS



UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women



World Health
Organization

Key development partners of the UN in Serbia

The UN system in Serbia works closely with a wide range of development partners. These include the Serbian government, donor governments, development agencies, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions, think-tanks, religious leaders, the private sector and the media.

UNCT extends its gratitude to the donors and financial contributors who supported our initiatives in 2024, both through financial support and in-kind contributions. We also extend our highest appreciation to our implementing partners for their active engagement and steadfast commitment.



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CHAPTER 1

Key developments in Serbia and regional context

Serbia ranked 35th worldwide, with a score of 77, in the 2024 Sustainable Development Solutions Network Report, which measures overall progress towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Geographical area

77,474 km²
88,361 km² with Kosovo¹

(Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, SORS)



The government endorsed the Pact for the Future, which includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations that aim to transform global governance and address issues such as sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights and gender equality (GE). It also strengthened SDG implementation by establishing an Inter-Ministerial Working Group and securing US\$1.5 billion in Sustainable Development Bonds. At the local level, the City of Niš became the first in Serbia to produce a Voluntary Local Review, laying the groundwork for aligning urban development with the SDGs.

The late formation of government in May initially delayed several policy implementations. However, momentum was regained and key reforms advanced throughout the year. Serbia deepened its role in multilateral cooperation, presiding over the Central European Initiative and the Global Partnership for Artificial Intelligence (AI). New trade opportunities emerged through a Free Trade Agreement with the People’s Republic of China and the signing of another with Egypt. In October, the government adopted a national Reform Agenda with 98 targeted measures linked to the EU Growth Plan, unlocking EUR€1.58 billion in grants and concessional finance. Regional cooperation advanced with the operationalization of the Open Balkans Single Labour Market and adoption of the 2025–2028 Common Regional Market Action Plan. Positive economic growth was driven in part by the ‘Leap into the Future’ programme, which foresees public investments of close to €18 billion over four

years, including the 2027 Specialised Expo. The country maintained investment-grade credit ratings, reflecting sound macroeconomic fundamentals.

The green transition gained momentum. Serbia adopted its first Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan and secured funding to expand renewables. Wind, solar, hydropower and waste-to-energy plants were launched or rehabilitated. Citizens benefitted from energy efficiency incentives, while environmental protection advanced with the opening of a desulfurization plant, closure of unsanitary landfills and designation of new protected areas. With €1 billion allocated to its first Green Budget, the country signalled a shift towards greener public spending. Climate change impacts were stark: a scorching heatwave in July–August caused substantial agricultural losses. Serbia strengthened its strategic partnership with the EU on sustainable raw materials, with a focus on enhancing its role in the green transition and aligning policies with EU environmental standards. However, nationwide protests also took place over environmental concerns such as lithium mining, indicating that the trade-offs between economic development and environmental protection still remain to be discussed and resolved.

In May 2024, Serbia underwent a review by the UN Human Rights Committee (CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4), which commended the country for adopting various legal and institutional measures, including laws on media, the judiciary and GE, as well as ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee also highlighted the necessity for a stronger legal framework, better implementation of existing laws, prompt investigation of human rights violations and enhanced awareness-raising efforts to address these pressing matters. In June 2024, the Constitutional Court suspended the Gender Equality Law to assess its constitutionality, with a decision still pending.

The government adopted the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2024–2028. However, public concerns over governance and accountability intensified following an infrastructure accident in Novi Sad with 15 civilian casualties, which led to student protests calling for improved safety measures and transparency.

Young people are at the heart of reforms to build human capital. The Employment Strategy Action Plan targets youth employability through vocational training and dual education, while piloting of the Youth Guarantee is strengthening human capital. Educational outcomes improved on the previous year, with increasing completion rates and efforts to expand inclusive education. Poverty levels declined, reflecting positive trends in economic inclusion, though vulnerable groups continue to face barriers. The burden of non-communicable diseases remains substantial, with limited shifts in prevention and health promotion. Social protection reform progressed slowly, with gaps persisting in the coverage, targeting and adequacy of support for those most at risk of exclusion.

Population (2024) (SORS)	6,605,168	Corruption perception index (2022) (Human Development Report)	65/193	Rule of Law Index: 0.47 (2024) (World Justice Project)	GR: 94/142 RG: 11/15
Unemployment rate (15 and over) (Quarter IV 2024) (SORS)	8.6%	Global Gender Gap Index (2024) (Global Ranking), Score 0.779	26/146	Female legislators, senior officials and managers (2021) (UNECE)	33%
GDP per capita (current US\$) (2023) (World Bank)	12,281.50	Global Freedom Score (Partly Free) (Freedom House, 2024)	57/100	Global Freedom Score (Global Ranking, 2024)	105/180
At-risk-of-poverty rate (2023) (SORS)	19.9%	Proportion of youth (age 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (2023) (SORS)	M: 12.7% F: 12.2%	Internet Freedom Score (Free) (Freedom House, 2024)	70/100

1. All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

CHAPTER 2

UN in Serbia support to national development priorities through the Cooperation Framework

2.1 Overview of Cooperation Framework Results in 2024

Serbia's development priorities are aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the strategic goal of EU membership, building on the strong synergies between the two processes. The national vision for sustainable development is articulated in a number of sectoral strategies, while the government's ambition to develop the National Development Plan – an overarching sustainable development strategy – should further enhance the implementation and synergies of both the 2030 Agenda and EU accession.

UNCT in Serbia prioritized supporting government in advancing the sustainable development and EU accession agenda across its three Cooperation Framework priorities (Table 1): 1, Green economy and climate change; 2, Well-being, social equity and human capital; and 3, Rule of law, human rights and gender equality. These efforts aim to nurture a more resilient economy and a cohesive, inclusive society.

Clean energy and efficiency were supported by improving heating systems, modernizing wastewater treatment and introducing the first Local Circular Economy Roadmaps in several cities, while energy-efficient building renovations further contributed to reducing emissions and enhancing sustainability. To **improve air quality**, efforts focused on strengthening regulations, expanding Local Air Quality Plans and implementing innovative pollution-reduction measures. Youth engagement was

central, with young advocates driving awareness and policy discussions. Research into landfill fires and air pollution informed policy actions, while Belgrade's first Green Infrastructure Strategy introduced nature-based solutions to combat urban air pollution. For **climate-resilient infrastructure and adaptation**, road safety improvements were advanced, a regional climate adaptation platform fostered cooperation and thousands of young people engaged in local climate action. To **enhance community resilience**, policymakers and farmers received training in climate-smart agriculture, while new policies supported sustainable farming and disaster preparedness. The Disaster Risk Register, early warning systems and emergency response measures were strengthened, improving Serbia's ability to respond to climate-related risks.

Substantial progress was achieved in strengthening human and social capital with key achievements including **expansion of the Integrated Health Information System**, adoption of the **Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities**, increased **Measles, Mumps and**

Rubella (MMR) vaccination rates, significant **investments in early childhood development and mental health initiatives** and **reintroducing tobacco control into the political agenda**. Education reforms engaged thousands of preschool professionals, teachers and students, while **vocational training and digital skills programmes** benefitted diverse groups, including migrants and marginalized girls. Enhanced migration governance and social inclusion efforts, such as development of the **Demographic Resilience Strategy** and refugee integration events, further supported Serbia's progress. Gender equality initiatives were also prioritized, with **gender-based violence services and empowerment programmes for women and girls** strengthened.

Significant advancements were made in **policy and legislative reforms within justice, human rights and social protection sectors**, alongside digitalization of judicial and law enforcement systems. **National human rights capacities** were strengthened, including through development of a child-friendly

platform for tracking recommendations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Significant advancements were made in **policy and legislative reforms within the justice, human rights and social protection sectors**, alongside the digitalization of judicial and law enforcement systems. Serbia's health system became more resilient and better prepared for health emergencies. **GE and women's rights** were prioritized with notable campaigns and capacity-building initiatives. Support for migrants, refugees and individuals at risk of statelessness was enhanced, and **national capacities to combat human trafficking were bolstered**. The UN e-Government survey recognized **Serbia's leadership in digital innovation** and public financial management reforms advanced to meet EU standards. Additionally, regional cooperation advanced on small arms control and war crimes accountability, while youth played a stronger role in promoting understanding and respect for diversity.

Table 1. Cooperation Framework – Strategic Priorities, Outcomes, Definitions and Expenditures, 2024

OUTCOME 1.1	
Green economy transformation	\$ 23.56M
OUTCOME 1.2	
Natural and cultural resources preservation	\$ 1.30M
OUTCOME 1.3	
Innovations in economic and employment opportunities	\$ 15.17M
OUTCOME 2.1	
Health and social protection	\$ 14.56M
OUTCOME 2.2	
Skills and education	\$ 7.13M
OUTCOME 2.3	
Mobility and demographic resilience	\$ 3.40M
OUTCOME 3.1	
Human rights, gender equality and social cohesion	\$ 19.91M
OUTCOME 3.2	
Effective governance and civic engagement	\$ 9.92M

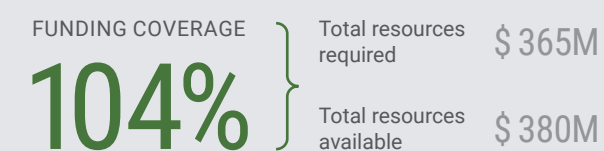


2.2 Achieving Results for Serbia – Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs

2.2.1 UN Country Team Contributions and Key Achievements in 2024

With three priorities and eight interlinked and mutually reinforcing outcomes, the UN Cooperation Framework provides a blueprint for addressing key development priorities that contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda and ensuring a greener, healthier and better future where no one is left behind.

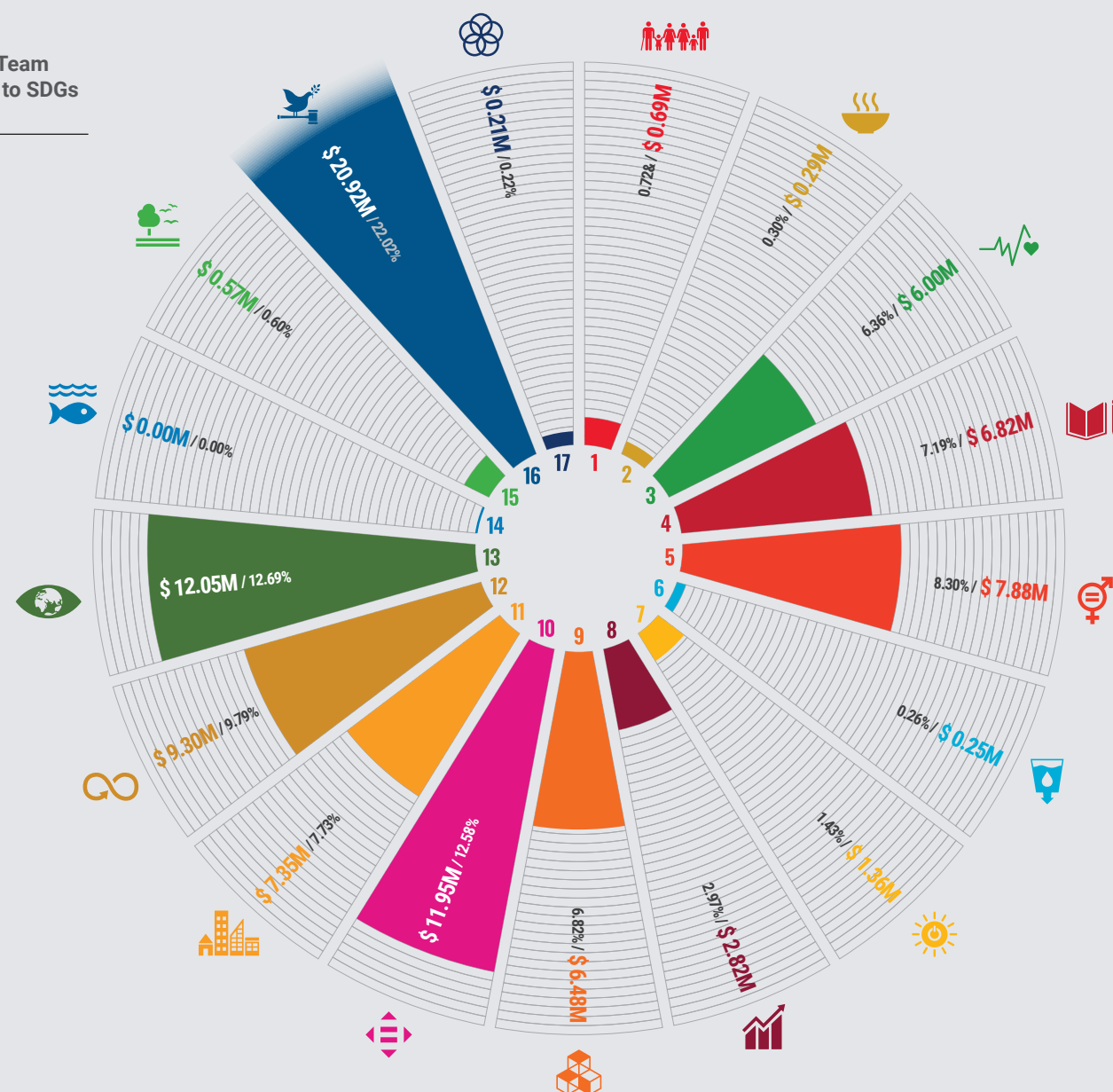
Multi-year funding overview, 2021–2025



Yearly funding overview in 2024

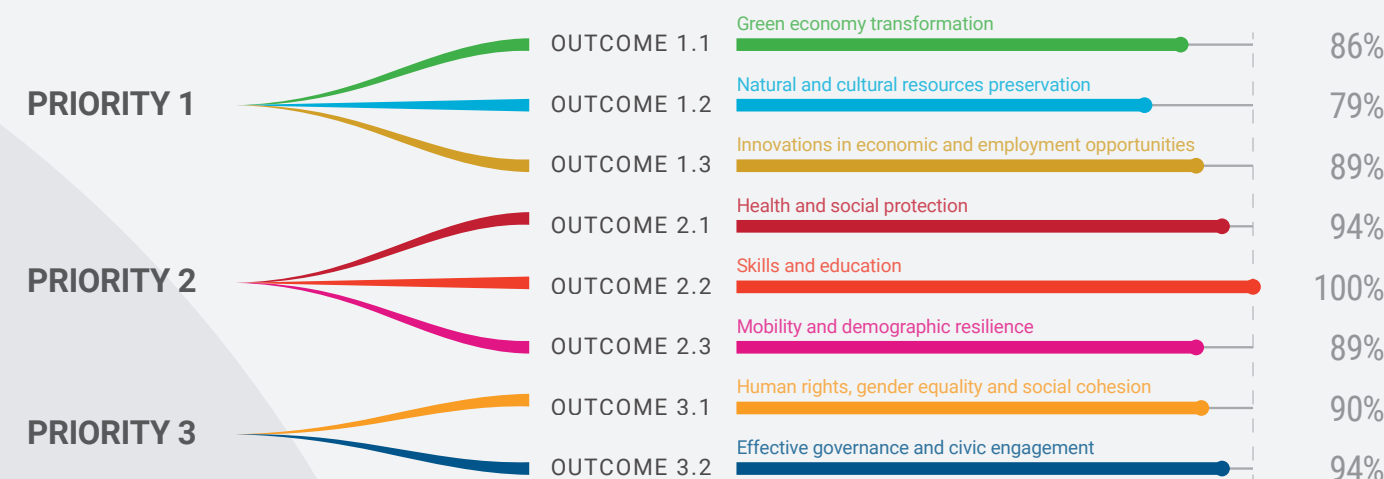


UN Country Team contribution to SDGs in 2024

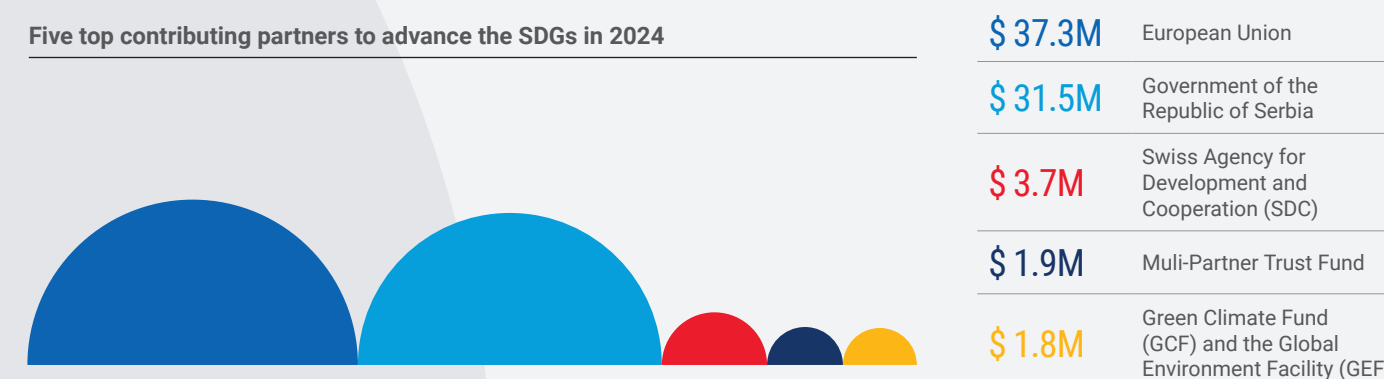


Achievement of Cooperation Framework indicators in 2024 Output Results Framework

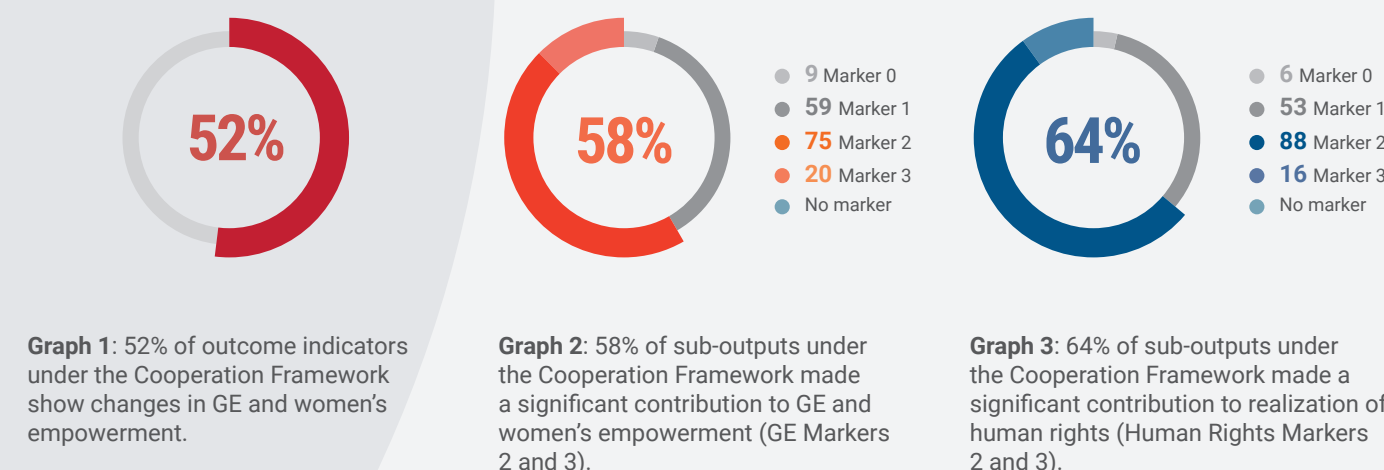
The progress of each Outcome is based on output indicators assessed by the responsible UN agency according to the actual achievement of the annual targets, using the following traffic light and 4–point scoring system: Green (3 points), planned results achieved; Yellow (2 points), minor elements still to be completed; Orange (1 point), limited progress achieved; Red (0 points), no measurable progress. The percentage of Outcome achievement is calculated based on the total score per output.



Five top contributing partners to advance the SDGs in 2024



UN Country Team contribution to human rights and gender equality



A snapshot of the results achieved in 2024 at the country level for 27 out of 64 indicators of the UNSDG Global Output Indicator Framework

2 ZERO HUNGER



ENDING HUNGER AND STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS

- 2.2 In 2024, national dialogues on food system transformation were organized to advance sustainable, climate-resilient food systems

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



QUALITY HEALTH, SOCIAL AND PROTECTION SERVICES

- 3.1 Development of new law on health documentation and records with by-laws supported
- 3.2 National authorities assisted in health system transformation, disease prevention and improvement of PHC
- 3.3 >115,000 users of Bebbo app. for early childhood development
>1 million reached in youth mental health campaign

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



STRONG, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- 4.1 Serbia scored 4 out of 7 for inclusivity and gender equitability in education system and learning opportunities
- 4.3 >1,000 people from vulnerable groups benefitted from learning programmes on SRH, gender-based violence and healthy and active aging



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5 GENDER EQUALITY



GENDER EQUALITY

- 5.1 National action plan for elimination of violence against women and girls developed
- 5.2 Institutionalization of prevention mechanisms in 8 municipalities implemented
- 5.4 Council for Gender Equality, Coordination Body for GE and National Coalition to end Child Marriage supported to address discriminatory gender and social norms
- 5.7 Mechanisms in place to advance women's and girl's decisions on sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care
- 5.8 At least 112,000 children and adults gained access to safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



DECENT AND RIGHTS-BASED WORK

- 8.1 Legal framework incorporating international human rights norms and standards at work developed
- 8.2 674 private sector entities (including MSMEs) improved performance and income generation
- 8.3 5 workers and employee organizations increased capacity to promote employment and decent work
- 8.4 400 people benefitted from programmes to prevent and address child labour, trafficking, and forced labour



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9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

- 9.2 426 private sector entities (including MSMEs) introduced innovative business practices to mainstream environmental sustainability

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



REDUCED INEQUALITIES

- 10.2 26 national and local development policies integrate migration and recognize migrants as contributors to sustainable development
- 10.3 >4,500 internally displaced, children, migrants, refugees benefitted from integrated and targeted interventions, including on mental health and WASH

13 CLIMATE ACTION



CLIMATE ACTION AND RISK REDUCTION

- 13.1 3 policy measures developed and implementation of NDCs under Paris Agreement supported
- 13.3 DRR Strategy 2024–2027 developed

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



RULE OF LAW AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- 16.1 Quality of free and universal birth registration service within civil registration and vital statistics is high
- 16.2 National Mechanism for Reporting is globally recognized as a good example of national mechanisms, with direct and meaningful participation of CSOs
- 16.3 5 concrete initiatives implemented to end all forms of violence and promote rule of law and ensure equal access to justice
- 16.4 Meaningful participation of rights' holders (especially women, persons with disabilities, Roma, LGBTI persons and youth) in public processes significantly progressed
- 16.6 >900 people supported to access justice

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



MONITORING THE SDGS

- 17.2 Alignment of national budgeting system with SDGs that enables tracking of budget allocation for SDGs is limited, some progress has been made in gender-responsive budgeting
- 17.3 Data collection and analysis to monitor progress towards SDGs further improved; in 2024, first VNR (Niš) in Serbia published



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CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES



2.3 Achieving results for Serbia
– detailed analysis

PRIORITY 1
Green economy
and climate
change

Contribution to EU accession policy area clusters

- 3 Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth
- 4 Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity
- 5 Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion

Contribution to EU negotiations chapters

- 11 Agriculture and Rural Development
- 12 Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy
- 15 Energy
- 19 Social Policy and Employment
- 21 Trans-European Networks
- 27 Environment and Climate Change

Budget: \$46,238,505

Delivery: \$39,664,360



Anica Spasov

President of 'Our House'

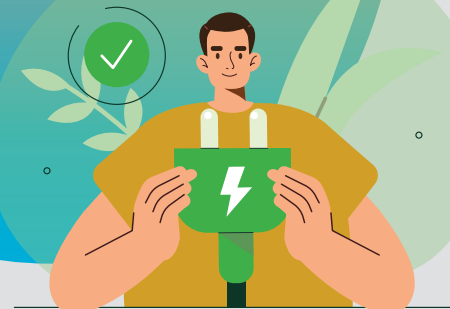
At 'Our House', we provide more than a workplace for young people with developmental disabilities: we're a beacon of hope and purpose. Here, these dedicated individuals transform used cigarette packets into premium recycled paper, creating a product that symbolizes opportunity and inclusion. It's not just a job: it's a community where the contributions are valued in our pursuit of a sustainable future.

The 'Our House' initiative, in collaboration with the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, aims to cut down on plastic use, reduce greenhouse gases and promote social inclusion. Supported by the 'Circular Communities' project, this effort is being supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with Serbia's Ministry of Environmental Protection and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

OUTCOME 1.1

Green economy transformation

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



54 projects

related to circular economy supported with **\$ 1.3M in grants**, generating total investment value of **\$ 13.5M**

€ 40M loan & € 0.9M grant

secured for renovating 28 gov't buildings, of which 50% are heritage sites

83 university buildings

underwent 'walk-through' assessments to evaluate energy performance for energy performance (65 Belgrade, 18 Novi Sad)

Output 1.1.1

Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency

In 2024, collective UN efforts significantly advanced Serbia's clean energy transition. Families in Niš experienced direct improvements through upgraded district heating systems that substantially reduced emissions and household heating costs. Workers at Umka Ltd. benefitted from an advanced wastewater treatment system utilizing biogas, aligned with best available technique standards. UN-supported investments launched 54 innovative projects nationwide, boosting recycling, sustainable business practices and waste-to-energy solutions. Key regulatory instruments, including the Eco-Label Rulebook and an analysis of Deposit-Based Packaging Waste systems, established essential policy foundations for Serbia's circular economy. Additionally, a €40 million sovereign loan enabled energy-efficient rehabilitation of 28 central

government buildings, half of which are classified as heritage sites. Serbia's institutional capacities were strengthened through six new regulatory rulebooks, enhancing compliance in energy audits. Energy assessments of 83 university buildings identified efficient renovation measures, delivering tangible financial and environmental benefits. Innovative projects such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified student housing in New Belgrade and geothermal heat pump explorations around significant public buildings highlighted the country's strategic shift toward sustainable infrastructure. Furthermore, 'Biomethane Production in Serbia – Gap Analysis' identified opportunities for increased energy independence by reducing reliance on imported natural gas (UNDP).

Output 1.1.2

Clean Air

Serbia achieved notable progress in improving air quality through integrated UN initiatives. An ex ante analysis and draft revision of the Law on Air Protection strengthened significantly the regulatory framework, enhancing national air quality governance. UN-supported interventions improved directly air quality management plans across 29 municipalities, with targeted implementations benefitting residents in nine localities. Public-private partnerships successfully implemented 14 projects, delivering tangible solutions to air pollution challenges (UNDP). Youth engagement greatly amplified these efforts: over 1,000 young people across 40 cities participated actively in the Youth4Air Ambassadors programme, providing practical energy efficiency support to marginalized families in Kragujevac and Kraljevo, while 300 youth, including refugees and migrants, were engaged through the UPSHIFT programme in developing solutions to air pollution and social cohesion, with ongoing mentoring and financial support. In Vojvodina, the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) climate initiative increased significantly climate resilience among local policymakers, children and youth by improving water and sanitation infrastructure (UNICEF). Health and environmental research informed air quality policies, notably through a proposal for Serbia's first economic assessment of health benefits derived from climate

mitigation actions (WHO). The working paper 'Wasted Air: Impact of Landfill Fires on Air Pollution and People's Health in Serbia' was published, highlighting systemic gaps in waste management and the increasing frequency of landfill fires that pose severe public health risks. Following extensive consultations, Belgrade adopted in December 2024 its first-ever Green Infrastructure Strategy, which integrates Nature-Based Solutions to combat urban air pollution and enhance public health, marking a crucial step in preserving and improving the city's green infrastructure (UNEP).

Output 1.1.3

Climate Change and Infrastructure

UN support significantly strengthened Serbia's climate resilience and sustainable infrastructure. A regional programme on climate adaptation in the Western Balkans was launched to support knowledge exchange, data sharing and capacity building for climate-informed planning (UNEP).



>1300

youth engaged to address air pollution

29 LSGS

upgraded or developed Local Air Quality Plans

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Jelena Mitrović

14 investments

of public-private partnerships in air quality improvements, value of **\$ 1.5M**

UN technical assistance strengthened the country's road safety system through regional collaboration with Bosnia and Herzegovina, supporting the implementation of legal instruments and the national road safety strategy (UNECE). Continued support helped Serbia comply with its hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) phase-out schedule under the Montreal Protocol and the phase-out management plan. Efforts focused on the refrigeration manufacturing and servicing sectors, aiming for a 67.5% reduction in HCFC consumption by 2025 (UNIDO). Advancements in Serbia's greenhouse gas monitoring system, alongside the development of a decarbonization investment portfolio, reinforced the country's global climate commitments (UNDP). Strategic youth engagement initiatives empowered Serbian youth, with more than 2,000 young people involved in peer-led climate workshops across five cities. This engagement led to tangible local impacts, such as youth contributions to waste management policies in Vranje and a youth seat on Čačak's environmental strategy group. Educational programmes, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-based environmental initiatives and disaster risk training for educators, strengthened national preparedness, fostered long-term resilience and informed youth engagement on climate issues (UNICEF).

Output 1.1.4

Community Resilience

Collective UN interventions significantly increased Serbian community resilience to climate risks and natural disasters. Targeted capacity building in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management equipped policymakers and technical officials with advanced knowledge in climate-smart agricultural practices. Demonstration centres and extensive farmer training programmes benefitted directly 850 farmers, enhancing their resilience to climate variability (FAO). Disaster risk management efforts, including post-disaster recovery assessments and an updated disaster risk data system, significantly improved emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Community investments, such as enhanced firefighting infrastructure and localized disaster preparedness training, directly increased public safety and resilience (UNDP). Local governance capacity building under the PRO-Local Governance initiative improved environmental management practices across 20 municipalities, directly benefitting residents (UNOPS). Targeted heatwave campaigns and emergency response volunteer training enhanced local emergency capacities, particularly benefitting children and vulnerable groups (UNICEF).

First Biennial Transparency Report submitted to UNFCCC

15 public-private sector

investments contributing to decarbonization supported, with total investment of \$ 15.7M

New DRR and Emergency Management Strategy aligned with the Sendai Framework drafted

80 local policies

and regulations were developed across 20 LSGs

40+ officials

trained in DRR & climate-smart agriculture

34 stations

offer DRR, climate-smart, soil, & organic farming advice

15,000 students

in 30 schools received STEM boxes

1300

people from 327 smallholder farms in 103 communities received support after the 2023 floods

850 farmers

trained in climate-smart agriculture practices

241

demonstration plots used to showcase sustainable techniques

16 LSGs

took steps toward green governance, including Green Councils, Roadmaps, and Air Quality Programmes

Green Agenda Strategy, with a focus on sustainable food systems and rural development drafted



OUTCOME 1.2

Natural and cultural resources preservation

Natural and cultural resources are managed in a sustainable way

Output 1.2.1

Cultural and Historical Resources

UN-supported policy innovations empowered local cultural actors and strengthened Serbia's creative sector through inclusive participatory planning and enhanced funding access. These efforts directly contributed to safeguarding cultural heritage and economic inclusivity in local cultural initiatives (UNESCO).

Output 1.2.2

Ecosystems and Biodiversity

UN-supported interventions supported ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation, integrating sustainable land management, policy alignment and innovative financing. In Kikinda and Dimitrovgrad, farmers benefitted from soil restoration initiatives, while national capacity for soil and water pollution assessment was improved through collaboration with environmental agencies. More than 287 farmers were trained in eco-friendly farming to reduce pollution risks (FAO).

Through the Green Agenda Challenge Calls, 13 biodiversity projects and 7 wetland conservation initiatives received funding. A citizen science app. for wetland conservation was put in development, alongside upgrades to environmental monitoring tools.

Land degradation

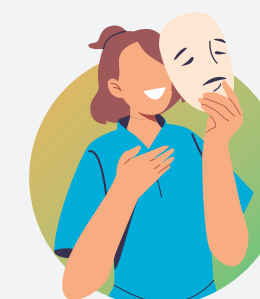
reduced in 2 pilot regions, including afforestation, agroforestry & shelterbelts to protect soil

287

producers trained in sustainable farming & safe pesticide use



The BIOFIN programme was launched to bridge the biodiversity financing gap, while legislative improvements included updates to the Law on Nature Protection and the Decrees on Ecological Network and Appropriate Assessment. Forest landscape restoration progressed with three completed plans and six feasibility studies (UNDP). Under the Early Action Support Programme, Serbia aligned national biodiversity targets with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. A new Nature Protection Programme, set for completion in 2025, will align with Serbia's Environmental Protection Strategy, 2033. Additionally, wetland restoration efforts advanced through the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, shaping the 2025 Wetland Restoration Action Plan (UNEP).



Innovative Local Cultural Policy Model developed by communities to boost equitable growth in the creative sector

22 proposals

under Green Agenda Call; 13 projects advanced, 7 supported; 10 wetlands projects accelerated

6 forest landscape

restoration plans: 3 completed, 3 in draft



OUTCOME 1.3

Innovations in economic and employment opportunities

Equitable economic and employment opportunities are promoted through innovation

1.6M people

benefit from 12 adopted territorial strategies across 31 LSGs

7 LSGs

updated waste management plans; 3 developed organic waste and sludge plans

Output 1.3.1

Local Development Strategies

Local authorities' capacities were strengthened in environmental governance, focusing on air pollution, waste management, nature protection, energy efficiency and green councils (UNEP). Twelve territorial strategies were adopted across 31 LSGs benefitting 1.6 million people. Eighteen integrated projects were awarded through a dedicated grant scheme, currently under implementation across 30 municipalities. Additionally, a national model for integrated territorial development was submitted to the Ministry of European Integration (UNOPS).

Output 1.3.2

Economic Transformation

Serbian stakeholders increased vigilance against livestock diseases and targeted trainings improved skills of farmers and small businesses in food safety, digital marketing and sustainable practices (FAO). The UN collectively supported Serbia's implementation of its National Food System Pathways, promoting rights to adequate food and safe water, and facilitating Serbia's first bio-district, including empowering women's associations through training in branding, agroecology, biodiversity and sustainable tourism (FAO, UN

18

integrated projects awarded covering 30 LSGs with € 12.8M total funding

\$ 246M

leveraged in green investment through 66 EU green projects, with \$ 33m total investment



Women, UNEP, UNECE). Serbian stakeholders increased vigilance against livestock diseases and targeted trainings improved skills of farmers and small businesses in food safety, digital marketing and sustainable practices (FAO). Seven municipalities enhanced their waste management by adopting circular economy principles, while three created integrated organic waste plans. Geothermal and biomethane studies identified investment opportunities in renewable energy solutions. A Food Traceability Platform and regulations on organic production were developed to enhance agricultural transparency and safety (UNDP). The Smart Manufacturing Innovation Centre at Novi Sad provided SMEs access to Industry 4.0 technologies, training and innovation, expanding across the region to foster industrial competitiveness and sustainability (UNIDO).

Output 1.3.3

Science, Technology, Innovation

UN-supported science-business collaborations advanced significantly Serbia's innovation ecosystem. Initiatives such as the Circular Vouchers programme institutionalized sustainable innovations in recycling, bioenergy and waste management, benefitting directly local economies and communities. The 'Circular Communities' of innovators, established through Challenge Calls and Acceleration processes, provided valuable insights into regulatory obstacles and informed key policy improvements (UNDP). Cross-border cooperation in contaminated site management enhanced Serbia's regional environmental resilience and scientific cooperation, fostering impactful cross-sectoral innovation (UNEP).

Output 1.3.4

Decent Employment

Integrated UN efforts significantly strengthened employment opportunities, labour rights enforcement and youth employability. Through a Social Dialogue project, critical analyses informed policy reforms, enhancing social dialogue and labour protections. The Youth Guarantee initiative provided strategic support to finalize national implementation plans and recommended structural improvements within the National Employment Service, directly benefitting young job seekers and marginalized groups (ILO). Targeted employment programmes supported young Roma in securing decent jobs through specialized training, advancing inclusive employment under the Youth Guarantee (UNICEF). Support to micro- and small enterprises led to the creation of 274 new jobs, with women occupying over half of these positions. Additionally, 113 corporate social responsibility initiatives were implemented across 42 local communities, benefitting more than 17,000 people. Start-up support for youth and women resulted in 63 new jobs and the completion of 39 business ventures. Economic infrastructure development in 13 municipalities enabled the launch of three factories and generated 900 jobs (UNOPS).



20 Roma youth

selected in 12 municipalities, supporting employment pathways following landfill closures

274 new jobs

created through 113 CSR activities in 42 communities, benefitting 17,000+ people

900

new jobs created through 3 factories opened by 13 infrastructure projects in 20 LSGs, supporting industrial zones & tourism



CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES



PRIORITY 2

Well-being, social equity and human capital



Contribution to EU accession policy area clusters

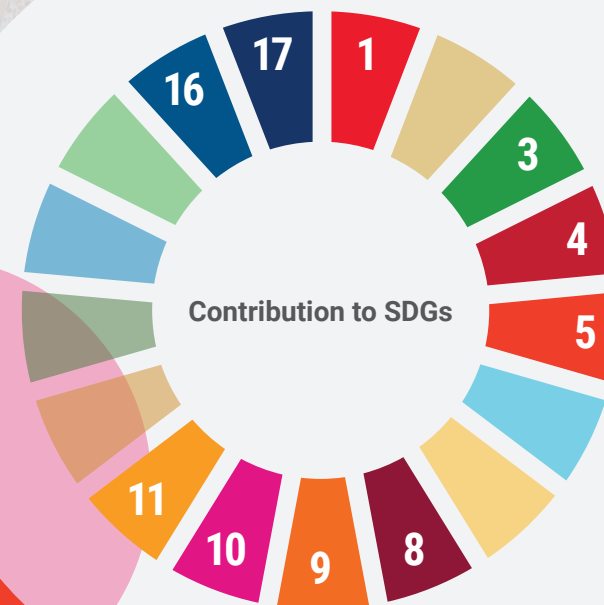
- 1 Fundamentals
- 2 Internal Market
- 3 Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth

Contribution to EU negotiations chapters

- 18 Statistics
- 19 Social Policy and Employment
- 24 Justice, Freedom and Security
- 25 Science and Research
- 26 Education and Culture
- 28 Consumer and Health Protection

Budget: \$30,626,381

Delivery: \$25,099,547



Muhamed Javad

A refugee from Afghanistan

"I feel like I've succeeded. I speak Serbian, I have friends, and I see my future in Serbia. I want to live my life to the fullest!"

Muhamed has transformed his life in Serbia, overcoming language barriers and finding employment in a salon. His journey symbolizes hope and perseverance, as he navigates a new chapter in his life.

UNHCR supported Muhamed by assisting with language learning, enrolment in high school and adaptation to his new environment. This comprehensive support equipped him with the skills and confidence to secure a job and build a promising future in Serbia.

© UNHCR/Dragan Mitić

OUTCOME 2.1

Health and social protection

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



1,000

unvaccinated children received MMR in 12 low coverage municipalities

50,000+ youth

reached by SveJeOK counselling platform

23,000+ families

reached via home visits for health messages

Output 2.1.1

Health and Social Protection

UN efforts across Serbia continued to focus on building a more resilient and inclusive health system. Nearly 1,000 children in 12 underserved municipalities received life-saving protection against measles, mumps and rubella. This outreach, guided by new assessment tools that go beyond vaccination coverage, improved outbreak preparedness (WHO). Vaccine hesitancy was addressed through training and improved cold storage facilities, enhancing trust and access in hard-to-reach areas (UNICEF). Digital solutions transformed health service delivery, an integrated health information system and e-Referral platform streamlined care (UNDP, WHO), while paediatric e-Health records now monitor development in 70% of primary centres (UNICEF). A popular parenting app., *Bebbo*, offers expert guidance and digital prompts for timely checkups and vaccinations, reaching families across the country (UNICEF). Health infrastructure upgrades advanced across the system. Preparations for laboratory renovations in Belgrade, Niš and Kragujevac were completed (UNDP), and work began on five new health centres (UNOPS). A national benchmarking assessment

improved regulatory systems for blood and blood products, laying the foundation for improved transfusion safety protocols (WHO).

A major milestone was the development of Serbia's first intersectoral mental health and psycho-social support plan for children and youth—a comprehensive, costed roadmap of nearly \$1 million, created through a national working group involving six ministries (UNICEF). The city of Zrenjanin signed the first local protocol on early childhood mental health with nine institutions. More than 50,000 young people accessed counselling online, while the Youth Minimum Service Package trained frontline professionals to recognize signs of distress and deliver mental health first aid (UNICEF). The *Čuvaj sebe, ne čuvaj u sebi* campaign reached 1.2 million people, gained 2 million social media impressions, and drew 2,700 youth to a new mental health platform—part of efforts to improve youth mental healthcare (WHO). Maternal and reproductive health also improved. Women in Belgrade and Niš accessed cervical screening services. Updated childbirth guidelines and educational materials were introduced, while antenatal care systems were evaluated and strengthened to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes (UNFPA). Early childhood development services were scaled significantly, and quality home visits reached more than 23,000 families across nearly half of all municipalities. Multidisciplinary early intervention services expanded to 84% of districts, backed by new legislation and more than \$3 million were mobilized by local governments. Over 1,800 practitioners were trained in playful parenting approaches, while 2,325 families, including vulnerable Roma, benefitted from mental health and well-being support (UNICEF).

Output 2.1.2

Innovative Social Care Services

Through the joint 'PRO-Local Governance for People and Nature' programme, the UN provided significant support to LSGs in developing evidence-based social protection policies. More than 6,300 individuals in 34 municipalities accessed coordinated support from partnerships between civil society and local institutions (UNOPS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNEP). Thirty-seven social infrastructure projects improved access for more than 280,000 people through the EU Programme PRO Plus. Renovated facilities include health centres, schools, sports halls and social services centres. New and upgraded social services more than 8,400 individuals, innovative diagnosis therapies for persons with

Caring for Caregivers programme in 40 municipalities



28 social services

established or upgraded

6,315 users

benefitted from CSO projects, including 3,783 women

350 vulnerable families

provided with secure housing

698 children and youth

assisted through drop-in centres/workshops

70% primary health

centres use paediatric e-Health records

100 early childhood

measures adopted in 26 municipalities

Secure housing solutions were provided for 350 vulnerable families, including Roma, persons with disabilities, survivors of violence, and youth exiting state care. Tailored support covered vocational training, access to health services, and inclusion services. Local CSOs also offered community-based support to women survivors of violence and trafficking through drop-in centres, mentoring and safe accommodation (UNOPS).

The Youth Well-being Index is now used in 17 LSGs, allowing tracking of progress against the national Youth Strategy (UNFPA). Foster care was enhanced through recruitment of 92 families and the training of more than 100 social protection professionals, benefitting nearly 250 children in need of temporary care. With UN support, government adopted the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities 2025–2030, along with the first three-year Action Plan (2025–2027) (UNFPA). Children with disabilities gained access to improved day care, family counselling and home care services through trained professionals (UNICEF). Serbia's 2024–2026 National Programme for Reintegration of Returnees was supported, while 69 individuals were assisted with reintegration services such as housing, medical care and social support (IOM).



350

vulnerable families secured housing

16 municipalities

improved disability services

28 social services

established or upgraded

8,780

interventions for migrant unaccompanied and separated children

248 children

benefitted from foster care



25% population

reached by 'It Is My Business'
campaign (1.7M+ people)

Output 2.1.3:

Gender-sensitive Services for Victims of Violence and Abuse

Over the course of 2024, the UN expanded gender-sensitive services across Serbia, focusing on comprehensive support for victims of violence and abuse and vulnerable groups, including women, children and asylum seekers. Four centres for sexual violence survivors provided essential medical, psychological and legal services. More than 200 social workers were trained in gender-sensitive counselling and 137 legal professionals and 74 journalists were trained in handling cases of sexual violence. One new centre was opened in Vrbas (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women). Policy reform advanced with updated licensing for intensive family support and judicial training sessions to enhance the application of national legal frameworks. A national campaign on coercive control helped communities better understand less visible forms of violence. Children benefitted from safeguarding reforms, including in the tourism sector. Prevention of child marriage was prioritized through continued advocacy and the launch of a study on online child exploitation (UNICEF). Asylum-seeking women and LGBTQIA+ individuals received tailored psycho-social and legal support, fostering a safer environment for marginalized groups (UNFPA).



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22,000

preschool professionals engaged in curriculum reform over 4 years

5,000+

education practitioners trained in
inclusive education

Output 2.2.1

Formal Education

In 2024, the UN focused on supporting the Ministry of Education, Institute for Improvement of Education, and Institute for Evaluation and Quality of Education to improve the inclusivity and quality of pre-university education, with an emphasis on national reforms in preschool education, systemic reforms in inclusive education and the social integration of vulnerable children in cooperation with academia, education institutions and CSOs.

Preschool curriculum reforms, reaching over 22,000 professionals, improved children's well-being and strengthened parental involvement. Tailored mentoring reached 25% of preschools, while webinars and practice sharing promoted inclusive education. Transitions between preschool and primary education were supported by communities of practice across 10 municipalities (UNICEF). More than 5,000 teachers and 1,000 other professionals enhanced inclusive education in 12% of Serbia's schools, with more than 125,000 students benefitting, including 4,000 children with disabilities and 600 refugee and migrant children. Assistive technologies reached 1,300 children and social robotics supported transformation of special education (UNICEF). Crisis preparedness improved in excess of 1,200 schools, with new protocols and training strengthening capacity to

respond to emergencies. Teachers from 17 district school administrations were trained to roll out crisis management practices (UNFPA). Migrant children were supported through 80 schools, with materials translated into native languages and staff trained in Serbian language instruction and human trafficking prevention (IOM). Vocational education was modernized in Subotica, Požega, Pančevo and Vršac through dual education upgrades. International collaboration supported specialized training in aviation and technology sectors (UNDP). Displaced youth accessed higher education through scholarships covering tuition, supplies and living expenses (UNHCR).

1,300 children

received assistive
technology for learning

4,000

children with disabilities gained improved access to education, alongside 600 refugee and migrant students

1,200 school teams

enhanced crisis response readiness



OUTCOME 2.2

Skills and education

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

Output 2.2.2

Informal Education and Life Skills

The UN continued to empower young people and adolescents through informal education initiatives aimed at building life skills, promoting inclusivity and supporting community engagement. It facilitated young people participation in global events such as the Belgrade Model UN and the Global Youth Dialogue in Benin. Local activities in five cities created safe spaces where boys challenged social norms and advocated for GE (UNFPA). Design-thinking programmes engaged more than 300 youth directly, while 3,800 others benefitted indirectly. Innovation hubs were established across Serbia and a national youth worker training programme was launched. The Office for Dual Education and the Qualifications Agency received support to strengthen the skills and employability of NEET youth and to develop a career guidance and counselling system aligned with the Growth Plan (UNICEF). Older adults gained digital literacy through workshops held in six cities, supporting use of public services including e-Banking and e-Health platforms (UNFPA). More than 600 refugees and asylum seekers participated in informal learning through language, Information Technology (IT) and vocational training. Community activities promoted integration and mental well-being (UNHCR).

6 innovation clubs

operational, fostering creativity and problem-solving

4,100 youth

reached through innovation & teamwork;
300 directly engaged (incl. 15 refugees) in 3 cities

2,377 older adults

trained in digital skills to access e-Services
such as e-Banking, ID renewals & 'My Doctor'

300 Roma

women & girls empowered with better health literacy & access to care health & chronic disease prevention



350 girls

from marginalized communities gained skills in tech & innovation

74 women scientists

trained, bridging research & entrepreneurship to tackle gender gaps in STEM

Output 2.2.3

Women and Girls' Empowerment

Efforts to empower women and girls in Serbia in 2024 focused on expanding skills in technology, supporting health literacy, fostering leadership and enhancing workplace equality.

Roma women activists across 14 municipalities joined intergenerational mentorship programmes. Over 70 women scientists received entrepreneurship training to bring research into the market (UNDP). Information and communication technology (ICT) training engaged 350 marginalized girls in Sombor, Kruševac and Novi Sad. A regional camp brought together 100 girls from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to inspire technology careers.

Gender-responsive programming in youth centres expanded, with 30 ICT mentors delivering workshops. Educators received digital literacy training and students engaged in STEM challenges and summer schools. Family-friendly workplace models were promoted across 25 companies (UNICEF). Open data courses empowered 40 women entrepreneurs to use data in business planning.

In 10 Roma settlements, 300 women and girls received health literacy training and promotion of preventative behaviours. Women with disabilities in five cities gained skills in reproductive health and rights. Advocacy and mentorship activities reached women survivors of violence and contributed to stronger community engagement (UNFPA).



40+ local officials

trained to strengthen municipal migration management and inclusive action plans

Output 2.3.1

Depopulation and Local Governance

Serbia continued to tackle depopulation and migration challenges through collaborative projects focused on demographic resilience and local governance, which were strengthened through targeted support to municipalities in developing migration integration plans and building institutional capacity (IOM). A landmark study on fertility patterns highlighted education-related disparities, guiding a forthcoming national demographic strategy focused on supporting families (UNFPA). Local governments advanced family-friendly urban policies, including work-life balance initiatives and career support for youth (UNFPA). Circular migration and reintegration efforts supported returnees with scholarships, job matching and family resources, promoting the sustainable return of skilled individuals (UNDP).

Output 2.3.2

Mobility of Skills and Knowledge

UN-supported programmes helped strengthen Serbia's migration governance and social inclusion policies, ensuring that migration contributes positively to economic and social development. The Demographic Resilience Strategy was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography to address demographic shifts, promote family-friendly policies and support parents

OUTCOME 2.3

Mobility and demographic resilience

mobility and demographic transition become vectors for positive change and prosperity

in balancing work and family life (UNFPA). Migration data accuracy improved, with recalibrated figures revealing a net migration loss of 22,000–23,000 in 2019, correcting previous overestimates and shaping future policy decisions (UNFPA).

Output 2.3.3

Community Cohesion

Efforts to strengthen social cohesion and intergenerational solidarity advanced through inclusive initiatives addressing age-based discrimination and the needs of marginalized communities. Through nationwide roundtables, local stakeholders helped shape a draft programme to combat ageism and promote active aging. Consultations led to the selection of three municipalities to pilot intergenerational centres fostering volunteerism and community engagement (UNFPA). Education and social inclusion efforts for refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking children were strengthened through targeted learning support, intercultural volunteer programmes and participatory integration approaches. Nearly 500 children benefitted from year-round activities (UNICEF), while over 5,000 individuals engaged in community events promoting dialogue, inclusion and awareness (UNHCR).



CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES



PRIORITY 3

Rule of Law, Human Rights and Gender Equality

Contribution to EU accession policy area clusters

- 1 Fundamentals
- 2 Internal Market
- 3 Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth

Contribution to EU negotiations chapters

- 5 Public Procurement
- 9 Financial Services
- 10 Information Society and Media
- 18 Statistics
- 23 Judiciary and Fundamental Rights
- 24 Justice, Freedom and Security

Budget: \$39,484,252

Delivery: \$30,189,681



Biljana Stepanović

Head of the Division for the Documentation
Centre at the Judicial Academy

We have developed an online learning platform to significantly enhance our response to violence against women (VAW), contributing to a system where every stakeholder plays a crucial role. Our focus is on providing comprehensive education and awareness, enabling timely identification, detection and prevention of such violence. This initiative is vital to ensuring that each participant fulfils their responsibilities effectively, fostering a society that prioritizes safety and justice for women.

The Judicial Academy's online platform was created under the 'Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia', a joint UN initiative with support from the Swedish Government and collaboration between UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF, and supported by UNDP's 'Reduce Risk, Increase Safety – Towards Ending SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons) Misuse in a Domestic Violence Context'.

OUTCOME 3.1

Human rights, gender equality and social cohesion

Mobility and demographic transition become vectors for positive change and prosperity

300 ICT systems

delivered boosted case management in Interior Ministry & Prosecutor's Office

Key legal reforms

advanced, including criminal code, anti-corruption, disability & human trafficking

Output 3.1.1

Policymaking and Implementation

The UN system partnered with the government to strengthen the rule of law, governance, human rights and GE frameworks by aligning them with international standards, while promoting meaningful participation of CSOs, academia and communities.

Advancements in policy and legislative reforms within the justice, human rights and social protection sectors were supported, strengthening legal frameworks and institutional capacities. The assistance included support for development of the Law on Amendments and Additions to the Criminal Code, amendments to the Law on Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime, the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Fight against Corruption, the National Programme and Action Plan to Counter Trafficking, the Strategy and Action Plan for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities, the National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights and the Strategy Programme for the Reintegration of Returnees after Readmission, as well as the drafting of by-laws and strategies related to biotechnology, ICT systems and electronic communications (UNODC, IOM, UNFPA, UNDP). Additionally, digitalization of judicial and law enforcement systems progressed with the procurement of

nearly 300 ICT systems and software solutions, enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor's Office. These efforts contributed to more efficient case management, streamlined legal procedures and improved institutional responsiveness (UNOPS).

Gender equality and women's rights remained a key focus of UN support in policy implementation. The leadership and advocacy skills of more than 250 women counsellors in 14

LSGs were strengthened, promoting more inclusive, gender-responsive governance. In over one-third of municipalities across Serbia, gender focal points enhanced their capacity to implement and report on the Law on Gender Equality, improving institutional accountability. In 2024, the first-ever national campaign highlighting the importance of addressing unpaid work for GE and societal prosperity, under the hashtag #ObustaviRad, achieved significant traction with some 60 media releases, a reach of 6 million, 21 television features totalling 240 minutes, and more than 800,000 impressions on social media (UN Women).

Efforts to address disability-based discrimination advanced significantly through the development of a special report on intersectionality and the denial of reasonable accommodation in employment. That report, along with the training of 15 employees from the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality in reasonable accommodation and intersectional discrimination, played a crucial role in mitigating disability-based discrimination in Serbia (UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP).

The **capacities of the justice and social protection systems** were strengthened by increasing the knowledge and evidence base for enhanced implementation of the National Strategy on the Rights of Victims and Witnesses of Crimes. Best practices and resources for capacity building were developed and distributed to key stakeholders, including the Juvenile Justice Council. An analysis of diversionary measures from 2017–2022 was conducted, offering targeted recommendations for



improved implementation. Additionally, analysis of the protection of victims and witnesses of crime is being conducted, focusing on strengthening the system for supporting children who are victims or witnesses (UNICEF).

Output 3.1.2

Oversight and Independent Bodies

National human rights capacities were strengthened and compliance with international human rights frameworks improved through enhancement of the National Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism within the government council for monitoring and reporting to UN human rights mechanisms. This was achieved using the National Recommendations Tracking Database to monitor Serbia's human rights progress in 2024 (OHCHR). Additionally, a child-friendly platform was developed to enable children's participation in tracking CRC recommendations (UNICEF).

The Human Rights Committee reviewed implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Meanwhile, the 2024 Special Rapporteur's report on the Freedom of Opinion and Expression acknowledged Serbia's strong legal framework though it raised concerns about threats, attacks and hate speech against journalists and human rights defenders. In response, the UNCT supported a campaign to raise awareness of hate speech on the International Day for Countering Hate Speech.

6M people

#ObustaviRad campaign reached 6M people with 60 media releases, 21 TV features, and 800K impressions

250+ women

Councillors empowered, strengthened in leadership & advocacy across 14 LSGs

Local resource centres for intergenerational cooperation were established in partnership with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, aiming at promoting active aging, lifelong learning and volunteerism. Over the year, this initiative engaged 170 stakeholders in age-based discrimination, contributing to inclusive local action plans. Additionally, extension of the 'Own Your Body Online' (Bodyright) initiative included youth capacity-building workshops in five Belgrade schools, raising effectively awareness of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (UNFPA).

Human rights

Monitoring enhanced via the National Recommendations Tracking Database



'Own Your Body Online'

initiative empowered youth across 5 Belgrade schools on gender-based tech violence



Local resource centres

promoted active aging and learning, engaging 170 stakeholders

Output 3.1.3

Strengthening of Home Affairs

Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and individuals at risk of statelessness remained a priority for both the UN and government. In 2024, reception centres recorded nearly 20,000 arrivals, with 850 individuals expressing intent to seek asylum. Legal aid was provided in more than 670 cases, including birth registration, nationality confirmation and asylum procedures. In partnership with the Judicial Academy, online training modules on asylum, statelessness and forced migration were developed to enhance the capacities of legal professionals to address these issues. Aiming to strengthen the future workforce in this critical area, legal clinics at the University of Novi Sad and University of Belgrade educated 45 students in refugee law and protection, while 132 state officials were trained in the area of asylum and statelessness (UNHCR).

National capacities in **combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling** were strengthened through national and cross-border activities on victim protection, labour exploitation and child trafficking. More than 150 social protection representatives were trained to recognize signs of human trafficking and support victims while reducing secondary victimization. Expert support helped update the Ministry of Interior's Standard Operating Procedures for Treatment of Victims of Human Trafficking, and the Centre for Protection of Victims of Trafficking was enhanced with digital tools to improve victim identification, referral and case coordination (IOM).

To improve the **preparedness and response of migration officials** to the needs of vulnerable children and families, two key curricula on Child Protection in Emergency and Gender-Based Violence in Emergency were developed for the Migration Training Centre in Plandište, along with an e-Curriculum for child safeguarding and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (UNICEF).

Significant progress was made in **reducing firearms misuse in the context of domestic violence and suicides**. Improvements in administrative data collection by the Ministry of Interior enabled better tracking of gender and age data, supporting evidence-based policymaking. Capacity-building initiatives trained 215 healthcare and legal professionals from 67 municipalities to identify and manage firearms-related domestic violence cases. A public awareness campaign reached more than one million people, promoting community intervention in domestic violence cases (UNDP).



670 people

received legal aid, including birth registration, nationality, and asylum support

Refugee law education expanded: 45 students, 132 officials trained in asylum & statelessness

150+ social workers

trained to detect human trafficking and support victims

215 professionals

trained in 67 municipalities to manage firearms-related domestic violence



16,500 civil servants

trained in e-Government, digital services, and info security

300

services migrated to the Cybercity Data Centre in Kragujevac

1,500

government officials, SMEs and companies were trained in public procurement

Output 3.2.1

SDGs and Governance Systems

The **2024 UN e-Government survey recognized Serbia's Office for IT and e-Government as a leader in digital innovation**, reflecting significant progress in citizen-centred services and government efficiency. High satisfaction rates among citizens (88%) and businesses (97%) regarding the speed of e-Services on the e-Government portal underscored the success of this transformation. To further strengthen civil servants' capacities in digital transformation, more than 5,000 civil servants were trained in e-Government, e-Services and information security, bringing the total number of trained civil servants to 16,500. Expert support helped design a cybercity facility in Kragujevac, with 300 services migrating to its Data Centre, informing the strategy for scaling up Data Centre modules. Additionally, 30 LSGs advanced local e-Governance, public data accessibility and e-Services, contributing to more efficient and effective governance processes (UNDP, UNOPS).

Public financial management reforms to meet EU standards advanced with 1,500 government officials, SMEs and companies across Serbia strengthening

OUTCOME 3.2 Effective governance and civic engagement



Good governance training

for 100+ officials across 22 LSGs

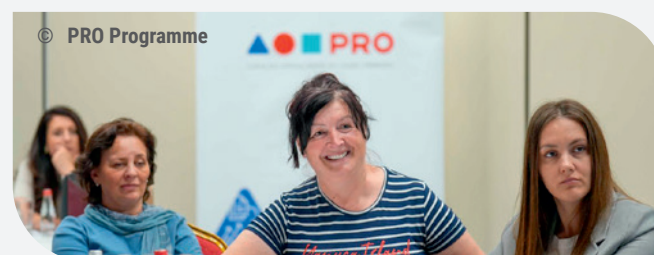
Gender-responsive budgeting

advanced across 130 institutions with 900+ gender goals

their capacities in public procurement, enhancing transparency and competition in public spending. Essential hardware was provided to the Customs Administration for a new tariff information system aligned with EU standards. The Ministry of Finance received support to develop new methodologies for public finance management and strategic planning, improving fiscal governance and transparency (UNDP). To improve **local governance by enhancing accountability, transparency and participation**, a comprehensive training programme on good governance principles was successfully completed, with 22 LSGs and more than 100 local officials actively participating. Additionally, the development of certified trainers through an accredited Training of Trainers programme allowed for the horizontal dissemination of best practices across local governments (UNOPS).

The City of Niš published **Serbia's first Voluntary Local Review**, aligning its urban development with the SDGs. This review provided key recommendations on youth employment and climate resilience and introduced a Quality-of-Life Index for data-driven decision making (UN-Habitat).

Gender-responsive budgeting efforts led to improvements in GE across 130 national and provincial institutions through the financing of 118 budget programmes and the development of more than 900 gender-sensitive objectives and indicators. At the local level, gender-responsive governance and budgeting were introduced in 16 LSGs, ensuring



more equitable resource allocation (UN Women, UNOPS).

Collaboration with LSGs through partnerships with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and the National Academy of Public Administration enabled the delivery of **accredited training on children's rights to public officials**. Twenty-six employees from 14 LSGs successfully completed a comprehensive training programme focused on recognizing and prioritizing children's needs in local measures and policies, expanding the programme's reach to 73 municipalities. In response to requests from LSGs for further support, a legislative guide on child rights was developed, published and disseminated across local governments (UNICEF).

Output 3.2.2

Civic Engagement

In collaboration with CSOs, seven initiatives were launched to **promote GE and Roma inclusion and combat hate speech**. Support for local governments was enhanced through 29 projects focused on transparent CSO funding and service delivery (UNDP, UNOPS). Additionally, 20 CSOs were empowered to engage with UN human rights mechanisms (OHCHR).

A total of 2,800 young people joined the **U-Report platform**, participating in consultations on water, sanitation and hygiene issues and ensuring youth perspectives were integrated into local government planning in five municipalities. A **new online volunteering platform** was launched to streamline volunteer management and expand opportunities for youth engagement in both local and large-scale initiatives (UNICEF). Four educational and cultural exchanges were organized in Sjenica, Pancevo, Sabac and Pirot, bringing together youth from diverse identity groups to facilitate **dialogue and mutual understanding**. These exchanges supported the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights' agenda for inclusivity and cohesion across communities and provided valuable inputs for the government's participation in the Summit of the Future (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNESCO).

Support was provided to the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications to promote media literacy, particularly in online security for children. In partnership with the Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, a collaboration with the **National Contact Centre for Child Safety on the Internet was established**, reaching 700 elementary school students with lessons on safe and responsible Internet use. Additionally, more than 170,000 people were informed through the media, social media and public events about new child protection mechanisms introduced in Serbia (UNDP). The capacity of local educators and experts to promote online protection for children was enhanced by

2,800 youth
engaged in WASH consultations via U-Report

700 pupils
reached with media literacy
and online safety education

170,000+ people
informed on child protection
through media, events, and
social outreach



distributing the **Serbian edition of the essential Child Online Protection guidelines**, with 1,300 copies disseminated across primary and secondary schools (ITU).

UNCT and its partners made a significant contribution to LGBTI rights advocacy, supporting the organization of **Belgrade Pride Week 2024**, including the Human Rights Talks, which underscored the importance of promoting tolerance and equality.

Output 3.2.3

Emergency Preparedness and Response

UN support to Serbia's DRR system was depicted through community resilience initiatives and in relation to rural life and the agricultural sector. In addition, the UN contributed to **enhancing Serbia's capacity to address public health threats**, as evidenced in the annual International Health Regulations implementation report, which serves as a vital tool for strengthening the country's ability to manage public health threats and emergencies. Improvements in the national laboratory system included training for 24 microbiology laboratories, boosting efficiency. A risk assessment in 144 municipalities, applying the Strategic Tool for Assessing Risk, formed the foundation for developing a health emergency preparedness plan. The Respiratory Pathogens Pandemic Preparedness Plan was developed, and genomic sequencing capacities were enhanced through hands-on training (WHO).

144 municipalities

strengthened health emergency plans using strategic risk assessment tools

Mental health support

expanded for refugee & migrant children, youth, and families

Youth involvement was integrated into the Emergency Preparedness Plan and national policies were reviewed for coordinated crisis response. Volunteer capacity in humanitarian response was strengthened through training in volunteer management and child protection. A total of 140 hygiene kits and 400 household cleaning kits were distributed to households affected by flooding and fires in Jagodina and Kraljevo, ensuring timely humanitarian aid delivery. Access to mental health and psycho-social support was expanded for refugee and migrant children, adolescents and parents, including peer-to-peer psychological first aid (UNICEF).

Output 3.2.4

Regional Cooperation, Security and Trust Building

Support for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Challenge Call enabled Serbia to significantly expand its role in regional development. Through this initiative, the country provided crucial development assistance to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia as a response to challenges induced by the many global crises, while fostering stronger regional ties and promoting sustainable growth. Assistance included a range of projects aimed at improving infrastructure, enhancing public services and supporting economic development, thereby contributing to the overall stability and prosperity of the region (UNDP).

Serbia also strengthened regional cooperation on SALW control, contributing to the revised 2025–2030 SALW Control Roadmap. The support resulted in harmonization of regulations with EU standards, promotion of gender-responsive policies and enhancement of public awareness of firearms misuse. Cross-border cooperation on firearms trafficking was strengthened, including discussions on 3D-printed firearms, with Serbia actively supporting regional criminal police efforts on firearms crime (UNDP).

Efforts to increase accountability for war crimes and foster regional dialogue in the Western Balkans led to significant achievements. A regional conference was facilitated to strengthen judicial cooperation

and support for war-crime victims, complemented by 12 CSO sub-granting projects that promoted dialogue and reconciliation (UNDP).

Young people's roles in promoting mutual understanding, respect for diversity, and trust were strengthened through engagement with educators from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania on digital responsibility and media literacy, focusing on tolerance and critical thinking. Ten media campaigns addressing toxic masculinity, body image and human rights reached 1.5 million people, while a regional GE campaign reached more than 80,000 people in Serbia, advancing awareness and advocacy for GE (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNESCO).

12 CSO projects

supported for dialogue and reconciliation

10 campaigns

on masculinity, body image, and rights reached **1.5M people**

GE awareness campaign

reached **80,000+** in Serbia



2.4 Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

In 2024, the UN team continued to consolidate and diversify its partnership base, leveraging resources to accelerate achievement of the SDGs through implementation of the UNCT Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy. Engagement with government, EU member states, international organizations, international financial institutions and the private sector was pivotal in advancing financing for sustainable development. UNCT focused on strengthening existing partnerships and forging new alliances to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to resource mobilization.

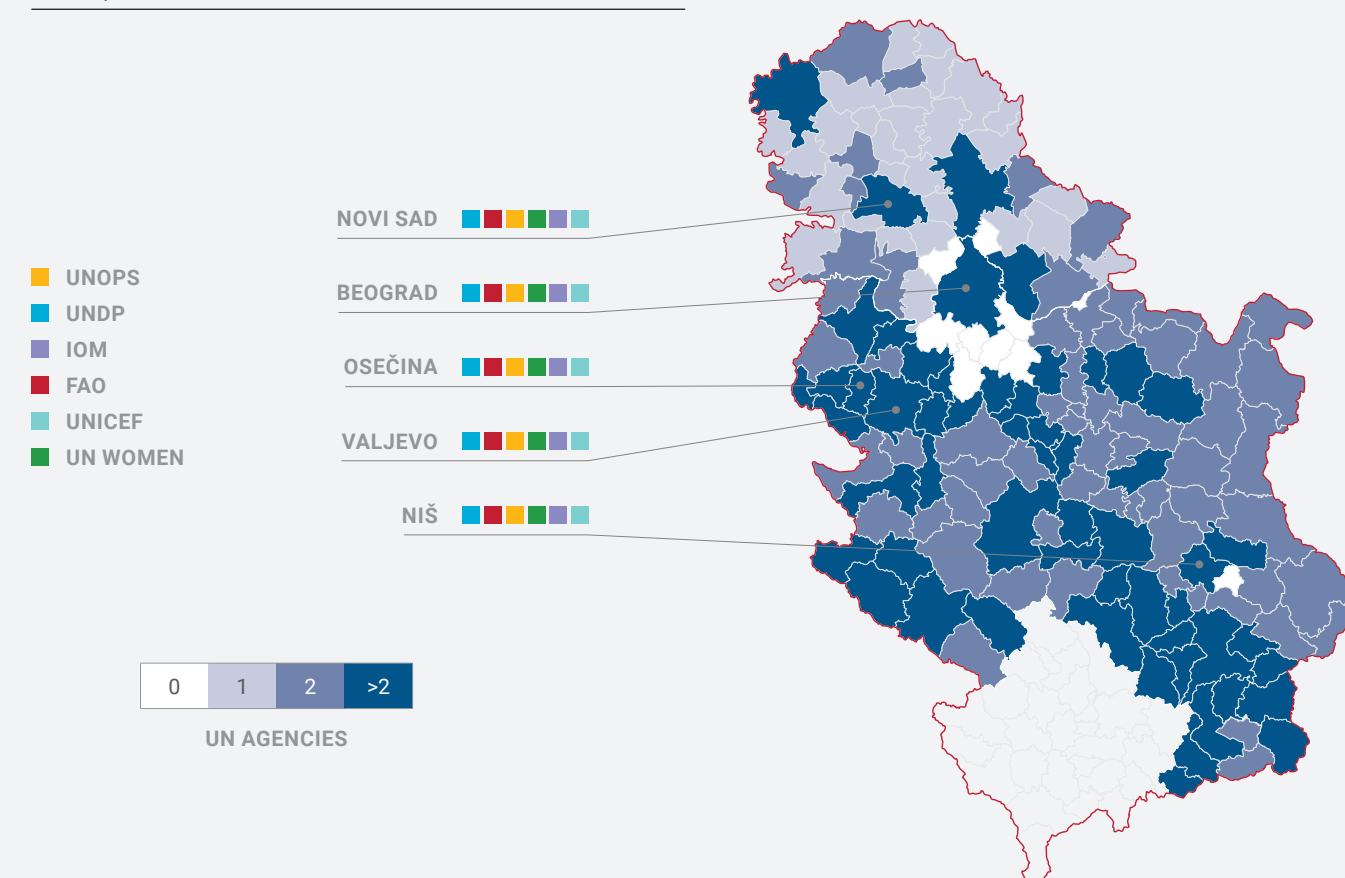
Government of Serbia

The government remains the UN's primary counterpart in implementing the priorities of the Cooperation Framework. Coordination was anchored in the Joint Steering Committee, which met annually to review the results from the previous year and agree upon the priorities for the 2024 Joint Work Plans. The committee was co-chaired by the RC, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of EU Integration. UN agencies collaborated with all levels of government – central, provincial and local – covering 156 of the 174 LSGs across the country (Figure 1), as well as

with all branches of power, including independent oversight institutions.

The UN team played a crucial role in **promoting interministerial cooperation on environment and climate change**. Ahead of COP29, the Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with the UN, held a **Dialogue on Climate Change** to advance climate adaptation and decarbonization. This event brought together key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, and Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, to discuss how national strategies align with global climate goals. At COP29, Serbia reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability by endorsing the Hydrogen Declaration and the Declaration on Reducing Methane from Organic Waste. With UNDP support, the Ministry of Environment submitted Serbia's second Biennial Update Report and the Third National Communication to the UNFCCC. Serbia also became the first country in the region to adopt and submit the First Biennial Transparency Report under the Paris Agreement, and initiated development of version 3.0 of its Nationally Determined Contribution, reinforcing its leadership and dedication to global climate action.

Figure 1. Map of UN presence in Serbia's municipalities



UNCT supported the significant strides made by Serbia in **digitalization and AI** throughout 2024. **The country chaired the Global Partnership for AI**, an OECD initiative, and hosted the first summit in Belgrade in December 2024. This achievement highlights Serbia's commitment to global AI leadership and innovation. The UN's partnership with the government was instrumental in these advancements, fostering strategic planning and coordinated efforts to harness AI and digital technologies for sustainable development.

During the **2024 SDG Investment Fair**, organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and Serbia's Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, showcased the 'Bio 4' Biotechnological Campus initiative. This project, the largest single investment in Serbian science, aims to establish a global development centre for biotechnology. Additionally, the SDG Investor Map was introduced, highlighting a comprehensive strategy to enhance cooperation and attract investment in Serbia's science and technology sectors.

The government is a major donor (next to the EU) to the UN system in the country, providing, in 2024, \$31.5 million in co-financing (33.2% of the total) in support of the Cooperation Framework strategic priorities.

Partnerships with International Finance Institutions (IFIs) and the private sector

In 2024, the **Green Agenda for Serbia**, led by UNDP with UNEP participation, achieved significant milestones in climate action and green transition. The UN collaborated with the European Investment Bank (EIB), which provided technical and financial support, mobilizing more than €29 million for green investments. EIB's contributions included technical workshops for financial institutions, equipping them to evaluate and finance green projects, and assisting local companies in integrating climate concerns into their management frameworks. More than 60 green projects were co-financed, fostering substantial private investment and supporting local initiatives in air quality, decarbonization and nature-based solutions. Investments in biodiversity and



wetland restoration were expanded, with knowledge exchange and targeted challenge calls. Technical studies and pilot projects on renewable energy sources such as geothermal and biomethane paved the way for future sustainable investments.

The **joint Programme 'PRO-Local Governance for People and Nature'** enhanced environmental governance and social inclusion at the local level. The programme is linked to \$160 million in investments from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the French Development Agency to upgrade Serbia's waste management system, resulting in the closure of 15 municipal dumpsites and the development of six regional waste management centres. In 2024, an employment support initiative targeting young Roma in 12 municipalities was launched, connecting landfill closure efforts with skills development and access to decent jobs (UNOPS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNEP, with UN Women participation).

The cooperation between UNICEF and the World Bank yielded significant results in early childhood development and education. The **Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care Project**, supported by a €47 million investment, successfully increased access to preschool education for an additional 17,000 children and ensured that the most vulnerable children, including Roma children, benefitted from targeted grants in at least 30 municipalities.

Partnership with the private sector focused on two main objectives: accelerating sustainability principles through cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and the Global Compact, and implementing project-based initiatives to address diverse development challenges. At the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, the **UN and the Chamber of Commerce** worked together to connect Serbian businesses with international markets, facilitating discussions with top officials from countries including Ukraine, Greece, the Philippines and Malta, with the aim of opening new opportunities for Serbian companies and promoting sustainable development. UN agencies in Serbia, including ILO and UN Women, collaborated with the **local chapter of the UN Global Compact** to advance corporate sustainability and responsible business practices. ILO, in partnership with the Global Compact, successfully implemented the Business & Human Rights Accelerator programme, providing training and follow-up support for companies in EU supply chains. UN Women contributed to the 'Ring the Bell for Gender Equality' event, aligning with International Women's Day, and supported the Target Gender Equality programme, focusing on Women's Empowerment Principles and the associated Gender Gap Tool analysis. UNICEF maintained strong corporate partnerships and helped shape responsible business practices that positively impact children, with a particular focus on promoting family-friendly policies in collaboration with business associations, including the Serbian Chamber of Commerce.

Partnership with the EU Delegation to Serbia

The UN continued its strategic partnership with the EU Delegation in accordance with the **Joint Guidance to strengthen EU-UN cooperation for SDG realization**. This cooperation extended beyond programme implementation support, focusing on enhancing Serbia's capacities for EU membership and fund management, and achieving the SDGs. Regular exchanges on mutual programmatic areas of interest were held through strategic dialogues, addressing country needs, common priorities and potential joint actions. These dialogues included discussions on the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, an important accelerator for ongoing reforms, and UN support for implementation of the Reform Agenda, a comprehensive strategic document outlining the steps and measures Serbian institutions will take to advance the country's reforms on its path to EU membership.

The EU is the largest donor to the UN system in the country: in 2024, it provided \$37.2 million in co-financing (39.3% of the total) in support of the Cooperation Framework strategic priorities and in line with EU accession priorities

CSO, academia and media

In 2024, the UN focused on engaging with women NGOs, human rights NGOs, organizations of people with disabilities, youth platforms, Roma organizations and environmental NGOs through

open-door and high-level engagement. This cooperation resulted in i) Increased participation in policymaking of rights-holders' groups in the areas of human rights and GE, and interaction between CSOs and UN human rights mechanisms; ii) Enhanced services for women experiencing violence and discrimination; iii) Legal support and integration of refugees and asylum seekers; and iv) Strategic guidance for the development of the next Cooperation Framework, considering diverse perspectives from CSO stakeholders.

The UN facilitated collaboration between academia and the private sector, resulting in 35 innovative solutions to reduce waste and transform it into new raw materials. This initiative significantly reduced the carbon footprint of local communities and advanced circular economy principles. Additionally, more than 70 women scientists enhanced their knowledge on the connection between science and business, aiding the commercialization of scientific results. These scientists overcame gender stereotypes, shifted to market-oriented thinking and developed skills in business model development and financing innovation. Efforts with media focused on combating violence and discrimination through ethical reporting and improving the capacities of media outlets to counter misinformation and disinformation. The UN actively promoted Agenda 2030, the Pact for the Future and advancement on the SDGs throughout the year in various forums and media.



2.5 Results of the UN Working More and Better Together – UN Coherence, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Planning and implementing together

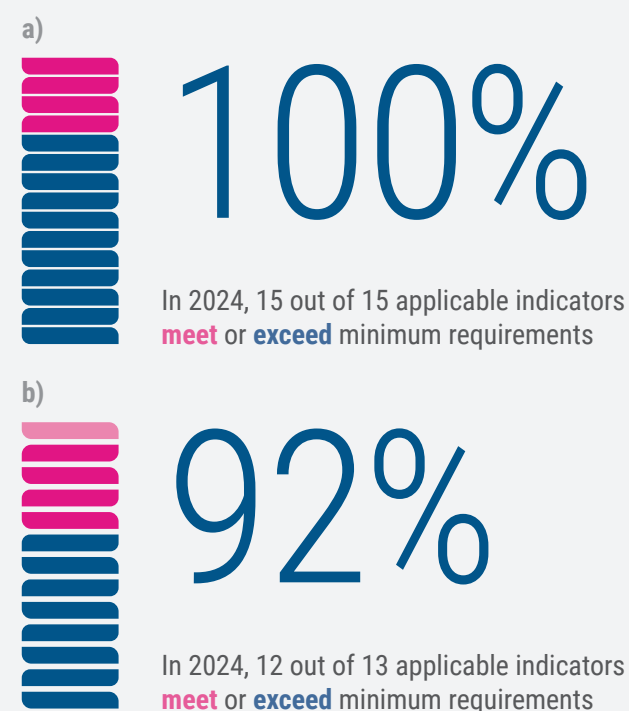
In the fourth year of implementing the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the UN advanced and further leveraged the benefits of joint programming to achieve coherent results, streamline interventions and enhance accountability. The Results Groups served as a key mechanism for identifying synergies and fostering interagency collaboration. The portfolio of ongoing joint programmes continued to strengthen with improved access to global pooled funds (Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, SDG Fund, UN Disability Fund, UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), UN Road Safety Fund) and member state donors committed to supporting coherent UN system action through interventions in health, socio-economic development and reduction of inequalities (EU, Sweden, Switzerland), with allocated funding of \$33.5 million.

As a result of UNCT's extensive analytical work throughout the year, the Common Country Analysis was developed. This forward-looking assessment of the country's sustainable development landscape provides an analytical foundation for designing the next UN Cooperation Framework for the period 2026–2030. Analysis was strengthened and enriched by a foresight exercise that included a scenario development with UN technical staff and a backcasting and visioning process with heads of agencies, resulting in the creation of three desired best-case scenarios and insights into the requirements to achieve them. Additionally, a series of 11 focus group discussions was conducted, covering a wide range of topics to gather diverse perspectives from key stakeholders, informing both the country analysis and the future Cooperation Framework.

UNCT's commitment to gender mainstreaming was further strengthened through implementation of the Gender Equality Screening Tool, ensuring that all individual and joint programmes integrate gender considerations systematically. The Team also ensured the systematic use of gender and human rights markers in joint workplans. UNCT maintained its results in the annual System-wide Progress

Assessment on GE, achieving 100% of indicators (Figure 2a), while notable progress was made in the System-wide Progress Assessment on Disability Inclusion, with 92% achievement of indicators (Figure 2b). Implementing the Youth 2030 Strategy is in focus for the UN Team, with \$7.5 million invested in youth programming in 2024. UNCT engaged both directly and indirectly with youth from across the country, harnessing the power of three youth groups that support the UN's strategic engagement: UNICEF Youth Advisory Board, PBF Youth Ambassadors and UNFPA Peer Educators.

Figure 2: a) Gender equality scorecards;
b) Disability inclusion scorecards



Operating together

In 2024, the Operations Management Team in Serbia continued its collaboration to enhance joint operations across procurement, recruitment, finance, ICT, administration and logistics services. This teamwork generated an estimated cost avoidance of \$600,000, enabling efficiency gains and quality

improvements in the Country Team's common services. The UN House's upgraded heating station sustained its impact, reducing CO2 emissions by 30% annually.

Through the Business Operating Strategy and common services, the Operations Management Team remained committed to utilizing common long-term agreements, while further exploring the potential of AI tools for enhanced efficiency. In addition to these collective operational efforts, the team implemented several efficiency projects within UN House. Notably, a common recycling initiative began, reaffirming our dedication to sustainability and operational excellence.

Communicating together

In 2024, the UN Communications Group advanced efforts under the 2020–2025 communication strategy, focusing on amplifying the visibility of the Cooperation Framework and Agenda 2030. Through a combination of advocacy and targeted communications, the UN team collaborated with government entities, international partners and civil society.

Engagement in high-level advocacy events, media appearances including interviews and op-eds, and participation in global forums allowed the UN to promote the SDGs and address key topics such as climate change, the triple planetary crisis, human rights, GE and VAW, inequalities, hate speech and youth empowerment.



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Noteworthy events and campaigns include:

- A preparatory session for COP299 on climate change, involving significant contributions from government representatives and international partners.
- UN Day featured a youth-led event for 'Pact of the Future', co-designed and co-implemented with young people.
- The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign reached about half a million people, significantly raising public awareness about abuse through an online campaign and 12 events organized with government bodies and various partners.
- International Women's Day, marked by a special performance by young girls and numerous agency-specific events.
- Human Rights Day, organized in partnership with government and the EU Delegation.
- Continuation of the UN Free and Equal initiative promoting LGBTIQ+ equality.
- Strategic communication across multi-agency projects (UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, RC Office).
- An online campaign for the International Day Against Hate Speech.
- World Bicycle Day celebrated with a focus on the 'One Health' approach, promoting healthy lifestyles in collaboration with international organizations.

These initiatives successfully engaged diverse audiences and fostered substantial dialogue, reinforcing the UN's commitment to addressing global challenges through strategic communication and advocacy.



2.6 Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Final evaluation of the UNSDCF Serbia (2021–2025)

An evaluation of the Serbia Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 was conducted in 2024, to ensure accountability, guide learning and inform the design of the next Cooperation Framework. Covering the full implementation period (January 2021–September 2024), the assessment examined contributions to Serbia's national development priorities and SDG progress. It focused on UN Joint Work Plans across all geographic areas of activity and addressed key cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability.

Key conclusions

The UN is recognized as a trusted advisor, valued for its technical expertise, advocacy and support to capacity development. The Cooperation Framework 2021–2025 demonstrates strong alignment with national priorities, particularly Serbia's EU accession path, though the absence of a national development plan has presented challenges for coordination. Most outputs have been achieved or are on track, with notable progress in green transition, education, governance and crisis response. Digitalization has been accelerated, particularly in e-Government and health services, though access gaps remain. UN-supported efforts have reached vulnerable groups such as children, Roma, migrants, refugees and persons with disabilities. UN coordination improved, with expanded joint programming, though synergies with government and donors can be strengthened.

Lessons learned

- Successes in joint programming and cross-agency collaboration show that integrated approaches can unlock greater efficiency and coherence.
- Strategic adaptability and policy alignment have enabled the UN to deliver impactful results in a rapidly evolving development context, while also underlining the need for clearer prioritization in a middle-income country setting.
- Results are achievable despite complex governance settings, but sustainability hinges

on ensuring integration into public policies and budgets.

- UN coordination gains should be reinforced through clearer roles, joint programming and shared accountability.

Key recommendations

1. Elevate the UN's role in Serbia's transition to high-income status by focusing on policy advice, strategic advocacy and global partnerships.
2. Secure institutional sustainability by ensuring successful initiatives are integrated into national policies and budgets.
3. Strengthen partnerships and financing, building deeper collaboration with IFIs, the EU and the private sector to broaden development impact.
4. Break structural barriers by intensifying reform advocacy in areas such as social protection, human rights and gender equality.
5. Accelerate the digital and green transition, advancing digital literacy, climate finance and inclusive innovation.
6. Boost UN system efficiency by expanding joint programming, improving monitoring and streamlining inter-agency coordination.

17%

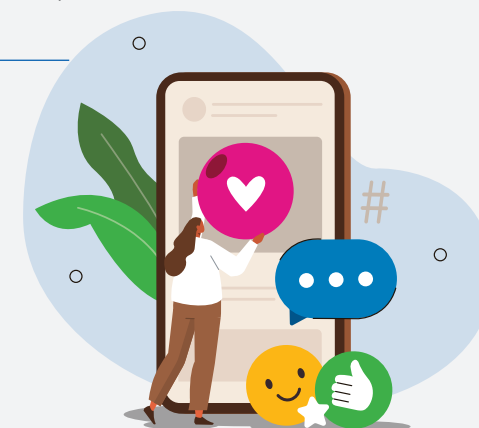
increase in number of followers, throughout channels

16 Days of Activism

campaign reached 0.5 million people through >12 events and online campaign

20%

increase in number of followers on Instagram



2.7 Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

I. UNCT in Serbia allocated \$116.34 million in 2024 (Figure 3) across three strategic priorities of the UNSDCF. The delivery rate by the year-end was 81.6% (Figure 4) (\$94.95 million utilized). Total delivery comprised: Strategic Priority 1, 41.8%; Strategic Priority 2, 26.4%; and Strategic Priority 3, 31.8% (Figure 3). Eighteen UN agencies implemented resources in 2024 (Figure 5).

Figure 3. Total budget (core/non-core) vs. Delivery (core/non-core)

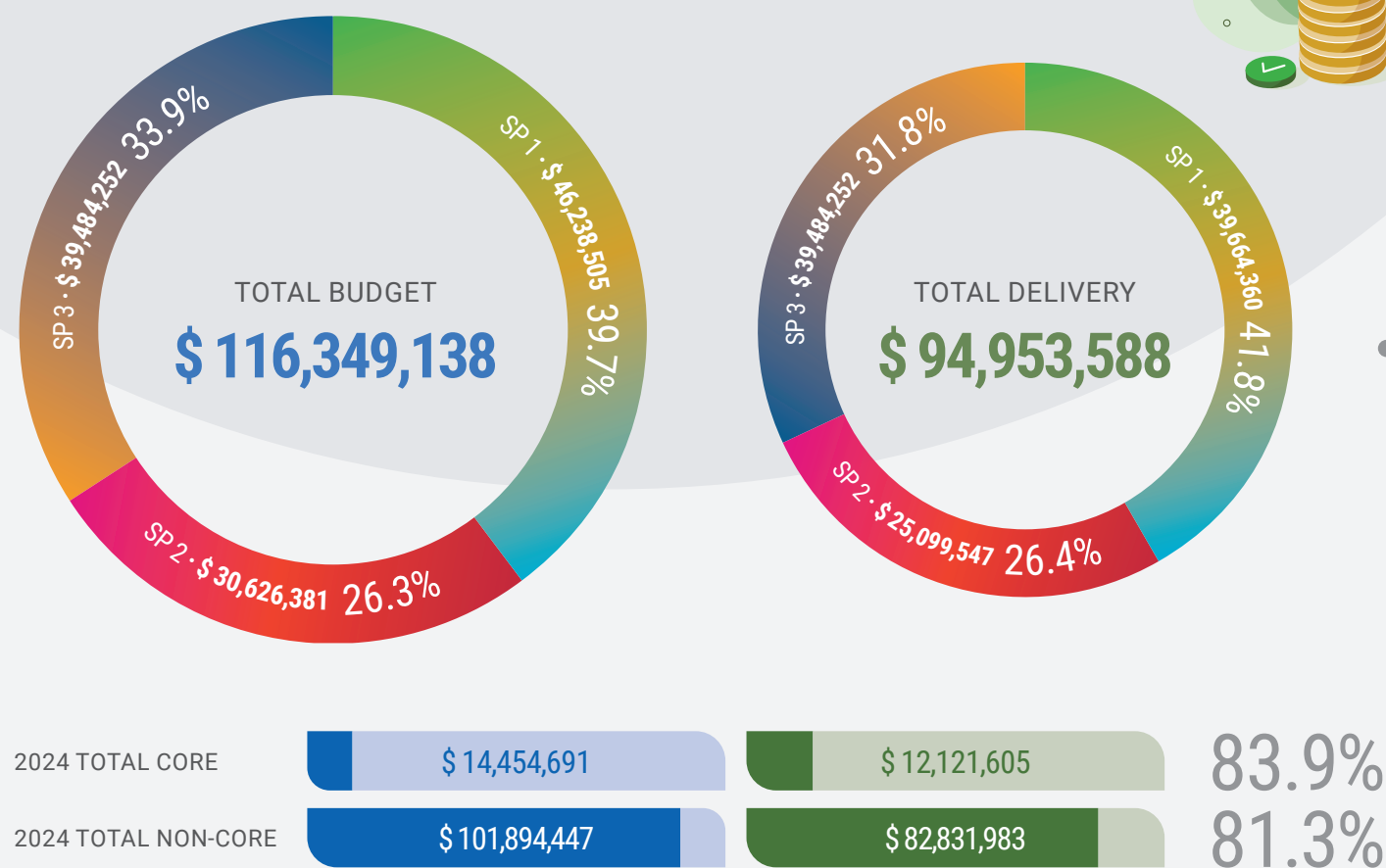
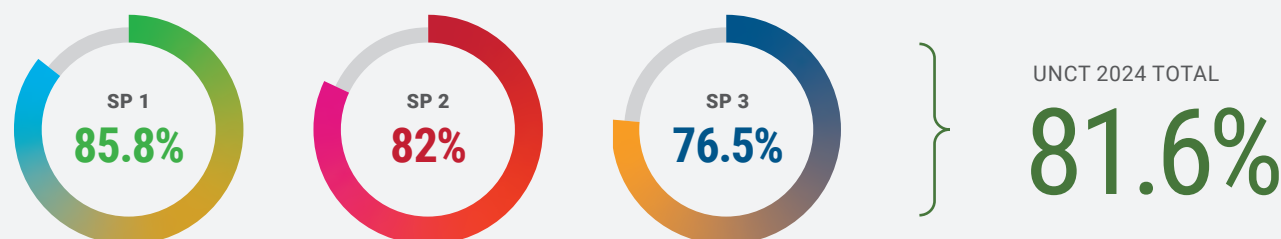


Figure 4. Strategic priorities total budget (core/non-core) vs. Delivery (core/non-core)



II. Diverse sources of financing were accessed in 2024. Locally raised, earmarked donor contributions accounted for 47.3% of the funding (Figure 6). The EU was the largest single donor (Figure 7), accounting for 39.3%, followed by the Government of Serbia with 33.2%. UN core resources accounted for 12.8%, pool and thematic funds, 4.8%, while private sector funding and IFIs provided 1.6% and 0.3%, respectively.

Figure 5. UN agencies delivery (\$)

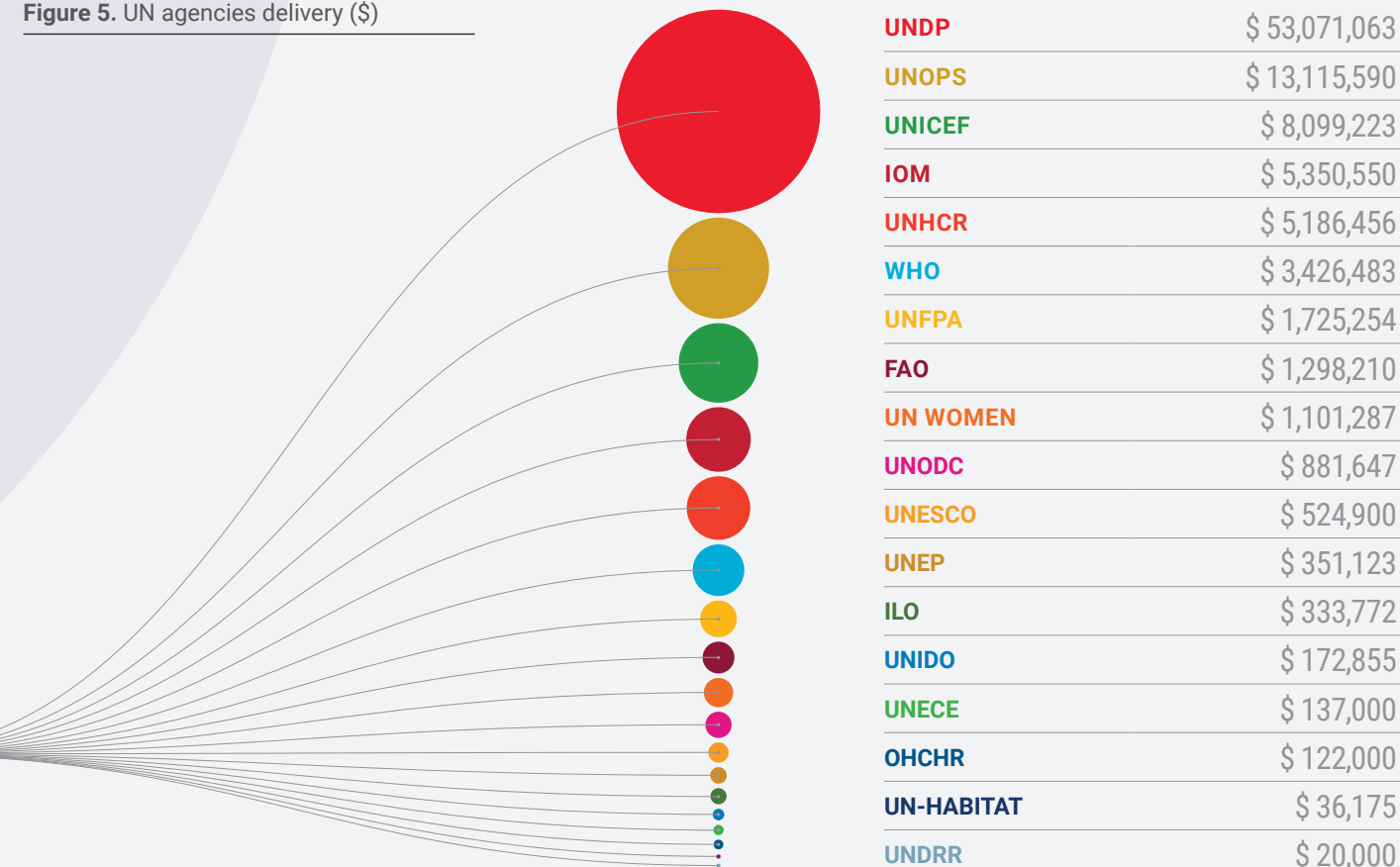


Figure 6. Delivery by funding source

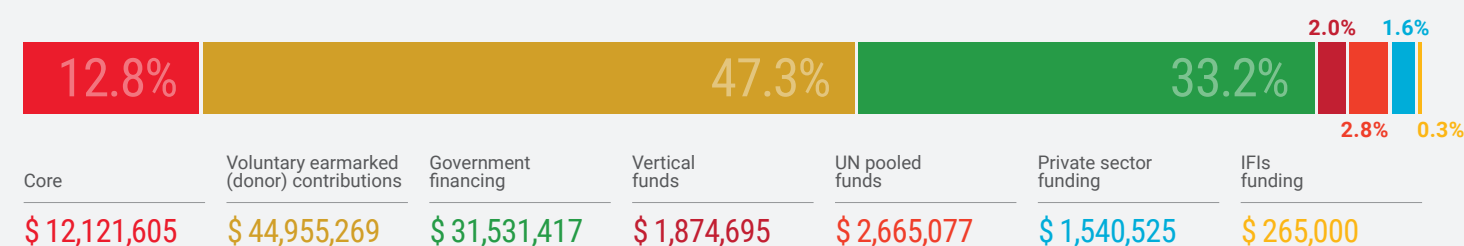
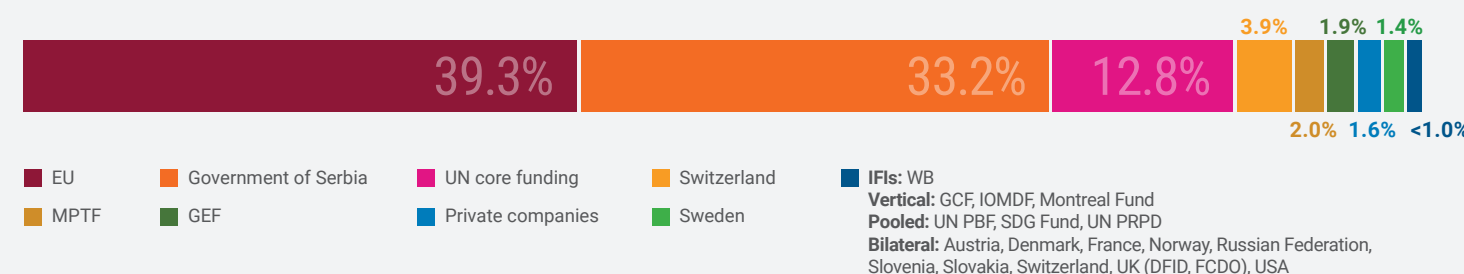


Figure 7. Delivery by donor (%)



III. Resource mobilization target: The total funding required to implement the Serbia–UN Cooperation Framework over the five-year period 2021–2025 was estimated to be \$365 million. **By the end of 2024, the UN system successfully mobilized \$380 million, exceeding the original funding target** and ensuring achievement of all planned outputs for the duration of the strategy.

CHAPTER 3

Into the future – UNCT key focus for next year

In 2025, the UN commemorates its 80th anniversary. This achievement is taking place against a background of uncertainty and in a world that is facing challenges on every front. However, as Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reminds us, the UN has never been more needed, our values have never been more relevant, and the needs have never been greater. The UN stands out as the essential meeting ground to advance peace, sustainable development and human rights. In the context of shrinking resources, the UN has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda to strengthen how we work and deliver, to be more efficient and cost-effective, to simplify procedures and to enhance transparency and accountability. The Pact for the Future also speaks on how to update the UN for the 21st century, so that we can better serve the people we work with.

As we enter the last year of the current Cooperation Framework in Serbia, the UNCT will continue to accelerate efforts to support Serbian society in its path towards sustainable development. As highlighted in the present report, the key results foreseen in the 2021–2025 cycle have largely been achieved. Nevertheless, we will intensify our efforts to address remaining gaps in priority areas, as identified in the government’s review of SDG indicators and beyond. A crucial element of our added value is our capacity to mobilize global and regional knowledge networks. We will also respond to the findings of our recent evaluation, continuing to support efforts to dismantle structural barriers and promoting cross-agency collaboration for integrated development solutions, to unlock greater efficiency and coherence. We will work with national institutions to strengthen the legal and policy framework and its implementation, as well as secure the budgets needed to ensure the sustainability of actions. And we will consolidate partnerships and leverage financing for sustainable development, building

deeper collaboration with the EU, development partners, IFIs and the private sector to broaden development impact.

A key consideration for 2025 is the uncertainty surrounding upcoming institutional changes due to the change of government. Incoming authorities will need to assume responsibilities, define priorities and address implementation. The evolving social context will also be an element to consider. In this changing environment, the UNCT will ensure mechanisms to remain flexible and adaptable, working with national institutions and longstanding partners from all strands of society.

As we develop our future Cooperation Framework, we will continue discussions with our partners on key priorities and how best to utilize our existing expertise at the national, regional and global levels to the benefit of Serbia. Meanwhile, our future financial framework and our Country Team configuration will be crucial elements for defining our work going forward.

RESULTS REPORT 2024

United Nations – Serbia

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