



THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON MIGRATION AND ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2022

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AND ACTION PLAN
2019 – 2022**

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As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADISA	Agency for Delivery of Integrated Services Albania
AIDA	Albanian Investment Development Agency
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
BoA	Bank of Albania
DBM	Department of Border and Migration
DPA	Department of Public Administration
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ERF	Electronic Register of Foreigners
IBM	Integrated Border Management
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPMG	Integrated Policy Management Group
IWG	Inter-Institutional Working Group
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MC	Migration Counter
MEFA	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MiGoF	Migration Governance Framework
MoESY	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
Mol	Ministry of Interior
Moj	Ministry of Justice
MoTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment
NDA	National Diaspora Agency
NES	National Employment Service
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SII	Social Insurance Institute
SMD	State Minister for Diaspora
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TCN	Third Country National
UAM	Unaccompanied minor
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VoT	Victim of Trafficking

Dear friends, colleagues and collaborators

The National Strategy on Migration and its Action Plan 2019-2022 represents an important step towards the accomplishment of the national and international commitments of the Government of Albania in the field of migration. The need to have such document came as a result of the need for a cross-sectorial approach towards migration governance, to address the challenges and to maximize as much as possible the impact of migration to the development of the country. Its development also addresses the European Commission's recommendation in 2018, which required Albania to consider migration as a core issue and to develop a cross-sectorial migration strategy.

The National Strategy on Migration, inspired by global migration processes as much as Albania's EU integration process, aims to provide, until 2022, a complete and comprehensive response to the challenges and opportunities of migration in Albania's context. It aims to provide a unifying framework of shared principles, commitments and understanding between state and non-state actors on all aspects of migration, including humanitarian, development and human rights dimensions as well as improve institutional co-operation and coordination on migration.

Albania is one of the countries that has set the Agenda 2030 as part of its national priorities and has welcomed the Global Compact on Migration and its objectives. This Strategy contributes to the successful achievement of nine Sustainable Development Goals.

This document comes after a long and intensive process, supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), during which it went through an extensive process of consultations.

The document is fully harmonized with a variety of strategic documents, which touch upon some aspects of migration governance, such as: Strategy on Integrated Border Management (2016–2020), National Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2015–2020), National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2016–2020 and National Strategy for Diaspora (2018–2024).

The National Strategy on Migration is the roadmap for the activity and context in the field of migration for the next four years, it presents the vision, specific goals and objectives, key products, financial resources and institutional coordination and monitoring mechanisms. Now we all have the obligation to implement the activities so that this document can be applied and implemented accurately.

In the capacity of the Chair of the Inter-Institutional Working Group set up by the Prime Minister's order, I would like to thank the Minister of Interior, Mr. Sandër Lleshaj, for the support in drafting this document, and all our partners of state and non-state agencies, national and international organizations, civil society, academics, business representatives, for their valuable contribution to the drafting of the Strategy, but also for the joint work and efforts to raise the issue of migration governance to a higher level.

Sincerely,
Rovena Voda
Deputy Minister of Interior

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document presents the National Strategy on Migration and Action Plan 2019-2022 of the Republic of Albania, approved by the Council of Ministers by Decision no. 400, dated 19.6.2019 “On the adoption of the National Strategy on Migration and the Action Plan 2019-2022”.*

The process for the development of the Strategy was led by the Ministry of Interior, with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) within the framework of the project “Support for the Development of a Migration Policy in Albania” funded by the IOM Development Fund (IDF).

For the drafting of this strategy and action plan, an Inter-Institutional Working Group was set up, led by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Rovena Voda, and composed of representatives of the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and the General Directorate of State Police. The group was later expanded to include representatives from all government entities dealing with migration related aspects.

To support the work of the Inter-Institutional working group for the development of the Strategy and Action Plan, IOM engaged a team of international and local experts as below:

- Piotr Kazmierkiewicz, International expert for the development of the Strategy;
- Teuta Grazhdani, PhD, Local expert for the development of the Strategy;
- Prof. Dr. Raimonda Duka, Local expert for the costing of the Action Plan;
- Asc. Prof. Dr. Luljeta Ikonimi, Local Legal Expert.

Several consultative meetings were held during the Strategy development process with civil society, business representatives, academia and researchers as well as representatives of international institutions and embassies in Albania.

* Published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania year 2019 - No. 92.

PART I:

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Introduction and purpose of the strategy¹

Emigration from Albania

Albania remains predominantly a country of emigration. In 2017, Albania had about 1.5 million citizens outside its territory, or about half of the country's population.² The majority of migrant communities are present in neighbouring countries, like Italy (448,407) and Greece (356,848)³, although there is a growing trend of Albanians residing in other European Union Member States as well as in North America and Canada. On the other hand, population projections indicate a long-term trend toward achieving a neutral migration balance.⁴

Emigration from Albania is primarily driven by economic reasons (caused by unemployment and the search for a better life) although other considerations have been prominent, too.⁵ Two categories of persons – youth and women -- have found the situation on the local labour market particularly difficult. In 2017, young people aged 15-29 who were unemployed and were not attending school or vocational training made up 29.7% of total youth. Only 50.3% of women (compared to 64.3% men) were employed.⁶

Emigration of Albanian citizens, in particular toward European Union (EU) countries continues despite the constant improvement of living conditions in the country, a net stable growth of the Albanian economy and constant improvement of public safety.⁷ According to INSTAT⁸, five factors are estimated to currently influence emigration toward the EU, including: the work opportunities abroad (84%), family reunification (4.6%), unemployment rates in Albania (4.2%), study opportunities abroad (3.5%) and other factors (3.6%). Additional pull factors are also higher quality of training and educational opportunities abroad. In turn, shortcomings of public services have served as push factors, adversely affecting migrants' efforts and chances to return and settle in Albania.

Another category of Albanian citizens abroad includes persons whose asylum claims were rejected or who otherwise resided irregularly in EU countries. A recent trend was noticed with significant returns of migrants falling within these categories. While it is difficult to record unassisted voluntary returns to Albania due to their nature, statistics with respect to involuntary return demonstrate a decrease of returns from EU countries⁹. The majority of involuntary returns from EU countries and neighbouring countries have been made with repatriation operations (from land and air).¹⁰ In 2017, there is a significant

1 For further analysis of migration trends to, from and through Albania, please check the 2017 Albania Migration Profile published by the Ministry of Interior.

2 According to INSTAT, the average population in 2017 was 2,873,457 inhabitants. The difference between the data registered in the National Civil Status Register and the average population in 2017 can be estimated indirectly as an indicator of the number of Albanian citizens living abroad.

3 According to UN DESA, the number of Albanian citizens residing in Greece and Italy by 2017 was 429,428 and 455,468 respectively.

4 By 2021, the number of emigrants should exceed between 5,000 and 16,000 the number of immigrants. This should be followed by a faster decline in the number of emigrants, leading to an almost neutral migration balance by 2030. http://www.instat.gov.al/media/3075/projekcionet_e_popullsis__2011-2031.pdf

5 Apart from labour migrants, the main categories of emigrants from Albania include family members of migrants, people migrating for family reunification purposes, students, and asylum-seekers and refugees.

6 Data extracted from INSTAT's 2017 Labour Force Survey, INSTAT – Labour market 2017, pg. 2. <http://www.instat.gov.al/temat/tregu-i-pun%C3%ABs-dhe-arsimi/pun%C3%ABsimi-dhe-papun%C3%ABsia/publikimet/2018/njoftim-p%C3%ABr-media-tregu-i-pun%C3%ABs-2017/>

7 According to the 2017 Albania Migration Profile published by the Ministry of Interior, the official unemployment rate for the population aged 15 years and above was 13.7%, which marked a decrease of 1.5 percentage points when compared to 2016.

8 Data extracted from INSTAT's 2017 Labour Force Survey.

9 2017 Albania Migration Profile, Ministry of Interior.

10 In 2017, a total of 2,243 operations were conducted, through which 13,497 Albanian citizens were returned, whereas in 2016, the numbers of Albanian citizens returned was 16,601 through 2,253 operations.

increase in the return of unaccompanied minors. A total of 452 children have been readmitted by the border authorities in cooperation with the State Social Services (SSS).

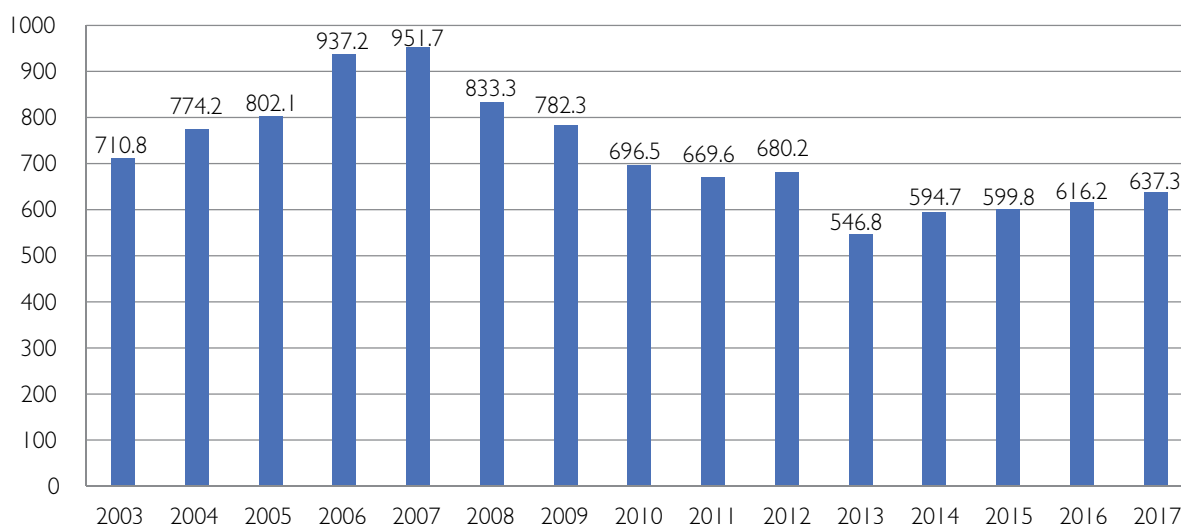
Table 1 Albanian citizens returned by age group (2016-2017)

YEAR	TOTAL	Male		Female	
		above 18 yrs	under 18 yrs	above 18 yrs	under 18 yrs
2016	21,681	18,443	978	2,259	222
2017	20,632	18,596	382	1,620	34

Source: 2017 Migration Profile, Ministry of Interior, Republic of Albania.

The impact of the migratory movements of the Albanian population on the country's social and economic development have been significant. For many years, remittances helped overcome the poverty that ensued in the aftermath of the communist regime. As such, they continue to make an important contribution to the economy of the country. Although Albania continues to be heavily dependent on remittances, the inflows gradually declined during the economic crisis in Southern Europe from the peak of EUR 952 million in 2007 to EUR 547 million in 2013. Since then, they have recovered and reached EUR 637 million in 2017 and are expected to rise further with growth returning in host countries, therefore, providing migrant households and local economies with an extraordinary and irreplaceable source of finance.

Figure 1 Dynamics of remittances (2013-2017)



Source: 2017 Migration Profile, Ministry of Interior, Republic of Albania.

Immigration and transit through Albania

Albania is also increasingly becoming a country of destination for a range of categories of foreigners (including migrants in search of employment, students, asylum seekers and refugees), although the numbers are relatively small.¹¹ In 2017, the General Directorate of the National Employment Service issued a total of 1,705 work permits for foreigners. The largest number of work permits (651) was issued by the Tirana Regional Employment Directorate. The top countries of origin of work permit recipients in 2017 included Turkey (582 or 34% of the total work permits issued) followed by China (208 work permits or 12% of the total) and Colombia (85 work permits or 6% of the total).¹² Out of 1,705 work permits issued in 2017, 245 or 14 percent were granted to women, and 1,142 were first-time applications.

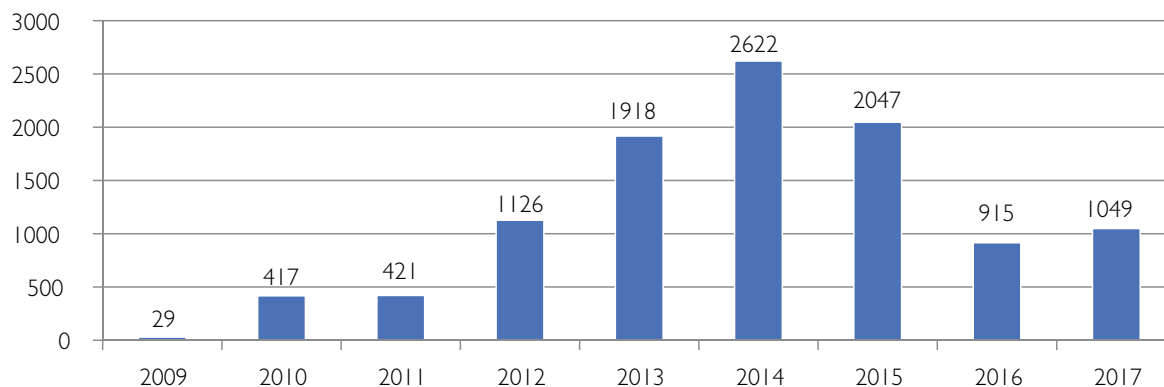
Like other Western Balkan countries, Albania has also been affected by mixed population flows, the reasons for which are not only socioeconomic conditions but also various conflicts taking place around the world. The categories of foreigners arriving in the country include, inter alia, refugees and asylum seekers, migrants, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied and separated

¹¹ National Strategy on Migration and its Action Plan (2019-2022) is primarily concerned with regular and irregular migrants. At the same time, it considers, where applicable, the position of asylum seekers and refugees.

¹² Turkish citizens are mainly employed in the construction sector, the education and health sector, Chinese citizens in the extractive industry (mining and quarrying), while Colombian citizens in the construction sector in the professions (welder, mechanic, electrical and steering heavy machinery for the construction of gas pipelines).

minors, and stateless persons. Some of them fall under more than one of the above-mentioned categories. They comprise diverse nationalities, the majority being Syrian and Afghan who often enter the country irregularly. In most cases, there is at least some degree of vulnerability involved, whether it is as a result of the situation in the countries from which they fled in the first place or due to the harsh conditions or exploitation and abuse suffered along the routes.¹³ These individuals primarily seek transit in Albania before moving on and entering EU countries.

Figure 2 Irregular migrants apprehended in Albania (2009–2017)



Source: 2017 Migration Profile, Ministry of Interior, Republic of Albania.

A quick assessment¹⁴ carried out by the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Albania in 2018 indicates a steep increase in the number of persons intercepted at the border areas. Therefore, 3,088 persons were intercepted in the first half of 2018, compared to 1,049 in all of 2017. This was matched by an increase in the number of asylum requests 1,901 in the first half of 2018, up considerably from 309 in 2017.¹⁵ These figures are actually higher than those recorded in 2015, during the peak of the Europe-wide migrant inflow. Based on data collected by IOM for the period of December 2015 – February 2018, 297 persons have tried to cross the Albanian border more than once (repeat offenders). The increase in asylum applications is likely to continue. The most optimistic scenario put together by the UNCT on the basis of an analysis of the increased number of entries and diversified roots indicate that the number of asylum applications will reach 3,000 in 2019 out of a total of 6,000 entries; while the pessimistic scenario estimates a total of 7,500 asylum applications in 2019 out of a total of 13,000 entries.

As to the countries of origin, in January–November 2018, 45.3% of those apprehended stated they were from the Syrian Arab Republic (2456; of which 2037 asylum applications) followed by other countries such as Pakistan (824, of which 623 were asylum applications), Iraq (533, of which 407 were asylum applications), Palestinian Territories (329, of which 275 were asylum applications), Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Afghanistan, Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran in fewer numbers. These figures indicate that the flow of persons irregularly arriving in Albania consists fundamentally of persons coming from countries that can be considered refugee- and asylum seeker producing countries.

Children are a particularly vulnerable group. 322 children were apprehended in the first half of 2018.¹⁶ While women and children account for the minority of cases, an increase in this category was observed particularly from March to May 2018 (Fig. 3). The majority of women and children were nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic who applied for asylum.

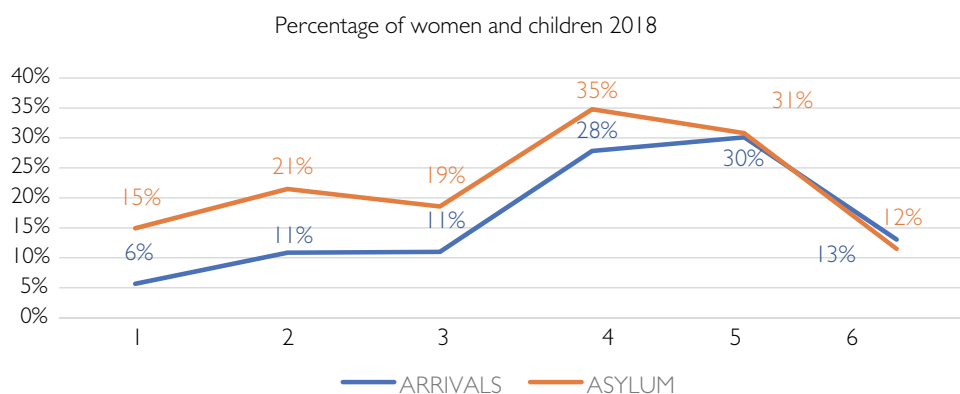
13 Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021.

14 Joint Assessment Asylum and Mixed Migration, Situation in Albania 2018; Initial Rapid Assessment, July 2018.

15 UNHCR data on asylum in mixed migration/Dashboard January –June 2018.

16 Of which 272 children were referred to asylum.

Figure 3 Share of women and children among asylum applicants



There is a geographical element about first-time interceptions. From January to April 2018, 74% of first-time interceptions¹⁷ (hereafter interceptions) were reported at the southern border of the country, and more specifically, at the Kakavija border crossing point. In addition, 305 persons were apprehended exiting the country (towards Montenegro, in the Shkoder area) between March and May 2018.¹⁸ This may be related to the new smuggling route that has been established from Greece via Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia and onto Western Europe.¹⁹ However, interceptions have increased inside the territory of the country, too, in 2018. Nonetheless, the stakeholders providing assistance, services and protection will have to re-evaluate the needs, priorities and existing procedures. Changes will have implications on the budgetary provisions of government institutions, UN agencies and NGOs involved in this work.

The need for a cross-cutting strategy on migration

Maximising the benefits of migration for migrants and societies requires a cross-cutting approach to migration governance so as to address challenges related to mixed movements (irregular migration, asylum seekers and refugees, UAM's, etc.) while enhancing the development impact of migration (investment, human development, innovation, etc). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes migration as an important global priority which, if governed appropriately, can bring positive benefits to migrants and their families, receiving and sending societies, and countries at large. Furthermore, the formulation of a Global Compact for Migration in July 2018 was a clear demonstration of the comprehensive approach and joint efforts at the global level to govern migration in a better manner.²⁰ Global Compact for Migration is expected to provide a unifying framework of common principles, commitments and understandings amongst Member States on all aspects of international migration, including the humanitarian, development and human rights, while also improving international cooperation on migration. Albania is one of the countries that has set the 2030 Agenda as part of its own national priorities and has also welcomed Global Compact for Migration and its objectives. The decision of the Albanian Government to renew the cross-cutting strategy on migration represents a key step in realising Albania's international commitments in the field of migration. The strategy contributes to the successful realisation of nine Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²¹

Furthermore, another incentive toward adopting an integrated approach to managing migration is the process of integration into the European Union. To conclude successfully negotiations on Chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom and Security) of the EU *acquis*, which defines migration governance as a core issue, Albania needs to formulate a cross-cutting migration strategy, as was already highlighted by the European Commission Albania 2018 Country Report.²²

17 Numbers relate to first-time interceptions. As such, persons who have been stopped in a particular location in Albania and have also been stopped elsewhere, for the purposes of this report are counted only once.

18 IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Compilation of Available Data and Information May 2018.

19 <http://bih.iom.int/pbn/bosnian-police-prevent-hundreds-migrants-entering-croatia-reuters>

20 Albania adopted the Global Compact on Migration during the Intergovernmental Conference held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 10 and 11 December 2018.

21 These goals include: Goal 1: No Poverty, considering that a number of measures will contribute to reducing poverty in the areas of origin for migrants; Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being, considering that the strategy addresses the health and wellbeing of migrants as a precondition for social and economic development; Goal 4: Quality Education, considering that the strategy encourages education for migrants' children as a measure to foster their socioeconomic integration and improve their livelihoods as adults; Goal 5: Gender Equality, considering that the strategy considers migration as a source of migrants' empowerment, (including women and girls' empowerment), but also looks at the issues of vulnerability to violence and exploitation; Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, considering that the strategy promotes decent job and secure work environment for migrants; Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, considering that the strategy promotes the transfer of migrants knowledge and skills to support innovation and economic growth in the country; Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities, considering that the key objective of the strategy is to govern migration in order to ensure, safe and orderly migration; Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, considering that the strategy promotes migrants access to justice to promote and protect their rights; Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals, considering that the strategy places special importance on collection, analysis and sharing of reliable data on migration that help policymakers develop evidence policies and plans to address the migration aspects of the SDGs.

22 Legal and Illegal Migration Section, pg. 37.

The Albanian Government already acknowledges the benefits of developing a coherent migration governance policy that would guide all programmatic actions in the area of migration. Several strategic policy documents on migration have been adopted since 2004. The first of these was the adoption of the first National Strategy on Migration and its Action Plan (2015-2010), followed by the Action Plans on Remittances (2007-2010)²³, the Strategy on the Return and Reintegration of Albanian Citizens (2010-2015) and the National Strategy on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Children (2014-2017). The more recent strategic documents include the Strategy on Employment and Skills (2014-2020), the Strategy on Integrated Border Management (2016-2020), the National Strategy on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2015-2020), the Strategy on Agriculture and Rural Development (2014-2020), the Strategy on Business and Investments (2014-2020) and the Strategy on the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings (2014-2017) and, more recently, the Diaspora Strategy (2018-2024). A major step toward achieving a comprehensive migration governance policy was the approval of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2016-2020. In line with the strategic vision of the NSDI “to establish an effective migration governance system in Albania”, the Prime Minister’s Office established an Interagency Working Group.²⁴ This body, in turn, formulated the new National Strategy on Migration for Albania, presented in this strategic document and its accompanying action plan.

The formulation of the strategy was supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The strategy and action plan are guided by the Migration Governance Framework (MiGoF) which was introduced and welcomed by all IOM Member States, including Albania, in November 2015. The document sets out the essential elements to support planned and well-managed migration. As such, it is the first and only internationally agreed document outlining how migration is best governed in a coherent and comprehensive manner. More importantly, MiGoF acts as the reference point for governments in developing and assessing “well-managed migration policies” under the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator (10.7.2). To facilitate the process of formulating a new migration strategy in the country, the Government of Albania in early 2018 took part in the roll out of the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) process, elaborated by IOM in conjunction with the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which offered insights on policy levers that Albania can action to strengthen migration governance.²⁵ The strategy does not cover comprehensively the issues of refugees, victims of trafficking, integrated border management, etc., given that those areas are covered by other policy documents, hence avoiding overlapping with these documents.

The Strategy and the Action Plan were shared with and extensively discussed by various actors dealing with migration issues in Albania, including representatives of the civil society organisations, the private sector, academia and international development partners.

Both documents rely on the legally binding definitions found in the Albanian legislation (such as in the Law on Aliens, Law on Emigration for Employment Purposes, Law on Asylum, Law on Protection of Children, etc.) and other existing policy documents.

The strategy document is organised in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the context and purpose of the strategy, along with the policy, legal and institutional framework on migration and lessons learned. Chapter 2 introduces the vision, policy goals and specific strategic objectives of the strategy while Chapter 3 presents the major products for each specific strategic objective. Chapter 4 provides information on the financial sources made available for the implementation of the measures of the action plan as well as additional funding that is required. The document concludes with Chapter 5, which gives an overview of the institutional coordination and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of both the Strategy and its Action Plan.

23 In 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the National Bank of Albania and the State Minister of Diaspora allowing for institutional cooperation and coordination in the area of remittances and their productive use.

24 Order No. 54, dated 19.03.2018.

25 Since its launch, 29 countries have used the MGI to assess their migration governance structures and to inform the design and development of their migration policies. Furthermore, the aim of the MGI is to help advance the dialogue on migration governance at country, regional and global levels by outlining the features of “well governed migration” in the context of the implementation of SDG target 10.7. Albania positively responded to the request by becoming part of the MGI assessment process by taking up its commitments to achieve the migration-related targets of the 2030 Agenda.

Policy, Legal and Institutional Framework, Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Four domains have been identified by Albanian institutions as components of a comprehensive MiGoF-based migration governance policy:

- Strategic governance of migration by Albanian institutions
- Safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania
- Effective labour migration policy and impact of migration on local development
- Migrant's integration and protection of migrants' rights

DOMAIN 1. Strategic Governance of Migration by Albanian institutions

The following areas are key to ensuring the strategic governance of migration:



A comprehensive legal and institutional framework on migration governance

Alignment of the national legal framework with EU and international standards

The process of EU integration and the parallel adoption of international norms gave an additional impetus to the continued improvement of the policy framework in the last decade. Legal approximation and implementation monitoring have acted as effective mechanisms in producing greater levels of cohesion to the national legal and institutional framework in the field of migration. Major legislative changes represent milestones in this regard: the adoption of Law No. 9668/2006 on the Emigration of Albanian Citizens for Employment Purposes including two Orders of the former Minister of Labour, Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities, Order No. 1772/2007 on the format, content and procedure of obtaining the Emigrant Status, and Order No. 2086/2007 on the format and content of the Registry of Emigrants and registration procedures, Instruction No. 44, date 21.08.2013 on determining the criteria and procedures for the recognition of pre-university certificates and diplomas of Albanian students returning to the country, changed by Instruction No. 14, dated 10.05.2017, Instruction 11/2010 of the Minister of Education on the criteria for the recognition of high schools and registration in the high school state examination in 2010, adoption of Law No. 108/2013 'on Aliens (amended), Law No. 121/2014 on Asylum in the Republic of Albania, Instruction No. 293/2015 of the Minister of Interior on the procedures for the treatment of foreigners with irregular stay in Albania, Order No. 1146/2014 of the Minister of Interior on some additions and amendments to Order No. 851/2009 on the Approval of Standard Operational Procedures for the Border and Migration,; adoption of Law No. 18/2017 on the rights of children and their protection the scope of which includes Albanian children, those of non-Albanian citizenship and stateless children who reside in the territory of Albania, Law No. 14/2016 on the identification and registration of addresses of Albanian citizens living outside the Republic of Albania, and Law No. 16/2018 on the Albanian Diaspora. These legal acts provide a solid legal framework that ensures the protection of Albanian citizens abroad as well immigrants in Albania. A lesson learned in the process of advancing the legal framework is that it is very important to carry out regular reviews of the impact of the main legal acts on migration governance. Often, they demonstrate the need to implement legal changes that would increase the effectiveness of legal measures. Furthermore, an analysis of interstate agreements needs to be carried out to ensure that no return of unaccompanied minors and victims or potential victims of trafficking takes place in the framework of these agreements.

Albania continues to align its migration legislation with the EU *acquis* and the international conventions it has adhered to While Albania has a very high level of ratification of international conventions²⁶ in the field of migration, continued attention needs

²⁶ This was one of the findings of the Migration Governance Indicators assessment that Albania undertook in spring 2018. Albania has ratified the following Conventions in the field of migration: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)- 2007; Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951; Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989; ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), 2005; ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), 2006; Conventions on Statelessness, 2003; European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, 2007; European Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, 2005.

to be paid to the level of their implementation and their impact on migrants' access to rights. Furthermore, inconsistency of migration terminology has been noticed in the Albanian legislation and its policy documents.

Strong institutional capacities and institutional coordination for migration governance

The strategic documents on migration governance adopted so far have recognized strengthening institutional capacities as essential to effective migration management. Some of the most substantial achievements in this aspect include institutional reorganisation, including the complete reform of the border and migration police, and the establishment of Migration Counters at the regional and local employment offices that provide services to three categories of migrants (prospective migrants, returnees and immigrants). Another set of developments includes the elaboration of sets of agreements and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), such as Procedures for the treatment of irregular migrants (both at the border and inside territory of the country) and the Cooperation Agreement for the Functioning of the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking and Potential Victims of Trafficking (2012), the Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking and Potential Victims of Trafficking (2018) and the formulation of a Council of Ministers decision on the Rules and Procedures for the Return and Repatriation of Unaccompanied Minors, implementing Law No. 18/2017 on the Rights of the Child and Protection, which is expected to be adopted in the near future.

The lessons learned from past efforts indicate the need for further strengthen institutional ownership on migration governance through continuous learning, sharing of best practices, active involvement in the design and implementation of migration policies and programmatic actions, the advancement of legislative framework in the field of migration, regular participation in international fora in the field of migration and constant monitoring and evaluation of the achieved progress.

A key factor conducive to ensuring institutional ownership is clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities of and in institutions under migration governance both at the central and the local level. Progress in this area has been achieved, in particular, at the national level, where there is a clear division of competencies among Ministries tasked with the managements various aspects of migration governance, such as the Ministry of Interior, State Minister for Diaspora, Ministry of Finance and Economy and subordinate institutions.²⁷ Nevertheless, there is a need to clarify the way in which migration-related policies and measures are going to be implemented in the wake of the institutional changes that took place in September 2017, which resulted in the merger of some ministries and extension of the portfolio of the new ministries.²⁸ For instance, it is necessary to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations among central and local government institutions on the assistance that is to be given to UAM's. Furthermore, there is a need to formalise the migration-related tasks of various government agencies under specific ministries, such as Migration Counters at the National Employment Service, as well as to strengthen institutional capacities to be able to complete these tasks (address staff turnover, lack of funding, need for knowledge and on-the-job training).

Another key factor for enhancing institutional ownership is the good institutional coordination at the central and local level for the implementation of migration-related policies. As part of the implementation of the first Migration Strategy, an Inter-ministerial Committee on Migration, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, was established as an advisory body to the Council of Ministers.²⁹ However, this body convened only once. Another body, facilitating inter-ministerial coordination, the Technical Committee on Migration, was established in 2007.³⁰ Chaired by the former Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Committee was in charge of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration and its corresponding Action Plan (2004-2008) composed of representatives from all ministries and institutions involved in the implementation of the National Action Plan on Migration. The Committee was assisted by the Migration Directorate within the former Ministry of Labour that acted as a secretariat. The records of the Committee show that the establishment of a coordination body expedited the implementation of the policy documents and reporting.

27 The Ministry of Interior is the main authority overseeing national border control, the management of immigration, integration of foreigners as well as for coordinating efforts against trafficking in human beings at the national and local level along with other stakeholders. It does so through the Ant trafficking and Migration Directorate, the State Police (Border and Migration Department), Directorate for Asylum, etc. The State Minister for Diaspora is responsible for designing and monitoring the implementation of the Diaspora policy in coordination with other line ministries. The Ministry of Finance and Economy is the responsible ministry for governing labour migration in the country in cooperation with other ministries (setting up and implementing labour migration schemes, along negotiating and implementing bilateral and multilateral labour agreements). It also monitors the functioning of recruitment agencies to ensure the ethical recruitment of migrant workers and oversees the work of the National Employment Service including Migration Counters. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection supervises the work of the State Social Service which provides crucial services to vulnerable categories, including migrants such as Victims of Trafficking and unaccompanied minors (UAM's). The Institute of Statistics is responsible for the collection, the processing and sharing administrative data as well as providing statistics on migration.

28 European Commission 2018 Albania Country Report.

29 Prime Minister's Order No. 115, dated 11 May 2006.

30 Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 425, dated 11.7.2007.

The absence of a high-level coordination mechanism on migration governance has limited the Albanian Government's capacity to address migration-related issues with a holistic approach and provide strategic guidance in all future challenges with respect to migration. However, work is currently ongoing on establishment of a thematic working group on migration that would coordinate the work of all ministries on both strategic and technical levels, facilitating reporting and monitoring of progress in fulfilling EU accession requirements. Furthermore, there is a need for a comprehensive review of the current role of local government structures in implementing migration policies and legislation and in delivering services to various categories of migrants. This would be crucial in establishing effective coordination mechanisms among the central and local government on migration management.

Another basic prerequisite for the implementation of the provisions of a strategic document is ensuring sufficient funding is available to match its priorities. This aspect proved to be a challenge with regard to the execution of the first Action Plan on Migration and the Reintegration Strategy. Nevertheless, the implementation of these strategic policy documents (as well as others) indicated the great potential of partnerships with the private sector and civil society organisations in supporting the implementation of policies and in securing donor funding.

Effective migration data collection, analysis and sharing

Adequate migration data collection, analysis and sharing has been at the core of designing and monitoring effective policies on migration although challenges have arisen in this regard. These include on the one hand the quality of data, stemming from lack of standardisation of administrative data collection coupled with only a few migration studies that would help decision-makers assess the impact of migrant flows and come up with reliable forecasts. Lessons learned from implementation of previous and current migration related strategies emphasise the need for the improvement of data collection and extending the scope of data collected. Furthermore, there is a need to carry out in-depth research and analysis on the impact of migration in particular in the labour market of Albania and demographic changes in the country (population growth/decline).

Data generation, analysis and sharing have been made difficult by insufficient funding as well as inadequate capacities of central and local institutions. These shortcomings were partly addressed when interinstitutional cooperation improved data collection and analysis with the establishment of an Inter-Agency Working Group that prepares the Annual Migration Profile for Albania, as provided for in the Law on Aliens. However, there is a need for continued efforts toward improving the capacity of Albanian state institutions to carry out regular data exchanges on migration with relevant authorities in destination countries including but not limited to Statistical Offices, Border Authorities, etc.

The civil society actors as well as academics can further contribute to the efforts to improve data collection, analysis and sharing and thus help improve public services provided to migrants by frequently informing all the stakeholders on the results of research that is carried out in the field of migration as well as the profile of various migrant categories assisted by them, when relevant.

Strong partnerships on migration governance

Sustainable and fair migration policies are developed in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders, both national and international. On the national level, the close cooperation between government institutions and civil society actors has been crucial to designing comprehensive policies on various aspects of migration, such as the National Strategy against Trafficking of People and the Action Plan 2018-2020, through the National Coalition of Anti Trafficking Shelters (Non-for-Profit Organisation), and the National Diaspora Strategy 2018-2022. The role of non-state actors (NGOs and the private sector) in policy implementation, however, has been limited and of an ad hoc nature.³¹

Migrants themselves have been consulted throughout the process of preparing the Strategy on Migration 2005, the Action Plan on Remittances, the Diaspora Strategy, etc. A lesson learned from the past is that it is crucial that government institutions identify ways to strengthen and formalise collaboration with migrant communities, with the private sector and civil society in both countries of origin and destination when designing and, in particular, when implementing migration policies in order to maximise the impact of these policies on the population at large, including migrants. With this in mind, it is necessary to organise meetings between government institutions responsible for the implementation of migration policies with non-

³¹ For instance, the private sector acted as sponsors for services to migrants (particularly victims of trafficking), setting up businesses.

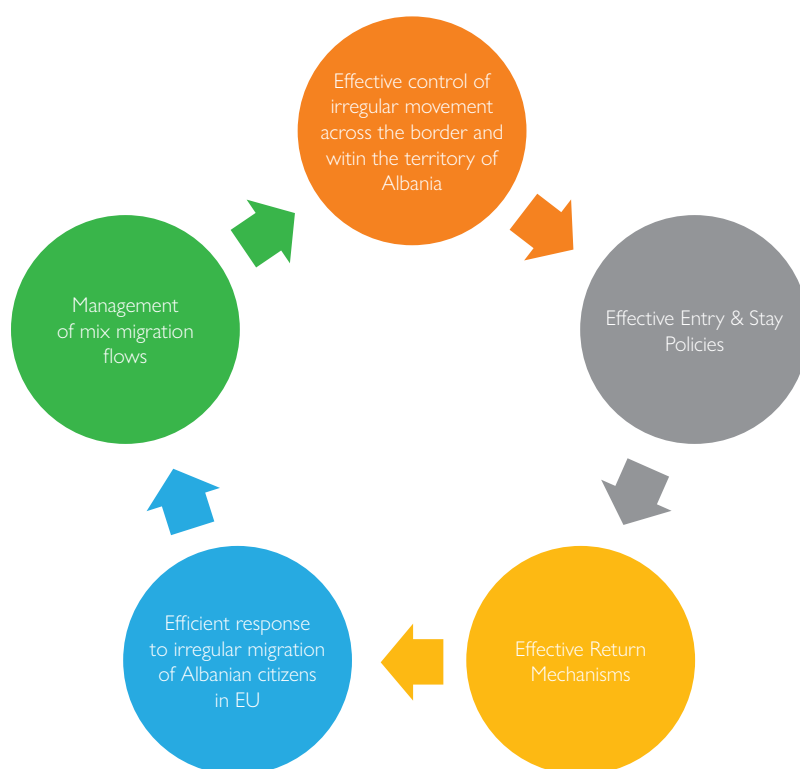
governmental stakeholders in the field of migration, as well as the involvement of the latter in the continuous monitoring and review of migration policies in the country.

With respect to international partnerships, Albania actively participates in several regional and international migration consultative processes such as the Budapest Process and Prague Process. It is also part of various initiatives promoting labour mobility, the more effective management of migration flows in the region, border security, free trade, and development and security. These include regional initiatives such as the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative³², the Regional Cooperation Council,³³ the South-East European Cooperation Process,³⁴ the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre, the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative, the Central European Free Trade Agreement,³⁵ the Central European Initiative, and the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative³⁶. Albania is also a party to various memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and agreements related to migration with other countries on, for example, irregular migration, counter-terrorism, the fight against organised crime, illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, exchange of information on migration and control issues, as well as asylum issues.

In addition, Albania has engaged in bilateral cooperation with important countries of destination for its nationals. Negotiations are currently under way with Germany and France for the exchange of information on asylum and migration. Cooperation with countries such as the United Kingdom, Italy and Greece is also ongoing with respect to data and information exchange, return procedures, border control and assistance to victims of trafficking. The increased international cooperation in the field of migration dictates the need to undertake a thorough review of the existing agreements and commitments so as to assess their level of implementation and to draw up important recommendations that can guide implementation as much as cooperation with other countries in the future.

DOMAIN 2. Safe and orderly migration

The following five areas are key to ensuring safe and orderly migration:



32 Albania held the presidency of this initiative from April 2010 to April 2011.

33 Albania is a member of the board.

34 Albania held the presidency from June 2014 to June 2015.

35 Albania chaired this organisation in 2012.

36 Albania held the chairmanship of this institution from June 2013 to May 2014.

Control of irregular movements at the country's borders and inside Albania

This represents an area in which major achievements have been reached over the last decade due to constant improvements in border infrastructure, enhancement of border guard capacities to detect, apprehend and screen migrants both at the border and inside the territory the country whilst referring them to adequate services. Albania's border management information system, known as the Total Information Management System (TIMS) and the Foreign Electronic Registry (FER),³⁷ make it possible for the authorities to monitor entry and exit movements to and from the country, as well as over stayers. The Law on Aliens, the Law on Asylum and related by-laws are the key legal acts that regulate the procedure for pre-screening of foreigners which aims at differentiating among various categories of persons on the move, such as asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, victims or potential victims of trafficking and undocumented migrants, in order to provide the appropriate assistance to them. In addition to the legal basis focused on asylum and migration, two legal acts, namely Law on the Rights and Protection of Children No. 18/2017 and Law No. 121/2016 on Social Services provide for specific protective measures for children and persons in need of protection/vulnerable categories.

To ensure that Albania attains EU levels with regard to border control, prevention and control of irregular migration while safeguarding migrants' rights the following areas need further improvement:

Border infrastructure

Albania needs to continue to modernise border management equipment and infrastructure to strengthen border surveillance, including the green and blue borders. An improved infrastructure and organisation of services at crossing points (dedicated lanes, access to information) will result in the reduction of waiting times and will address specific needs of migrants with special needs such as children, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, there is a need to ensure access to information on the phases of the pre-screening process, in addition to human rights of undocumented foreigners in general, and of vulnerable categories such as unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking and asylum seekers, in particular. Information can be made available through printed materials and interpreting services at the border crossing points as well as inside the country. Provision of interpreting services in particular at the border needs further improvement as it may hinder the provision of necessary protection in particular to children (both unaccompanied and separated minors) and females, as the only way to understand whether there is a case of a victim-potential victim of trafficking. Adequate budget allocation for interpreting services along with enhanced cooperation with international partners in the field of migration and asylum (such as IOM, UNHCR, etc.) may address the shortcomings in the provision of these services, as has been the case to date³⁸.

Enhancement of border guard organisation, training and deployment

Strengthening national and local capacities and dedicating adequate resources for the effective processing of persons on the move is crucial to ensure adequate treatment and respect of human rights, including *non refoulement* and the identification and referral of vulnerable cases to protection services available in Albania. While progress in this respect has been ongoing over the last years, there is still a need to increase the planned human resources at the Department for Border and Migration (DBM) within the Albanian State Police in line with the analysis of changing trends in irregular entry and transit, and to monitor further needs for reallocation, based on risk analysis. There is also a need to formally appoint substitute pre-screening specialists who will become involved in this line of work in case there is an increased flow of undocumented foreigners. As a result, it is necessary that the by-laws on pre-screening formally envisage that in case of such flows, other border and migration officers trained in pre-screening will have the mandate to be involved in pre-screening procedures. In addition, the efforts to mainstream gender in border police by encouraging women's participation in border policing and ensuring relevant training for all personnel should continue.

The increase in mixed population flows has revealed the need for the continuing training of border guards and management personnel by the Training Department at the State Police³⁹ and for ensuring that it is based on good practices and European

37 FER-TIMS is composed of some modules like "E-Permission of Stay", "E-Visa", "Irregular foreigners in the territory" and biometric data which contain information on foreign citizens that are granted a visa, permission of stay, or are irregularly in the country. The two systems replicate and exchange data among each other.

38 Needs assessment of the front-line officers involved in the pre-screening process, OSCE, 2018 (unpublished).

39 This is an administrative and management structure designed to guide all aspects of training, which started operating in July 2007. This Department is focused on the development of the skills of State Police employees, based on the standards and experience of developed countries. Training sessions take place in accordance with one's role, rank, function and responsibilities, and include subjects such as ethics, knowledge of the law, language requirements, etc.

standards, such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) Common Core Curriculum. A basic training on pre-screening procedures, on the rights and procedural guarantees for vulnerable categories such as children, victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking and asylum seekers should also be conducted for all Border and Migration officers acting as substitutes in the pre-screening process.

Effective entry and stay policies

Visa policy plays an important role in reducing the incidence of irregular migration to Albania. Albania has in place the E-Visa system, which is used to register all foreign nationals applying for a visa when entering the country. The system is operational within the TIMS system, and it allows for the whole application process to be completed online. The European Commission 2018 Annual Report recommends that Albania gradually aligns its visa policy with that of the EU, therefore requiring compliance with the EU lists of countries whose citizens require a visa and those who are exempted.⁴⁰ To this aim, Albania could benefit from a mechanism that would directly access electronic records of past visa applications and the applicant's migration history, as these could be used to screen past denials of visas, entry or violations of the terms of a visa through automatic alerts.

Another instrument that helps keep irregular stay and transit to a minimum is the application of targeted checks and the effective use of measures for irregular stay. Albania needs to bring its migration controls in full alignment with EU practice through close observation of the criteria and procedures for the application of a standard set of measures when there is a proven violation of legality of stay of non-nationals: termination of a visa/residence permit, voluntary return with temporary re-entry ban, removal order, and expulsion. In particular, it needs to standardise the rules of evidence, duration of the procedure and mechanisms for inter-institutional cooperation. The NSDI has set up some key targets with respect to preventing and reducing cases of irregular migration and foreign citizens stopped in the country with irregular documents by carrying out of accurate risk analysis, deployment of forces to the most affected areas and the provision of modern equipment to prevent irregular migration. These measures aim to reduce levels of irregular migration so as to achieve:

- an increase in the detection rate and elimination of irregular migration to 87% by 2020 (from 70% in 2014);
- the reduction of cases of irregular migration and foreign citizens apprehended in the territory of Albania with irregular documents by 27% more in 2020, as compared to 2014; and
- the monitoring of migration flows through monthly and annual risk analysis in line with FRONTEX41 standards.

To reach these targets, border and migration authorities will need to apply periodic risk analysis, taking into account the changing locations of where irregular migrants tend to concentrate and evolving *modus operandi* of facilitators. These measures are essential for effective planning purposes and so as to monitor the effectiveness of inspections on the legality of residence. Furthermore, it is important to provide all police officers with real-time data access on current residence status of foreigners in order to detect overstay or violation of terms of stay.

Effective return mechanisms for irregular immigrants

Readmission is one of the mechanisms utilised by competent authorities to return to the country of origin Albanian citizens with an irregular stay in destination countries, as well as immigrants with an irregular stay in Albania. The Republic of Albania has signed bilateral readmission agreements with several countries and the European Union which include a provision on third-country nationals (TCNs). The readmission agreement with the EU is being implemented in a satisfactory manner, with Albania swiftly processing readmission requests from Member States. With respect to return and readmission of third-country nationals, the key issue is swift and effective identification. The procedure involves initially the pre-screening of bio-data, collection of fingerprints and photo⁴², followed by interviewing the TCN on the reasons of their arrival to Albania and circumstances under which they left their country of origin. They are then referred to the asylum system, returned to the country of transit or referred to the closed reception centre for irregular migrants. Quick and efficient cooperation with embassies and border and migration services in the countries of origin on the swift identification of foreign citizens and return procedures will also be needed in the future.

40 It is, for instance, expected that temporary visa exemptions, as those applied in the summer months toward several non-EU countries, are terminated.

41 Frontex promotes, coordinates and develops European border management in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights applying the concept of Integrated Border Management.

42 Fingerprints and photos of adult migrants only (above 18 years old).

An area of concern is arranging the return of third-country nationals to Greece. The absence of a Protocol for the implementation of the EU-Albania Readmission Agreement with Greece has been identified as very much needed in several policy and institutional assessments and reports.⁴³ Negotiations on readmission agreements are being conducted with a number of countries of origin including Russian Federation, Morocco, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Other challenges identified by the authorities with respect to remission of third-country nationals include limited reception capacities at border points, limited reception facilities for unaccompanied minors, insufficient staff training, limited funding for return to country of origin and language and interpretation challenges.

Voluntary return is another return mechanism utilised by Albanian authorities which ensures a dignified and assisted return for the migrant to the country of origin. Nevertheless, the number of assisted voluntary returns from Albania during the last 5 years has been insignificant.⁴⁴ The majority of those who were apprehended during the past 5 years entered irregularly through Greece as the transit country. According to DBM, foreigners expressed their interest to return to Greece voluntarily, as the country where they sought asylum, and not to their country of origin. The number of those who asked the authorities for assistance to return to their country of origin has been limited. This may have also been due to lack of information about the assisted voluntary return scheme among undocumented migrants.

There are no standard procedures in place regarding the process of assisted voluntary return (AVR) from Albania, whereby irregular migrants and other categories of persons, such as rejected asylum-seekers, asylum seekers and refugees willing to return to their country of origin, are given advice about AVR. There is a lack of standard procedures and of a protocol on assisted voluntary returns. Therefore, the process commences only when there is a statement to this effect by the individual themselves. In addition, when a foreigner is served a forced removal order, operational difficulties⁴⁵ are encountered in changing the order to assisted voluntary return and involve other partners, such as the IOM.⁴⁶

The Assisted Voluntary Return of unaccompanied minors proves to be particularly challenging. This is due to lack of adequate accommodation, difficulties to determine the best interest of the child since there are difficulties in reaching authorities/families/custodians in the countries of origin, in particular if these are located in war zones. At the time of writing, a Council of Ministers' Decision on the Return and Readmission of children was under way. The decision, which is expected to be approved by the end of 2018, regulates the procedures for the treatment of unaccompanied minors, their accommodation and return to the country of origin, if and only when return is in the best interest of the child, and with the assistance of relevant Albanian authorities.

There is a need to increase human resources on voluntary return and deal with the demands of the AVR process, which involves both operational and procurement procedures, currently handled by officials already tasked with readmission. An increase in staffing might be necessary if the number of AVR rises. In particular, a designated officer on voluntary and assisted voluntary returns might be considered necessary, as it will ensure due emphasis is placed on the AVR process.

Efficient response to irregular migration of Albanian citizens in EU

The government of Albania continues to meet the visa liberalisation benchmarks since 2010 when the country was granted a visa-regime with the EU's Schengen Area. These efforts have helped lower the number of unfounded asylum applications lodged by Albanian citizens in EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries. The number dropped by 20% from 31,737 applications in 2016 to 25,528 applications in 2017. In January 2018, France registered 720 asylum applications and Germany 300, respectively 30 % and 52.7 % less compared to January 2017. In line with its commitments, further improvement of the implementation is expected in addressing the root causes of irregular migration. Albania intensified its dialogue with the most affected Member States, and in June 2017 the government adopted an action plan to prevent the abuse of the asylum system in EU and Schengen countries. In parallel, bilateral agreements were reached with destination countries. In December 2017, Albania signed an agreement with France on strengthening operational police cooperation, thereby regulating the deployment in France of four French-speaking Albanian police officers who are currently supporting the dismantling of criminal organisations of Albanian origin, including those behind the asylum seekers' travel to France.

43 Migration Governance Assessment Report, 2016, IOM; UNCT Rapid Joint Assessment on Migration and Asylum, 2018; European Commission 2018 Country Report.

44 Albanian Legislation and Practice on Assisted Voluntary Return, IOM, 2018.

45 The order can be changed only in the presence of the pre-screening specialist who might be located quite a distance away from the regional border and migration departments. Their presence in due time is not always feasible because there is only one pre-screening specialist in the regional departments, who must be physically present to do this. S/he might be unable to travel to the detention center the foreigner is being kept in. Given this difficulty, the border and migration authorities do not amend the expulsion order and neither do they delete the entry ban that accompanies it.

46 IOM cannot be involved in assisted voluntary return when a foreign national is subject to a removal order.

To reduce the risk of unfounded asylum applications, the country has also put in place additional temporary operational measures. These include tighter checks at border crossing points, more thorough exit interviews and information campaigns targeting prospective travellers. Stricter controls upon departure by Albanian authorities resulted in an increase in the number of Albanian citizens who were denied travel to the Schengen area. Throughout 2017, 12,403 Albanian citizens were denied permission to leave Albanian territory at border crossings (10,796 adults and 1,607 children). Yet, in the first two months of 2018, as many as 3,307 (3,061 adults and 246 children) persons were prevented from leaving the country altogether.

Lessons learned so far from the application of the visa liberalisation regime indicate the need for further strengthening institutional efforts to tackle unfounded asylum applications and address the 'push factors' behind it. It is necessary to intensify cooperation with countries of destination, including provision of awareness-raising whilst providing socioeconomic support for prospective migrants and returnees based on an accurate analysis of their needs and the geographical areas affected. The awareness-raising campaigns should be better targeted to potential asylum seekers. The Migration Counters established across the country continue to provide support to those returning to Albania as well as to prospective migrants, yet their capacities for information provision need to be strengthened. In addition, it is recommended that the cooperation between DBM and municipalities on provision of assistance for readmitted Albanian UAM's is formalised in particular in border areas. Given that lack of opportunities and poor education are among the key reasons for the emigration of UAM's from Albania, designing livelihood programmes for youth can address the specific push factors to emigration and contribute to the development of the local community in the regions the UAM's come from.

Management of mixed flows⁴⁷

Analysis of the changing trends in population movements in Albania's neighbouring countries strongly implies the need to strengthen the country's capacity for reception of a larger number of arrivals. In this context, close follow-up of the dynamics of migratory movements remains crucial, including early warning signs of potential increases. When interviewed by Albanian authorities, asylum seekers arriving from Greece blame lengthy asylum procedures in Greece, inadequate reception conditions on the mainland and the islands, and their willingness to join family members in EU Members States, hence their desire to continue moving onwards. Therefore, should these factors fail to improve, refugees and migrants will increasingly look for alternatives. The options are either irregularly crossing land borders in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, as has been the case since 2015, or trying alternative sea routes, which has not been an option until now. It is, therefore, necessary to continue ensuring the effectiveness of border checks at border crossing points and border surveillance along the green border, and to periodically update the profile of the refugees and migrants arriving in Albania, including the reasons why they intend to transit through Albania and what their future intentions are. Moreover, it is recommended that the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration is enhanced, and international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration strengthened so as to address the root causes of irregular migration.

In 2015, Albania developed the first Contingency Plan to respond to Mixed Migration Flows, which needs to be replaced by an updated version that should take into account the increase in the number of arrivals/interceptions of migrants and particularly asylum requests in Albania.⁴⁸ All actors involved in the provision of assistance, services and protection will need to re-evaluate needs, priorities and existing procedures. These changes will have implications on the budgetary provisions of government institutions, UN agencies and NGOs involved.

The following challenges⁴⁹ need to be addressed by the new Contingency Plan:

- **Access to safe and dignifying accommodation**

The rise in the number refugees and migrants has triggered the need to increase reception capacities for asylum seekers and migrants in Tirana and the border areas. The total reception capacity available in the country is for 400 people, which has been sufficient given the temporary nature of the movement but would be overstretched if the number of persons staying rises.⁵⁰ There are no specialised shelters for women and children at risk, and referrals to the residential care centres

47 This term reflects a migration governance perspective which is also the focus of the strategy, however asylum seekers and refugees are distinct categories of persons entitled to specific protection.

48 The share of foreign nationals who lodged asylum applications upon arrival doubled from 33% in or before 2017 to 66% in the first half of 2018.

49 As identified by The Rapid Joint Assessment on asylum and mixed migration; Satiation in Albania, 2018 undertaken by the UN Country Team in Albania.

50 The National Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers in Tirana can accommodate up to a maximum of 180 persons. In addition, at the southern border, a total of 75 persons can be accommodated temporarily at the Municipality centre (15 persons) and the Centre for Registration and Temporary Accommodation for irregular migrants managed from the BMP (60 persons). Furthermore, a facility at the border with Montenegro was put at the disposal of the Mol by Caritas Albania, and it can accommodate up to 120 persons.

managed by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare have proven challenging for foreign citizens. In this regard, a network of temporary/emergency reception centres could be established at the border in coordination with key Municipalities, UN agencies and NGOs to ensure provision of specialised services to those most in need. In addition, it is recommended that the coordination between the NRCA, CRCIM, the emergency shelters for survivors of domestic violence, children at risk and VoTs is strengthened.

○ Child Protection

Unaccompanied and separated minors are generally referred to and accommodated in the National Reception Centre in Tirana along with the adults that they travel with. The UNCT report indicates that individual interviews of children at the border are not carried out, unless children are immediately identified as unaccompanied minors. Instead, interviews with accompanied children have been carried out in the presence and as part of the whole family or group of adults even when their relationship is not confirmed, which in effect limits the capacity of the pre-screening interview to properly identify UAMs who do not declare themselves as such. Lack of comprehensive assessments, case management and referral mechanisms could have led to children failing to have access to services they may need, such as psycho-social support. Adoption of the Council of Ministers Decision on rules and procedures for the return and repatriation of the unaccompanied minors pursuant to implementation of Law No. 18/2017 “On the Rights and Protection of the Child”, is expected to establish clear mechanisms and procedures for case management procedures of unaccompanied minors, both foreign and Albanian. The Decision shall provide and leave the rest. ut h this expressioneven said that it is fine, and there are no problems with prescreening, so I am afraid that border and migration police forward unaccompanied minors to the regional Child Protection Unit that is responsible for providing shelter and any other basic needs to children, appointing a legal custodian and a psychologist. Overall, the new Contingency Plan should carefully address additional aspects of children’s position that cannot be covered by this strategy as it focuses on specific migration-related actions.

○ Women at risk

The procedure for the identification, referral and case management of victims of trafficking is solid and well established in the country. However, it has only been tested on foreign citizens once in the past two years. Among persons on the move, victims of trafficking alone are legally entitled to residential care services provided by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. In turn, to properly address the issue of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), dedicated services need to be allowed for to cater to migrant women, female asylum seekers or women refugees. The urgent issue is the ability to identify SGBV victims, which at present is hampered as pre-screening interviews fail to provide sufficient information for identification of cases. Another challenge is the limited technical capacities to identify survivors of gender violence or victims of trafficking by the NRCA, the authority that hosts women and girls who have applied for asylum at the border. Identification is further complicated by the insufficient period of stay of women and girls at the centre (7-10 days) during transit.

○ Other vulnerable groups

In addition, the Contingency Plan should also attempt to address the protection of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

○ Health

Regional BMP, Social Services and NGOs dealing with non-nationals coordinate actions on a case-by-case basis, but their collaboration is not formalised. In addition, contingency plans to manage emergency situations involving refugees and migrants are missing.

○ Data management

The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)⁵¹ has been widely utilised by government authorities in many countries including Albania to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or *en route*. In addition to being systematically deployed in medium- to large-scale humanitarian response operations, DTM has also proven to be highly effective as a preparedness tool, as well as in support of the recovery and transition phase of the response. Integrating DTM into capacity–building activities, mapping of potential

51 DTM is comprised of four distinct components:

- **Mobility Tracking:** regularly tracks cross-sectorial needs and population movements to target assistance in locations of displacement or in locations of origin or possible relocation sites to support sustainable solutions to displacement;
- **Flow Monitoring:** tracks movements of displaced populations at key transit points when locations of origin are not accessible and displacement is gradual;
- **Registration:** individual and household level information used by site managers for beneficiary selection, vulnerability targeting and programming;
- **Surveys:** gathers specific information through population sampling, in regard to return intention, displacement solutions, community perception, and other thematic information in relation to displacement.

evacuation and displacement sites, and setting up the DTM to be ready before a disaster occurs are some examples of how the DTM can be employed as an effective preparedness measure. Proper tracking of mixed flows (migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, etc.) requires that all relevant institutions (Directorate for Asylum, Border and Migration Police, NRCA and CRCIM) have access to a common information management system. This is currently limited as the Directorate cannot modify records in the Foreign Electronic Register (FER), as is the sole competence of the Border and Migration Police. In turn, border Officials in charge of pre-screening can access FER and register new cases, but cannot modify existing records even if fingerprints of the individual are found to match with a prior record. This leads to lengthy processes of data cleaning, inconsistencies between different directorates within the Mol and double counting.

DOMAIN 3. Effective labour migration policy and enhanced positive impact of migration on national and local development

The following elements are key to ensure an effective labour migration policy for Albania and to enhance the positive impact of migration in the national/local development:



Effective labour migration policy framework

In the existing policy framework, labour migration is considered to be part of *labour resources management*. The National Employment Strategy has mainstreamed migration throughout its strategic objectives which are geared toward promoting *quality jobs and skills opportunities for all Albanian women and men*. One of its strategic objectives is *fostering* decent job opportunities, and to achieve this, specific needs of Albanian returnees and migrants will need to be taken into account during the development, implementation and monitoring stages of national employment policies. Three years from the starting day of the implementation of this strategy, there is a need to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the extent to which this objective has been already achieved.

While planning, designing and monitoring future employment policies, it is necessary to examine the impact of migration of Albanian citizens (including emigration and return migration) and foreigners on the national labour market (be these migrant workers or asylum seekers/refugees). A forecast of the upcoming labour market needs is essential to tackling the challenges related to the fast decline of population due to low fertility rates, accompanied by steady emigration flows from Albania. This is vital to ensure that the national labour market will not face any major challenges and that a good social security system is in place.

Another strategic objective is strengthening the *governance of the labour market and the qualification systems*. The labour migration responsibilities are distributed among various ministries and subordinate agencies, some of which have been affected by the government reshuffle in 2017 as well as changes within internal structures of ministries (such as the changes in the Ministry of Finance and Economy). It is, therefore, a necessity to carry out an assessment of available human, financial and information resources in institutions charged with the implementation of labour migration tasks, so as to identify gaps and needs for investment. Furthermore, there is a need to determine the role and operating capacities of Migration Counters within the overall scope and responsibilities of the National Employment Service to enhance the implementation of migration policies.

Over the past four years the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoFE) has successfully carried out annual analysis of skills needs in the Albanian market so as to plan vocational education and training delivery and to prepare specialists who are in demand not only in Albania but also abroad.⁵² Another key policy measure has been the capacity development for policymakers to recognise skill gaps and gender inequalities in the national labour market and to come up with respective measures promoting skills transfer from other labour markets.

⁵² These are specific measures of the Action Plan on Employment.

Moreover, the Strategy envisions designing and implementing Skills Transfer Programmes on the basis of sectoral skills forecasting and cooperation agreements established with other SEE countries. The latest skills needs assessment report⁵³ for Albania indicates that more than one third (39.9%) of enterprises stated that their existing staff lacked skills, a figure more than double the one reported in 2014. Water supply, sewerage and waste, and mining and quarrying are the sectors suffering the most from a lack of relevant skills. The predominant reason reported for businesses facing these skills shortages is that the labour market seems to be unable to provide candidates with sufficient knowledge and skills.

In order to achieve national objectives, the potential of Albanian migrant communities abroad (including those granted permanent stay in destination countries) and Albanian returnees with skills and qualifications in short supply need to be further explored. This could be done through surveys on skills and qualifications, and it requires the identification of some of the barriers and opportunities for the integration of prospective migrants and returnees in the Albanian labour. It also calls for a more active role of the Albanian consulates and representative offices abroad in disseminating the list of professions and qualifications in short supply as well as the conditions on taking up employment in Albania. Facilitated conditions (such as temporary tax waivers, etc.) for diaspora members with skills in short supply would encourage them to take up employment in Albania in particular in pilot initiatives in sectors experiencing highest outflow of professionals.

Analysing the potential of Albanian migrant communities abroad is also extensively discussed in the National Strategy for Diaspora, highlighting the needs for exploring and putting this potential into use, combined with encouraging the return of qualified migrants. The Action Plan of the National Strategy on Migration, in support of the provisions of the National Strategy for Diaspora, highlights the necessity of building the infrastructure for the successful implementation of the Registry of the Addresses of the Albanian nationals residing abroad and the development of a methodology for collecting data on exits and returns of Albanian citizens as well as on the entry of migrants, migration for employment purposes and the integration of returned migrants into the labour market.

Like in other countries, setting up a scholarship fund for further study abroad and participation in exchange programmes with the mandatory proviso to return could be explored and introduced, if necessary, as foreseen in the National Strategy for Diaspora. Albania has had a good record of highly qualified nationals returning to the country through the implementation of the Brain Gain Programme, which supported the creation of the necessary incentives and national policy mechanisms for the effective engagement of the Albanian Diasporas in the scientific, administrative and economic development of the country. The project sought to reverse Albania's "brain drain" and supported the Government in the preparation of a policy framework to address the issue. An online database was established to match the demand of Albania's academic institutions, public administration, and private sector with the expertise offered by the Albanian Diaspora members. Changes were made to laws and by-laws regulating employment in the Public Administration favour returnees both financially with rewards for the graduate degrees obtained abroad and in terms of the DPA entrance exams.⁵⁴ Similar initiatives of temporary, virtual or permanent return of highly qualified nationals can have positive effects on addressing skills shortages in both the public administration and labour market in Albania in general.

Albania has a quota system⁵⁵ for managing **labour immigration** determining the sectors and professions in which there are shortages, along with the number of work permits, in line with. The process of setting annual quotas for the employment of immigrants is highly dependent on migration policy priorities and the changing situation in the labour market, in particular with regard to seasonal employment). The current way quotas are established is such that it has had a limited effect and, therefore, it ought to be re-designed to better react to labour market needs, including areas of skills deficits in each sector. In addition, like many EUMSs, Albania will probably have to consider offering dedicated schemes to attract foreign professionals and skilled workers in selected sectors, including a combined long-term work and residence permit and facilitated conditions for family reunification.

A good future labour migration policy would require that labour migration needs are periodically monitored and forecast. Regular assessments of the current and future impact of migration flows on the volume and structure of the national labour force, along with assessments of the impact of migration on the national and regional labour markets will be needed to determine labour migration policy and the need for foreign workforce. Similar to EU countries, this process will require good capacities from relevant Government of Albania institutions to collect and analyse comprehensive and consistent datasets on labour migration, whilst making use of migration forecasts to develop long-term labour migration policies.

53 Skill Needs in Albania, 2017, Swiss Development Cooperation (pg. 115).

54 The Programme was implemented by the Council of Ministers. Its main Government partners were the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Interior's Department of Public Administration, the Diaspora Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education through UNDP funding.

55 As per Article 82 of Law No. 108/2013 on Aliens, the deadline for the establishment of the annual quota for the number of immigrants employed in the succeeding year in Albania is 1 October.

A good policy needs to be grounded on a good legislative and institutional framework ensuring its implementation. The current system of labour migration management for *Albanian citizens* has relied mainly on the role of the government in signing and implementing bilateral labour migration agreements. The progress so far has shown limitations as the effectiveness of bilateral agreements has depended on changes in the immigration rules of the destination countries (Greece and Italy, in particular). The new policy needs to take into account the growing role of the private sector (including recruiters and recruitment agencies) as a direct service provider on labour migration.

The National Employment Strategy has also envisaged developing national standards on ethical and fair recruitment that are aligned to internationally recognized standards.⁵⁶ Following a 2017 assessment on the state of recruitment of migrant workers by recruitment agencies, the Minister of Finance and Economy issued Instruction No. 286 dated 21.05.2018 on some specific rules for temporary employees who are employed by employment agencies regulating the recruitment procedures followed by private recruitment agencies, and their obligations to periodically report to the responsible government authority for employment. However, national standards on the ethical recruitment of migrant workers have yet to be established. Once in place, they will need to be enforced by private operators, and their activity monitored periodically.

Effective mechanisms for seasonal and circular migration

Albanian migration for seasonal work purposes has mostly been towards Greece and Italy. The May 1996 agreement between Albania and Greece on hiring seasonal workers involved all seasonal professions although in reality it was implemented solely for agricultural workers.⁵⁷ An assessment of the implementation of the bilateral agreement in 2013⁵⁸ revealed that circular migration takes place mainly through informal channels and outside the scope of this agreement. After the EU visa-free regime entered in force in December 2010, the *metaklisi* (invitation) procedure for Albanian circular migrants has in effect become inactive. In reality, a new form of irregularity has emerged, notably that irregular seasonal circular employment takes place upon legal entry into Greece.

The February 1998 agreement between Albania and Italy on hiring seasonal workers was renewed in December 2008 along with its implementing protocol.⁵⁹ A pilot scheme was set up and implemented by respective government authorities in 2013⁶⁰ albeit without much success, and it was, therefore, not replicated further. The Italian quota system has continued to grant Albanian citizens preferential quota for seasonal work and has helped regularise the status of stay for irregular ones.

Over the past few years, there has been an increased demand to extend the geographical scope of bilateral labour mobility agreements with other countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Future success of new seasonal/circular migration agreements will rely on the institutional ability to carefully examine characteristics and determinants of seasonal labour migration from Albania toward intended countries, to identify key problems associated with irregular movement in these destination countries and use this knowledge to guide the negotiation process of new labour migration agreements. However, it is important to review the scope and provisions of bilateral agreements already in force so as to check that they contain sufficient incentives for circular movement.

Pre-departure services for prospective migrants are essential to an effective seasonal and circular migration policy. The network of Migration Counters established throughout the country provides pre-departure information and orientation to Albanian citizens who seek regular employment opportunities abroad. However, the capacities of MCs for frequently updating the information on opportunities, rules and regulations for regular migration abroad are limited. Their capacities to address the need for information and orientation of potential vulnerable categories need to be strengthened, too. Given the increasing role of private recruitment agencies in facilitating labour migration for employment purposes for Albanian citizens, stronger cooperation needs to be established with them to identify methods of effective cooperation on disseminating information on opportunities for safe and orderly seasonal migration.

56 The Ministry of Finance and Economy supervises the role of the recruitment agencies, and it makes efforts to advance legislation and enforce the ethical recruitment of migrant workers, be these Albanian or foreign citizens. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and more recently the Diaspora Ministry, MoFE negotiates new bilateral labour migration agreements as well as the portability of social benefits.

57 Seasonal migration to Greece has been primarily regulated by the so-called *metaklisi* (invitation) for seasonal labour that was officially introduced by the Greek government in 2001 (L.2910/2001) under a system of annual quotas and in 2005 (L.3386/05). In practice, however, it did not work as many Greek employers who tried to make use of this procedure were disappointed and gave up using it altogether. See: European University Institute (MEITKOS project): 2011, Circular Migration between Albania and Greece: A case Study-draft report, May 2011.

58 Albanian Irregular Migration to Greece: A new typology of crisis, Eda Gemi, ELIAMEP, 2013.

59 The agreement was approved by DCM No. 866 dated 12.08.2009 on the Approval of the Labour Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Italy.

60 On the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was signed on 19 July 2011 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Italy and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Albania.

An examination of the **effectiveness of current legal provisions** for the protection of the rights of seasonal workers is needed, addressing the specific challenges faced in main destination countries. The Law on Emigration of Albanian Citizens for Employment Purposes 9668/2006 (amended⁶¹) which regulates key aspects of the emigration of Albanian citizens and their protection while abroad has remained largely unimplemented and needs to be completely revised along with its secondary legislation. While efforts have been made to substantially improve the current consular and legal services provided to Albanian migrant workers abroad through online platforms of communication, the online application of services, the reduction of the time needed to be able to obtain required documents, etc., there is a need to carry out a survey of migrants and migrant community leaders in main destination countries so as to identify additional needs to ensure their maximum protection while abroad. As part of the National Mechanisms for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking, the Albanian authorities in and outside the country use standard templates when interviewing potential victims. A similar approach could be considered in interviewing migrant workers to identify cases of exploitation or discrimination when identified by Albanian consular services abroad.

Return and socioeconomic reintegration forms an important part of the circular migration cycle. The first reintegration strategy failed to distinguish between voluntary and forced returns and focused on the necessity to improve the provision of information to prospective and actual returnees and their referral to available services (public, e.g. Migration Counters, and private, if possible). The MCs can partially fulfil these tasks. While serving as an important information hub for public and private services available to returnees, they have merely played a facilitating role in reintegration. Based on the field evidence of returnees' opinions, orientation assistance needs to be complemented with dedicated support to access the labour market in Albania, public education, vocational training, and health and housing services, along with entrepreneurship support services. These issues suggest a need for an in-depth analysis of the current reintegration support mechanism in the country. In particular, a redefinition of the scope of *reintegration support* as well as of the eligibility criteria is required, as it would determine the shape of government national programmes for the return and reintegration of labour migrants. The state programs could also build on the experience of reintegration assistance for returnees provided by international organisations and civil society actors mainly in the form of resettlement support, and in the framework of return programmes implemented by EU countries.

To address these shortcomings, it is imperative to assess the scale, categories and specific needs of Albanian citizens willing to return through surveys, consultations with diaspora and events with migrant workers. Its findings will lead to specific measures and incentives for reintegration, and the areas where MC capacities need to be further strengthened. The specific measures may facilitate the creation of small enterprises by returnees (investment funds, legal aid, preferential loans). European practice shows that in general countries of origin try to gear the potential of returnees toward the wider needs of the national economy.⁶² Similar Greece or the experiences of other European countries, Albania can encourage the development aspect of return migration, by going beyond reintegration support by targeting merely basic needs of the returnee and his/her family.

The reintegration programmes should also monitor the indicators of the labour market participation and economic welfare of the returnees and their family members to identify the barriers to re-integration of the categories of those most in need as well as to undertake actions to remove barriers. Every single intervention in the area of return migration should take into consideration the development impact of migration and its utilisation for the development of local communities where returning migrants settle. Full use of return migration provides opportunities for greater development of local communities, accompanied by better public and private services, which should provide sufficient disincentives to continued emigration of returnees and their families. Local development may also be an important reason to continue maintaining links with destination country and trying to explore further avenues for business opportunities between the two countries. The preparation of local development plans will be essential to all efforts to link migration with development.

Removing barriers to the **recognition of degrees and qualifications** as much as skills gained/earned abroad is a crucial factor for the success of return and reintegration to Albania as much as for addressing skills shortages in the national labour market. Albania implements the European Qualifications Framework and accounts for labour migrants' skills and capabilities when deciding whether to admit them. Law No. 10247/2010 on the Albanian Qualification Framework (AQF) was adopted in 2010 whereas the National List of Occupations based on International Standard of Classification of Occupation (ISCO 2008) was approved in 2009 by a Council of Ministers' Decision. So far, 640 occupational descriptions have been developed with business representatives and a list of vocational qualifications has been proposed by the National VET Agency, consisting of 20 fields

61 Amended by Law no. 10389 dated 03.03.2011.

62 In Greece, the Government decided to send returnees to less developed areas. Koser K. (2000) noted that in the case of Greece a lump sum was paid to those returnees that settled in rural areas. Another method applied in Germany was to concentrate returnees in particular sectors of the economy, for example incentives to encourage self-employment in agriculture, trade and research. Yet, in the context of Albania, efforts to promote returnee investment in local development are hampered by the lack of local development strategies and plans.

of qualifications for the 2nd AQF level and more than 100 profiles linked to AQF levels 3-5. For most professions, Albania has an accreditation system to recognize foreign degrees and qualifications.⁶³ The 2nd monitoring report on the implementation of the National Action Plan on Employment (2016) highlights the ongoing efforts to revise the AQF Law in order to improve the process of curricula design in education and training as well as recognition of VET nationally and internationally, improving employability and labour mobility of VET graduates.

At the same time, returning migrants bring a valuable set of informal and non-formal capacities, skills and competencies obtained whilst in migration. It is important, therefore, that there is a mechanism in place to ensure that these can be applied in the Albanian context and taken advantage of in the local labour market. The National Action Plan on Employment foresees ‘*selecting bodies and putting in place procedures for the validation of qualifications, skills assessments, certification and the validation/ recognition of prior learning*’. However, the 2nd monitoring report on the implementation of this Action Plan (2016)⁶⁴ indicates that Recognition of Prior Learning mechanisms has been defined for and tested in a few qualifications, whilst the legal basis is not fully in place yet. The new VET law supports the implementation of procedures for recognition of prior learning, but it is not complete without the AQF law and its by-laws. Recognition of prior learning would contribute to the development of lifelong learning opportunities, especially among adults and improve their participation. Completion of the legal framework would unlock progress in this regard.

Albania participates in the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) for South East Europe (SEE). The RCC believes that the free movement of people within the region is likely to redirect some of the migration flows that have otherwise been outside the SEE, to mobility within the region itself, therefore contributing to keeping the skills base and potential workforce in the region. As part of implementation of the SEE Development Strategy 2020, the RCC aims to remove some obstacles to the mobility of professionals, in particular through:

- regional mutual recognition agreements of professional qualifications in sectors of mutual interest by 2020;
- removing obstacles to the mobility of the highly qualified workforce, in particular through development of joint standards and procedures for automatic recognition of quality assured academic qualifications;
- removing obstacles to mobility of students, researchers and academics through joint policies, measures and instruments aimed at increasing academic and research mobility and cooperation in the region and a proposal for a Western Balkans Young Researchers Mobility Scheme to facilitate mobility from and to the Western Balkans by 2020.

Therefore, the national labour migration framework needs to be aligned with Western Balkan countries to offer quality vocational education and training to youth and adults. Three categories of migrants, namely potential emigrants, returnees as well as immigrants benefit from this policy.

Migration and development policies and practices

This pillar of migration governance is closely linked to the labour migration policy, which, when well-organised, has a high potential to contribute to the development of the country of destination as much as the country of origin. As the Diaspora Strategy and its Action Plan ensure a good coverage of all issues related to migration and development, the proposed measures under this strategy and action plan complement the provisions of the Diaspora strategy.

Two core issues are covered in this policy document with respect to the impact of migration on development – remittances and their transfer, and investments in Albania from a development perspective.

o Remittances and their transfer⁶⁵

The economic significance of remittances lies beyond what official statistics of the balance of payments suggest, for both sending and recipient countries. Remittances include the transfer of monetary or in-kind “income and wealth” from workers in one country to their country of origin. Monetary transfers contribute to the direct growth of foreign currency amount in the home country of migrants, while in-kind transfers contribute to the increase of savings in the host country of the migrant. When remittances are sent via formal channels, they are recorded in the current account of the balance of payments of both

63 Instruction No.17 of the Minister of Education and Sports dated 03.08.2016 provides for the recognition degrees that correspond to levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Albanian Qualification Framework, in other words PhD, Master, Bachelor and two-year professional degrees. See: Migration Governance in Albania: An assessment Report, IOM, 2016 (pp. 35-36).

64 P. 67.

65 The analysis in this section relies on “Remittances: support for development”, a 2018 publication by the National Bank of Albania.

the home and the host country of the migrant. Remittances are also in-kind, such as goods sent to families in the country of origin. However, only a part is recorded as imports, while the majority of payments⁶⁶ or donations made by migrants are rarely ever recorded as remittances.

During 2008-2017, the remittances to GDP ratio in Albania averaged 9.1%. This share fell slightly only once after the global crisis, yet it did not affect the important contribution of this item to the macroeconomic framework of the country. The impact of remittances on household incomes in Albania is significant. The World Bank has estimated that remittances represent about 13% of the annual households' budget in Albania and a considerable part of remittances is destined for households living in rural areas. Studies show, however, that dependence on remittances may make some households increasingly vulnerable. While many families seek to emerge from poverty and improve the standards of living, a significant share of remittances is used for consumption. Considering that sooner or later these cash flows will fall, they need to be increasingly channelled towards investments so as to be sustainable. It is, therefore, crucial to continue expanding and improving remittance data collection research and analysis in order to orient new policies on remittance transfer and their productive use/investment.

The use of formal and informal channels for the transfer of remittances is an important factor for their productive use and investment. The Diaspora Strategy and its Action Plan envisage a number of important measures in this respect, which are complemented by the provisions under this strategy, especially with regard to the need for undertaking periodic surveys on financial strategies and the models of the use of financial instruments to identify the gaps in the financial system and the possibilities for improvement with regard to remittances, financial education as well and the need for awareness-raising campaigns targeting migrants and remittance recipients.

In Albania, the majority of remittances are transferred informally while little use is made of banks. Based on the analysis of the way remittances are delivered, it is estimated that 39% of remittance flows are channelled through unregulated channels, while 57% through non-bank financial institutions and only 4% through banks. It is also noted that remittances in Albania, even when channelled through official delivery channels, are disbursed in cash, thus promoting the use of cash in the Albanian economy. A combination of high transaction costs and socioeconomic exclusion of households in rural areas and/or households with low financial literacy may be the main factors for the continued use of informal channels of transactions.

In light of the above, routing remittances through official channels is extremely important, creating and enhancing **access to basic banking services** for the remittance-receiving households of emigrants. A 2016 World Bank survey on the financial behaviour of remittance recipients indicates that an important factor for the financial inclusion of remittance-receiving households and the channelling of remittances through regulated channels is the development of a country's retail payment market meeting international standards. The Albanian retail payments market consists mainly of banks and some non-bank financial institutions, which concentrate their activity mainly on money transfers (cash-in-cash-out). Banks dominate the financial system accounting for about 90% of the system's total assets. Non-bank financial institutions provide limited alternatives to using electronic payment instruments.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the presence of innovative institutions, such as electronic money institutions, remains at a limited level in the Albanian market. The electronic payment instruments offered by the banks can widely be utilised for remittance transfers.

Low costs are estimated to be a key factor for the delivery of remittances. The study of the remittance market identifies 'cost' as the third reason why banks are not used as channels for the delivery of remittances. The first two reasons why banks are not being used to deliver remittances are: the perception that banking procedures are complicated and the lack of a bank account from inhabitants. Since remittances are high in Albania, the cost of their delivery is high, too. In 2018, its cost was 8.64% of the total amount to be sent, standing above the global level (at 7.13%) and the regional average for Europe and Central Asia (at 7.55%).

Remittance costs could be further reduced by raising the level the public's **financial education**. The Greenback Project is a recent pilot initiative of the World Bank Group, implemented in Berat, promoting the financial education of emigrants and their families who are expecting remittances in cities selected based on the volume of remittance flows. The overall objective is to increase the efficiency of the remittance market by promoting change based on the real needs of final beneficiaries of international transfers and stimulating cooperation between emigrants and their families, remittance service providers and public authorities.

⁶⁶ Such as insurance premia, education, tickets for international flights directly to airlines.

⁶⁷ At present, there are nine licensed non-bank financial institutions in the Albanian market for payment and transfer services, of which six may be considered actively involved in the market. It is estimated that remittances are channelled mainly via two of these institutions. It is worth pointing out that the services currently provided by these institutions do not support the use of electronic payment instruments, inter alia as a result of the existing legal and regulatory framework.

The challenge of **developing specific and innovative products** to serve emigrants and their families should be encouraged and promoted to allow them access to financial system services and greater financial inclusion. The National Bank of Albania has found that the banking system offers very few products linked to remittances, mainly bank transfers and deposits. It is, therefore, recommended that banks shift their attention to the remittance business, as it is profitable because of the commission rates involved, foreign currency remittances are a source of income for banks because of the exchange rate, and banks may sell other remittance-related products such as debit and credit cards, and consumer credit. The approach of non-bank financial institutions to the remittance market differs from the banks. These institutions pay more attention to the remittance market as they have tailored products (such as time deposits, business loans to families of migrants and mortgage loans) that serve a specific purpose to emigrants and their families. Non-banking financial institutions look out for new developments and the evolution of the remittances' development cycle, so their role must be enhanced and supported.

○ Promotion of investment in Albania

In so far as economic development activities, the involvement of Albanian Diaspora groups has so far been limited, bar the support provided during the Kosovo conflict. The adequate identification of Diaspora groups has been a challenge to their engagement in the country's development because, in general, they are not organised or formalised in particular associations or because activities are sporadic and discontinuous. There are, however, some well-established groups that have been active for a long time and enjoy the serious commitment of their members. The State Minister for Diaspora is actively creating a repository of all the associations and groups of Albanian communities abroad also through the recently established National Institute for Diaspora which intends to involve these community members in various initiatives for the country's development. Out-of-country voting remains one of the Government of Albania incentives to promote Diaspora engagement in this regard.

Diaspora engagement has also been hampered by the lack of providing updated information on investment opportunities in Albania and the legal and regulatory framework for doing business and/or investing in the country. The establishment of the Albanian Investment Development Agency has brought some major improvements in this respect although the government's efforts could have a higher impact if coupled with frequent contacts with diaspora business networks abroad through the support of the Albanian diplomatic service. These meetings should act as investment opportunities whilst gauging the Diaspora's interest in investing in Albania identifying some of the major barriers they may have been faced with. This is also one of the key objectives of the Diaspora Strategy and its Action Plan.

Engagement of the diaspora could also be encouraged by establishing dedicated Government programmes specifically designed to attract the human and financial capital of Diaspora members and to utilise to the benefit of Albania's socioeconomic advancement. In this respect, Albania could learn from successful international experiences in Diaspora engagement in national and local development, such as the Diaspora Engagement Hub in the Republic of Moldova or the 3x1 programme in Mexico.⁶⁸

Such experiences would allow the Government of Albania to encourage the transfer of human capital and professional experience to the academic, social and economic spheres whilst establishing successful models of matching funds to support public works that bring improvements in local community infrastructure (roads, schools, health services) and promote local economic development (employment generation schemes).

Moreover, the Diaspora community may contribute towards projects of a strategic interest for the country, such as the implementation of the Integrated Rural Development Programme, otherwise known as the 100 Villages Programme⁶⁹ with the aim of increasing investment in agriculture and tourism through the development of agro-tourism, the growth and development of the agro-processing businesses. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development may facilitate the absorption of EU funds by all Albanian citizens, migrants included, through projects that promote investments in agriculture (IPARD and SARED funds) or by reducing taxes on agricultural machinery. These incentives will provide new job opportunities, will facilitate investments in agriculture and livestock husbandry for both farmers who are currently engaged in agriculture and migrants who have decided to return and invest in these sectors.

68 The Republic of Moldova encouraged the transfer of human capital and professional experience to the academic, social and economic spheres by way of three sub-programs focusing on the Return Diaspora Professionals, Diaspora Innovative Projects and Thematic Regional Partnerships, and Educational Centres among the Diaspora community. The Diaspora are awarded grants to implement various components of the programme through funding by the Swiss Government. The 3x1 Programme for Migrants in Mexico supports the initiatives of Mexicans living abroad and gives them the opportunity to channel their resources into works of social impact that directly benefit their home communities in Mexico. The project is implemented with the assistance of clubs or federations of migrants living abroad, the Federal Government and the state and municipal governments. It is a matching funding scheme through which for every peso sent by migrants, the Federal, State and Municipal governments add 3 pesos each, hence it being called the 3x1 programme. Having recently been expanded to include the private sector as well, it is now the 4x1 programme instead. The funds raised are used for public works that improve the infrastructure of local communities (roads, schools, health services) and promote local economic development (employment generation schemes, etc.).

69 More information on this programme can be obtained by visiting the following link www.bujqesia.gov.al/programi-i-integruar-per-zhvillimin-rural-programi-i-100-fshatrave-2/

DOMAIN 4. Migrant's integration and protection of migrants' rights

With respect to this domain the following elements are crucial:



Comprehensive non-discrimination framework

With respect to protection mechanisms applicable to migrants, Albania guarantees the implementation of a range of the human, economic and social rights to foreigners in the country. Albanian legislation is generally in compliance with EU standards regarding the legal provision on non-discrimination. Equality of the rights of foreigners with those of nationals is enshrined in Article 16 of the Constitution of Albania.⁷⁰ The Constitution also extends to non-nationals a range of fundamental human rights and freedoms, including equality and non-discrimination.⁷¹ Migrants' rights are also explicitly guaranteed in several legal acts⁷², Council of Ministers' Decisions and implementing legislation. Law No. 10221/2010 on protection against discrimination is a key legal act in this regard.

Albania has also ratified the majority of international human rights instruments and the main conventions on the rights of migrants,⁷³ and implements successfully the majority of international conventions on migrant workers with domestic migration legislation generally reflecting the principles of international conventions on migrants' rights.

Given the binding nature of these legal acts, attention needs to be paid to certain area so as to ensure full alignment, as follows: (1) Even though Albania has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, domestic legislation has not been amended so as to enable certain rights envisaged by that Convention such as the right for consultations in local matters, or the right to vote in local elections⁷⁴; (2) Albanian emigrants abroad cannot exercise their right to vote due to the lack of infrastructure to enable them to vote abroad; (3) According to the Law on Aliens, public service providers must not provide services to foreigners of irregular immigration status. Exceptions are made only for emergency health care. The Law should also include schools as a service provider exempted from the obligation to check the legal status of the children attending school so as to guarantee the right to education to all the children. At present, despite the ratification of the Convention, there is a risk that children of migrants with irregular status cannot exercise their right to education due to the legal status.

A long-standing general objective of Albania's migration governance continues to be the extension of legal guarantees of non-discrimination to all persons, regardless of the status of their residence.⁷⁵ This ensures that the general norms of the national legislation securing the country's compliance with international standards, are adhered to without any discrimination in practice. In this context, it is important to review the actual position of foreign workers, in particular those employed irregularly, with regard to the fulfilment of a range of entitlements and standards enshrined in the Labour Code.⁷⁶ This should further be complemented by ensuring that all migrant workers, regardless of their legal status, are paid in full for all completed work.

o Enforcement of non-discrimination regulations

It is very difficult to ascertain to what extent non-discrimination regulations are being applied in Albania. This situation reflects

⁷⁰ "The fundamental rights and freedoms and obligations provided for in the Constitution for Albanian citizens are also valid for foreigners and stateless persons in the territory of the Republic of Albania, except for cases when the Constitution specifically attaches the exercise of particular rights and freedoms to Albanian citizenship".

⁷¹ These include freedom of expression, right of information, freedom of conscience and of religion, prohibition of torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading punishment or treatment, prohibition of forced labour.

⁷² The Labour Code, the Law on the emigration of Albanian citizens for employment purposes (No. 9668 dated 18.12.2006), the Law on International Private Law (No. 10 428 dated 2.6.2011), the Law on Aliens (No. 108/2013 as amended), the Law on Asylum in the Republic of Albania (No. 121/2014), the Law on Foreign Service (No. 23/2015).

⁷³ ILO Convention on Migration for Employment (C97), ILO convention on Migrant Workers (C 143), Convention on the Status of Refugees and its Protocol (1961), Convention relating to the status of Stateless Persons (1954), Convention on Reduction of Statelessness (1961), Vienna Convention on the Consular Affairs, Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Covenant on the Rights of Migrants and Their Family Members, as well as two Council of Europe Conventions on the rights of migrants, namely the Convention on the Status of Migrant Workers, and the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in the Public Life at the local level.

⁷⁴ Even though Albania has expressed reservations regarding the right of foreigners to vote as envisaged by the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, it is advised that it acknowledges this right to foreigners.

⁷⁵ Article 4, Law No. 10221/2010.

⁷⁶ These include, for instance, the right to have a written contract in a language understood by both parties, stipulating terms of fair and timely payment of all wages and benefits as well as compliance with safety and other standards in the workplace.

certain cross-cutting issues, which need to be addressed in order to raise the country's overall implementation capacity.

Firstly, appropriate human resources need to be in place to ensure implementation of both domestic legislation and international conventions. It is, therefore, recommended that continuous training takes place of all officials working on migration, in particular police and border personnel, judges, prosecutors, lawyers/advocates as well as officials at the local level. This should help address lack of knowledge of procedures to detect and prosecute legal violations by or in relation to foreigners in Albania. In particular, there is a significant lack of knowledge among judges and prosecutors on the rights of migrants despite their irregular status, as envisaged by the Conventions Albania has ratified.

Secondly, as per the recommendation of the Committee on Migrant Workers, there is also a need for information campaigns to take place targeting migrants, to ensure that they have effective access to information about their rights and the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in the Albanian Constitution and the Conventions ratified by the country. An increased awareness of their rights should result in a greater readiness to report violations.

Finally, more effective mechanisms are needed to monitor the respect for the principle of non-discrimination. The information provided by official sources on the implementation of and respect for the rights of migrant workers and women migrants in Albania remains limited and irregular. During the past few years, the Special Rapporteur on migrants underlined the need for adequate information on seeking asylum, better care for migrant children and more interpretation assistance to irregular migrants entering Albania. In this context, the competencies and capacities of several institutions need to be strengthened. Albania's Ombudsman has increasingly monitored and reported on the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, including reception conditions of irregular immigrants and asylum seekers. This work needs to continue unabated in general and through particular mechanisms that would respond to ICRMV requirements as well as entrusting a specific institution with the regular monitoring of migrants' rights.

Identification of migrants as a vulnerable category

Certain categories of migrants, both returning Albanian citizens and foreign nationals residing in Albania, are recognized as vulnerable by Albanian policies, legal framework and programmes. In particular, the Law on Foreigners includes references to *Vulnerable persons* who are unaccompanied and separated minors, persons with limited abilities, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with children, and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape, or other forms of psychological, physical and sexual violence. The Law on Social Care Services includes foreigners with legal residence in Albania as one of the categories that can benefit from these services. The law addresses categories eligible for state aid, and includes among others, victims of trafficking, and children including UAM's, children in need of special protection, i.e. children that have been abandoned, have been subjected to exploitation, violence or discrimination, etc.

However, various legal acts contain inconsistencies on the definition of vulnerable groups. This especially applies to UAM's, affecting their rights and entitlements in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For instance, the Law on Social Care Services does not include asylum seekers or irregular migrants as beneficiaries of social services, which affects the provision of shelter to unaccompanied minors who cross the borders irregularly. According to Article 3/6 of Law No. 18/2017 on the rights of children and their protection, unaccompanied minors who enter Albania are considered to be in need of protection. However, according to the Law on Aliens, UAM's must be sheltered in open centres and not placed in a detention centre. Furthermore, dedicated mechanisms are needed for the provision of social care and support to returnee Albanian UAM's whose families have not been identified yet or have been considered abandoned by their parents.

Vulnerabilities may arise in the process of handling irregular migrants during their detention. While the term "vulnerable person" does not feature in the Criminal Procedure Code, the law includes the right of a detained or arrested foreigner to contact their consular office. It is, however, recommended that detained irregular migrants should be considered vulnerable categories in relation to legal aid as a whole and, as such, they should be provided with free legal assistance while in detention. Another important aspect is raising detainees' awareness of their rights with information materials covering appeals procedures and availability of legal aid. To ensure adequate treatment and respect of human rights, national and local capacities need to be strengthened by allocating adequate resources for the effective processing of migrants and asylum seekers, so as to guarantee *non refoulement* and the fast and effective identification and referral of vulnerable cases.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Instruction No. 293/2015 on procedures for the treatment of foreigners of an irregular status in Albania envisages specific measures for pre-screening and transfer mechanisms of victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors.

Women's specific needs should be taken into account in the overall design and delivery of assistance. This requires firstly identifying the barriers to women's employment and protection of their rights through consultations with female migrants. Secondly, a review is needed of both legislative acts and administrative procedures/assistance schemes to identify any obstacles to effective use of aid mechanisms by women.

Migrants' socioeconomic integration

Albanian migration legislation grants foreign long-term residents economic rights, health-related and social rights on the same terms as the Albanian nationals. Access is also extended to residents on family reunification permits **as under Article 84 of the Law on Aliens**, foreign family members of Albanian nationals who are willing to work are treated the same as Albanian nationals. Under Albanian legislation, foreign citizens working in Albania for Albanian employers, and foreign citizens working in Albania for non-Albanian employers are entitled to Albanian social insurance, provided they do not enjoy other more favourable social insurance protection.⁷⁸

Albania has concluded several agreements with other countries on social protection, which guarantee the portability of pensions along with other social security benefits.⁷⁹ While the number of concluded agreements has increased significantly recently, the need to undertake negotiations on signing bilateral agreements on social protection with key host countries was explicitly featured in the Diaspora Action Plan, in which they were considered crucial for the effective transfer of social insurance benefits for Albanian returnees. In this regard, a State Coordinator was appointed by Order No. 43, dated 12.02.2019, of the Prime Minister; "On the appointment of the state coordinator for state agreements in the field of insurance for Albanian citizens abroad", at the level of Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, which functions within the framework of the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Diaspora and reports to the State Committee on Diaspora (starting from 3 May 2019).

In this context, it is worth considering conclusion of agreements with certain priority countries, such as Italy and Greece, since they host significant numbers of Albanian migrants many of whom have begun to return to the homeland.

While the national legal framework is generally comprehensive, some gaps remain in securing the socioeconomic integration of all residents. To respect the constitutional guarantee of equal access to social protection (social insurance, health care and other social and economic rights) for all Albanian citizens and migrants, the categories of persons who are insufficiently covered need to be identified and necessary changes in the national legislation and international agreements undertaken. These barriers relate to the legal and administrative framework (conditions of acquiring residence permits by family members and of maintaining their residence status when a migrant worker passes away or in case of divorce), the catalogue of entitlements (right of irregular migrants to join trade unions the scope of protection applicable to irregular migrants and their family members, refugees and asylum-seekers) and the eligibility for social protection (access to integration programmes and services). Many of these issues may be addressed through a combination of better information provision, facilitated procedures and institutional strengthening of service provision to migrants.

Particular attention needs to be paid to those areas, in which specific issues have been identified in terms of the protection of rights of some migrants, especially those with irregular status. These are, in particular, access to health care and education.

Access to health care

Depending on their legal status, immigrants generally enjoy the same status as Albanian citizens in accessing government-funded health services. All economically active persons⁸⁰ permanently resident in Albania make use of health services on the basis of their obligatory contributions to the state health insurance fund.⁸¹ The Law on Aliens guarantees health care to foreigners hosted in closed reception facilities.⁸² The Law provides an additional guarantee granting the right of access to health

78 Art. 7 of the Law No.7703 "On Social Insurance in the Republic of Albania", 11 May 1993.

79 These agreements include: Agreement on Social Protection with Belgium that entered into force in 1st of January 2016, Agreement on Social Protection with the Federal Republic of Germany in 23 September 2015, Agreement on Social Protection with the Republic of Romania in 2015 that was ratified in April 2016, an Agreement with the Republic of Macedonia in March 2015 ratified with the law 123/2015 in 12 November 2015 and entered into force in 1st of June 2016, a bilateral agreement for the transfer of social insurance signed with Kosovo/UNSCR 1244/1999 in 5 February 2015, an Agreement on Social Protection with the Czech Republic signed in 13 October 2015 and ratified in 24 March 2016, an Agreement on Social Protection with the Republic of Hungary ratified with the law no. 151/2015 in 21 December 2015, and entering into force in 1st of July 2016. In addition, there is an agreement with Turkey, in force as of 15 April 2005, and an agreement with Canada as per the Council of Ministers Decision No.336 dated 22 April 2015.

80 This includes employed and self-employed persons, unpaid family workers and other working/economically active persons.

81 Article 5, Law No.10383 on Compulsory Health Care Insurance in the Republic of Albania, 24 February 2011.

82 Article 127.2, Law No. 108/2013 amended by Law No. 4/2016.

care for all categories of immigrants irrespective of their legal status when found in a situation of medical emergency and in case lack of medical care may jeopardise their life.⁸³

However, certain difficulties in practical access to health care for non-nationals have been noted in the 2016 assessment report. Gaps have been revealed in the ability of the medical personnel to provide health services to foreigners in Albania, indicating training needs that would help them better understand their respective health risks and determinants as well as the culture's impact on health and illnesses.

Access to education

Despite their legal status, all immigrants have access to primary and secondary education in Albania⁸⁴ given that Albanian legislation guarantees the right to education to foreign citizens and stateless persons, without discrimination due to gender, race, colour, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, political or religious convictions, economic or social status, age, place of residence, disability or any other grounds expressed in Albanian legislation. However, some migrants experience difficulties in accessing public education. In general, there is a need to provide tailored assistance to immigrants and their children to address the language barrier, preventing them from using educational services effectively. Other barriers are of an administrative nature. For instance, although in principle entitled to their children receiving education, irregular migrants are not able to access the education system because they may have not obtained legal residence as yet.

Dedicated integration programmes

In the current institutional setup, several state bodies are responsible for the social integration of foreigners. Under Article 4 of Law No. 108/2013, the design and implementation of a national programme for the social integration of foreigners lies with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. Greater coordination of their activities could help address more thoroughly the challenges and barriers face by migrant workers and migrant women in Albania for the enjoyment of their social and cultural rights.

The creation of dedicated integration programmes that take into account foreigners' diverse social and cultural backgrounds could help pool resources together and exchange information more effectively on the part of the institutions involved. The programmes could also target the needs of vulnerable categories of foreigners (in particular, women and children) more comprehensively. Design of such programmes should take into account the results of a review on the functions of Migration Counters and other institutions involved in the referral reintegration mechanism that was established in the framework of the Reintegration Strategy. This could help take stock of the various sectoral reintegration initiatives and identify assets and competencies of relevant institutions.

Durable legal status of immigrants in Albania

Ultimately, clear and transparent prospects for legal status are the key to long-term integration, along with guarantees of equal treatment. Albania recognizes the importance of a rights-based migration policy that creates legal opportunities for long-term settlement and full integration of those who qualify.

- **Long-term residence**

A vital step in this regard is the opportunity to acquire long-term residence after meeting transparent criteria. All foreigners who have been granted temporary residence in Albania are entitled to apply for an indefinite residence permit under equal conditions.⁸⁵ An application must be lodged 60 days before the expiry of the existing residence permit with the local Border and Migration authority.⁸⁶ Should the application fulfil all criteria, their application for a long-term residence permit can only be refused if they have been charged with or convicted of criminal offences committed in Albania, or if there is the risk that they pose a threat to national security and public order. When an application is rejected, the reasons behind it must be clearly explained along with information on how to challenge that decision in courts, in line with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Code. Long-term residence status is permanent and the permit is automatically renewed after seven years. It may only be revoked if it was obtained by means of fraud or false representation. The holder is subject to removal if they pose a

⁸³ Article 136.2.

⁸⁴ Article 5, Law No.69/2012 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Albania, 18 July 2012.

⁸⁵ Exceptions include foreigners who study in Albania, are seasonal workers, applicants or beneficiaries of temporary protection or asylum seekers awaiting a final decision on their application.

⁸⁶ Article 61 of Law No.108/2013 on Aliens.

threat to public security or have been living abroad for more than 12 consecutive months.

While the terms of acquisition and termination of long-term residence are generally in line with international practice, there is a need to raise the applicants' awareness of the precise meaning of the terms of the formal requirements. With the exception of cases of genuine threat to public order and national security, the applicants should be provided with exhaustive information on the grounds for the rejection of the application along with sufficient information on how to meet the requirements when re-applying. When the long-term residence is terminated for reasons other than security, such as having been away from the country for a lengthy period, the applicant should be provided with information on how to re-apply once they can demonstrate that the requirements are fully met again, such as closer ties to Albania, family status or length of residence, as mitigating circumstances in countering a removal decision.

○ **Citizenship**

Article 6 of the Law on Albanian Citizenship places naturalisation next to birth and adoption⁸⁷ as a form of acquiring Albanian citizenship that is open to all qualifying adult foreign applicants. The primary requirements are a period of legal residence of five years and basic command of the Albanian language.⁸⁸ The legislation provides for the naturalisation of spouses of Albanian citizens, and children who are born to at least one Albanian parent, whilst easing conditions for foreign nationals of Albanian origin.⁸⁹ The request is lodged with the Ministry of Interior, which is obliged to decide on whether to forward the request to the President of the Republic 6 months from the date of submission. The President then issues a decree by means of which citizenship is granted. If the Ministry of Interior decides not to forward the application to the President, it should inform the applicants of this decision, as they have the right to appeal this decision in court.

Although the ultimate decision is discretionary, it is vital that the review procedure is transparent, providing genuine opportunities for effective appeal. In particular, the applicant should be notified of any delay in the review, and, if necessary, s/he should be given an opportunity to submit evidence in support of the application. The standards of the review by the Ministry of Interior should reduce arbitrary interpretation of the formal grounds for accepting the application. In particular, it is necessary to establish and inform applicants accordingly of the interpretation of the criterion of uninterrupted residence in the country. The negative decision of the review by the Ministry ought to result in the issuing of a written notice, which, with the exception of grounds of public security and national defence, should include detailed explanations of the grounds for refusal with clear legal and factual references.

As in other procedures, acquisition of citizenship ought to consider the welfare of children as a particularly vulnerable group. Albania has ratified the Convention on Migrant Workers and Their Family Members which envisages that every child of migrant workers shall have the right to citizenship regardless of migratory status. As explained in footnote 88, a child born in the country from foreign parents with legal residence or from unknown parents can obtain Albanian citizenship (please see footnote 88). However, the Law on Citizenship does not cover children of irregular migrants, who otherwise would remain stateless. It is, therefore, vital that in addressing this issue, Albanian authorities bring the national legislation in line with ratified international conventions regarding citizenship and the elimination of statelessness so as to guarantee that no child is deprived of the opportunity to acquire a nationality in order to avoid statelessness.

○ **Family reunification**

Albania allows for family reunification of all migrants in visa or residency categories in accordance with the EU Directive on Family Reunification. The Law on Aliens grants the right of reunification to spouses of Albanian nationals and children under their custody (Article 55), family members of legal immigrants (Article 56) or of refugees (Article 58).⁹⁰ Residence permits are then issued by the border and migration authority. The Law also provides for an independent residence permit albeit only after five years of residence in the country under family reunification rules.

The International Committee of Migrants has pointed out that the law does not provide for members of the family of a migrant worker to renew their residence permit in case of divorce or following the death of the migrant worker.⁹¹ It is, therefore,

87 A minor becomes automatically Albanian by birth, if any of the parents is Albanian. If the child's parents are not Albanian citizens but are legal residents in Albania at the time, the minor born in Albania may become an Albanian citizen should both parents desire this outcome.

88 Moreover, applicants may not have been sentenced for a criminal offence with the detention term of at least three years or their admission into Albania might constitute a threat to the public security and national defence.

89 Decision of Council of Ministers no 554/2013 "On the criteria and procedures for acquisition of Albanian citizenship by persons with Albanian origin with the exception of citizens of Kosovo".

90 Furthermore, all relevant provisions with respect to application for family unification, the procedure of unification as well as the rights of the family member/s of the refugees are set out in Articles 63, 64, 65 and 67 of the Law on Asylum.

91 Article 34 of the Law on Aliens states that the residence permit shall not be renewed if the reason for which it was issued in the first place no longer exists, i.e. when the

essential that the Law on Aliens fully guarantees the rights of the families of the deceased or divorced migrant workers, so as to bring the Albanian legislation in line with Article 50 of the Convention on the Rights of Migrants and Family Members.⁹² In particular, the authorities should consider the best interest of the child when deciding on the annulment of the residence permit of the foreigner when the family is dissolved. If no such authorisation is granted members of the family shall be allowed a reasonable period of time prior to departure in order to be able them to settle their affairs in the State of employment.

Although the Law on Aliens does not explicitly refer to the right of family members to employment, the latter enjoy equal access to the labour market as holders of relevant residence permits. Under Article 70 of the Law on Aliens, long-term residents enjoy economic rights, health-related and social rights on the same terms as the Albanian nationals. Under Article 84 on labour market needs for employees, foreign family members of Albanian nationals who are willing to work are treated the same as Albanian nationals. Foreign family members of Albanian nationals take precedence over other immigrants in filling job vacancies. In this regard, Article 84 also provides that job vacancies are first to be filled by persons who possess the skills and qualifications required and are willing to work in that position, including foreign family members of Albanian nationals. Article 85 foresees that work permits for family members of Albanian citizens must be issued as a matter of priority and without reference to the labour market.

Albanian legislation should set out the rights of family members of foreigners in Albania, including the right to education, vocational training, employment and social assistance. Moreover, in line with the 2010 recommendations of the Committee on Migrant Workers, it is essential that the implementation of the right of family members to maintain their residence permit is monitored. However, as explained above, the residence status of family members is dependent on the holder of the main permit, potentially making the position of family members vulnerable in case of death or divorce.

marriage has been dissolved. The family member enjoys the autonomous right to a residence permit only after five years of residence themselves in Albania. In case the sponsor passes away, the family member enjoys the autonomous right to a residence permit after three years of residence in Albania.

92 According to the Convention, the State of employment shall favourably consider granting an authorisation of stay to family members of the migrant worker residing in that State on the basis of family reunion. The State of employment shall take into account the length of time they have already resided in the said State.

PART II:

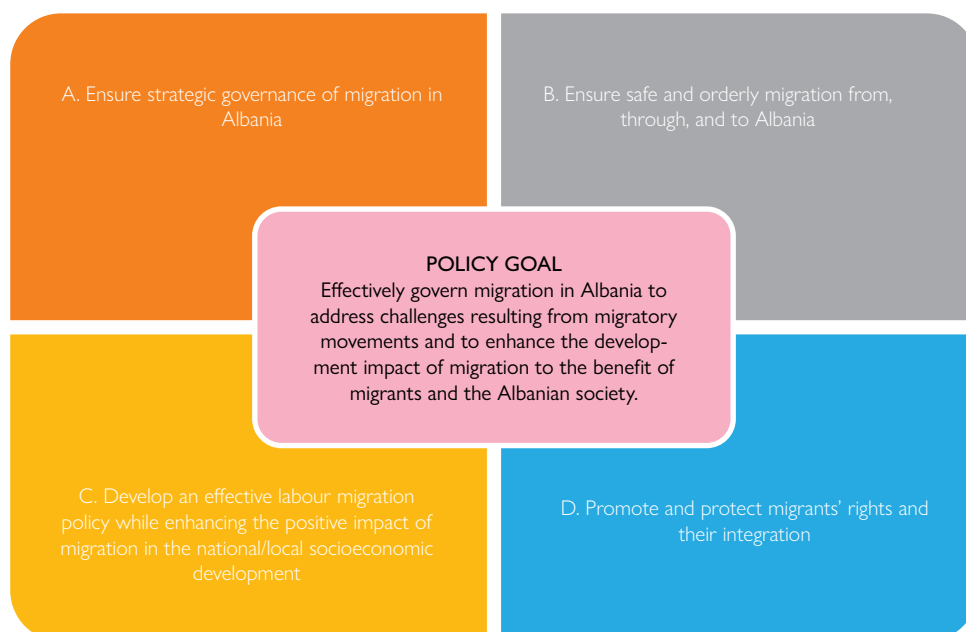
VISION, POLICY GOALS AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

The vision of the National Strategy on Migration is inspired by global migration processes as much as by Albania's EU integration process, so as to ensure a comprehensive and holistic response to migration challenges and opportunities. In line with this vision, the Government of Albania has set as the following Policy Goal:

'Effectively govern migration in Albania to address challenges resulting from migratory movements and to enhance the impact of migration on development to the benefit of migrants and society'

This objective will be achieved through coherent and concerted policy actions that simultaneously respond to: the need for building a solid legal and institutional framework on migration governance; the need to continue to strengthen the response to irregular migration from, to and through Albania toward the European Union; challenges posed by mixed flows and the need to ensure adequate responses; the need to enhance the governance of labour migration; the need to further promote links between the emigration of Albanian citizens and development at national and local levels; the challenges and opportunities for building a solid framework for integration of foreign migrant workers and members of their families in Albania.

The National Strategy on Migration centres on four strategic priorities, as follows:



PART III:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY AND MAJOR PRODUCTS

The basic condition for the effective governance of migration in Albania is the existence of a solid policy, legal and institutional framework for migration governance. This will also be the primary objective of the strategy. A solid policy framework will ensure that migration policies are mainstreamed into sectorial and inter-sectorial policies, as much as aligned with the overarching strategic documents, the National Strategy on Migration, the NSDI and the EU accession process. Enhancing data collection and analysis on migration will be a key objective so as to ensure that the policy framework is based on good and solid evidence. In addition, Albania will remain an active partner in the regional as well as in the global processes on migration, and in ensuring that international commitments in the field of migration are firmly and fully translated into concrete actions.

The specific objectives and major products are, as follows:

A. Ensure strategic governance of migration in Albania

Legal approximation with EU and international standards and improvement of institutional capacities (both individual and through enhanced coordination) are a strategic priority for the Albanian Government. Its fulfilment is essential in order to achieve substantial progress across all pillars of state migration policy. It is expected that, as a result, the legal and institutional framework will be in compliance with European best practices, therefore enhancing Albanian institutions' ability to form effective partnerships in migration governance. The progress in this area is also of fundamental importance when it comes to making migration governance more transparent and able to respond to emergencies in a flexible manner. This strategic objective will be attained through the following specific objectives that will produce the outcomes below:

A. Ensure strategic governance of migration in Albania	
A1. Align national legal framework with EU and international framework on migration governance	A1.1 Ensure systematic adoption and implementation of international terms, norms and standards in the field of migration
A2. Enhance institutional capacities for migration governance	A2.1 Clearly define competences of key Government of Albania institutions and agencies and identify their capacities for migration governance
	A2.2 Improve migration data collection, analysis and sharing
A3. Improve coordination mechanisms for migration governance	A3.1 Improve horizontal and vertical coherence through enhanced operational and strategic coordination
A4. Enhance partnerships for migration governance	A4.1 Review existing institutional partnerships on migration and formulate of new partnerships

B. Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania

Integrated border and migration management has taken a central position in Albania's efforts to reduce irregular movements across its borders and inside the country. This objective builds on the existing commitments, aiming at increasing effectiveness of control mechanisms for safe and orderly admission, stay and transit movement of foreigners, and return and reintegration of Albanian citizens. It recognizes the importance of adequate allocation of resources to meet the challenges of evolving migration flows and of working out and enhancing mechanisms of co-operation with the authorities of the migrant's country of origin and destination.

This strategic objective will be realised through the following specific objectives that will produce the outcomes below:

B. Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania	
B1. Effectively address irregular movements at the country's borders and inside the territory of Albania	B1.1 Continue to improve infrastructure at the country's borders and within the country in order to strengthen migration control while safeguarding migrants' rights.
	B1.2 Ensure efficiency of the border guard
	B1.3 Entry and stay procedures serving as effective instruments to prevent and reduce irregular migration
	B1.4 Minimize cases of irregular stay and transit through checks on the legality of stay, measures for proven violation of legality of stay and provision of information
B2. Improve effectiveness of return mechanisms for foreign citizens	B2.1 Successful return of foreign citizens to their countries of origin through readmission and voluntary return
B3. Efficiently respond to irregular migration of Albanian citizens in EU Member States	B3.1 Implement adequate measures to prevent the irregular migration of Albanian citizens
	B3.2 Support return and reintegration of readmitted Albanian citizens
B4. Management of mixed flows	B4.1 Develop strategic and operational frameworks to meet the challenge of mixed flows to Albania

C. Develop an effective labour migration policy while enhancing the positive impact of migration in the national/local socioeconomic development of the country

Labour migration of Albanian citizens is likely to remain a major factor influencing the country's development. The application of a combination of measures is needed to reduce the scope of irregular migration, protect migrants' rights and maximize the overall positive contribution economic migration produces on local and national welfare. This objective aims to integrate migration policy more closely into the management of national labour market by means of providing incentives to the return of workers in demand, making better use of returnees' skills and promoting productive use of remittances and other contributions the migrants bring. Supplying prospective migrants with comprehensive information on their rights and opportunities is particularly important for the facilitation of more orderly forms of labour migration (circular and seasonal) and ultimately so as to encourage their return to the Albanian labour market.

This strategic objective will be realised through the following specific objectives that will produce the outcomes below:

C. Develop an effective labour migration policy while enhancing the positive impact of migration in the national/local socioeconomic development of the country	
C1. Ensure an effective labour migration policy framework	C1.1 Include the various elements of the emigration of Albanian citizens into the development, implementation and monitoring of national employment policies
	C1.2 Develop and implement proactive policies and schemes aiming at attracting Albanian citizens, members of the Albanian Diaspora and foreign workers with skills and qualifications in short supply in the Albanian labour market
	C1.3 Periodically monitor and forecast labour migration needs
	C1.4 Set up and implement an effective legal and institutional framework on labour migration
C2. Facilitate seasonal and circular migration for Albanian citizens	C2.1 Keep track of the dynamics of seasonal and circular labour migration and the establishment of a regulatory framework
	C2.2 Foster International cooperation on labour migration
	C2.3 Ensure that pre-departure services for prospective Albanian migrant workers are in place
	C2.4 Strengthen institutional capacities on protection of migrant workers' rights
	C2.5 Facilitate the return and socioeconomic reintegration of the Albanian citizens
C3. Maximise the impact of migration on national and local development	C3.1 Promote formal channelling and productive use of remittances
	C3.2 Promote investments to Albania

D. Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration

The final pillar of migration governance concentrates on ensuring the favourable conditions for the long-term integration of migrants in Albania. It seeks to do so by identifying current challenges facing non-nationals in exercising the rights that are guaranteed by Albanian constitutional and statutory legislation and proposing targeted measures to safeguard those rights. In particular, it recognizes the priority of raising migrants' awareness of their rights and facilitating their access to various forms of state support. Special attention should be given to reducing impediments to the effective enjoyment of rights by the most vulnerable categories, such as female migrants, children, youth, persons with disabilities and the elderly.

This strategic objective will be realised through the following specific objectives that will produce the outcomes below:

D. Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration	
D1. Ensure that a comprehensive non-discrimination framework effectively protects migrants' rights	D1.1 Extend legal guarantees of non-discrimination to all persons residing in the country
	D1.2 Raise migrants' awareness of their rights and procedures for their enforcement
	D1.3 Improve effectiveness and monitoring of response mechanisms

D2. Identify migrants as a vulnerable category in programming and delivering assistance	D2.1 Tailor assistance to meet specific needs of children and youth
	D2.2 Address specific needs of migrants
D3. Improve conditions for migrants' socioeconomic and cultural integration	D3.1 Guarantee equal access to social security
	D3.2 Provide adequate access to housing, health care and education
	D3.3 Design and implement dedicated integration programmes
D4. Provide durable legal solutions for migrants	D4.1 Facilitate acquisition of long-term residence and make their legal status durable
	D4.2 Provide a clear path toward citizenship
	D4.3 Guarantee the legal status of family members

Indicators for measuring progress at the outcome level as well as for each proposed measure have been introduced in the Action Plan accompanying this strategy.

PART IV:

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

This chapter summarises the financial resources needed to implement the Action Plan of the National Strategy on Migration. The total cost estimated for the implementation of measures from all sources of funding is around 341.25 million ALL or approximately 2.7 million Euros⁹³. Sources from the state budget are allocated to budget programmes of line ministries and institutions that are tasked with the implementation of the Action Plan.

The allocation of funds for the 2019-2021 period has taken into account the ultimate ceilings of the draft medium-term budget (MTBF 2019-2021). Financial resources from the state budget cover about 73.7% of the cost of the Strategy cost, or about 251.3 million ALL, whilst donors have committed themselves to cover 0.8% of the Strategy, which comes to 2.76 million ALL.

The financial gap uncovered by the budget is 25.53% and is part of additional budget requests and negotiations with various donors. It consists primarily of the cost of complementary activities, such as independent assessments and studies, awareness-raising campaigns, projects to increase the accommodation capacities for migrants, pilot programmes for the integration of vulnerable categories of migrants, and so on.

The amount of spending required for the implementation of National Action Plans is derived by costing each of the sub-measures of the action plan individually. When calculating total spending, various elements are taken into consideration, such as the duration of the measure, the number of beneficiaries for certain activities, etc. The cost of the Action Plan is based on budget planning techniques.

Table 1 presents the budget in years according to strategic objectives. 59.65% of the spending are needed for strategic objective B.

Table 1 Budget according to strategic objectives for the period 2019-2022

Discription	Budget 2019-2022				
	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022	TOTAL
Objective A: Ensure strategic governance of migration in Albania	3,872,000.00	7,489,000.00	4,446,000.00	4,446,000.00	20,253,000.00
Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania	61,698,000.00	45,764,000.00	46,445,000.00	49,520,520.00	203,427,520.00
Objective C: Develop an effective labour migration policy while enhancing the positive impact of migration in the national/ local socioeconomic development	936,000.00	33,007,000.00	20,098,000.00	20,623,000.00	74,664,000.00
Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration	6,935,400.00	11,267,200.00	12,109,480.00	12,589,480.00	42,901,560.00
TOTAL (1+2+3+4+5)	73,441,400.00	97,527,200.00	83,098,480.00	87,179,000.00	341,246,080.00

93 Exchange rate: 1 Euro = 125 ALL.

Table 2 presents the budget according to the sources of funding and the financial gap for each of the specific objectives.

Table 2 Cost of implementation of action plan by objectives 2019-2021

Strategic objectives and objectives covered by the strategic document	Total Cost (in ALL)	Financing source		Financial gap	Comments on objectives with financial gaps
		Budget	Donors		
TOTAL	341,246,080	251,329,520	2,760,000	87,156,560	
Strategic Objective A: Ensure strategic governance of migration in Albania	20,253,000	10,383,000	300,000	9,570,000	
A.1 Align national legal framework with EU and international framework on migration governance	1,100,100	800,000	0	300,000	An independent assessment of the implementation of the conventions is planned; could be funded by donors
A.2 Enhance institutional capacities for migration governance	14,110,000	4,840,000	0	9,270,000	New Migrant Data Management Project; Additional staff required for the strategy monitoring section; consultancy for workshop and design of training modules
A.3 Improve coordination mechanisms for migration governance	2,010,000	1,710,000	300,000	0	
A.4 Enhance partnerships for migration governance	3,033,000	3,033,000	0	0	
Strategic Objective B: Effectively address irregular movements at the country's borders and within the territory of Albania	203,427,520	161,127,520	0	42,300,000	
B.1 Effectively address irregular movements at the country's borders and within territory of Albania	110,304,000	110,304,000	0	0	
B.2 Improve effectiveness of return mechanisms for foreign citizens	3,400,000	3,400,000	0	0	
B.3 Efficiently respond to irregular migration of Albanian citizens in EU member states	67,846,000	39,046,000	0	28,800,000	
B.4 Management of mixed migration flows	21,877,520	8,377,520	0	13,500,000	Project to increase accommodation capacities for migrants (2020)

Strategic objectives and objectives covered by the strategic document	Total Cost (in ALL)	Financing source		Financial gap	Comments on objectives with financial gaps
		Budget	Donors		
Strategic Objective C: Develop an effective labour migration policy while enhancing the positive impact of migration in the national/local socioeconomic development of the country	74,664,000	53,304,000	2,160,000	19,200,000	
C.1 Ensure an effective labour migration policy framework	41,358,000	38,958,000	0	2,400,000	Needs assessment
C.2 Facilitate seasonal and circular migration for Albanian citizens	21,561,000	6,961,000	0	14,600,000	Evaluation; business support scheme, new project in 2020
C.3 Maximise the impact of migration to the national and local development	11,745,000	7,385,000	2,160,000	2,200,000	Survey, consultations
Strategic Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration	42,901,560	26,515,000	300,000	16,086,560	
D.1 Ensure that a comprehensive non-discrimination framework effectively protects migrants' rights	13,335,960	5,549,400	0	7,786,500	The gap mainly for information campaigns; creation of a unit at the Labour Inspectorate (2021-2022)
D.2 Identify migrants as a vulnerable category in programming and delivering assistance	6,772,000	6,772,000	0	0	
D.3 Improve conditions of migrants' socioeconomic and cultural integration (both for Albanian and foreign citizens)	14,479,600	6,179,600	0	8,300,000	Pilot program for integration of vulnerable categories of foreign citizens
D.4 Provide durable legal solutions for migrants	8,314,000	8,014,000	300,000	0	

PART V:

ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING

A dual monitoring system will be established covering both the attainment of particular objectives of the Strategy and the overall improvement the coordination of activities. This chapter outlines the institutional and operational framework required for the effective monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy.

The progress towards achieving the objectives of the Strategy will be primarily measured against a set of indicators, tied to specific objectives and measures, as defined in the Action Plan. Government institutions shall be assigned the responsibility to monitor the implementation of specific measures unless otherwise specified⁹⁴. The lead institution will define detailed sub-indicators, establish the format and procedures for reporting, and maintain regular communication with all responsible agencies. A focal point at the lead institution will be tasked with the preparation of regular reports using standard data collected from the agencies and institutions on a quarterly basis.

The **Technical Secretariat on Migration** will be established as a horizontal body at the Ministry of Interior's Emigration Section. Its main task will be to ensure that monitoring of the substantive progress covers all the pillars of the Strategy and its Action Plan, that it is comprehensive and up to date relying on current and standard information. The Secretariat will coordinate the monitoring activities of all lead agencies by collecting quarterly reports for the purpose of harmonisation, identification of data gaps and trend analysis. The unit will introduce a calendar with dates when reports are due for submission, and will provide technical assistance to focal points, clarifying any methodology queries. The Secretariat will integrate the inputs from lead agencies into a semi-annual progress report on the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan that will be submitted to a **Technical Committee on Migration** led by the Deputy Minister of Interior and composed of Heads of Departments of each ministry/institution assigned with the responsibility of implementing the Strategy and Action Plan on Migration. The report will include detailed recommendations and will address emerging issues in implementation of specific measures. The Technical Committee will commission the Technical Secretariat to coordinate activities so as to prepare a comprehensive draft annual report, covering all the measures set out in the Strategy and the Action Plan, and providing diagnosis of emerging issues and recommendations for remedial actions. The report will be submitted to the Steering Group for review purposes.

The **Steering Group on Migration** will be established as a consultative body to oversee the overall progress made in attaining strategic migration policy objectives and in improving coordination mechanisms. The Steering Group will include deputy ministers, representing institutions involved in the implementation of the Strategy. The Group will convene at least once a year to approve the general directions of the activities of the Strategy, to propose changes to the schedule of activities and to elaborate specific proposals on revising the scope of existing measures as well as adopting additional ones. The Steering Group will take into account changing migration trends, the state of the budget and the impact of other government strategies. The Steering Group may submit to the Council of Ministers specific recommendations that come out of its meetings.

At least twice a year, meetings will take place with civil society representatives and other migration stakeholders to review progress and strengthen cooperation among government and non-government institutions for the implementation of the strategy.

Mid- term review of the Action Plan

The implementation period for the Strategy and Action Plan will be 2019-2022. Following the completion of the first two years of implementation, a mid-term review of the Action Plan may also be envisioned to take stock of migration trends and to adjust budgetary planning with the mid-term planning of the Government. The work for the mid-term review will be led by the Technical Committee. The approval procedure for the revised Action Plan will be carried out as provided for by the legislation, and as applied in the launch of this Strategy and Action Plan. The mid- term review will also allow for at least one comprehensive round of consultations with civil society and other stakeholders in the field of migration.

⁹⁴ In some cases, non-governmental institutions such as the Ombudsperson's Office will take the lead in the implementation of certain measures.

ACTION PLAN ON THE NATIONAL
STRATEGY ON MIGRATION
2019 – 2022

List of acronyms

ADISA	Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services
AIDA	Albanian Investment Development Agency
ASP	Albanian State Police
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
BoA	Bank of Albania
DPA	Department of Public Administration
DBM	Department of Border and Migration
EUD	European Union Delegation in Albania
IWG	Inter-Institutional Working Group
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISI	Institute of Social Insurances
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MC	Migration Counter
MoESY	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
Mol	Ministry of Interior
Moj	Ministry of Justice
MEFA	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment
NAD	National Agency of Diaspora
NES	National Employment Service
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SMD	State Minister for Diaspora
UAM	Unaccompanied Minor
WHO	World Health Organisation

Specific Objective A: Ensure the strategic governance of migration in Albania		Outcome Indicator/s: 100% alignment of national legal framework with the EU and international framework on migration; adequate staffing levels to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination of migration governance; number of new partnerships with public and non-public actors on good governance of migration								
		No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
							Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
A1	Align national legal framework with EU and international framework on migration governance	<p>A1.1 Ensure the systematic adoption and implementation of international norms and standards in the field of migration, including terminology</p> <p>a. Undertake a legal review of the Albanian legislation to identify gaps with EU and international legislation in the field of migration as to the scope, procedural guarantees and safeguards of migrants' rights, including use of key international terminology</p> <p>b. Assess the level of implementation of ratified conventions and its impact on migrants' access to rights so as to identify mechanisms that would foster their effective implementation</p> <p>c. Continue to undertake regular reviews of the impact of main legal acts on migration governance (Law on Aliens, Law on Emigration for Labour Purposes, Law on Diaspora, Law on Asylum) to reveal the need to amend specific clauses in order to the increase effectiveness of legal measures</p>	2019	800,000	MoI	MEFA MoFE MoHSP MoESY SMD Moj IOM EUD	A comprehensive legal review of Albanian migration legislation is available, highlighting gaps in alignment with the EU acquis and international legislation, along with recommendations for legal changes	Number of legal changes adopted each year to ensure Albania's commitments deriving from signed and ratified international conventions and the EU acquis are fully reflected in the national legal framework		
			2020	300,000	MoI	MoFE MoHSP Ombudsman IOM	An in-depth assessment is undertaken of the implementation rate of ratified conventions and impact on migrants' access to rights, along with the identification of mechanisms that foster their implementation	Number of recommendations/mechanisms identified to improve the effective implementation of ratified conventions		
			1 st review by end of 2020 Every three years in continuity	0.00	MoI	MoFE MEFA MoHSP SMD MoESY Moj IOM	Reviews on the impact of main legal acts on migration governance are carried out every three years	Number of specific legal changes adopted in line with the implementation of this Action Plan, therefore ensuring a higher rate of effectiveness on the implementation of the legal framework on migration		

Specific Objective A: Ensure the strategic governance of migration in Albania		Outcome Indicator/s: 100% alignment of national legal framework with the EU and international framework on migration; adequate staffing levels to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination of migration governance; number of new partnerships with public and non-public actors on good governance of migration								
		No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
							Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
A2	Enhance institutional capacities for migration governance	<p>A2.1 Clearly define competences of key Government of Albania institutions & agencies and identify their capacities for migration governance</p> <p>a. Undertake an in-depth assessment of institutional capacities for effective migration governance at various management levels in all related institutions</p> <p>b. Develop a holistic training program on migration governance for government authorities; align existing training modules with this program. ASPA to undertake a training of trainers on the training program on migration governance.</p> <p>c. Review and institutionalise the functions (including on reintegration) of Migration Counters within the National Employment Service</p>	2020	450,000	MoI	DPA	In-depth assessment of Government of Albania officials' capacities for effective migration governance undertaken and relevant recommendations drafted accordingly	Specific needs for strengthening institutional capacities identified and appropriate organisational changes implemented		
			2020-2022	1,500,000	MoI	ASPA School of Magistrates IOM EUD	A national training program on migration governance for government authorities is developed and approved	Existence of the training programme itself; number of training modules developed and aligned with this national programme; number of Government of Albania officials trained every year on by this programme; Number of trainers engaged and delivering training courses		
			2020	190,000	MoFE	NES/MFE ADISA	Function of Migration Counters formalised and embedded in the NES operational framework; the function of Migration Counters is aligned to other public services	Number of staff allocated for each MC with clear terms of reference; number of migrants referred from Migration Counters to other public services at the national and local level		

Specific Objective A: Ensure the strategic governance of migration in Albania		Outcome Indicator/s: 100% alignment of national legal framework with the EU and international framework on migration; adequate staffing levels to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination of migration governance; number of new partnerships with public and non-public actors on good governance of migration							
		No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators
Lead Agency	Together with						Outputs	Indicators	
		d. Strengthen the capacities of Migration Sector within Mol to carry out functions related to the monitoring of the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration	2019	6,720,000	Mol	IOM ASPA	New staff recruited in the Mol's Migration Section; number of staff trained on monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration	Number of staff recruited in the Mol's Migration Section; number of staff trained on monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration	Number of monitoring reports prepared on the implementation of the Strategy on Migration
		A2.2 Improve migration data collection, analysis and sharing a. Improve data management on migrants through access to a common information management system	2020	1,000,000	DBM/Mol	INSTAT EUD	Formal inter-agency agreements concluded/amended setting terms of access to a common information management system	Number of inter-agency agreements on access to a common information management system	
		b. Identify gaps/difficulties in administrative data collection on migration and elaboration of a new standard model for their collection	2019	300,000	INSTAT	IOM EUD	A gap assessment report on administrative data collection in the field of migration completed and findings shared with all line ministries responsible for managing migration in the country	A new standard template for the collection of administrative migration data developed and used by each national institution	
		c. Enhance the institutional capacities for the collection of administrative data and for research on the situation of migrants in Albania	2020-2022	600,000	ASPA	INSTAT Mol IOM EUD	Officials from various Government of Albania institutions trained on migration data	Number of Government of Albania officials trained on migration data collection, analysis and	

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators		Outcome Indicator/s: 100% alignment of national legal framework with the EU and international framework on migration; adequate staffing levels to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination of migration governance; number of new partnerships with public and non-public actors on good governance of migration
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	
			through training sessions, including on the job training, study visits, etc.					collection, analysis and sharing	sharing: share of male/female officials trained each year; number of official publications on migration issued each year	
			d. Enhance the institutional capacities needed to engage in regular data exchange on migration with relevant authorities in destination countries including but not limited to Statistical Offices, Border Authorities, etc.	2020-2022	750,000	All line Ministries	INSTAT	Standard procedures elaborated for regular data exchanges with international counterparts at relevant Albanian institutions	Number of migration data exchanges carried out annually; volume of data exchanged.	
			e. Undertake a thorough analysis of the Registry of Albanian citizens abroad to establish a basic profile, including geographical location, age, sex; this will help develop future policies on migration governance, such as out-of-country voting, etc. ¹	The first review in 2020 and annual updates	500,000	Mol	INSTAT Mol NAD/SMD	An in-depth analysis of the Registry of Albanian Citizens abroad is carried out; a socioeconomic profile of Albanian citizens in each country developed	Extent to which the socioeconomic profile of Albanian communities abroad is utilised to advance national policies in the field of migration	
			f. Develop a methodology for data collection and monitoring of both outflows of Albanian citizens and their return to Albania as well as on inflows of migrants, and on the presence of migrants in every sector and region so as to produce regularly updated statistics covering a variety of issues such as employment, health, education, crime, etc.	2020-2022	2,100,000	INSTAT	Mol IOM	INSTAT has developed the methodology for data collection and applies it.	Number of periodic publications focused on the scale, composition and socioeconomic position of migrants out of and into Albania Frequency of updates of the regularly collected migration data on INSTAT and Mol websites	

¹ The State Minister for Diaspora and IOM are currently preparing a socioeconomic migration profile of the Albanian community in Italy.

Specific Objective A: Ensure the strategic governance of migration in Albania										Outcome Indicator/s: 100% alignment of national legal framework with the EU and international framework on migration; adequate staffing levels to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination of migration governance; number of new partnerships with public and non-public actors on good governance of migration				
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators							
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators						
A3	Improve coordination mechanisms for migration governance	<p>A3.1 Improve horizontal and vertical coherence through enhanced operational and strategic co-ordination</p> <p>a. Carry out a review of the activities of local government structures in implementing migration policies and legislation and in providing assistance to migrants; propose enhanced coordination mechanisms between central and local government</p>	2019	342,000	Mol	All line Ministries Municipalities Communes Civil Society actors	A review of the activities of local Government structures in implementing migration policies and legislation and in providing assistance to migrants is carried out, and it is accompanied by concrete recommendations so as to enhance coordination between central and local government	Extent to which the recommendations of the review are translated into specific actions for improved coordination between central and local government, along clearly divided roles						
											Mol	Prime Minister's Office IOM	A gap analysis on institutional coordination is carried out, highlighting shortcomings in the provision of information and services to various categories of migrants; accompanied by a list of activities to address the shortcomings identified	Extent to which the recommendations from the analysis are reflected in the daily work of government institutions and in the coordination work that takes place among them as per the reporting in the Steering Group

Specific Objective A: Ensure the strategic governance of migration in Albania		Outcome Indicator/s: 100% alignment of national legal framework with the EU and international framework on migration; adequate staffing levels to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination of migration governance; number of new partnerships with public and non-public actors on good governance of migration						
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
A4	Enhance partnerships for migration governance	<p>A4.1 Review existing institutional partnerships on migration and formulate new ones</p> <p>a. Analyse the scale of involvement of non-government stakeholders (civil society, private sector, migrants and international partners) in the design and implementation of migration policies and programmatic responses; identify areas of migration governance where such partnerships are crucial.</p> <p>b. Based on the findings of the above analysis (point a), enter into partnership agreements with non-government stakeholders in to enhance implementation of migration policies</p> <p>c. Organize at least two meetings per year with civil society actors and other migration stakeholders to review progress in the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan on Migration Governance, and discuss appropriate forms of involving these actors in the implementation phase.</p>	2019	1,000,000	Mol	All line ministries responsible for migration management Representatives of migrant associations, civil society	Status of Government of Albania partnerships with non-government stakeholders in the field of migration examined and areas of opportunities for new partnerships identified	Number of consultative meetings with non-government stakeholders organised; areas of cooperation identified
			2020-2022	228,000	All ministries responsible for various aspects of migration management International partners IOM	Mol	Partnership agreements entered by Government of Albania entities with non-government stakeholders in the field of migration	Number of partnership agreements entered by Government of Albania entities with non-government stakeholders in the field of migration each year
			2019-2022	680,000	Mol	All ministries and institutions responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan Civil society actors	Two meetings with civil society actors and other migration stakeholders organised each year to review progress in the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan on Migration Governance, and specific recommendations	Extent to which the implementing government entities involve non-government migration stakeholders in the implementation of these policy documents

Specific Objective A: Ensure the strategic governance of migration in Albania							Outcome Indicator/s: 100% alignment of national legal framework with the EU and international framework on migration; adequate staffing levels to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination of migration governance; number of new partnerships with public and non-public actors on good governance of migration		
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators		
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	
						Other migration stakeholders	formulated so as to enhance the involvement of non-government stakeholders in the implementation of these policy documents		
		d. Undertake an assessment of the agreements Albania has entered into for the purposes of regional and international migration consultative processes and bilateral cooperation to assess their implementation and to draw up important recommendations that could guide future implementation cooperation processes	2020-2022	1,125,000	Mol	All ministries responsible for consultation work at the regional and international level in the field of migration	Assessment of the level of implementation of Albania's commitments in the context of regional and international migration consultative processes and bilateral migration cooperation carried out; and recommendations for enhancing future cooperation formulated	Extent to which the recommendations of the assessment carried out are translated into actions by Government institutions responsible for the implementation of Albania's commitments in the context of regional and international migration consultative processes and bilateral cooperation on migration	

Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania							Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		
					Lead Agency	Together with	
					Outputs and Indicators	Outputs	Indicators
B1	Effectively address irregular movements at Albania's borders and within the territory of the country	<p>B1.1 Continuous improvement of infrastructure at the country's borders and within territory in order to strengthen migration control while safeguarding migrants' rights.</p> <p>a. Continue to modernise border management equipment and infrastructure to strengthen border surveillance, including the green and blue borders. In particular, increase the density of the surveillance towers</p>	2020-2022	21,000,000	DBM/Mol		<p>Modern border management equipment purchased each year;</p> <p>surveillance towers built</p> <p>Value of border management equipment purchased each year; number of migrants apprehended at Albania's borders and inside the territory of the country (also compared to the total volume of cross-border movement); share of male/female migrants</p>
		<p>b. Improve infrastructure at border crossing points to adequately address specific needs of various categories of migrants (children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, etc.)</p>	2020	30,000,000	DBM/Mol	<p>Mol</p> <p>MoHSP</p> <p>IOM</p> <p>UNHCR</p> <p>OSCE</p> <p>etc.</p>	<p>Scale of investment (budget) in border infrastructure (pre-screening area, temporary reception areas, computers, printers, scanners, etc.)</p> <p>DBM budget increased for services delivered at the border</p> <p>Number of migrants accessing basic services at the border each year; share of male/female migrants served; % of vulnerable categories served;</p>

Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania							Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		
					Lead Agency	Together with	
					Outputs	Indicators	
							selected border sections, identified previously as higher-risk
		b. Ensure adequate planning of human resources at DBM in line with an analysis of changing trends in irregular entry and transit, and monitor further needs for reallocation, based on risk analysis	2019 -2022	304,000	DBM/MoI		Reduced time needed for the identification and referral of immigrants to protection services (in total and for each category of immigrant referred to). decline in the incidence of the use of forged documents in border crossings to 1.001 cases per 100,000 individuals
		c. Strengthen capacities and professional performance of border management personnel by enhancing their training and ensuring that it follows good practices and European standards of border and migration management and protection of migrants' rights	2020	1,800,000	DBM/MoI	IOM EUD	Border management personnel trained according to European standards in particular with regard to detection of forged documents 80% of DBM staff trained score higher than 85% in the post-training evaluation; results of follow-up evaluations of effectiveness of training and inclusion of standard interviewing techniques and referral operational procedures

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	
			d. Increase the coverage of the specific needs of particularly vulnerable persons ² in the training curricula and on-the-job coaching programmes provided to border guards (including pre-screening procedures, interview techniques, identification and referral of vulnerable cases to protection services, intercultural aspects of communication with persons with special needs)	2019 -2022	152,000	DBM/Mol	Police Academy	Number of DBM staff trained each year; % of DBM's annual budget allocated to training of staff on pre-screening procedures	Number of DBM staff trained each year; % allocation of staff training on pre-screening in the DBM's annual budget	
			e. Identify working practices of successful border control cooperation (joint controls, liaison officers, information exchange) at selected sections of the border, adapt and transfer them to the entire perimeter.	2020 -2022	228,000	DBM/Mol		Regular analysis of successful border control operations carried out at senior management levels and transmitted to all DBM staff	Total number of DBM staff involved annually in border control cooperation and number of joint operations per year.	
			B1.3 Entry and stay procedures serving as effective instruments for the prevention and reduction of irregular migration							

2 In compliance with the Standard Operating Procedures for the protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking which were approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers of 29 August 2018. The aim of these procedures is twofold: a) to provide protection to victims and potential victims, including minors, Albanian citizens, foreigners, and stateless persons, from all forms of internal or international exploitation, and b) to envision specialised sectoral and multidisciplinary interventions to ensure their reintegration.

No.		Sub-objective		Actions to be taken		Timeline		Financial resources in ALL		Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators					
										Lead Agency		Together with		Outputs		Indicators	
Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return																	
Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania																	
				a. Regularly monitor the effectiveness of standard procedures in place for the verification of the purpose of entry and stay at all stages (visa application, consular interview, interview by border guards)	2020	114,000	MEFA	DBM/Mol	Monitoring reports on the scale of mismatch between declared and actual purpose of travel prepared on the basis of data collected from border crossing points	Number of monitoring reports clearly indicating the mismatch between declared and actual purpose of travel collected from border crossing points							
				b. Enhance the use of databases, in particular the E-visa and E-permission modules in FER and TMS systems by training consular and border staff in methods of verification of the legality of stay, purpose of entry and stay of foreign citizens in the territory of Albania	2020	228,000	MEFA	DBM/Mol	Consular staff and border guards trained on methods of verification during personal interviews	Number of denials of visa applications and entry (according to grounds)							
				c. Set up databases of higher-risk and trustworthy visa applicants and differentiate verification procedures for applicants based on their application and migration history; develop standard sets of additional in-depth questions to be asked at personal interviews and lists of supplementary documents required from higher-risk applicants	2020	342,000	MEFA	DBM/Mol	Databases of higher-risk and trustworthy visa applicants established and used to differentiate verification procedures for visa applicants	Number of consular staff and border guards trained on verification methods during personal interviews; share of male/female participants							
									A specific interview protocol for higher-risk applicants developed and used	Shortening the processing time and verification procedure for visa applicants in general and for the category of trustworthy applicants in particular							

No.		Sub-objective		Actions to be taken		Timeline		Financial resources in ALL		Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators			
										Together with		Outputs		Indicators	
										Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators		
Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return															
Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania															
				d. Ensure further alignment with the EU list of visa requirements	2019-2022	No cost	DBM/Mol		Full alignment with the EU list of visa requirements	Identification of gaps in the list of visa requirements through regular review					
				B1.4 Minimise cases of irregular stay and transit by checking on the legality of stay, taking measures when violation of legality of stay has been proved and by providing migrants information on the above											
				a. Intensify checks on the legality of stay in the interior of the country by focusing on locations migrants tend to concentrate in the most, as identified by the regularly updated risk assessments.	2019-2022	3,040,000	DBM/Mol	ASP	Periodic checks carried out jointly by DBM and local police, so as to detect overstayers or violations of the terms of the foreigner's stay	Number of cases of irregular residence detected and prosecuted; an increase in the detection rate so as to eliminate irregular migration up to 87% by 2020 (from 70% in 2014);					
				b. Strengthen joint DBM and local police checks to detect overstayers or violations of the foreigner's stay	2019-2022	1,824,000	DBM/Mol	ASP	Standard procedures have been adopted for DBM-local police cooperation; operational staff trained on how to best use them	The reduction of cases of irregular migration and foreign citizens apprehended in the territory of Albania with irregular documents up by 27% more in 2020, when compared to 2014;					

Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return		Responsible Units		Financial resources in ALL	Timeline	Actions to be taken	Sub-objective	No.						
		Lead Agency	Together with						Outputs	Indicators				
		Outputs and Indicators												
B2	Improve effectiveness of return mechanisms for foreign citizens	DBM/Mol	IOM	190,000	By end of 2020	<p>B2.1 Successful return of foreign citizens to their countries of origin through readmission and voluntary return</p> <p>a. Regularly identify emerging barriers to the fast and effective return of foreign citizens during the process of readmission so as to identify needs for assistance in readmission agreements</p>								
									DBM/Mol	MEFA	608,000	2019-2022	<p>b. Continue efforts to conclude readmission agreements and implementation protocols, therefore establishing working mechanisms for effective return</p>	<p>Number of readmission implementation protocols signed or amended; % increase in the number of foreign citizens returned to their countries of origin in the context of readmission agreements/protocols</p>

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
<p>Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return</p>									
<p>Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania</p>									
			<p>d. Develop clear standard procedures on Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) (including vulnerable categories such as UAMs, VoTs and asylum seekers) and identify the role of each partner</p>	2019	190,000	DBM/Mol	IOM	Standard AVR procedures are in place specifying clear procedures for support to vulnerable categories as well as roles and responsibilities for each involved party	% increase in the number of irregular migrants and vulnerable categories returned to their countries of origin through voluntary return procedures
			<p>e. Designate dedicated specialists on assisted voluntary return at DBM to facilitate AVR process</p>	2019	0.0	DBM/Mol		DBM staff (at the central & local level) designated to undertake AVR procedures	Number of DBM specialists designated to undertake AVR procedures
			<p>f. Make information available at border crossing points on the benefits and modalities of voluntary return in the languages of the main groups of immigrants; inform irregular migrants of the right to seek assistance for voluntary return during all phases of their stay in Albania (including when in detention)</p>	2020-2022	1,500,000	DBM/Mol	IOM	Leaflets/brochures on the benefits and modalities of voluntary return produced and disseminated each year at border crossing points	40 % increase of the voluntary return to their countries of origin from irregular migrants resulting from an informed decision
B3	Efficiently respond to irregular migration of Albanian citizens in EU member states	B3.1	Implement adequate measures to prevent the irregular migration of Albanian citizens						

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcomes and Indicators	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
<p>Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return</p>									
<p>Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania</p>									
			<p>a. Carry out regular awareness-raising campaigns to inform Albanian citizens of the rules and conditions of visa-free travel in the EU, of regular migration opportunities and of the consequences of irregular migration (including unfounded asylum applications);</p>	2019-2022	24,000,000	Mol	DBM MCs/NES MEFA MoFE SMD IOM EUD	Regular awareness-raising campaigns on the terms of visa-free travel to the EU, opportunities for regular migration and consequences of irregular migration	Number of citizens reached through awareness-raising campaigns on the terms of visa-free travel in the EU, opportunities for regular migration and consequences of irregular migration; share of youth versus adults, males/females; number of families reached in UAMs' regions of origin
			<p>b. Provide incentives for education/training and youth employment in the regions of origin/residence of Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) in cooperation with local authorities</p>	2019-2022	32,400,000	NES/MoFE	MoESY MoHSP IOM	Specific programmes targeting youth and their families in regions of the UAMs' origin developed and implemented to empower them and reduce the incidence of irregular migration of youth	Number of youth/families who benefitted from local empowerment programmes on prevention of irregular migration
			<p>c. Strengthen information services provided by Albanian consular services on regular stay in destination countries, through consular desks and webpage</p>	2020-2022	10,800,000	MEFA		Information services on regular stay in destination countries provided by the Albanian consular office, strengthened through regular	Number of Albanian citizens who receive information each year at the consular desks and through their webpage

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
<p>Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return</p>									
<p>Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania</p>									
			<p>B3.2 Support return and reintegration of readmitted Albanian citizens</p> <p>a. Carry out obligatory briefings with readmitted nationals, raising their awareness of the implications of irregular migration and provide with contacts of relevant state bodies and NGOs in the locations of these nationals' permanent residence</p>	2019-2022	570,000	DBM/MoI	MC/NES	information disseminated consular desks and through their webpage	Number of readmitted citizens informed about implications of sanctions on irregular migration; share of males/females
			<p>b. Establish a dedicated cooperation mechanism between MoI's DBM and municipalities on provision of assistance for readmitted Albanian UAMs</p>	2019	76,000	DBM	Municipalities	Specific cooperation modalities established between MoI's DBM and local municipalities on provision of assistance for UAMs	Number of readmitted citizens referred to public/other services when available; share of males/females
B4	Manage mixed flows efficiently		<p>B4.1 Develop strategic and operational frameworks to meet the challenge of mixed flows to Albania</p>						Number of readmitted UAMs receiving assistance locally each year

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units			Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return		
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	Outputs and Indicators	
										Outputs	Indicators
Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania						Mol	All line Ministries IOM	A new Contingency Plan drafted and approved by Government of Albania; Budget (in ALL) allocated to implementation of Contingency Plan for preparatory actions	Individuals entering Albania through mixed flows comprehensively assisted and their rights protected; share of males/females identified and assisted each year; categorisation by status		
		a. Develop a new contingency plan for Albania to manage mixed flows taking into consideration the specific vulnerabilities of people on the move (such as UAMs, VoTs, asylum seekers, disabled persons, etc.), and undertake regular updates in light of new challenges	2020	152,000	Mol	All line Ministries IOM	Annual review and gap analysis with recommendations to the Council of Ministers for the revision of expenditure highlighted in the Contingency Plan	Total value of investment in required resources and share of planned expenditure achieved			
		b. Carry out regular reviews of available resources (infrastructure, staff, equipment and finances) for implementation of the Contingency Plan, and identify gaps in meeting new challenges	2019-2022	229,520	Mol	All line Ministries IOM	Training curricula are developed and regularly updated in response to changing vulnerabilities faced by people on the move in crisis/emergency context	Border officials are capable of identifying vulnerable categories within mixed flows and of referring them to adequate protection services			
		c. Undertake training of border officials on identification of vulnerable categories in cases of massive mixed flows	2019-2022	7,236,000	DBM/Mol	Mol UNHCR Municipalities in the border areas IOM	New accommodation facilities identified and made available for various categories of people on the move (VoTs, UAMs, asylum seekers) that enter Albania	Hosting capacity of the new premises for various categories of people on the move			
		d. Ensure access to safe and dignifying accommodation for people on the move in the context of mixed flows at the border and inside the country in particular for vulnerable categories such as UAMs	2019-2022	13,500,000	DBM/Mol	IOM UNHCR OSCE					

Outcome Indicator/s: % increase of irregular migrants detected at the border and within the territory of Albania; % of vulnerable categories of migrants identified through pre-screening procedures and referred to protection services including at times of crisis; number of readmitted Albanian citizens referred to available reintegration services; number of third-country nationals returned to their countries of origin through readmission or voluntary return		Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
		Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
Specific Objective B: Ensure safe and orderly migration from, through and to Albania					
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units
		e. Formalise coordination between Regional BMPs, Social Services and NGOs with respect to health services provided to various categories of people on the move in the context of mixed flows; include specific provisions in the new contingency plan on the management of the emergency situation	2020	760,000	Mol Regional BMP, Local NGOs
					Cooperation agreements signed between regional BMPs, Social Services and NGOs on health services Number of people on the move benefiting from health services provided annually

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
C1		Ensure an effective labour migration policy framework	<p>C1.1 Include the benefits of the emigration of Albanian citizens in the development and implementation of national employment policies</p> <p>a. Commission in-depth assessments on the challenges and specific needs of returning migrants for their effective integration in the local labour market in Albania</p> <p>b. Incorporate the main findings and recommendations of the assessment in the process of revising national employment policies</p> <p>c. Carry out regular assessments of the impact of migration on the available labour resources and use the results for planning, designing, implementing and monitoring employment policies</p> <p>d. Carry out regular assessments of the current and future impact of migration flows on the volume and structure of the national labour force</p>	By the end of 2020	450,000	NES/MoFE	INSTAT	An in-depth assessment on the challenges and specific needs of returning migrants for integration in the local labour market in Albania successfully carried out	Number of returnees benefiting each year from changes in the national policies on employment
				By the end of 2020	114,000	MoFE	NES/MoFE	Specific measures on Albanian returnees included in the National Employment Action Plan	Increasing number of returnees included in the Albanian labour market in the context of new policy measures undertaken
				2020-2022	450,000	INSTAT	NES/MoFE IOM	An assessment carried out every 2 years, listing sectors and professions that are currently in demand for additional labour force and identifying opportunities for the employment of returnees or immigrants	Extent to which employment policies reflect the migration of Albanian citizens and their impact in the labour market
				2021-2022	228,000	INSTAT	MoFE INSTAT NES/MoFE IOM	Assessments on current and future impact of migration carried out every 5 years	Number of the assessment recommendations endorsed by relevant institutions and reflected in their work

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
<p>Specific Objective C: Develop an effective labour migration policy while enhancing the positive impact of migration in the socioeconomic development of the country</p> <p>Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances</p>									
			<p>e. Strengthen capacities of relevant Government of Albania institutions for data collection and comprehensive data analysis on labour migration; making use of migration forecasts to develop long-term labour migration policies</p>	2021-2022	456,000	INSTAT	MoFE NES/MoFE IOM	Government of Albania officials successfully trained to collect and analyse comprehensive and consistent datasets on labour migration; officials make use of migration forecasts to develop long-term labour migration policies	Number of Government of Albania officials trained to collect and analyse comprehensive and consistent datasets on labour migration
		<p>C12 Develop and implement proactive policies and schemes aiming at attracting Albanian citizens, members of the Albanian Diaspora and foreign workers with skills and qualifications in short supply in the Albanian labour market</p> <p>a. Carry out consultations with employer associations to gauge the demand for employment of professionals and skilled workers in particular sectors of the economy</p>		2020	76,000	MoFE		Consultations with employer associations to gauge the demand for employment of professionals and skilled workers in particular sectors carried out	Number of employer associations participants in the consultations on demand of skilled workers; conclusions generated from the consultations
		<p>b. Disseminate the list of professions and qualifications in short supply to the Albanian consulates and representative offices abroad, along</p>		2019-2022	171,000	MEFA	NES/MoFE	A list of professions and qualifications in short supply is sent to all Albanian consulates and representative	Number of Diaspora members expressing an interest in employment in Albania through the

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			with the conditions on taking up employment in Albania					offices abroad, accompanied by the conditions on taking up employment in Albania	Albanian embassies/ consulates abroad; share of males/females
			c. Carry out an assessment of labour market needs in sectors experiencing highest outflow of professionals and launch pilot initiatives facilitating the temporary return of professionals to Albanian public institutions and private sector	2020	1,500,000	MoFE	NES IOM	Pilot initiatives for temporary return of professionals to positions at Albanian institutions and private sector launched	Number of professionals returning each year to public or private sectors
			d. Evaluate initiatives and define a permanent mechanism for preventing "brain drain" and "brain waste" of Albanian citizens through inter-agency consultations	2020	152,000	MoESY In consultation with other line ministries	SMD MoFE IOM	Inter-agency consultations take place to define a permanent mechanism for the prevention of "brain drain" and "brain waste"	Number of consultations held along with a concrete proposal for a permanent mechanism to prevent "brain drain" and "brain waste"
			C.1.3 Set up and implement an effective legal and institutional framework on labour migration a. develop ethical recruitment instructions for private employment agencies based on the legislation in force (including the preparation of reporting templates that will be used regularly by recruitment agencies); publish instructions in the website of MoFE, NES, Labour Inspectorate, NBC and at employment offices;	2019	114,000	MoFE	All line Ministries	A set of guidelines on the ethical recruitment of migrant workers developed by MoFE in cooperation with the private sector; it is disseminated to private recruitment agencies and published online by	Number of ethical recruitment instructions of migrant workers drafted and published; number of information materials disseminated

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			Prepare a list of private recruitment agencies that have been licenced, and its publication at the employment offices as well as inspectorate offices to ensure their monitoring and well-functioning					respective government institutions List of private recruitment agencies prepared and published at employment offices and inspectorate offices	
			b. Ensure private operators comply with ethical recruitment standards by monitoring of their activity regularly	2019	57,000	MoFE	NES/MoFE	Periodic monitoring of ethical recruitment standards by private operators carried out	Number of migrants recruited annually through ethical recruitment practices Number of reports on recruitment practices prepared and delivered by private employment agencies using the standard template; number of cases at risks of exploitation identified and reported
			c. Carry out a review of the current institutional setup on emigration for labour purposes to reveal the problems arising from the current allocation of competencies, in particular noting areas of duplication, inefficiency or unaddressed issues	2020	380,000	MoFE	NES/MoFE SMD MOI IOM	Diagnostic review of institutional arrangements currently in practice, containing specific recommendations on reallocation of competencies on emigration for labour purposes	Evidence of changes proposed in institutional setup on labour migration

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			d. Based on the results of the review, propose changes to the institutional setup so as to improve exchange of information, co-ordination of measures and ability to develop legal and policy solutions	2020	76,000	MFE		A list of changes in the institutional setup formulated so as to improve exchange of information and co-ordination	Extent to which the proposed recommendations are being enforced by various institutions
			e. Provide necessary training to the newly hired staff at the local and regional offices of the National Employment Service enabling it to implement migration policies effectively	2020-2022	450,000	MoFE	NES/MoFE	Training of MC/NES staff throughout the country carried out	Number of MC staff trained on migration issues and share of those scoring higher than 85% in the post training evaluation
			f. Carry out consultations with recruitment agencies on effective cooperation so as to disseminate information on opportunities for safe and orderly seasonal migration and associated benefits of regular status	2020	152,000	MoFE	IOM	Consultations organised with recruitment agencies on effective cooperation so as to disseminate information on opportunities for safe and orderly seasonal migration periodically	Issues identified during consultations are used to produce specific recommendations on improved dissemination methods
			g. Run consultations with partner institutions (ministry of labour, employment services, etc.) of key destination countries of Albanian migrants on effective cooperation and on disseminating information on opportunities for safe and orderly seasonal migration and associated benefits of regular status	2020-2022	1,140,000	MoFE	MEFA IOM	Consultations with partner institutions of key destination countries carried out	Issues identified during international consultations are used to produce specific recommendations on improved dissemination methods

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances						
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators					
										Lead Agency	Together with			
C2	Facilitate seasonal and circular migration for Albanian citizens	<p>C2.1 Keep track of seasonal and circular migration and the effectiveness of a regulatory framework</p> <p>a. Commission a study on the characteristics and determinants of seasonal labour migration of Albanian citizens to identify key problems associated with irregular movement in main destination countries (in particular, covering recruitment mechanisms, work conditions, health and safety standards, wage and benefit guarantees and safeguards against exploitation)</p>	2020	1,400,000	MoFE	INSTAT MoI IOM	A report is published on the characteristics and determinants of seasonal labour migration to identify key problems associated with irregular movement in main destination countries undertaken; findings and recommendations shared with the relevant stakeholders;	Extent to which the recommendations of the report are endorsed by the authorities and actions are taken to facilitate seasonal migration of Albanian citizens						
									2020-2022	684,000	MoFE	MoI IOM	Public and institutional consultations organised on the findings and recommendations of the study	Extent to which the findings and recommendations of the study are reflected in the policies and legislation that regulates seasonal/circular migration for employment purposes
b. Carry out institutional and public consultations on the findings and recommendations of the study, and reflect them in existing policies as well as in the legislation that regulates seasonal/circular migration for employment purposes	b. Complete a review of the effectiveness of the current legal provisions protecting the rights of Albanian migrant workers and addressing the specific challenges faced in main destination countries													

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			<p>C2.2 Foster international cooperation on labour migration</p> <p>a. Review the scope and provisions of bilateral agreements in force regulating labour migration from Albania to verify that they contain sufficient incentives for circular movement</p> <p>b. Identify priority countries with which new bilateral agreements on labour migration, covering circular migration, need to be concluded</p> <p>c. Conclude agreements with selected countries of destination, offering pilot schemes with incentives for circular movement</p>	2020	304,000	MoFE	MEFA IOM	Revision of all bilateral agreements undertaken and evidence on incentives for circular movement collected and shared with relevant stakeholders	Number of incentives for circular movements identified in bilateral agreements
			<p>b. Identify priority countries with which new bilateral agreements on labour migration, covering circular migration, need to be concluded</p> <p>c. Conclude agreements with selected countries of destination, offering pilot schemes with incentives for circular movement</p>	2020	76,000	MEFA	MoFE SHKP	A list of priority countries for new bilateral agreements prepared	Number of new bilateral labour agreements initiated by the Albanian authorities
			<p>c. Conclude agreements with selected countries of destination, offering pilot schemes with incentives for circular movement</p>	2020	380,000	MEFA	MoFE SMD	New circular migration agreements concluded	Number of Albanian citizens benefiting from the new/existing regulated agreements per year; share of male/female migrants
			<p>C2.3 Ensure that pre-departure services for prospective Albanian migrant workers are in place</p> <p>a. Provide information on current opportunities for regular labour migration to EU Member States through information packages and a dedicated website that is updated regularly</p>	2019-2022	2,000,000	MoFE	IOM GIZ	Website on migration opportunities launched and information packages printed Regular updates of website content	Number of visitors to the website Number of information packages disseminated

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			<p>b. Deliver training to Migration Counters' personnel on pre-departure orientation, taking into account needs of most vulnerable groups</p> <p>c. Enhance cooperation with counterpart institutions in the countries of destination on transferring good practices on provision of information to migrants (study visits, materials sharing)</p>	<p>2019-2022</p> <p>2019-2022</p>	<p>1,000,000</p> <p>1,500,000</p>	<p>MoFE</p> <p>NES/MoFE</p>	<p>DBM/Mol</p> <p>IOM</p> <p>Other actors</p>	<p>Training of MC staff on pre-departure orientation and protection of migrants' rights successfully carried out</p> <p>Cooperation is established with counterpart institutions in countries of destination on transferring good practices for information provision to migrants</p>	<p>Number of MC officials trained on pre-departure orientation and migrant rights each year</p> <p>Number of international good practices on provision of information to migrants obtained and utilised to improve service provision at MCs</p>
			<p>C2.4 Strengthen institutional capacities on protection of migrant workers' rights</p> <p>a. Review the scope and effectiveness of the current consular and legal services provided to Albanian migrant workers through a survey of migrants and migrant community leaders in main destination countries; undertake actions to respond to identified needs such as increasing human resources; budget increase, etc</p>	<p>2020-2022</p>	<p>1,000,000</p>	<p>MEFA</p> <p>MoFE</p> <p>INSTAT</p> <p>IOM</p>		<p>Assessment carried out in key destination countries for Albanian migrants</p> <p>Adjustment of human/financial resources at the Albanian consular service undertaken as per identified needs</p>	<p>Changes made to Albanian consular services to improve service delivery to Albanian workers abroad and information on protection of their rights</p> <p>Number of new staff recruited to Albanian consular service desks abroad on the basis of the current needs; % increase in the budget of the consulates ensure Albanian citizens are provided with better services</p>

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			b. Develop standard guidelines for interviewing migrant workers to identify cases of exploitation or discrimination when identified	2021-2022	228,000	MEFA	MoFE SMD IOM	Standard guidelines drafted to interview migrant workers with the aim of identifying cases of exploitation or discrimination	Number of Albanian migrant workers interviewed according to new guidelines and number of cases of exploitation and/or discrimination identified and referred to relevant services
		C2.5 Facilitate return and socioeconomic reintegration of Albanian citizens	a. Assess the scale, categories and specific needs of Albanian citizens willing to return through surveys, consultations with diaspora and organization of events with migrant workers	2020	1,500,000	MEFA	SMD MoFE IOM	Studies carried out on the scale, categories and specific needs of the Albanian citizens willing to return	Size of the population of potential returnees and their reintegration identified;
			b. Undertake an in-depth review of the reintegration mechanism for Albanian citizens and of the forms of partnership with civil society and other stakeholders; recommend actions to improve institutional coordination with respect to reintegration	2019	475,000	MoFE	MoHSP Mol SMD MoESY MARD IOM Civil society organizations	An in-depth review of the reintegration mechanism in Albania is undertaken along with specific actions to improve institutional coordination on reintegration	Extent to which clear roles and responsibilities on reintegration of returnees are allocated to central and local government as much as other actors; 20% increase in the number of returnees receiving reintegration

		Specific Objective C: Develop an effective labour migration policy while enhancing the positive impact of migration in the socioeconomic development of the country		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances				
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
		<p>f. Cooperate with private sector and vocational schools in Albania on the development of standard tests, confirming actual acquisition of professional skills and knowledge by those lacking formal education in a given field</p> <p>g. Negotiate and sign cooperation agreements with main destination countries for Albanian citizens in the field of vocational training and joint recognition of training certificates</p>	<p>2020-2022</p> <p>2020-2022</p>	<p>684,000</p> <p>684,000</p>	<p>MoESY</p> <p>MoESY</p>	<p>MEFA</p> <p>In consultation with other line Ministries</p> <p>MoFE MEFA Moj State Coordinator of the State Committee for Diaspora.</p>	<p>Templates put together to test professional skills and qualifications for relevant areas of expertise</p> <p>New cooperation agreements signed with main destination countries for Albanian citizens in the area of vocational training and joint recognition of training certificates</p>	<p>Number of test templates approved for use</p> <p>Number of Albanian citizens benefiting annually from recognition of their qualifications</p> <p>Number of agreements signed; number of students benefiting per year</p>
C3	Maximise the impact of migration on national and local development	<p>C3.1 Promote formal channelling and productive use of remittances</p> <p>a. Undertake periodic surveys on Albanian households' financial strategies and patterns of use of financial instruments in order to identify gaps in the financial system and opportunities for improvement</p>	By the end of 2020	6,500,000	BoA	INSTAT World Bank	<p>Research data collected and analysed including: (a) characteristics of individual household flows and patterns of use, (b) links between remittance patterns and migration patterns, (c) impact of remittances on savings, physical capital accumulation, education, labour supply, and income inequality; d) financial instruments used for remittances</p>	Share of remittances that go through official channels to the total number of remittances

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	
			<p>b. Increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fostering competitiveness by promoting innovation, which, in turn, will be reflected in efficient services in the form of transaction commissions as well as the time needed to process remittances; - increase transparency and consumer protection through the adoption of the Law on Payment Services in the Republic of Albania; - banking education and promotional campaigns targeting migrants and remittance recipients, such as the Greenback project in Berat and its replication in other parts of the country 	2018 – 2022	1,400,000 Greenback is financed by SECO, therefore there are no costs for NBA	BoA	MEFA Association of Banks Albanian Financial Supervisory Authority	Access to banking services linked to remittances increased for remittance senders through several measures	Annual volume of remittances sent to Albania via the banking network; Increased financial culture and know-how; use and possession of financial products; level of financial inclusion; number of Albanian families' benefiting from the Greenback project each year; Lower transaction costs for remittances; number of financial institutions established to facilitate remittance transfer and related services in rural areas.	
			<p>c. Encourage financial market institutions to develop specific and innovative products for migrants and their families through periodic consultations with financial market institutions.</p>	2019 –2022	760.000	BoA	Association of Banks AIDA Albanian Financial Supervisory Authority Albanian stock exchange Academia (universities)	Consultations are held with financial institutions so as to develop specific and innovative products for migrants and their families	Number of consultations held; number and typology of innovative products issued by financial institutions for migrants and their families each year	

No.		Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances	
						Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			<p>C3.2. Promote investments to Albania</p> <p>a. Develop and continually update online and offline materials on current investment opportunities in Albania on the basis of information collected from local authorities</p>	2020	114,000	MoFE	AIDA IOM MARD	Information put together on current investment opportunities in each region, and updated periodically	Number of information materials on current investment opportunities in each region published online and offline and disseminated among Albanian communities abroad each year
			<p>b. Carry out surveys and conduct regular consultations with Albanian entrepreneurs who are resident in key destination countries to gauge their interest levels in investing in Albania; and identify major barriers</p>	1 st survey by 2020 Other surveys every 3 years	1,200,000	AIDA	MEFA INSTAT MoFE AIDA SMD MARD IOM	Level of Diaspora interest in investing in Albania and major barriers to investment identified; findings discussed among stakeholders	Number of actions undertaken to remove barriers for investment in Albania from Albanian Diaspora community; number and value of investments per year and the % of annual increase
			<p>c. Offer facilitated conditions for entering business-to-business contacts with Albanian entrepreneurs (diaspora business rooms, diaspora business registers)</p>	2021-2022	1,000,000	MEFA		Incentives for B to B cooperation established by the Gov of Albania	Number of Diaspora businesses and those registered in Albania who entered into a joint cooperation each year; volume of investment in the country through B to B cooperation.

Specific Objective C: Develop an effective labour migration policy while enhancing the positive impact of migration in the socioeconomic development of the country							Outcome Indicator/s: number of citizens emigrating through regular migration channels each year; % increase in the number of returnees benefiting from reintegration support provided by government institutions in partnership with other actors; % increase access to banking services and financial services linked to remittances		
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators		
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	
		d. Engage Diaspora groups in national and local development through special programmes designed for this purpose	2020-202	171,000	MoFE	SMD MARD IOM	Projects/initiatives for engagement of Diaspora groups in national and local development identified and proposed for Government funding	Number of diaspora engagement projects implemented; number of citizens benefiting each year; Extent to which the initiatives address the local/national development needs	

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year						
		Responsible Units						
		Lead Agency	Together with					
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
D1	Ensure that a comprehensive non-discrimination framework protects migrants' rights effectively	<p>D1.1 Extend legal guarantees of non-discrimination to all persons residing in the territory</p> <p>a. Carry out a comprehensive review of the state of implementation of international instruments and their impact on the position of non-nationals whilst identifying specific protection gaps. Consider granting certain rights to foreigners, envisaged in the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level</p>	2019-2022	1,520,000	Mol	In cooperation with an Interagency Working Group	<p>A review of the state of implementation of international instruments and their impact on the position of non-nationals is undertaken with recommendations to address protection gaps which are then shared with relevant stakeholders;</p> <p>White paper on the implications of granting additional rights to foreign nationals</p>	<p>Number of administrative/legal acts passed to address the gaps in meeting international obligations for the protection non-nationals</p> <p>White paper submitted to the Council of Ministers with specific legal recommendations</p>
		<p>b. Carry out an assessment of needs to regulate labour relations, involving foreigners individually employed in Albania, in particular, consider extending the Labour Code guarantees (including the requirement to sign a written contract with a foreign worker, offering guarantees of due payment of wages and compliance with safety standards) to all migrant workers employed in Albania</p>	By the end of 2020	114,000	MoFE	MEFA Mol NES/MoFE	<p>A list of what is needed to regulate labour relations of foreign workers in Albania; it is shared with relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>Number of administrative/legal acts passed to improve the regulation of labour relations for foreign workers based on the findings of the needs assessment</p>

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration									
Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year									
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators		
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	
		<p>c. Take measures to provide remuneration for all completed work for migrant workers, regardless of their legal status. Introduce a procedure establishing the terms of enforcement applicable to irregular workers</p>	2021-2022	304,000	MoFE	Interagency Working Group	Legal, administrative and/ or procedural changes proposed to introduce the right to full remuneration for all completed work migrants have undertaken	Legal changes passed in Parliament or administrative procedures introduced, and number of migrant workers who have benefitted from them yearly	
		<p>D1.2 Raise migrants' awareness of their rights and how they are enforced</p> <p>a. Run information campaigns among foreigners on the application of non-discrimination norms and on the procedures for enforcing their rights. Provide them in the main languages spoken by migrants, including information on the services provided by the Commissioner against Discrimination</p>	2019-2022	4,800,000		all line ministries	Ombudsman Commissioner Against Discrimination	Information campaigns are organised among foreigners on the application of non-discrimination norms and on the procedures for enforcing their rights	Number of migrants reached through campaigns on non-discrimination norms; number of materials produced and disseminated; number of migrants seeking legal remedies each year
		<p>b. Provide free legal assistance and information on rights to detained irregular migrants</p>	By the end of 2020	1,020,000	Moj		Free legal clinics run by Civil Society Organizations	Free legal assistance and information on rights provided to detained irregular migrants	Number of detained irregular migrants receiving free legal assistance each year, share of male/female migrants
		<p>c. While issuing a work and residence permit, hand out informative leaflets on the rights of immigrant workers and contacts of institutions/bodies/</p>	By the end of 2020	410,400	NES			Informative leaflets on the rights of immigrant workers and contacts of institutions/ bodies/agencies to get in	Number of information leaflets on migrants' rights disseminated along with contact details of

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year							
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators		
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators	
		agencies to be reached in case their rights are violated						touch with in case their rights are violated	institutions to approach in case of their rights are violated
		<p>D1.3 Improve effectiveness and monitoring of protection mechanisms</p> <p>a. Review current activities of the Non-Discrimination Commissioner in the monitoring and protection of the rights of foreigners residing in Albania, in particular to the enforcement of principle of non-discrimination and, if necessary, consider assigning a specific officer focused on the observance of the respect of the principle of non-discrimination of foreigners</p>	2020	133,000	Commissioner Against Discrimination	Parliament	Report submitted by the Commissioner to the Council of Ministers with identified gaps and recommendations	Allocation of the necessary resources to the Commissioner, including a dedicated specialist who shall monitor the principle of non-discrimination of foreigners is observed	
		b. Based on the above review, introduce a regular reporting procedure on the monitoring of observance of the principle of non-discrimination of the rights of migrants	2019-2022	608,000	Commissioner Against Discrimination		The Commissioner Against Discrimination has introduced a regular reporting procedure	Number of periodic reports on the position of foreigners in the Albanian labour market compiled and shared with relevant stakeholders	
		c. Establish a central unit at the Labour Inspectorate for the detection and investigation of violations against foreign workers	2021-2022	2,986,000	Labour Inspectorate	MoFE	A dedicated unit at the Labour Inspectorate detecting and investigating violations against foreign workers is established and up and running	Number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated per year by the new Unit established at the Labour Inspectorate	

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year								
		No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
							Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			d. Increase the capacities of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies (judges, prosecutors, police officers, labour inspectors) to detect and prosecute cases of violation of immigrant rights through targeted trainings	2019-2022	1,440,000	Mol	IOM School of Magistrate EUD	Training sessions organised for the judiciary and law enforcement agencies on detection and prosecution of cases of violation of immigrants' rights	Number of judiciary staff trained every year on how to detect and prosecute violation of immigrant rights; share of male/females	
D2	Identify migrants as a vulnerable category when programming and delivering assistance	D2.1 Tailor assistance to meet specific needs of children and youth a. Ensure that the legal and institutional framework provides shelter to Albanian unaccompanied children who cross the border irregularly and that adequate resources are allocated to this purpose	By the end of 2020	5,760,000	MoHSP Mol Moj			Amendment of the Law on Social Care Services to provide shelter to unaccompanied children who cross the border irregularly Setting aside a reserve fund to be disbursed for holding facilities	Number of irregular UAMs provided with shelter each year Extent to which allocated funds are being disbursed	
		b. Track the level of provision of social care and support to Albanian undocumented migrant children returned by countries of destination whose families are not identified or have been considered as abandoned by their parents and reveal gaps	By the end of 2020	228,000	MoHSP		DBM/Mol	Regular reports on the level of provision and gaps to be addressed	Improved coverage with social care and support of the undocumented migrant children who were returned	

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year						
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units			
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs and Indicators	
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
		<p>D2.2 Address specific needs of migrants</p> <p>a. Assess existing legislation, administrative procedures and job assistance schemes to identify barriers to employment and protection of the rights of women on the labour market (with a focus on immigrant women)</p>	By the end of 2020	304,000	MoFE	NES ISI MoHSP IOM NGOs active in protecting women rights	Legal and administrative framework assessed and barriers that impede the employment of migrant women or the protection of their rights are identified	Number of legal/administrative amendments passed to ensure access to employment and protection of women in the labour market
		<p>b. Based on the results of the review, develop and implement targeted measures for promoting migrant women's access to the Albanian labour market. Consider training female assistants to do consultations with migrant women, publication of leaflets in the main languages used by migrant women informing them of contacts to state institutions and NGOs assisting in job-seeking</p>	2021-2022	480,000	MoFE		Targeted measures taken to promote migrant women's access to the Albanian labour market	Number of leaflets produced in the main languages used by migrant women, and disseminated to inform them of the contacts details of state institutions and NGOs that can help with job-seeking
D3	Improve conditions for the socioeconomic and cultural integration of migrants	<p>D3.1 Guarantee equal access to social security</p> <p>a. Identify categories of foreign residents who are not covered by social security, detect reasons for their non-coverage and submit recommendations on relevant legal and procedural amendments</p>	2019-2022	1,641,600	ISI/MoFE	Council of Ministers	Proposals for amendments to the 2016 Law on Social Services and implementing legislation	Number of proposals approved by the Council of Ministers

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year						
		Responsible Units	Outputs and Indicators					
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
		<p>b. Target the categories of foreigners identified as least covered with information on opportunities and benefits of national social security coverage</p> <p>c. Undertake necessary changes in the legal framework to ensure access to social care for all categories of migrant children</p>	<p>by the end of 2020</p> <p>2020 -2022</p>	<p>600,000</p> <p>570,000</p>	<p>IS/MoFE</p> <p>IS/MoFE</p>	<p></p> <p>MoHSP Moj IOM Municipalities UNICEF</p>	<p>Foreigners are informed on the opportunities and benefits of national security coverage distributed; no of foreigners informed each year; share of male/females</p> <p>Revision of the 2016 Law on Social Services undertaken to ensure all categories of migrant children have access to social care</p>	<p>Number of leaflets on opportunities and benefits of national security coverage distributed; no of foreigners informed each year; share of male/females</p> <p>% increase in the total number of migrant children benefiting from social care in Albania every year</p>
		<p>D3.2 Provide adequate access to housing, health care and education</p> <p>a. Identify and remove access barriers to public services so irregular migrants can partake in them. In particular, review opportunities for the provision of primary education to children of irregular migrants and basic health care to foreigners lacking regular status (extending beyond emergency care)</p>	<p>By the end of 2020</p>	<p>228,000</p>	<p>MoHSP</p>	<p>M0FE Mol</p>	<p>Legal changes, if necessary, undertaken granting primary education to children of irregular migrants and basic health care to foreigners lacking regular status</p>	<p>Number of foreigners/ children benefiting from primary education and basic health care every year</p>
		<p>b. Increase access to public services for foreign residents by providing them with information (websites, mobile apps, leaflets, consultative points at relevant state offices) on eligibility, scope of entitlements, necessary documentation, etc. in languages they speak</p>	<p>2019-2022</p>	<p>2,000,000</p>	<p>ADISA</p>	<p>All line Ministries responsible for the implementation of this Action Plan</p>	<p>Access to public services for foreign residents in Albania increased through information sharing</p>	<p>Number of foreign residents in Albania who receive information annually on public services through ADISA counters</p>

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year								
		No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
							Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
		<p>c. Train medical doctors, nurses and hospital and health-care personnel so as to improve services to foreigners and migrant workers in the country by better understanding their respective health risks and health social determinants as well as their culture's impact on health and illnesses</p> <p>D3.3 Design and implement dedicated integration programmes</p> <p>a. Commission an in-depth assessment of integration conditions and barriers as well as patterns of use of existing services by interviewing foreigners residing in Albania to reveal the need to design dedicated integration programmes</p>	2019-2022	800,000	MoHSP	WHO	Doctors, nurses and hospital and health-care personnel trained to improve service provision to foreigners and migrant workers in the country	No of medical doctors, nurses and hospital and health-care personnel trained on service delivery to foreigners and migrant workers in the country		
		<p>b. Through inter-agency consultations, design programmes targeting the needs of vulnerable categories of foreigners, and monitor the demand for certain services</p>	By the end of 2020	1,500,000	Mol	MoHSP MoEYS MTE MC IOM MFE MEFA Ombudsman	In-depth assessment of the integration of foreigners residing in Albania undertaken, and specific recommendations identified and shared with other stakeholders so as to design dedicated integration programmes	Roadmap for establishment of pilot and permanent programmes on integration compiled and implemented		
			2021-2022	6,000,000	MoHSP	All line Ministries responsible for the implementation of this Action Plan	Pilot programmes designed addressing the needs of vulnerable groups of foreign citizens in Albania; they are regularly monitored	Number of pilot initiatives implemented to enhance the integration of vulnerable groups of foreigners in Albania; number of migrants benefiting		

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year						
No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
					Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
								every year from the programmes
		c. Based on the results of the monitoring work, establish permanent dedicated integration programmes and modify them according to changing demand	2021 -2022	1,140,000	Mol	All line Ministries responsible for the implementation of this Action Plan	Permanent dedicated integration programmes for foreign citizens residing in Albania established and monitored	Number of permanent reintegration programmes for foreigners designed; size of the budget allocated annually
D4	Provide durable legal solutions for immigrants	D4.1 Facilitate acquisition of long-term residence and make the status durable a. Continually align the long-term residence permit procedure with the EU acquis	By the end of 2020	190,000	Mol	Moj	Periodic reports on the necessary changes in the long-term residence permit procedure aligning national legislation with the EU acquis	Number of amendments adopted to the Law on Aliens incorporating EU acquis norms in the long-term residence permit procedure
		b. Notify applicants in writing on the grounds for refusal and of the appeal procedure	By the end of 2020	760,000	Mol		Standard written notifications on the grounds for the refusal of the application and information on the appeal procedure for long-term residence prepared and used	Number of standard written notifications on refusal and number of appeal procedures for long-term residence permit
		c. Targeting applicants of long-term residence, put together information materials that clearly interpret the requirements (in particular: the continuous residence period and language proficiency) and describe the procedure for long-term residence	By the end of 2020	300,000	Mol		Info materials on requirements for long-term residence prepared and disseminated	Number of info materials on requirements for long-term residence disseminated every year

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year								
		No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
							Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
		<p>d. Ensure that the principle of family life and interests of the child are considered when reviewing cases of cancellation/termination of the long-term residence status. Except in cases of genuine threat to public order and national security, provide opportunities for re-application</p> <p>D4.2 Provide a clear path toward citizenship</p> <p>a. Set standard deadlines for the duration of the naturalisation procedure and introduce obligatory notification of the applicant when the President's decision cannot be given within the standard defined period</p>	By the end of 2020	760,000	Mol		Reduction in number of expulsions; increase in number of voluntary returns	Number of cases of expulsion and re-application following departure		
		<p>b. Notify the applicants in writing of the outcome of the review by the Ministry of Interior and of the President's decision, stipulating grounds for refusal</p>	2019-2022	3,040,000	Mol		Standard deadlines for the duration of the naturalisation procedure and relevant notifications set and applied	Number of immigrants who apply for naturalisation annually		
		<p>c. Targeting non-Albanians applying for citizenship, draft information materials that clearly set out and interpret the requirements, in particular the continuous residence period and language proficiency, and describe the procedure</p>	By the end of 2020	912,000	Mol		Written notification procedure on refusal of Albanian citizenship established and applied	Number of applicants notified in writing on the grounds for refusal of Albanian citizenship		
			By the end of 2020	300,000	Mol		Information materials targeting applicants for Albanian citizenship disseminated to inform on requirements and procedure	Number of information materials to applicants for Albanian citizenship disseminated		

Specific Objective D: Promote and protect migrants' rights and their integration		Outcome Indicator/s: % increase among migrant population who demonstrate awareness of their rights and seek enforcement of legislation; number of cases of violations against foreign workers detected and investigated by state bodies; number of migrants and their family members acquiring long-term resident status and citizenship each year								
		No.	Sub-objective	Actions to be taken	Timeline	Financial resources in ALL	Responsible Units		Outputs and Indicators	
							Lead Agency	Together with	Outputs	Indicators
			<p>D4.3 Guarantee the legal status of family members</p> <p>a. In line with the Convention on the Rights of Migrants and Their Family Members, amend the Law on Aliens to list the rights of family members of the legally resident foreigners and affirm the principle of their equal status</p>	By the end of 2020	760,000	Mol	MoFE MEFA MoHSP IOM	Changes to the Law on Aliens undertaken to list the rights of family members of the legally resident foreigners and affirm the principle of their equal status	Legal amendments approved by Parliament	
			<p>b. Guarantee the right of family members to obtain independent residence permits when conditions are met</p>	By the end of 2020	304,000	Mol		Legislative change, formulating the right explicitly	Statistics of the family members applying for independent permits in case of death or divorce	
			<p>c. In the interpretation of Article 34 of the Law on Aliens, consider the renewal of the residence permit issued for family reunification in case of divorce, in case children are involved, and in case the removal of the foreigner from the country would render him/her unable to have a family life with the children</p>	2019-2022	760,000	Mol		Renewal of permission of stay for family reunification in case of divorce, with children involved, in interpretation of the Law on Aliens	Statistics of the procedures under Art. 34 of the Law on Aliens	
			<p>d. Introduce a fast-track procedure to deal with work permit applications placed by holders of family reunification residence permits</p>	2020	228,000	MoFE		A fast-track procedure work permit applications placed by holders of family reunification residence permits is established	Number of work permit applications from holders of family unification processed through fast-track procedures annually	