

2025



UNITED NATIONS
SERBIA



RESULTS REPORT



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As the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Serbia concludes implementation of the Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, we reflect on a year marked by steady partnerships, reform efforts and a complex national and global environment. Serbia has maintained its commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and its European Union (EU) pathway, while the United Nations (UN) continues to be a solid partner to the Government and the people of Serbia for advancing towards these objectives.

Throughout 2025, the UNCT collectively supported progress on the green transition, human development and institutional strengthening. Notable results were obtained in climate policy, expansion of people-centred health and social services, and further modernization of public administration and digital service delivery.

Across these areas, our joint work continued to prioritize policy coherence, institutional capacity and inclusive access to services, guided by the principle of Leave No One Behind.

Particular attention was given to strengthening systems that protect the most vulnerable. Continued efforts in early childhood development, disability inclusion, gender equality and migration and refugee management



Foreword by the UN Resident Coordinator

contributed to more responsive and equitable public services. At the same time, investments in environmental governance, disaster preparedness and climate resilience supported Serbia's transition towards a more sustainable and risk-informed development pathway.

The year also underscored the importance of anticipatory and integrated approaches. The UN has accompanied inter-institutional coordination as a means for delivering better public policies and services, in, e.g., agricultural systems, gender equality and climate change. It has supported local level authorities to respond to the direct needs of the population, connecting national policies to local action. And it has renewed its call for human rights for all, in the social, economic and civic spheres. Applying foresight tools, we have enhanced our collective understanding of emerging trends that may shape Serbia's development trajectory towards 2030.

A key milestone was the Government's endorsement of the Cooperation Framework 2026–2030. This shared strategic vision reaffirms the added value of the UN development system in supporting Serbia's national priorities and EU accession process. Looking ahead, the UN will continue to deepen its focus on innovation, digital transformation, social cohesion and climate resilience, while further strengthening partnerships across government, local authorities, civil society and the private sector.

I am pleased to present the UN Serbia Annual Results Report 2025 and extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Serbia, our donors and all partners for their continued collaboration and trust. Building on the progress achieved, the UN remains committed to supporting the country in its path towards development that is sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

Resident Coordinator
Matilde Mordt

United Nations Country Team in Serbia

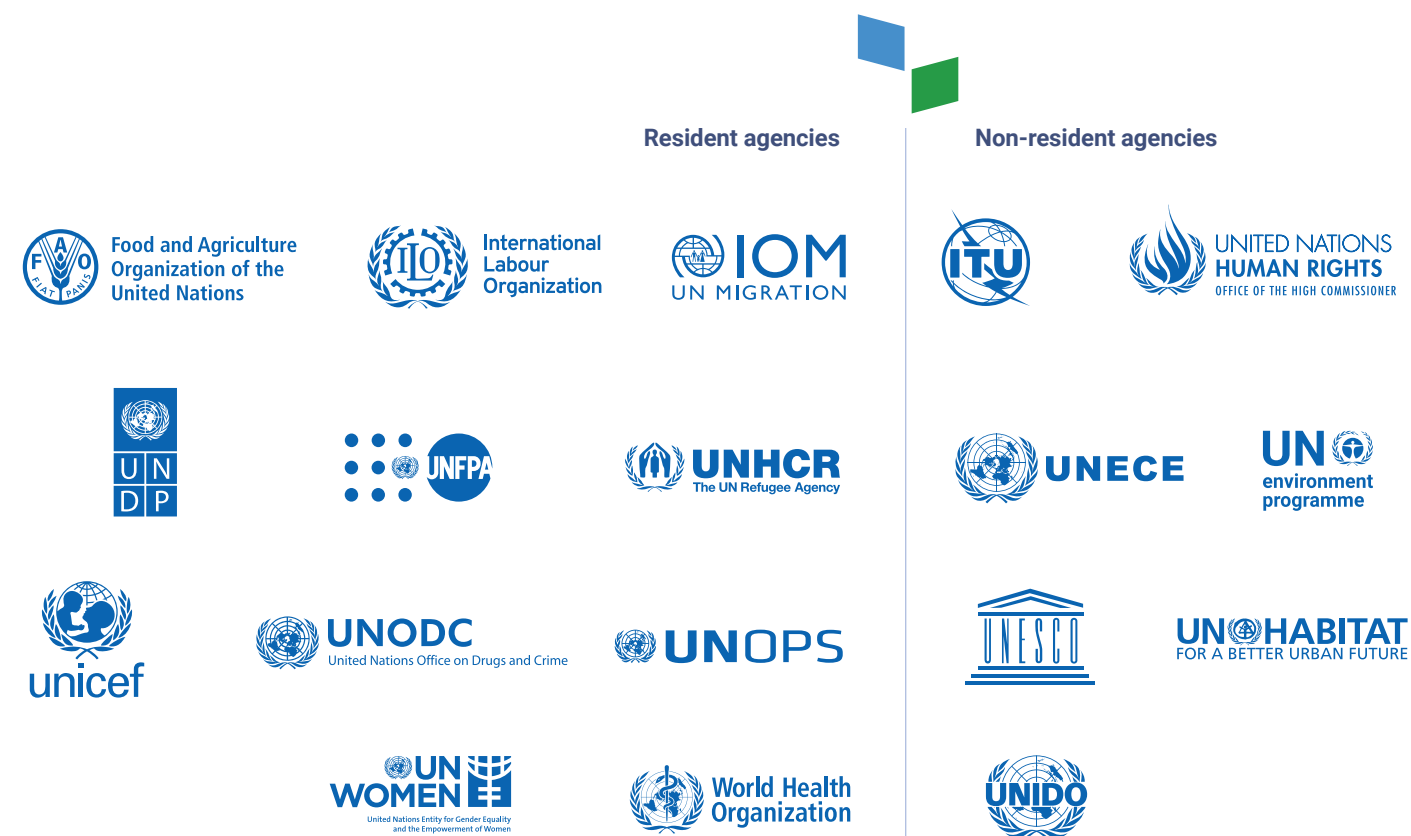
Under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF) 2021–2025, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Serbia comprises 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes. Of these, 12 operate in the country, while eight provide support as non-resident agencies.

Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), in 2025, 18¹ of the 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes contributed to implementation of the Joint Work Plans, operationalizing delivery in the final year of the UN's overarching strategic framework in the country. Oversight was provided by the Steering Committee co-chaired by the RC and the Government, represented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of European Integration.

Working in close partnership with government and a broad range of stakeholders, the UNCT remains

committed to advancing green and inclusive development, reducing inequalities, improving well-being, strengthening social equity and unlocking human potential. Through strengthened mutual accountability and trust, the UN continues to support Serbia's sustainable development pathway, in alignment with Agenda 2030 and the country's EU accession priorities.

In 2025, the UNCT, together with government partners and a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, academia and development partners, completed nationwide consultations to inform the development of the CF 2026–2030. The new Framework was subsequently endorsed by the government, reaffirming the added value of the UN development system in supporting the country's sustainable development and EU accession priorities.



¹ Participation reflects agencies reporting programmatic activities under the Joint Work Plans in 2025.



Key development partners of the UN in Serbia

The UN system in Serbia works closely with a wide range of development partners, including the government, the private sector, CSOs, academic institutions, think tanks, religious communities, the media and donor governments, development agencies, international organizations, and international financial institutions (IFIs).

The UNCT extends its sincere gratitude to all donors and financial contributors who supported our initiatives in 2025, through both financial and in-kind contributions. We also express our strong appreciation to our implementing partners for their active engagement and steadfast commitment to delivering results for people in Serbia.

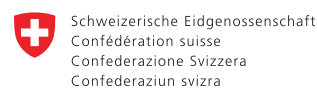
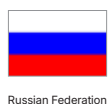


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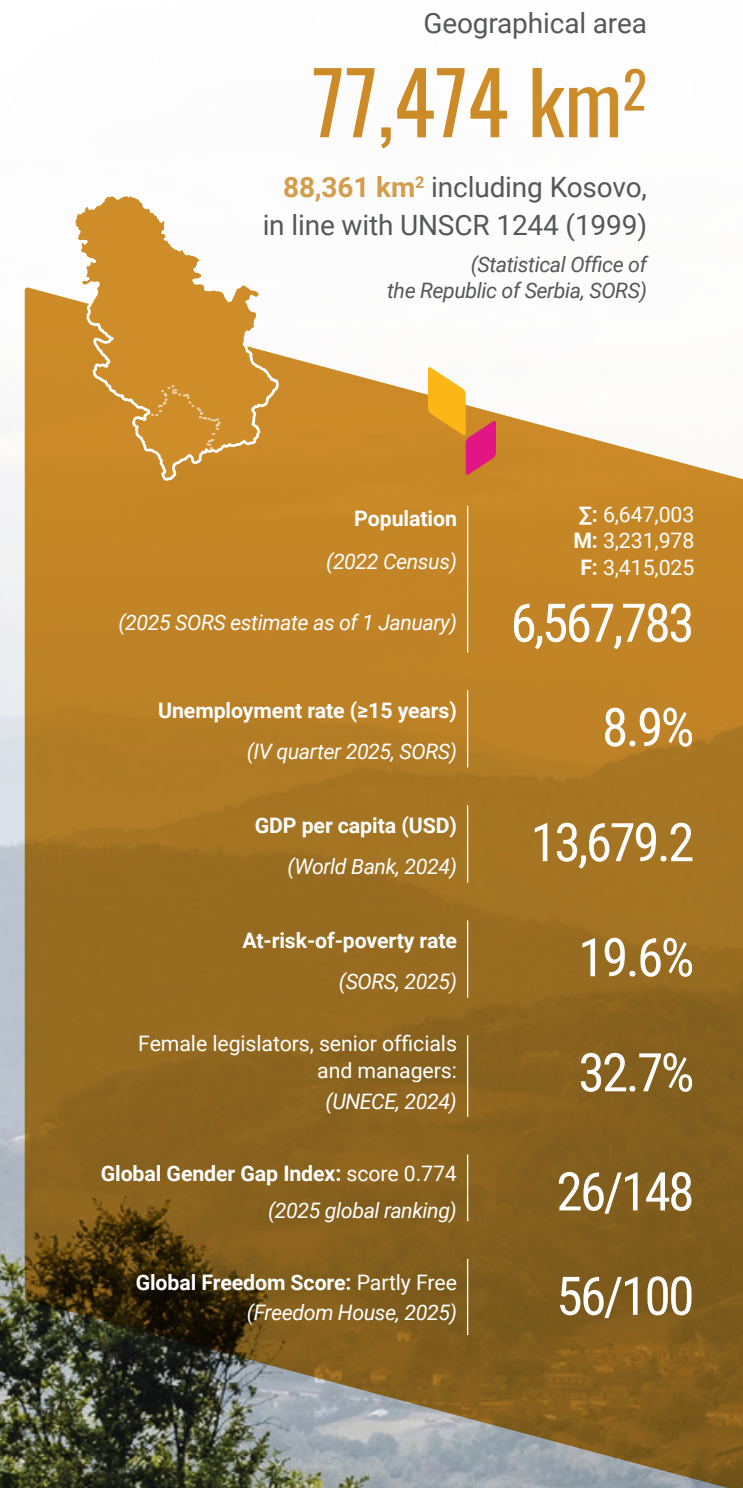
Key developments in Serbia and regional context

In 2025, Serbia advanced in several aspects of the 2030 Agenda, notably in renewable energy deployment, climate-related fiscal reforms and measures addressing cost-of-living pressures, such as increases in pensions and minimum wages.

Serbia ranked 33rd with a score of 78 in the 2025 Sustainable Development Solutions Network SDG Index, indicating continued progress but with implementation gaps remaining across several goals. It also engaged actively in global norm-setting, endorsing the Sevilla Commitment at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development and was among the signatories of the Doha Political Declaration at the World Social Summit, aligning with global commitments on social protection and inclusion. Domestically, Serbia strengthened its statistical systems for SDG monitoring.

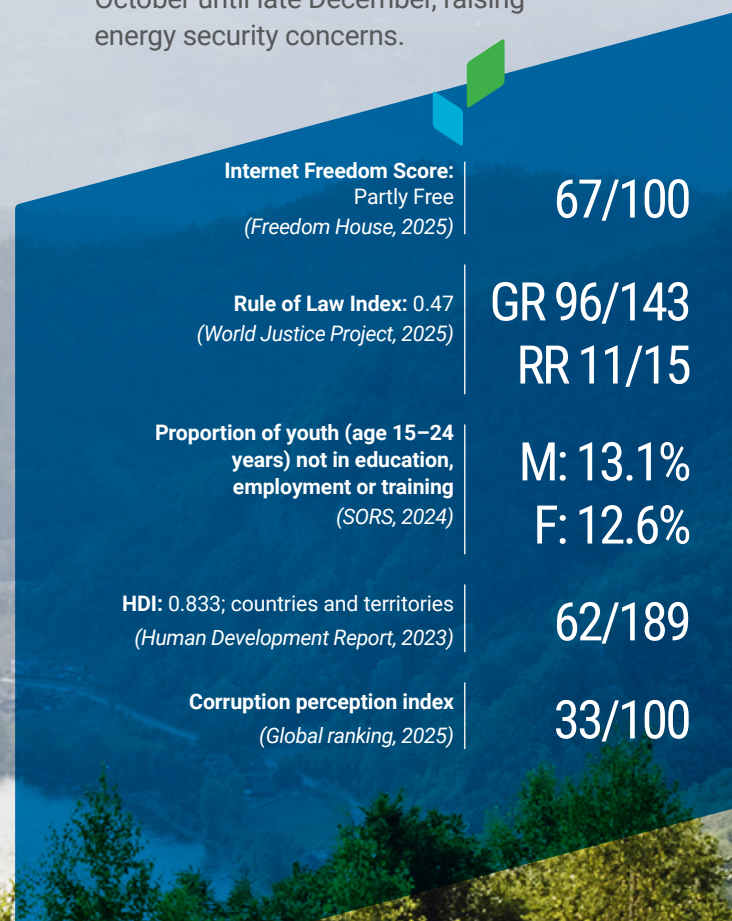
Political transition slowed the progress of reforms, however. Following months of large-scale protests, the government resigned in January 2025, and a new cabinet took office in April with a focus on continuity and stabilization. Soon after the formation of the new government, Parliament approved new procedures for preparation of Serbia's Development Plan, though drafting of this overarching strategy did not progress. In the absence of a development plan, priorities were shaped by the Reform Agenda, which sets out benchmarks for the EU accession process, and the Leap into the Future—Serbia 2027 investment programme.

Preparations for Expo continued, with an International Planning Meeting in June 2025 convening more than 150 countries, and the construction of residential and commercial buildings. CSOs called attention to *lex specialis* procedures and the importance of transparency and safeguards in public procurement.



The green transition gained momentum in 2025. A second energy auction allocated fully wind and solar quotas at competitive prices, indicating sustained investor interest in the renewable energy sector, while additional capacity deployment and early steps in storage development strengthened the transition pipeline. Environmental governance advanced in the field of air quality and waste management, alongside efforts to remediate illegal landfills. A Just Energy Transition Plan until 2030 was adopted, the state-owned power utility published its Decarbonization Plan, outlining a pathway toward a gradual phase-down of coal use by 2050, and two climate-related fiscal instruments were approved in December for entry into force in 2026.

Regionally, the country narrowed its convergence with the EU, receiving EUR 111 million in pre-financing under the Western Balkans Growth Plan, while the first EUR 56.5 million performance-based tranche related to the 2024–2025 reform cycle was approved in early 2026. Admission to the Single Euro Payments Area is expected to reduce transaction costs, while joining the EU4Health programme will enable Serbia to access additional funding. Trade integration moved forward with entry into force of the United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Yet external pressures intensified: the United States introduced tariffs of more than 35% on key exports and imposed sanctions on national oil company NIS that came into full effect in October until late December, raising energy security concerns.



Together with declining Foreign Direct Investment inflows and weaker agricultural production, these external pressures weighed on the country's growth dynamics.

Serbia's long-standing EU commitment notwithstanding, it did not participate in the December EU–Western Balkans Summit for the first time in over a decade, reflecting sensitivities concerning the pace of accession negotiations, including postponement of the opening of Cluster 3. Key macroeconomic indicators nonetheless improved, with inflation substantially reduced. The launch of the Portfolio of Sustainable Investment Projects, along with expansion of credit lines and blended finance aimed at small and medium enterprises (SMEs), encouraged sustainable private sector investment.

Human rights monitoring intensified during the year, against a backdrop of shrinking civic space and media freedoms, limited space for consultations in policy development, targeting of activists and repression of protests, according to reports by international and domestic monitoring bodies. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights conducted a two-day official visit in May, urging the rebuilding of trust in public institutions, while the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights undertook a visit in October and emphasized the need to strengthen institutional capacities for implementation and enforcement.

Efforts to leave no one behind continued, notably through an extraordinary increase in the minimum wage and the ongoing piloting of the Youth Guarantee to support youth employability and school-to-work transition. A decline in the at-risk-of-poverty rate signalled progress towards shared prosperity even as vulnerable groups continued to face persistent barriers. By promoting the take up of the voluntary Equality Code by business, employers were encouraged to adopt more gender sensitive and inclusive workplace practices. The burden of noncommunicable diseases remained high, with limited progress in the promotion of healthier lifestyles.



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

2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results in 2025 (Summary)

Serbia's development priorities are aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the strategic objective of EU membership, building on the strong synergies between these two processes. The national vision for sustainable development continues to be articulated through a range of sectoral strategies. Consideration of a comprehensive National Development Plan, envisaged as an overarching sustainable development framework, remains part of the broader strategic landscape.

In this context, the UNCT in Serbia prioritized support to the government to advance the sustainable development and EU accession agenda across the three CF priorities (Table 1): (1) Green economy and climate change; (2) Well-being, social equity and human capital; and (3) Rule of law, human rights and gender equality (GE). These efforts aim to foster a more resilient economy and a cohesive, inclusive society.

Clean energy transition and climate action gained strong policy and investment momentum in 2025. Serbia adopted its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), committing to a 40.1% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, alongside the National Adaptation Plan, which defines 25 priority climate measures across key sectors. Air quality governance was significantly strengthened through adoption of the new Law on Air Quality and further alignment with the EU *acquis*. Large-scale wastewater and sewerage investments advanced in more than 20 municipalities, while energy efficiency renovations of central government buildings progressed, delivering measurable energy savings and emissions reductions. Green investments were further scaled through blended finance mechanisms



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under the Green Agenda framework, enabling implementation of bankable decarbonization, circular economy and nature-based solutions projects. Progress was also made in biodiversity governance and wetland restoration planning, aligning national targets with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Community resilience was reinforced through upgraded national firefighting capacities, expanded climate-smart agriculture programmes and strengthened local environmental governance, contributing to greener growth and improved preparedness for climate risks.

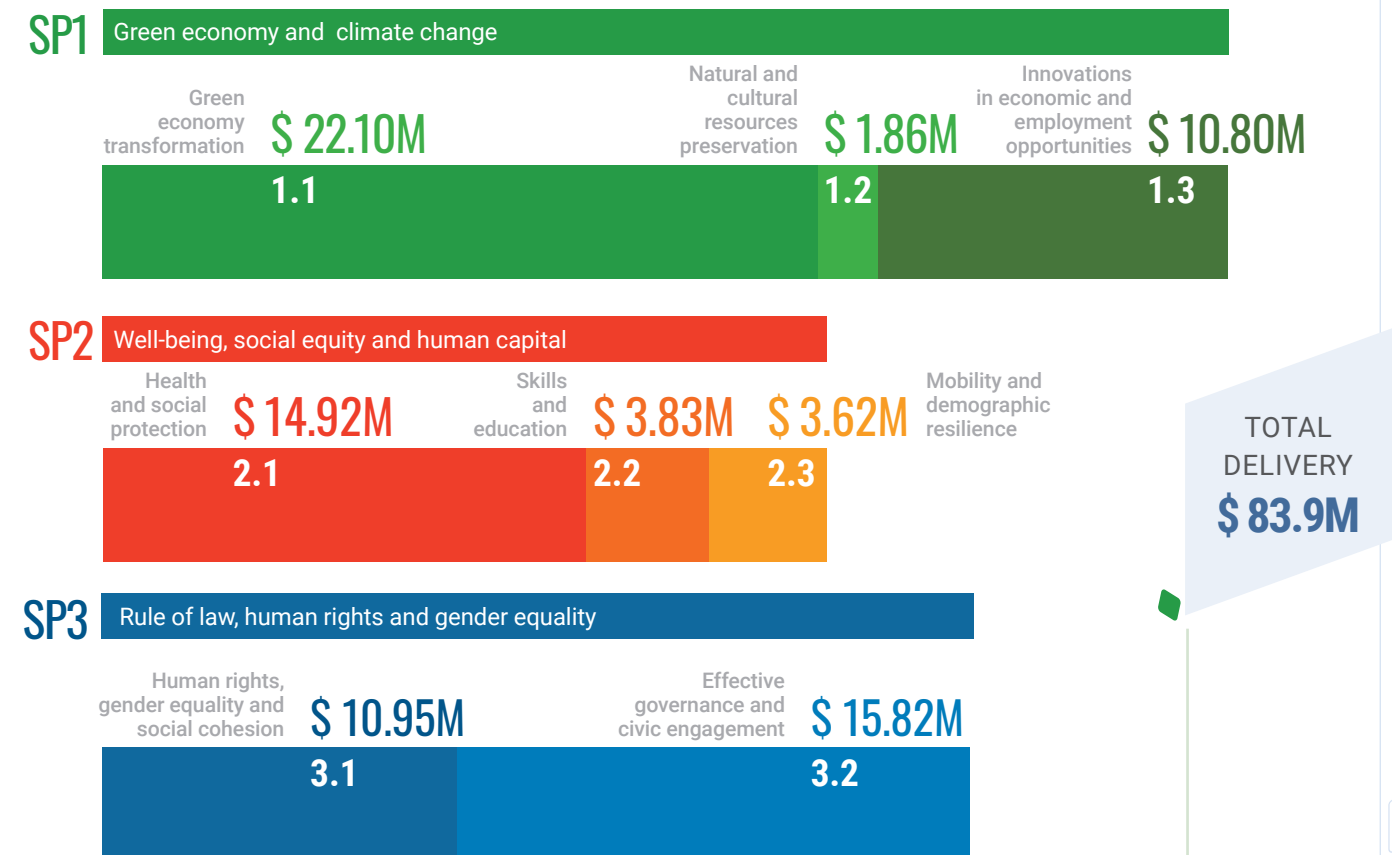
Major gains were achieved in strengthening human capital and reinforcing health and social protection systems. Health sector reforms improved workforce planning, maternal and child health services and equitable access to care. Serbia adopted Clinical Guidelines for Physiological Vaginal Childbirth, while continued investments in neonatal care contributed to reductions in neonatal mortality. The first Health Labour Market Analysis established a foundation for strategic health workforce planning and improved coordination of health policies. Early childhood intervention services expanded nationwide, supported by strengthened home visiting and parenting programmes, reaching more than 111,000 caregivers and improving early identification of developmental risks. Social protection reforms accelerated deinstitutionalization and expanded family-based care, while the government adopted the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities (2025–2030), marking an important step towards more inclusive service delivery. Responses to gender-based violence (GBV) were strengthened

through a joint UN programme supporting improved institutional risk assessment, expanded survivor services and integration of accredited training into the national medical education system. Progress was also achieved in strengthening human capital through expanded early childhood education and inclusive learning systems, while local initiatives improved migration governance and community cohesion.

Important progress was made in advancing the rule of law, human rights and accountable governance. Serbia strengthened its legislative and policy framework through progress with the new Juvenile Justice Law, development of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation, adoption of the Law on Information Security and alignment of criminal legislation with international standards, reinforcing harmonization with EU standards. The public administration and service delivery continued to modernize through the Digital Service Design Hub, strengthened Single Administrative Points and AI-

enabled service solutions, improving accessibility and efficiency for citizens and businesses, including expansion to local self-governments (LSGs). Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) expanded across 132 institutions, while national oversight and anti-corruption capacities were reinforced through support to the State Audit Institution and the review process of the UN Convention against Corruption. Migration and border management systems were further strengthened through improved registration, legal aid and protection services, alongside enhanced regional cooperation to combat trafficking, migrant smuggling and illicit firearms. Public health emergency preparedness was reinforced through strengthened laboratory systems and enhanced local emergency response capacities. Together, these efforts strengthened institutional accountability, protection of vulnerable groups and alignment with EU and other international standards, contributing to increased public trust in governance systems.

Table 1. Cooperation Framework – Strategic Priorities, Outcomes, Definitions and Expenditures, 2025



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

2.2.1. UNCT Contributions and Key Achievements in 2025

Structured around three strategic priorities and eight interlinked, mutually reinforcing outcomes, the Cooperation Framework provides an integrated framework for addressing Serbia's key development priorities. It supports progress towards the 2030 Agenda and contributes to a greener, healthier and more inclusive future for all, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Multiyear funding overview (2021-2025)



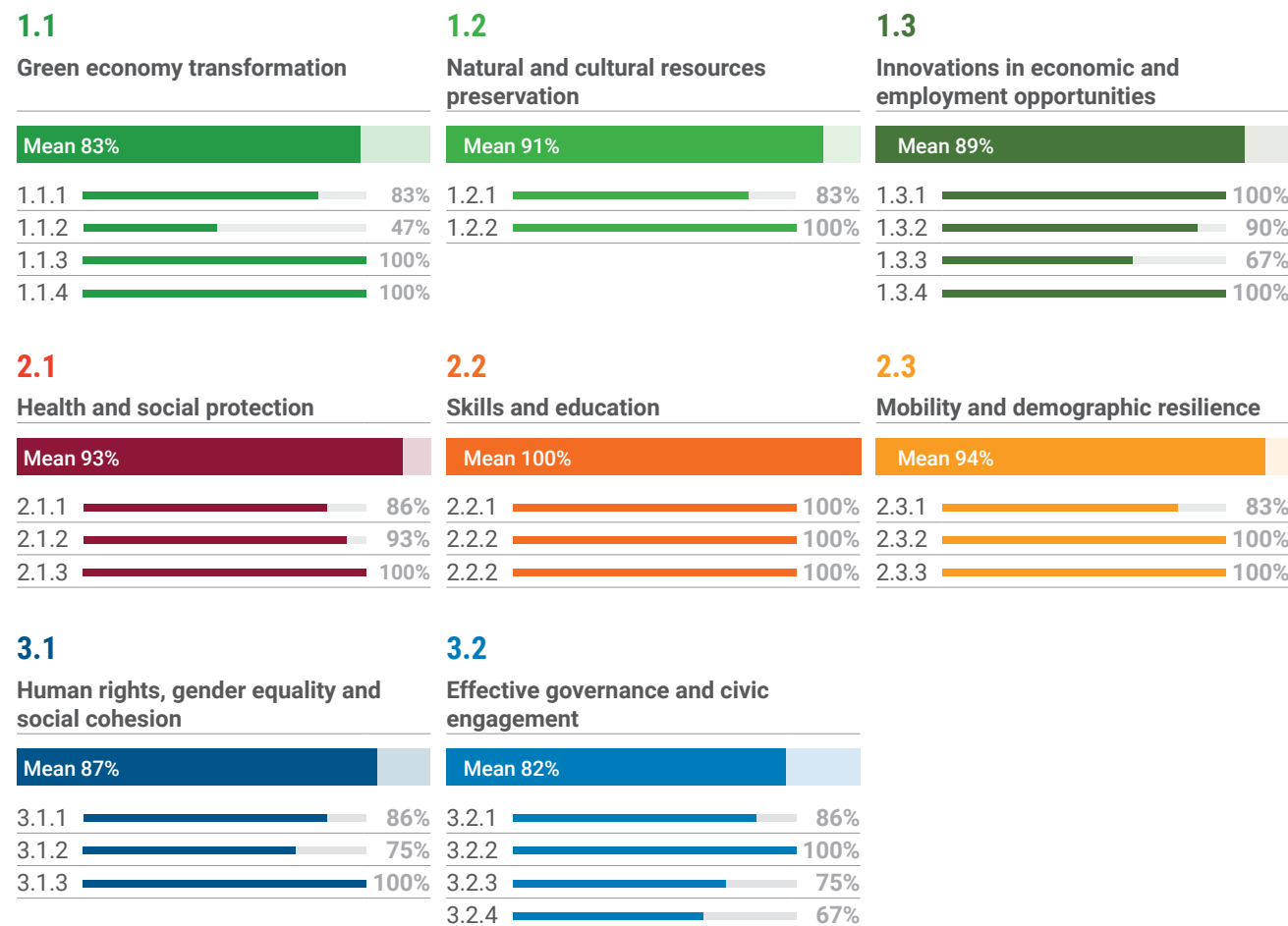
Total required resources	Total available resources	Funding coverage
\$ 365M	\$ 464M	127%

Yearly funding overview in 2025



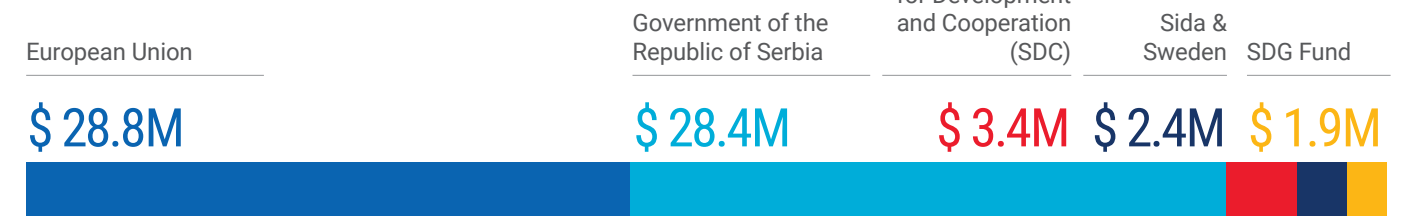
Total available resources	Total delivery	Delivery rate
\$ 104.1M	\$ 83.9M	80.5%

Achievement of Cooperation Framework indicators in 2025 Output Results Framework²



² Progress of each output indicator is assessed by the responsible UN agency according to the progress made against the annual targets, using the following traffic light and 4-point scoring system: Green (3 points), planned results achieved; Yellow (2 points), minor elements still to be completed; Orange (1 point), limited progress achieved; Red (0 points), no measurable progress. Percentage achievement is calculated from the total score per output.

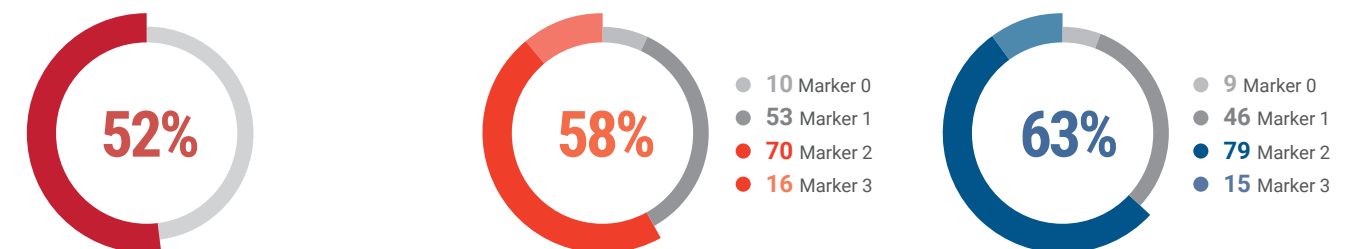
Five top contributing partners to advance the SDGs in 2025



UN Country Team contribution to SDGs in 2025

SDG	Contribution	Value
No Poverty	0.11%	\$ 0.09M
Zero Hunger	0.32%	\$ 0.27M
Good Health and Well-being	13.07%	\$ 10.96M
Quality Education	6.15%	\$ 5.16M
Gender Equality	2.33%	\$ 1.96M
Clean Water and Sanitation	0.00%	\$ 0.00M
Affordable and Clean Energy	8.00%	\$ 6.70M
Decent Jobs and Economic Growth	3.31%	\$ 2.78M
Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	8.23%	\$ 6.90M
Reduced Inequalities	6.47%	\$ 5.42M
Sustainable Cities and Communities	0.77%	\$ 0.65M
Responsible Consumption and Production	0.98%	\$ 0.82M
Climate Action	15.27%	\$ 12.81M
Life below Water	0.00%	\$ 0.00M
Life on Land	1.52%	\$ 1.28M
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	33.25%	\$ 27.89M
Partnerships for the Goals	0.22%	\$ 0.19M

UNCT contribution to gender equality and human rights



▲ Graph 1: 52% of CF Outcome indicators assess changes in GEWE.

▲ Graph 2: 58% of CF sub-outputs contribute significantly to GEWE (Markers 2 and 3).

▲ Graph 3: 63% of CF sub-outputs contribute significantly to the realisation of human rights (Markers 2 and 3).





2 ZERO HUNGER



ENDING HUNGER AND STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS

- 2.1** Cross-sectoral policies, strategies and investment programmes to eradicate hunger and food insecurity are developed.
- 2.2** 38 rural organizations and beneficiaries in agrifood systems improved productivity.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



QUALITY HEALTH, SOCIAL AND PROTECTION SERVICES

- 3.1** Mental health legislation and regulation of health service organization were strengthened.
- 3.2** The UN continues to support health system reform, disease prevention and stronger primary healthcare in Serbia.
- 3.3** >136,000 users of the Bebbo app for early childhood development. 1.04 million people reached through a national youth mental health campaign. 10,000 women screened through a pilot programme for organized cervical cancer screening.

This section provides a snapshot of the results achieved in 2025 at the country level for 28/64 indicators of the UNSDG Global Output Indicator Framework.



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4 QUALITY EDUCATION



STRONG, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- 4.1** Serbia scored 4 out of 7 for inclusivity and gender equitability in the education system and learning opportunities (scale, 0-7).
- 4.3** In 2025, 300 Roma women and girls strengthened sexual and reproductive health literacy and awareness of GBV, while women with disabilities enhanced their knowledge and advocacy capacities, and 246 older persons improved digital literacy and access to online services.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



GENDER EQUALITY

- 5.1** Government extended implementation of the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2021–2025) until 2027.
- 5.2** 8 measures were implemented to address discriminatory gender and social norms, stereotypes and practices, including child marriage. Council, and Coordination Body, for GE were supported to address discriminatory gender and social norms.
- 5.4** Mechanisms are available to advance women and girls' decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive healthcare.
- 5.7** At least 12,000 children and adults had access to safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian, development or protection personnel.
- 5.8**

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



DECENT AND RIGHTS-BASED WORK

- 8.1** Legal framework incorporating international human rights norms and standards at work is developed.
- 8.2** Since 2021, >800 private sector entities (including MSMEs) improved performance and income generation.
- 8.3** Workers and employees organizations have increased capacity to promote employment and decent work.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

- 9.2** 40 new private sector entities (including MSMEs) introduced innovative business practices to mainstream environmental sustainability.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



REDUCED INEQUALITIES

- 10.2** >20 new national and local development policies were supported to integrate migration and recognize migrants as contributors to sustainable development.
- 10.3** At least 2,000 internally displaced, migrants and refugees benefited from integrated and targeted interventions, including on strengthening social cohesion.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



SUSTAINABLE CITIES

- 11.1** National urban policies for sustainable cities and communities were formulated and resourced with additional 4 municipalities piloting VNR.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



CLIMATE ACTION AND RISK REDUCTION

- 13.1** 3 policy measures for implementation of NDCs under Paris Agreement are implemented.
- 13.3** Consultations and preparatory work towards the adoption of a new National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy continued.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



RULE OF LAW AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- 16.1** Quality, free and universal birth registration services are available and vital statistics are high.
- 16.2** Serbia's National Mechanism for Reporting supports coordinated reporting and implementation of international recommendations. Civil society participation is temporarily affected by broader societal developments.
- 16.3** 2 concrete initiatives were implemented to end all forms of violence, promote the rule of law, and ensure equal access to justice.
- 16.4** UN-supported processes remained inclusive of rights-holders and civil society. In 2025, some CSOs temporarily suspended engagement with government-led processes.
- 16.5** In 2025, UN assisted 450 people to access justice.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



MONITORING THE SDGS

- 17.2** Progress was made with GRB despite limited alignment of the national budgeting system with SDGs.
- 17.3** Monitoring and analysis of progress towards the SDGs remain high with UN and SORS jointly publishing 10 years of SDGs in Serbia in 2025.



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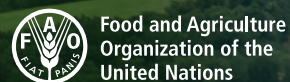
Achieving results for Serbia: Detailed analysis by Strategic Priority

2.2.2

PRIORITY 1

Green economy and climate change

CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES



Radenka Stanković

Farmer, Gola Glava (near Valjevo)



In my village, I run a dairy farm with 30 milking cows and 10 heifers. But in recent years, one challenge has defined our work – drought. There is less and less rain each year. Without enough water, we cannot grow sufficient feed, sustain production, or even secure drinking water for our animals. Sometimes, we transport water from kilometres away just to keep the farm running.

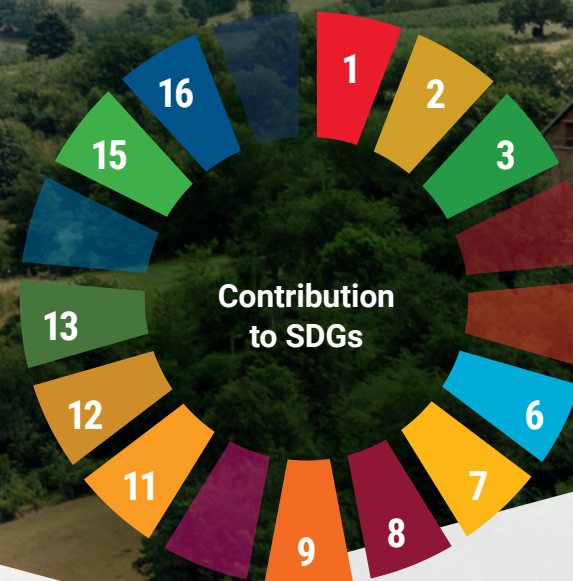
The training organized by the Valjevo Advisory Service helped us understand practical measures – such as subsoiling and improved soil management – that strengthen soil and water retention. In a changing climate, this knowledge is not optional; it is essential for the survival of farms like mine.

Beneficiary Story



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Under the EU-funded project “Strengthening Disaster Resilience in Agriculture” (2021–2026), 318 training sessions were delivered, reaching some 1,600 farmers across Serbia, 25% of whom were women (3,752 recorded participants). The initiative supports farmers in adapting to climate risks and building long-term agricultural resilience.



Contribution to SDGs

Budget: USD 45,992,314
Delivery: USD 34,741,967

Contribution to EU Accession Policy Area Clusters

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

Contribution to EU Negotiations Chapters

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

OUTCOME 1.1 Green economy transformation

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



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28 government buildings undergoing renovation covering **208,000 m²**

86,300 kWh saved annually in **1 public building**



1,827 youth gained green & digital skills | **8,722** youth reached (2021–2025)

1,000 youth supported with funding & mentorship

60+ across **40** community projects municipalities

Output 1.1.1

Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency

In 2025, the UN supported Serbia's transition towards a more inclusive and climate-responsive energy sector. At the institutional level, improvements in the energy performance of public infrastructure were supported. Renovation of 28 central government buildings resulted in reduced energy consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions and decreased operational costs, demonstrating alignment of climate mitigation with responsible public spending and preservation of cultural heritage. These improvements contribute to cleaner air and improved working environments in public institutions (UNDP).

Environmental sustainability standards were integrated into reception and asylum facilities. A structured model for upgrading existing centres and designing new facilities introduced energy-efficient and environmentally responsible solutions, improving living conditions for migrants and asylum seekers while reducing the environmental impact. This tiered approach is enabling authorities to align progressively facilities with advanced sustainability standards, contributing to realization of the right to adequate housing and a healthy environment (IOM).

Through evidence-based analysis of energy efficiency measures, structural barriers limiting women's access to resources, participation in decision making and equitable benefits from public investments were identified and addressed. As a result, the Ministry of Energy strengthened its capacity to integrate gender-



100 vulnerable households with children supported

across **10** municipalities

responsive planning into energy and water management policy frameworks, promoting more equitable distribution of opportunities and benefits in the sector (UN Women).

Adolescents and young people, particularly those at risk of exclusion, improved their access to green and digital skills linked to emerging labour market opportunities. In 2025, 1,827 young people strengthened competences for greener livelihoods, while 1,000 youth-led initiatives generated local climate solutions across 40 municipalities, expanding youth participation in environmental governance and economic inclusion. Socially vulnerable households with children strengthened their knowledge of energy-saving practices and received practical support to reduce energy costs, contributing to improved living conditions and reduced exposure to energy poverty. Evidence generated through public finance analysis further supported more equitable allocation of resources for energy efficiency and climate adaptation, helping ensure that public investments better respond to the needs of children and vulnerable households (UNICEF).

Output 1.1.2

Clean Air

At the policy level, support was provided for drafting and advancing the new Law on Air Quality, adopted in 2025.

Development of the Environmental Protection Strategy with its Action Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment progressed to the final stage of interministerial consultations. Support to LSGs through open calls enabled the implementation of targeted air protection measures. National experts strengthened their capacity to apply Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change methodologies, improve data quality assurance and transparency procedures (UNDP).

5,000+ youth engaged across **8** municipalities

24,900+ youth reached through the U-Report | **12%** with disabilities



Air quality governance was strengthened through UN support to legislative alignment, institutional capacity and local implementation. Legal and technical assistance supported revision of the Directive-Specific Implementation Plan for the EU air quality *acquis*, ensuring alignment with Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC. Complementary analysis of the new Directive 2024/2881 examined implications for stricter limit values and expanded monitoring architecture. The analysis also reviewed requirements related to air quality plans, roadmaps for 2026–2029, provisions on public participation, access to justice and revised implementation deadlines, informing steps towards full transposition and alignment (UNEP).

Capacity to monitor chemical exposure was strengthened for 37 national experts through human biomonitoring training and technical exchanges organized during the Second Meeting of the Environment and Health Process Partnership in Belgrade. As a result, national experts improved their capacity to design and interpret biomonitoring surveys and communicate findings relevant for vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women and older persons (WHO).

Adolescents and young people were enabled to contribute to local decision-making processes, including municipal frameworks addressing environmental issues. Through U-Report and structured consultations, more than 24,000 young people participated in shaping local strategies and programmes, supported by trained peer volunteers. Youth consultations were conducted across multiple



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40 experts trained in IPCC methodologies

10 air protection projects supported

7 completed 3 ongoing

municipalities during the programme cycle, contributing to more structured participation mechanisms (UNICEF).

Output 1.1.3 Climate Change and Infrastructure

At the national policy level, support was provided for development and adoption of the National Adaptation Plan, aligned with national climate policies and the Paris Agreement, including Action Plans defining responsibilities and timelines across key sectors, with 25 priority climate adaptation measures identified. Serbia also adopted its updated NDC, setting a 40.1% greenhouse gas emission reduction target by 2023 compared to 1990 levels, aligned with the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2030–2050. Implementation of the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency project began with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), strengthening national systems for transparency and reporting under the Paris Agreement. Investments exceeded several hundred million USD in total, strengthening local service delivery, public health, environmental protection and long-term community

25 climate adaptation measures identified under the National Adaptation Plan

40.1% GHG reduction by 2035 vs 1990

550+ individuals trained from the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency project **51% women**



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20+ municipalities upgraded wastewater & sewage systems

300+ km sewerage networks supported

19 construction supervision assignments

6 technical designs prepared or verified

sustainability. In 2025 alone, UN-supported initiatives catalysed additional investment in decarbonization, allocating around USD 600,000 to scale up solutions and mobilizing approximately USD 4.7 million in follow-on investments. Climate resilience and environmental infrastructure were strengthened through UN support to wastewater systems, climate policy development and low-carbon transition measures. In partnership with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, wastewater and sewage infrastructure projects progressed in more than 20 municipalities, including wastewater treatment plants, main collectors, pumping stations and extensive sewerage networks serving both small settlements and larger urban areas. During 2025, more than 300 km of sewerage networks were supported. Construction supervision and technical design verification ensured quality implementation, with completion of several works. These investments contributed to improved sanitation, reduced pollution of rivers and groundwater and strengthened municipal service delivery capacities (UNDP).

Support was provided to advance implementation of stage II of the hydrochlorofluorocarbon phase-out management plan and facilitate transition to climate-friendly refrigerants. Sector assessments identified key training, infrastructure and regulatory gaps, informing preparation of a national training centre and procurement of modern servicing and refrigerant recovery equipment.

Approval of the third tranche of the phase-out management plan enabled continued financial and technical assistance. Additional assessments examined regulatory and safety gaps related to hydrofluorocarbon use, informing proposals to strengthen legislation, certification systems and monitoring mechanisms (UNIDO).

Output 1.1.4 Community Resilience

UN support strengthened environmental remediation, local governance implementation, climate-smart agriculture and disaster preparedness.

Through the Joint Programme 'Local Governance for People and Nature', LSGs transitioned from developing of environmental policy documents to implementing locally led environmental projects in partnership with CSOs. In total, 18 locally led environmental projects were implemented across participating municipalities, including operationalization of previously developed local documents and delivery of environmental initiatives benefiting local communities (UNOPS).

Some 77 technical officers and policymakers within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management strengthened their capacity in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate-smart agriculture. Technical manuals covering key agricultural production sectors were developed to support the application of sustainable practices. Support was provided to update rulebooks on subsidies for climate-resilient agricultural investments, contribute to drafting of the Strategy for the Green Agenda, improve the national methodology for Disaster and Loss Assessment in Agriculture, and update IPARD III Measure 4 on agri-environment-climate and organic farming. Advisory capacity was expanded through agricultural extension stations, demonstration centres and vocational education on climate change in agriculture (FAO).

A Site Characterization Plan was developed for the abandoned Koža Leather and Textile Processing Factory in Zaječar to guide investigation and potential remediation of the contaminated site located near the Timok River (UNEP).

The country's emergency response capacity was strengthened through provision of upgraded equipment to the Ministry of Interior's Sector for Emergency Management, including two firefighting trucks, one all-terrain vehicle and one special-purpose cargo vehicle. Awareness-raising campaigns and emergency training reached communities in several cities, and technical guidance

80+ local policy documents developed across **20** local governments

400+ agricultural advisors engaged in capacity building

1,600 participants from **16 municipalities** engaged in DRR and climate resilience was disseminated to support policy and local preparedness measures (UNDP).

→ 41 climate-smart farmer schools

→ 434 demonstration plots

318 trainings

12 vocational schools adopted climate change curriculum

300 students reached

5 mini-projects supported

600+ citizens reached via awareness & emergency training

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OUTCOME 1.2 Natural and cultural resources are managed in a sustainable way

Output 1.2.1 Cultural and Historical Resources

Access to financial resources for the culture and creativity sector was strengthened through an inclusive and participatory approach, enabling public institutions and CSOs to advance effective cultural policies, regional cooperation, artist mobility, circulation of creative goods and services, and heritage protection.

Authorities, including heritage professionals, law enforcement, customs and judiciary, were equipped with a Roadmap to improve security systems at cultural sites and prevent illicit trafficking of cultural property. These efforts were reinforced through dissemination of the EU–UNESCO toolkit Fighting the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property: A Toolkit for European Judiciary and Law Enforcement (UNESCO).



© Vladimir Dobretic/Pokrajinski zavod za zaštitu prirode



Output 1.2.2 Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration were strengthened through policy alignment, restoration planning and field-level interventions. National biodiversity targets were aligned with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework through the GEF-funded Early Action Support Programme. Institutional, policy and financial gap analysis, together with recommendations to strengthen biodiversity monitoring, informed preparation of the new Nature Protection Programme and related action plan, scheduled for finalization in 2026. Within the EU for the Green Agenda in Serbia framework, a prioritization tool for wetland restoration was developed and the first Wetland Restoration Action Plan was prepared for Uvac Special Nature Reserve (UNEP).

In the pilot regions of Kikinda and Dimitrovgrad, measures to reduce land degradation were implemented through afforestation, agroforestry plantations and shelterbelts. Technical brochures were developed to guide forest and land restoration activities aimed at achieving land degradation neutrality (FAO).

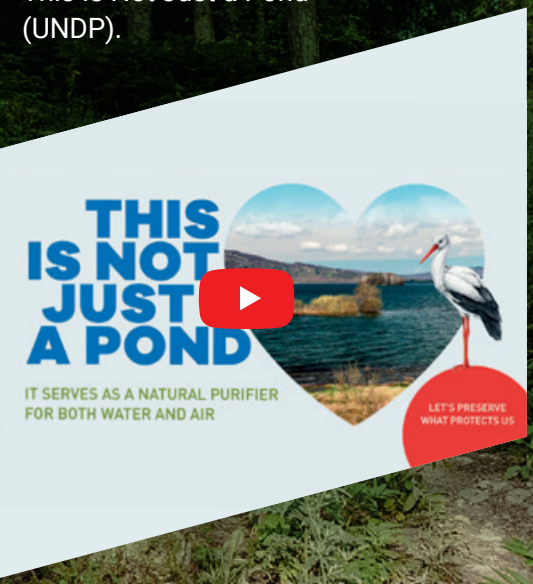


Implementation of the project Protecting and Investing in Biodiversity and Water for Enhanced Climate Resilience continued, contributing to active protection, preservation and revitalization of wetland habitats.

4 brochures
for forestry professionals & private owners developed

6 wetland solutions
implemented across protected areas

Activities included improvements in governance and planning, enhancement of biodiversity data systems and promotion of nature-based solutions. Restoration and conservation measures were implemented in several protected areas, including six innovative wetland restoration solutions across priority sites, and public awareness of the value of wetlands and biodiversity was promoted through the campaign This Is Not Just a Pond (UNDP).



OUTCOME 1.3 Equitable economic and employment opportunities are promoted through innovation



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Output 1.3.1 Local Development Strategies

Territorial governance in Serbia became more integrated, inclusive and aligned with EU Cohesion Policy principles than previously.

Twelve territorial strategies strengthened evidence-based development planning across 31 local governments, promoting functional economic areas beyond administrative boundaries. Of these, seven strategies targeted single-city urban areas, while five covered wider functional territories. Implementation of 18 integrated projects, valued at more than EUR 12 million, accelerated investments addressing shared territorial priorities across 30 municipalities, improving local service delivery, infrastructure and economic prospects. Institutional foundations for long-term territorial governance were reinforced through development of a national model for integrated and sustainable territorial development, strengthening Serbia's preparedness for EU accession and cohesion funding absorption (UNOPS).



30 local governments reached through integrated projects

12 territorial strategies

developed in line with EU Cohesion Policy principles

31 local governments

benefited from strategic development support

Output 1.3.2 Economic Transformation

Implementation of the National Food System Pathways advanced through development of a gender-responsive Roadmap for Food Systems Transformation (2025–2028) and national and subnational dialogues engaging 130 representatives from government, private sector, farmers, academia and civil society.

The Bio-district model was piloted in the Kolubara region to promote organic and regenerative agriculture, supported by development of a marketing and communication strategy, a business plan and a rulebook integrating the concept into the national legal framework. Capacity-building workshops for 200 beneficiaries (163 women) and a study visit to Italy supported knowledge exchange on sustainable territorial development (FAO, UN Women and UNEP in partnership with UNECE).



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The Ministry of Agriculture was supported in drafting the new National Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy (2025–2034), ensuring policy continuity following expiration of the previous strategy. Technical assessments and consultations with 33 stakeholders informed the next steps for advancing farmer-centred digital agricultural services and supported introduction of EU Statutory Management Requirements and Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions into the national legal framework (FAO).

More than 90 rural women and girls directly benefited from livelihood support that improved access to agricultural equipment, seeds and greenhouses, combined with study visits to neighbouring countries. The measures enabled development of sustainable women-led businesses and increased women's participation in household and community decision making. Economic inclusion was further promoted through capacity development of 65 Roma women waste pickers across 11 municipalities, strengthening their skills and opportunities for economic activation (UN Women).

In the areas of trade and transport connectivity, the smart and sustainable connectivity e-Learning platform strengthened capacity for implementation of sustainable transport and connectivity action plans. A regional seminar on trade facilitation and data sharing advanced pilot implementation of UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business standards

65 Roma women waste pickers improved their economic inclusion

→ **11 municipalities** covered

for multimodal data exchange and alignment with the EU electronic freight transport information Regulation. In-depth analysis of road accidents informed improvements to the road safety system, strengthening institutional understanding of accident patterns and informing system improvements (UNECE).

Public calls mobilized USD 6.9 million in co-financing to leverage blended green investments combining grants, equity and commercial loans. Since 2022, implementation of green projects has been enabled through co-financing mechanisms. Recommendations were provided to integrate circular economy principles into local waste management plans in additional municipalities. Support for development of the Environmental Protection Strategy and Green Agenda Action Plan, including sectoral roadmaps and strategic environmental assessments, contributed to alignment of economic transformation priorities with EU accession processes.

90+

rural women and girls improved self-reliance

20 circular economy solutions supported by female entrepreneurs

USD 6.9 million co-financing to support green transition initiatives

USD 53 million total investment

94 green projects implemented



© UNDP Serbia

Twenty innovative circular economy solutions led by female entrepreneurs were supported (UNDP).

Regional readiness for green industrial transformation increased. Consultations with business support organizations, academic institutions and SMEs identified priority needs in digitalization and circular economy adoption. Evidence-based analysis and strategic partnerships strengthened competitiveness of automotive suppliers in the Western Balkans and supported enterprise upgrading and regional cooperation (UNIDO).



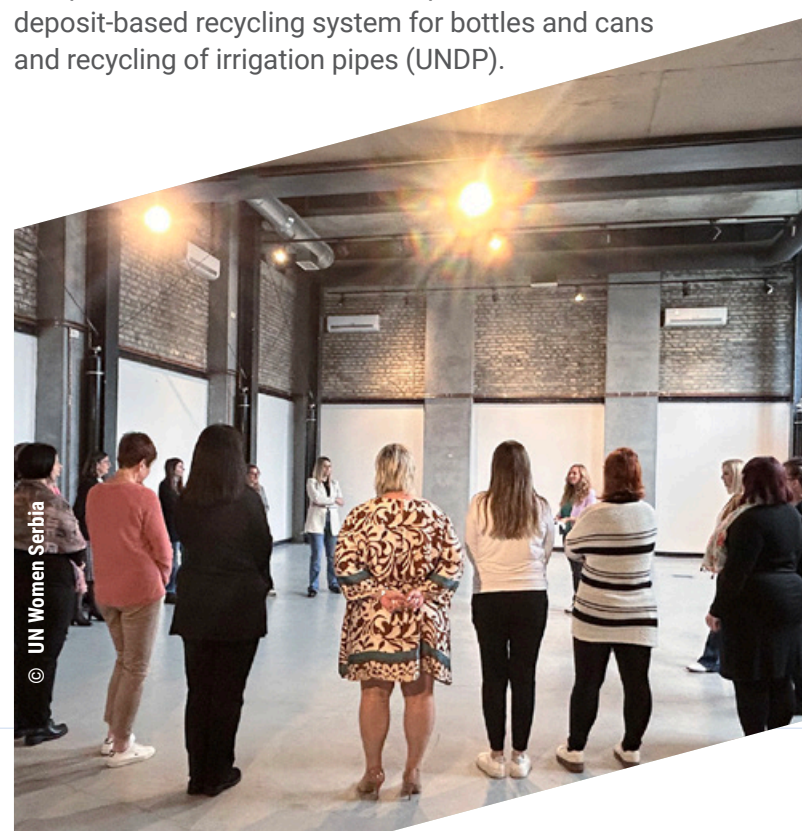
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Output 1.3.3
Science, Technology and Innovation

Public recognition of women’s leadership in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) was strengthened through strategic partnerships with the private sector, civil society and cultural institutions.

Through partnerships with the private sector, civil society and cultural institutions, GE in science was elevated as a broader societal priority. A joint event marking the Day of Gender Equality increased visibility of women scientists as role models. The partnership also supported integration of gender perspective into institutional knowledge production through development of a dedicated publication on women architects represented in national collections (UN Women).

Green economic transformation advanced through new public calls in 2025 to scale-up innovative green investments targeting public and private companies, including SMEs. The calls promoted technically and financially innovative green projects, including blended financing mechanisms and energy audits. Technical assistance, mentorship and co-financing grants were provided to projects in decarbonization, circular economy, air quality, nature and biodiversity protection, and digital and urban solutions. Notable completed innovations include implementation of a deposit-based recycling system for bottles and cans and recycling of irrigation pipes (UNDP).



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Output 1.3.4:
Decent Employment

Labour market reforms strengthened institutional preparedness and alignment with international labour standards.

Expert recommendations improved the readiness of the National Employment Service for nationwide implementation of the Youth Guarantee by 2027. A Green Employment Diagnostic report was completed and validated with tripartite partners. Draft legislation on seasonal work and the new Labour Law advanced towards EU *acquis* and international labour standards, including provisions on social dialogue and collective bargaining. Social partners strengthened their capacity for engagement in labour market reforms, supported by communication strategies for trade unions and employers’ organizations. Analytical studies on mandatory insurance against occupational injuries and improvement of occupational safety and health informed improvements to the Law on Occupational

Safety and Health, supporting its alignment with international standards (ILO).

Local economic growth and job creation advanced through development of economic infrastructure in the Šabac Northwest Free Zone, Minel zone in Čuprija, and the Mataruška Banja area. Those investments enabled operationalization of new production facilities, strengthening local investment environments, and improved service delivery resulting in the creation of 2,084 new jobs. Other municipalities secured or applied for financing to expand industrial and infrastructure capacities, strengthening foundations for sustained job creation (UNOPS).



1,512 jobs
created through
EUR 219.5 million investment

→ Šabac Northwest Free Zone
5 facilities

+ 2,084 new jobs created
via supported investments

EUR 15.5 million investment
by Feka Automotive (Čuprija)
→ **500 jobs created**

57 jobs created
through water supply reconstruction in Mataruška Banja

97 new service connections enabled

93 households
4 public institutions

PRIORITY 2

Well-being, social equity and human capital

CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES



”

Jelena Mitrović

business owner & entrepreneur

It's very important to have a community where you can rely on help and share experiences. As a small business owner, access to practical knowledge and tools makes a real difference. For small businesses, data is no longer a luxury – it is a necessity.



© UNDP Serbia/Jakov Simovic

Beneficiary Story

Better Business through Data training was delivered within the initiative **Open Data for Open Societies**, implemented by UNDP and the Office for IT and e-Government, with support from the United Kingdom. The programme promotes data-driven decision making and strengthens women's entrepreneurship.



Budget: USD 24,967,354
Delivery: USD 22,362,992

Contribution to EU Negotiations Chapters

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

Contribution to EU Accession Policy Area Clusters

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

OUTCOME 2.1

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



31
mental health professionals trained in trauma therapy

Output 2.1.1 Health and Social Protection

In 2025, UN support strengthened Serbia's health system through improvements in maternal and child health, expanded early childhood services, strengthened mental health support and enhanced health governance.

At the system level, national capacities for evidence-based health governance improved. The Ministry of Health launched Serbia's first Health Labour Market Analysis, establishing a foundation for strategic workforce planning and improved coordination among health institutions. Regulatory systems for medicines, blood products and vaccine safety were also strengthened through improved monitoring of adverse events and alignment with European

80% of districts covered by early childhood intervention services

10,000 women included in pilot HPV cervical screening and Pap tests

Legal framework strengthened for mental healthcare safeguards and rights

111,000 caregivers reached through home-visiting services

regulatory standards, contributing to safer and more reliable access to essential medicines and immunization (WHO).

Maternal and child health services advanced through strengthened clinical standards and expanded digital health tools. Serbia adopted its first Clinical Guidelines for Physiological Vaginal Childbirth, supporting more respectful and evidence-based maternity care. In addition, 10,000 women were included in a pilot programme for HPV cervical cancer screening (UNFPA).

Investments in neonatal care equipment, updated clinical guidance and specialized training for neonatal health professionals contributed to further reductions in neonatal mortality rates, which declined nationally from 3.78 per 1,000 live births in 2020 to 2.89 in 2024. Antenatal care systems were also strengthened through updated national guidance and the piloting of a digital pregnancy health record to strengthen monitoring of maternal health services. Early childhood health services expanded nationwide. Visiting nurses strengthened competences in responsive caregiving and parental support, reaching more than 111,000 caregivers, while family-centred early childhood intervention services expanded to around 80% of districts, improving early identification of developmental risks and referral pathways for nearly 9,000 children and families. The Bebbo parenting application continued expanding access to trusted information on child health and development for families nationwide (UNICEF).

Policy reforms advanced through technical support to amendments to the Law on the Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders, reinforcing safeguards and human rights protections in mental health care (WHO). Mental health systems were strengthened through enhancing capacities of professionals to deliver trauma-focused therapy for children and families affected by trauma (UNDP).

Mental health system coordination was further strengthened through support to the national governance

mechanism established under the six-ministry Memorandum of Understanding on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. As a result, 180 frontline professionals strengthened their capacity to deliver coordinated services, while 10% of municipalities implemented the Youth Minimum Service Package, contributing to more standardized local service delivery. A unified youth referral protocol improved early identification of psychological distress and more timely access to support, enabling 1,577 children and young people to access mental health and psycho-social services. Preventive outreach also expanded significantly: a national mental health awareness campaign reached over 1 million people, generating more than 3 million engagements, while the SveJeOK.rs platform recorded over 134,000 visits, exceeding its combined traffic from 2022–2024 (UNICEF).

Preventive approaches targeting children and youth also strengthened well-being and resilience. School-based life-skills programmes supported teachers and young people in developing social and emotional competences, contributing to safer learning environments (UNODC).

Output 2.1.2 Innovative Social Care Services

Local social welfare systems strengthened their capacity to provide integrated and person-centred support. Across 26 municipalities, social protection professionals strengthened their competences in delivering coordinated services to beneficiaries of financial social assistance and supporting labour-market activation of vulnerable groups. Guidance for local governments to accelerate deinstitutionalization was developed based on assessments in 13 municipalities, supporting the transition from residential institutions to community-based services. Child protection reforms advanced through strengthened family-based care (UNFPA).

Recruitment campaigns supported the engagement of 154 new foster families, expanding opportunities for children without parental care to grow up in family environments. Capacity-building programmes strengthened competences of professionals and foster families, improving the quality of specialized, urgent and respite foster care (UNICEF).

Local infrastructure investments further improved access to social and community services. Improvements to education and health infrastructure expanded such

136,000+
Bebbo app downloads



4
migrant and refugee reception centers rehabilitated

154
new foster families recruited benefited from infrastructure improvements to support migrants and refugee children

20,000+ health service users
78 specialists trained

26 municipalities strengthened social protection services



access in several municipalities. Investments improved learning conditions for pupils in Medveđa and strengthened health services in Raška, benefiting more than 20,000 patients, while the Sunce Day Care Centre in Lebane obtained an operating licence enabling extension of services for children with disabilities (UNOPS).

Protection systems for migrants were strengthened through improved coordination among local institutions. A total of 78 social protection professionals strengthened their capacity to support migrants and unaccompanied children through specialized training and strengthened collaboration among municipalities, social work centres and CSOs. Living conditions in four reception centres were improved through rehabilitation works and strengthened information and referral mechanisms (IOM).



Output 2.1.3
Gender-sensitive Services for Victims of Violence and Abuse

UN support strengthened prevention systems and survivor-centred responses to violence against women and children through coordinated interventions under the joint programme implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women. National and local institutions strengthened their capacity to prevent and respond to domestic violence and GBV. Multi-agency cooperation mechanisms were strengthened across the police, judiciary and social protection systems, enabling more coordinated responses to high-risk cases. In total, 261 police officers and 269 professionals from police, prosecution and social welfare institutions strengthened their capacity to conduct risk assessments and implement coordinated protection measures, improving the timeliness and quality of institutional responses to domestic violence. Transparency and accountability of institutional responses also improved. A national monitoring system for court-imposed urgent protection measures was established, enabling systematic tracking and analysis of domestic violence cases and strengthening oversight of institutional responses nationwide (UNDP).

Rural women and girls strengthened their capacity to recognize, prevent and respond to GBV. Fifteen CSOs in remote areas strengthened their capacity to serve as referral points for gender-based discrimination and violence, improving coordination with institutions and strengthening the quality of support services. A national media campaign reached over 400,000 people, including remote rural communities, contributing to increased public awareness of discrimination and violence affecting rural women. Survivor-centred services were expanded through strengthened multisectoral support systems. Five Centres for Victims of Sexual Violence continued providing integrated medical, forensic and psycho-social assistance to survivors, ensuring access to specialized services and recovery support (UN Women).

Health sector responses to GBV were strengthened through upgraded and accredited continual medical education module for health professionals, improving providers' capacity to identify violence and ensure survivor-centred referrals (UNFPA). Preventive efforts were reinforced through advocacy and policy dialogue aimed at strengthening legal and institutional

5 centres
 provided services to survivors of sexual violence



frameworks addressing violence against children, including proposed amendments to the Criminal Code and the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence addressing violence against children and child marriage (UNICEF).

261 police officers
 strengthened domestic violence risk assessment

269 professionals
 trained in multi-agency GBV response

National GBV training
 integrated into continual medical education

400,000+ people
 reached through media awareness on rural women violence

OUTCOME 2.2
Skills, education and capabilities are enhanced to ensure equitable outcomes for all

Output 2.2.1
Formal Education

Serbia's education system continued to advance towards more inclusive and equitable learning through enhanced quality of early childhood education and care, strengthened inclusive education and improved institutional capacity to support diverse learners. Access to early childhood education expanded nationwide, with pre-school coverage reaching 62.9%. Implementation of the national Years of Ascent Curriculum strengthened child-centred and inclusive teaching practices across the pre-school system. In total, nearly 23,000 professionals strengthened their competences in play-based learning and inclusive pedagogies, improving learning environments for more than 235,000 children. Inclusive education reforms strengthened support systems for children requiring additional learning assistance. More than 8,000 teachers

500 schools
 supported through inclusive education resource centres

23,000 pre-school professionals applied inclusive teaching practices

235,000 children benefited from improved early learning

8,000 teachers strengthened inclusive education skills

4,598 education professionals equipped with emergency response skills, strengthening education system resilience



and education professionals strengthened their capacity to deliver inclusive teaching approaches, improving learning conditions for the benefit of more than 125,000 students. Resource centres supporting inclusive education expanded access to assistive technologies and specialized pedagogical support for nearly 500 schools supporting children with disabilities (UNICEF).

Education system resilience and crisis preparedness were strengthened by equipping 4,598 education professionals, through 134 targeted capacity building sessions, with emergency response and support skills, fostering sustainable protection mechanisms in schools (UNFPA).

Targeted support to schools hosting migrant children improved learning conditions through grants for extracurricular activities, Serbian language learning and school infrastructure improvements (IOM).

Together, the above interventions strengthened the quality, inclusiveness and resilience of Serbia's education system, while expanding learning opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds.

Output 2.2.2
Informal Education and Life Skills

Skills development and non-formal learning opportunities expanded for young people and vulnerable groups, strengthening pathways from education to employment and community participation.

Youth programmes strengthened practical, digital and entrepreneurial skills, supporting youth engagement in local communities. Innovation, problem-solving and digital skills were strengthened in 1,827 young people, while youth-led community projects reached more than 10,000 young people across 30 municipalities. An outreach and activation model for NEET Roma youth in rural areas was developed, connecting youth workers and local services to identify, engage and link young people to learning opportunities (UNICEF).

Transition from education to employment was strengthened through modernisation of labour market systems. A national skills taxonomy aligned with the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations Framework strengthened job matching, career guidance and labour market planning. Dual education expanded cooperation between vocational schools and employers, creating opportunities for work-based learning. Programmes for informal waste pickers and their families strengthened life skills, labour rights awareness, violence prevention and gender equality, and access to employment, education and social protection (UNDP, UNFPA). Targeted initiatives improved access to learning for vulnerable groups, and digital literacy programmes enabled older persons to access online public services and participate more actively in community life (UNFPA).

1,827 youth
 strengthened skills through youth programmes

60 youth-led initiatives
 implemented, boosting local engagement

10,000+ youth
 reached through innovation programmes

National skills taxonomy
 introduced for employment services

246 older persons
 gained digital skills



Output 2.2.3
Women and Girls' Empowerment

Efforts to advance GE strengthened women's economic participation, workplace equality and access to health information and services for women and girls, particularly those from marginalized groups.

Evidence-based analysis identified structural barriers limiting women's participation in the labour market, including unpaid care responsibilities and skills mismatches. The findings informed development of a gender-responsive employment activation model designed to support long-term unemployed. Opportunities for women's participation in high-growth sectors were strengthened through mentoring and networking initiatives supporting women professionals in science and technology fields. These efforts contributed to establishment of the Women in Information and Communication Technology Network in Serbia (UNDP). Evidence on the gender gap in the ICT sector in Serbia was generated and disseminated, helping partners better understand barriers affecting girls' participation, including stereotypes, unequal access to learning opportunities and weaker transitions into ICT-related education and career pathways (UNICEF).

Workplace equality also advanced through the introduction of gender-responsive family policies in ten companies, improving work-life balance and working conditions for 2,256 employees while promoting gender-responsive employment practices aligned with European standards. Targeted initiatives supported women from marginalized groups in accessing information and services. In all, 300 Roma women and girls strengthened health literacy and awareness of available health services through peer education activities, while women with disabilities improved knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and advocacy skills through community initiatives (UNFPA).



2,256 employees

benefited from gender-responsive family policies

300 Roma women strengthened health literacy

Women in ICT Network established

OUTCOME 2.3
Mobility and demographic transition become vectors for positive change and prosperity

Output 2.3.1
Depopulation and Local Governance

National and local responses to demographic change were strengthened through improved policy frameworks, data and community-based initiatives supporting families, youth participation and local development planning. The development of Serbia's Demographic Development Strategy (2026–2036) advanced through evidence-based policy analysis and population projections, strengthening the government's capacity to address long-term demographic trends and support family well-being. A high-level Council for Family and Demography was established to strengthen coordination of population development and family policies (UNFPA).

Local initiatives strengthened the capacities of municipalities to respond to demographic challenges through participatory approaches to community development. The People Make Cities initiative supported local governments and communities in designing more child- and family-friendly public spaces. The Parenthood Caravan reached families in 40 municipalities, providing information and services supporting parenting and family well-being (UNDP).

Youth participation in local governance expanded. Through digital consultations and surveys conducted via U-Report, more than 5,000 young people contributed to discussions on local policies and youth priorities, providing municipalities with insights for development of youth strategies and local initiatives (UNICEF).

5,000+ youth engaged in local policy consultations



40 municipalities reached by Parenthood Caravan

16 Migration Local Action Plans developed or updated

Migration governance at the local level was strengthened through development and revision of 16 Local Action Plans on Migration, improving the municipal capacity to address migration-related challenges and support integration of migrants and returnees (IOM).

Output 2.3.2
Mobility of Skills and Knowledge

Understanding of migration and labour mobility trends were strengthened through improved analytical capacities and new mechanisms linking skills, labour markets and diaspora communities.

New analytical research based on census data generated evidence into labour migration patterns and demographic change, strengthening the basis for targeted labour market and population policies (UNFPA).

Circular migration initiatives strengthened institutional mechanisms supporting returning migrants and diaspora engagement. A model for bilateral social security agreements was developed, while the Talent Ecosystem digital job-matching platform connecting Serbian professionals abroad with domestic employment opportunities was sustained by national institutions (UNDP).

Migration governance capacities were strengthened through development of new training curricula on migration and public health, as well as return and reintegration (IOM).



Migration analysis undertaken using census data



Talent ecosystem job-matching platform sustained nationally

Migration governance training curricula introduced

Output 2.3.3
Community Cohesion

Initiatives supporting refugees, migrants and host communities strengthened social cohesion and expanded opportunities for participation in local economic and community life.

Livelihood and integration programmes supported refugees and asylum seekers in accessing employment opportunities, financial services and vocational training, strengthening their economic self-reliance and participation in local communities. This was further enhanced through interventions improving access to tertiary education, career guidance and easier access to financial services (UNHCR).

Community-based initiatives strengthened interaction between migrants and host communities. A total of 36 cultural, educational and community events created spaces for dialogue and exchange while supporting integration of migrant and refugee families in municipalities across the country (UNHCR, IOM).

Support for migrant children and youth strengthened their participation in education and community life. Targeted learning support and psycho-social activities improved well-being and school engagement among migrant students (IOM).

Other initiatives further strengthened community cohesion. Resource centres for intergenerational cooperation promoted engagement between young people and older persons while supporting community activities that encourage active ageing and social inclusion (UNFPA).

36 community

cohesion events organized across Serbia

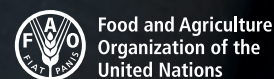


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PRIORITY 3

Rule of Law, Human Rights and Gender Equality

CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES



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Nikola Starčević

User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI) design team, Office for IT and e-Government

Redesigning a public service is more than a visual update – it is about learning from every user interaction and removing barriers along the way. Each iteration brings us closer to services that citizens can use with confidence, without worrying about making mistakes.

Beneficiary Story

Through support to citizen-centred digital transformation, the UN works with partners in Serbia to strengthen trust and improve accessibility to public services. Capacity-building efforts have helped embed user-experience approaches into institutional practice, enabling closer collaboration between public institutions and citizens in designing more inclusive and user-friendly digital services:



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Contribution to SDGs

Budget: USD 33,182,855
Delivery: USD 26,774,822

Contribution to EU Accession Policy Area Clusters

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

Contribution to EU Negotiations Chapters

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

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OUTCOME 3.1

Human rights, gender equality and social cohesion

**Output 3.1.1
Policymaking and Implementation**

The rule of law, human rights, GE and inclusive governance all advanced through UN–government cooperation, with strengthened legislation, institutional capacity building and evidence-based policymaking in line with international and EU standards. Integrated interventions across justice, anti-corruption, anti-trafficking, asylum, disability inclusion, digital governance and public finance improved policy coherence, service delivery and institutional accountability.

Juvenile justice reform advanced through support for drafting the new Juvenile Justice Law and amendments to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, alongside strengthened capacities of justice and social welfare professionals, including some 140 judges and 40 social workers trained in child-sensitive justice and child participation in proceedings (UNICEF).

Alignment of criminal legislation with international standards progressed through technical assistance on firearms control provisions and establishment of a multi-institutional framework for financial

Law on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking adopted

Multi-institutional framework
established for financial investigations of criminal assets

300+ stakeholders

140 judges and 40 social workers
trained in child rights in family law

42 procurements
enhanced rule of law institutions under **EU Chapters 23 and 24**

enhanced capacities in refugee law and statelessness prevention



investigations to trace and confiscate criminal assets (UNODC).

Protection systems were reinforced through adoption of a dedicated anti-trafficking law introducing enforceable victims' rights and standardized identification procedures, while more than 300 stakeholders strengthened capacities in refugee law, international protection standards and statelessness prevention (IOM, UNHCR).

Operational capacities of rule-of-law institutions were strengthened through targeted investments and digitalization supporting implementation of reforms under EU Chapters 23 and 24 (UNOPS).

Inclusive governance reforms advanced. Reforms included amendments to the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code, and the application of the LNOB principle in policymaking (OHCHR).



124 GRB
programmes and **480+**
gender objectives integrated

→ 132 institutions
211 civil servants trained

~300 stakeholders engaged in digital service reform

10 municipalities launched digital maturity support

Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities (2025–2030) adopted

→ draft Law on Central Register of Persons with Disabilities developed

The Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities (2025–2030) and its Action Plan was developed and adopted, strengthening the policy framework for disability inclusion. A draft law on the Central Register of Persons with Disabilities was developed to support improved data and evidence-based policymaking (UNFPA, OHCHR).

GRB expanded across 132 public institutions, integrating 124 programmes and more than 480 gender-related objectives (UN Women).

Digital governance reforms strengthened public service delivery through engagement of nearly 300 stakeholders in user-centred service design and support to digital maturity improvements in ten municipalities (UNDP).

Youth engagement in policymaking was enhanced through the Youth Well-being Index and consultations informing the development of the Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2028 (UNFPA).

**Output 3.1.2
Oversight and Independent Bodies**

The UN supported Serbia in reinforcing oversight, accountability and independent monitoring through civil society, Parliament and UN human rights mechanisms. Child-rights accountability advanced via integrated support to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and parliamentary oversight. CSOs from the Network of Organizations for Children contributed to EU Child Rights Guarantee consultations and a child-friendly online platform enabled children to track

implementation of recommendations. Parliamentary oversight was strengthened with a dedicated child-rights public finance tool and publication of the manual Budgeting Focused on Children's Rights, guiding MPs in child-responsive budgeting, programme oversight and public fund management for children (UNICEF).

Public finance oversight progressed through Serbia's second cycle UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) review and State Audit Institution capacity building. Evidence-based recommendations guided anti-corruption reforms, 30 auditors were trained in GRB and a regional conference engaged 100 participants sharing GRB best practices (UNODC, UN Women).

Alignment with the EU *acquis* and fundamental rights safeguards in border control advanced via an assessment of Serbia's capacity to establish an independent border monitoring mechanism. Conducted with the Ombudsperson's Office, authorities and civil society, the assessment identified gaps including unlawful returns, limited asylum access and weak procedural safeguards.



Government Council for Monitoring and Reporting to NMRF re-established

Second Cycle Review Executive Summary under UN Convention against Corruption published

30 State Auditors trained in GRB

100 participants engaged in regional conference



Child-friendly online monitoring platform launched

for active child participation in CRC Tracking

Child-rights Public Finance tool and Budgeting Focused on Children's Rights manual introduced for parliamentary oversight



Embedding the mechanism in the Ombudsperson's mandate ensures independence, full information access, unannounced monitoring and EU-compliant follow-up (IOM).

The Government Council for Monitoring and Reporting to UN Human Rights Mechanisms (NMRF) was re-established, enhancing coordination, reporting and follow-up on international obligations (OHCHR).

Output 3.1.3
Strengthening of Home Affairs

Serbia strengthened migration management, border governance, counter-trafficking systems and small arms and light weapons (SALW) control through reinforced capacities, legal frameworks and regional cooperation. Law enforcement and judicial actors improved investigation and prosecution of trafficking, migrant smuggling and firearms-related crimes, including digital cases, supported by institutionalized training and evidence-based tools (UNODC).

SALW control advanced through legislative alignment, adoption of the National SALW Programme and Action Plan aligned with the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap 2030, and strengthened investigative and forensic capacities (UNDP SEESAC, UNODC).

Access to asylum, statelessness prevention and civil registration were expanded, safeguarding rights and informing national policy.

A total of 359 asylum seekers received legal aid, 154 new arrivals received counselling, 207 persons obtained civil status or ID, and 110 registered a birth or confirmed nationality, reaching 1,214 through outreach (UNHCR).

National counter-trafficking mechanisms were reinforced through 25 multi-sectoral trainings on victim identification, referral and support, in line with the National Programme for Combating Human Trafficking and its Action Plan. Border management was modernized through upgraded equipment, EU-aligned data interoperability, registration of undocumented migrants (rising from 4% to 35%) and deployment of the Schengen Bus for reinforced state border control (IOM).

Migration governance was strengthened with 29 certified trainers delivering national modules, 109 end-users trained in Local Action Plan monitoring software and new curricula on diaspora engagement, social cohesion and economic impacts of migration (UNDP).

Gender-responsive and victim-centred approaches were reinforced through regional research into firearm misuse, domestic violence and victim support, while the Judicial Academy integrated the Firearms in the Courtroom training module into its continuous professional development (UNODC, UNDP SEESAC).

359 asylum seekers received legal aid

154 new arrivals received counselling

207 obtained civil status or ID

110 registered a birth or confirmed nationality

29 certified trainers delivered national migration modules with

109 end-users trained in Local Action Plan software

1,214 reached with statelessness support

25 trainings strengthened capacity to identify, refer and support human trafficking victims

Undocumented migrant registration increased from **4% to 35%**

Schengen Bus deployed to strengthen border control.

National SALW Programme and Action Plan adopted, aligned with Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap 2030

Firearms in the Courtroom training module for judges and prosecutors introduced



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OUTCOME 3.2
Effective governance and civic engagement

Output 3.2.1
SDGs and Governance Systems

Serbia advanced inclusive, accountable, SDG-aligned governance through strengthened administration, financing and data-driven policymaking. High level advocacy with the EU and World Bank addressed social protection and poverty reduction policies through a multidimensional lens. Green, child-sensitive public finance in ten municipalities was addressed under the SDG Fund-finances joint programme, guiding investments in energy efficiency, poverty reduction and children's human capital. High-level advocacy positioned child poverty in macro-fiscal debates (UNICEF).

Local governance was strengthened through 22 LSGs improving transparency and participatory decision making. Supported by 16 ToT practitioners, 16 LSGs adopted 203 policies across youth, social protection, environment, anti-corruption and citizen services, 30 expanded e-Governance and open data, and 20 enhanced environmental governance, engaging some 13,000 youth, aligning with the Agenda 2030 and Green Agenda. Inter-municipal cooperation for social protection was institutionalized (UNOPS).

874 children reached through digital literacy programmes

203 local policies and normative acts adopted in

16 LSGs for youth, social protection, environment, transparency and anti-corruption

10 municipalities assessed for green and child-sensitive Public Finance Management

30 LSGs strengthened e-Governance expanding e-Services and open data access

43 women entrepreneurs trained in digital and data literacy through Better Business through Data



16 ToT practitioners supported knowledge exchange initiatives

LSGs enhanced environmental governance engaging 13,000 youth

7th MICS survey captured clean fuel, mental health and food insecurity indicators, including Roma settlements



The 7th Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) survey, including Roma settlements, captured clean fuel use, mental health, food insecurity and water quality, was linked to census and electricity datasets (UNICEF, UNFPA).

Public services were modernised via Clicking Together with Citizens (UNICEF, UNDP, FAO), piloting AI applications for the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA) and Ministry of Demography and Family Welfare. Digital inclusion and economic empowerment initiatives resulted in 43 women gaining digital data literacy (Better Business through Data), and 874 children enhancing coding skills via Petlja on the Road, online winter school (rasPETLJAvanje), Summer School of Programming, and the STE(A)M Challenge (UNDP).

Output 3.2.2
Civic Engagement

Civic engagement in Serbia was strengthened through institutionalised opportunities for youth and civil society to shape policymaking, community action and public service innovation. Structured pathways for adolescents and youth to influence policymaking, volunteer and advance climate action were expanded. Through U-Report, more than 5,000 adolescents in 12 municipalities contributed to local strategies, while 60 youth advanced community climate initiatives via EcoGen. Volunteering was institutionalised through Local Volunteering Services (LVS) in three cities and the national volunteering platform was strengthened, adding 629 volunteers to reach 3,248 active participants. The model's national relevance was reinforced when the Ministry of Tourism and Youth recognized LVS as a good practice and launched a public call for USD500,000 to support nationwide expansion, marking a shift from project-based support to sustainable public financing (UNICEF).

Eighteen municipal-civil society partnerships were supported, delivering environmental initiatives benefiting 993 citizens (UNOPS).

The SME Innovation and Technology Financing Initiative (SITFI) helped more than 30 municipalities identify 70 technology-driven service challenges, submitting 11 to the Innovation Fund, and set the foundation for a GovTech mechanism to link local governments with innovators.



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5,000+
adolescents in
12 municipalities
shaped local strategies via
U-Report

629 new
volunteers
added to National
Volunteering Platform

60 youth
advanced
community climate
initiatives through
EcoGen

3,248 active
participants
in total

18 local
partnerships
delivered environmental
initiatives benefiting
993 citizens

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70
innovation
challenges identified in
30+
municipalities
with
11 proposals
submitted to
the Innovation Fund

5 municipalities
partnered with
ReLOaD3
with
25 staff trained
in participatory
governance and
EU-aligned
practices

ReLOaD3 advanced participatory democracy and EU-aligned governance by partnering with five municipalities and training 25 local staff (UNDP).

Civil society engagement in human rights monitoring and reporting to UN Human Rights Mechanisms was reinforced and Youth Rights Talks were organized with more than 80 young participants, promoting civic action and digital rights protection (OHCHR).

Output 3.2.3
Emergency Preparedness and Response

Serbia strengthened emergency preparedness, public health and child protection systems. The Commissariat

35
microbiology
labs upgraded
to WHO Biosafety level 2/2+

76 datasets added to
Disaster Risk Register

400+ users trained
via newly introduced e-Learning platform

94 municipalities
assessed health hazards
and developed tailored
Public Health
Emergency Plans

for Refugees and Migration and MoLEVSA were supported with child-sensitive procedures, data standards and GBV and child-protection training, improving protection-oriented migration governance (UNICEF).

Thirty-five microbiology labs were upgraded to WHO Biosafety 2/2+, 15 lab developed SOPs and six emergency procedures, and the Disaster Risk Register was expanded with 76 datasets, training more than 400 users (UNDP, WHO).

Ninety-four municipalities assessed health hazards and created Public Health Emergency Plans (WHO).

Four community health events reached more than 350 participants (UNDP).



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Child protection
systems for
refugees and
migrants
refined with updated
SOPs and training
curricula

15 lab SOPs
and
6 emergency procedures developed, enhancing coordination and safety

350+ participants
reached by
4 local health events

National and regional coordination advanced emergency preparedness, informing Early Warning Systems



National and regional coordination with ministries, RATEL and private partners was enhanced, laying the groundwork for Early Warning Systems, strengthening Serbia's capacity to protect, detect and respond to emergencies across health, disaster and migration sectors (ITU).

Output 3.2.4
Regional Cooperation, Security and Trust Building

Regional cooperation was strengthened across the Western Balkans on security, rule of law, human rights and youth inclusion. Cross-border crime prevention, anti-corruption investigations and border security were enhanced through support provided to the Airport Control Unit (ACU) at Belgrade International Airport, leading to more than 1,000 inspections and 26 narcotics seizures, and delivery of training on Passenger Name Record and Advance Passenger Information systems, trafficking and criminal network disruption. The Western Balkans GlobE Network reinforced operational cooperation among anti-corruption authorities (UNODC).

Rights-based migration governance and safe returns were promoted, convening the 4th Western Balkans Task Force on Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, supporting regional dialogue, labour mobility and protection of vulnerable groups, aligned with EU Chapter 24 (IOM).

Youth inclusion was advanced through supporting more than 40 Serbian participants in nine regional Youth, Peace and Security exchanges and arts and media projects. Twelve young professionals completed media internships, producing youth-led campaigns promoting critical thinking, social inclusion and ethical journalism (UNDP, UNFPA).

Young journalists and media practitioners engaged in sustained cross-border exchange with peers from neighbouring countries through a regional conference and journalist residency, collaborating on ethical, inclusive and peace-oriented communication, becoming part of a regional peer network committed to rights-based and gender-sensitive journalism, enhancing trust, mutual understanding and professional cooperation (UNESCO).

SALW control was strengthened via regional commissions, expert networks and four Multi-Partner Trust Fund projects, advancing compliance with the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap (UNDP SEESAC).

Under the joint project Better Road Safety System Based on In-Depth Analysis of Road Accidents in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, a new crash investigation methodology was piloted, indicating a 20–30% potential reduction in severe injuries and enabling regional replication (WHO, UNECE).

1,000+ inspections conducted by Belgrade International ACU
→ including narcotics seizures

4 regional projects
and multi-agency coordination strengthened

SALW control
and compliance with the
Western Balkans Roadmap

12 young professionals

completed media internships, producing youth-led campaigns on

critical thinking and social inclusion



Press Council Serbia supported adoption of the

Regional Declaration on ethical AI in media

New crash investigation methodology piloted,

showing 20–30% potential reduction in severe injuries, with regional replication initiated



4th Western Balkans Task Force meeting

strengthened regional cooperation on trafficking and migrant smuggling

40+ Serbian youth
engaged in

9 regional exchanges on Youth, Peace and Security, arts and media



2.3. Support to partnerships and financing the 2030 Agenda

In 2025, the UN strengthened and diversified partnerships to accelerate SDG implementation in Serbia. Engagement with government, EU and member states, international organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society enabled innovative financing, capacity building and evidence-based policy reforms. These collaborations delivered scalable, rights-based and sustainable solutions, enhancing institutional capacity and advancing Serbia's social, environmental and governance priorities.

Government of Serbia

Serbia's Government remains the UN's primary counterpart in implementing the CF priorities. Coordination was anchored in the Joint Steering Committee, which reviewed results from the previous year and agreed on priorities for the 2025 Joint Work Plans. The Committee was co-chaired by the RC, the Minister for European Integration, and a State Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UN agencies collaborated with all levels of government—central, provincial and local—reaching 145 of Serbia's 174 territorial units³ (Figure 1), as well as engaging with all branches of power, including independent oversight institutions.

The government remains one of the two largest contributors to UN programming in Serbia. In 2025, it provided USD 28.4 million in co-financing (33.9% of total resources) supporting implementation of the Framework strategic priorities.

The country also reinforced its alignment with global development and social protection standards, actively participating in international norm-setting by endorsing the Sevilla Commitment at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development and signing the Doha Political Declaration of the World Social Summit, thereby linking national policies to global commitments on social protection and inclusion.

³ The figure includes 145 local self-government units (117 municipalities and 28 cities) and 29 administrative districts



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The UN leveraged its convening role and multidisciplinary expertise to support Serbia's climate commitments, presenting a comprehensive Joint UN Offer and Joint Work Plan to assist development and implementation of the updated NDC (3.0). Through initiatives such as the Climate Talks – Play for Climate Action dialogue ahead of COP30, the UN brought together government, international partners and experts to advance policy discussion on decarbonization, climate resilience and implementation of Serbia's climate ambitions.

In 2025, collaboration between the UN and the government intensified in the context of the formulation of CF 2026–2030, the UN system's primary instrument for supporting national development priorities and the SDGs. Under the leadership of the RC, the UN system convened extensive consultations with government counterparts to define joint priorities for the new framework. These consultations culminated in agreement during a Strategic Prioritization Workshop held in March that brought together representatives from 28 line ministries and government institutions. The Framework outline was agreed, building on the structure of CF 2021–2025 while further streamlining Outcomes and integrating key SDG transitions. The new framework also embeds elements of the UN 2.0 agenda, including strengthened use of data, digitalization, innovation, foresight and behavioural insights to support more effective and evidence-based policymaking. It also takes into account the evaluation of the CF 2021–2025. The Cooperation Framework 2026–2030 was approved by the government in December 2025 and will guide UN support to national development priorities through 2030.

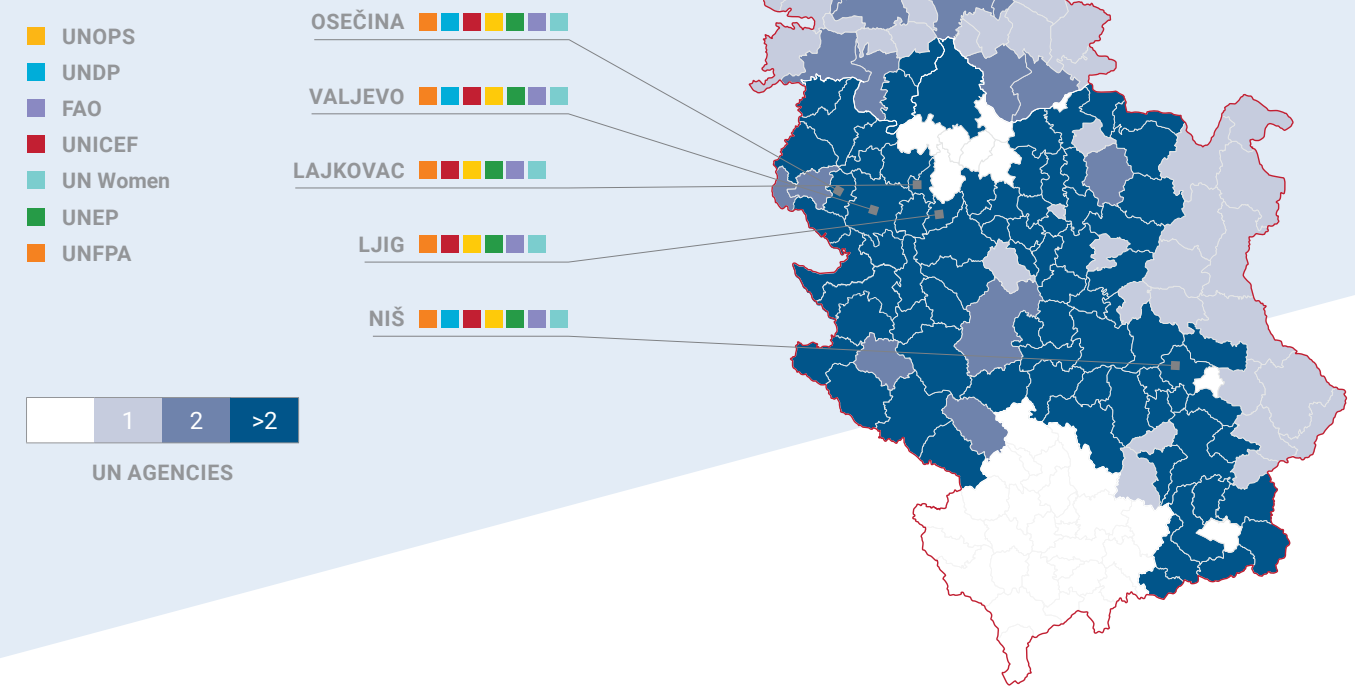


Figure 1. Map of UN presence in municipalities

Partnerships with IFIs and the private sector

The UN deepened partnerships with IFIs, development banks and the private sector to mobilize investments and innovative financing for green transition, social inclusion, GE and demographic resilience in Serbia. Through the programme PRO - Local Governance for People and Nature UNOPS, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNEP partnered with EBRD, AFD and LSGs to address social dimensions of the Solid Waste Programme, closing 15 dumpsites, developing six regional waste centres and formalizing informal waste pickers via cooperatives and integrated services. UNDP advanced green finance through the conference Boosting Green Transition Financing and support to 14 bankable projects under the EU for Green Agenda, mobilizing more than USD 25 million. Inclusive financing frameworks were strengthened by UN Women, AFD, EBRD, EIB, the EU and Italy on GRB, and by UNFPA and the World Bank on data-driven social protection for older persons. Strategic collaboration between the UN system and the World Bank in Serbia reinforced alignment around national development priorities, leveraging additional funding

towards agreed investments and accelerating joint action. Through coordinated engagement, the UN and the World Bank advanced complementary investments in inclusive human capital development and sustainable agri-food systems, combining policy reform, institutional capacity building and service delivery improvements. This partnership underscores the RC's convening role in fostering coherence across the UN and IFIs to maximize development impact and scalability. These partnerships demonstrate the UN's catalytic role in aligning public and private finance with social safeguards, GE and climate priorities for scalable, sustainable impact.

The innovative partnerships also advanced systemic digital transformation through the Joint Programme 'Digital Service Design Hub: Clicking Together with Citizens', implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and FAO with key national institutions. The Programme institutionalizes people-centred digital service design by embedding new standards, methods and ways of working directly into partner institutions, rather than supporting standalone digitalization initiatives. This approach strengthens regulatory frameworks



and institutional capacities, laying the foundation for the legal mandating and scaling of citizen-centric e-Government services for sustainable, long-term impact.

Collaboration with the private sector was strengthened notably through the UN Global Compact (UNGC) local chapter, which grew its membership to 57 companies in 2026. UN agencies, including ILO, UN Women, UNFPA, UNEP and UNODC, worked with UNGC to advance corporate sustainability, GE, human rights due diligence, environmental protection and ethical business practices. Initiatives included joint events such as Ring the Bell for Gender Equality, workshops on the Women's Empowerment Principles, promotion of family-friendly workplaces and capacity building on internal grievance mechanisms and business integrity. Private-sector influence and cultural institutions were also mobilized through the L'Oréal For Women in Science programme through which UN Women and the Association of Female Scientists of Serbia promoted women's leadership in STEM, integrating gender perspectives into museum knowledge production, and showcased women scientists as societal role models, ensuring long-term visibility of women's contributions. Additionally, strong corporate partnerships were maintained by UNICEF through supporting introduction and implementation of responsible business practices that positively impact children, with a particular focus on promoting family-friendly policies in collaboration with business associations, including the Serbian Chamber of Commerce. These efforts highlight the UN system's role in mobilizing private sector engagement alongside public and development finance, ensuring socially responsible and inclusive contributions to Serbia's sustainable development agenda.

Partnership with the EU Delegation to Serbia

The partnership with the EU Delegation has gone beyond programme delivery to include regular strategic dialogues, ensuring that joint actions address Serbia's accession priorities and the SDGs. In 2025, the EU provided USD 28.8 million in co-financing to the UN, confirming its role as the largest donor to the UN system in Serbia. The expanded strategic partnership in support of Serbia's EU accession priorities and SDG-aligned reforms

covered public administration modernization, financial management, rights-based procedures, public service delivery, DRR, green transition, climate change mitigation, resilience building in agriculture, health systems and the fight against trafficking and smuggling. Key project-based results include Serbia's first e-Readmission Case Management System (e-RCMS) linking Belgium and Serbia, ensuring secure management of return cases and protection of vulnerable groups. Public sector innovation advanced through the procedure Innovation Partnerships, which delivered solutions in kindergartens, smart traffic and sustainable waste, while the project EU for Green Agenda in Serbia mobilized USD 53 million for pilot and scale-up green projects, DRR and climate resilience initiatives. Building on results from previous years in social housing, new 2025 investments through EU and UN partnership (UNICEF and UNOPS) widened access to education, child protection and municipal services, ensuring that reforms directly benefit communities. High-level advocacy promoted inclusive social policies, with UN agencies and the EU Delegation in Serbia strategically engaging in high-level dialogue and advocacy with the government on multidimensional poverty and child-sensitive fiscal policies, positioning child poverty and human capital financing at the centre of macro-fiscal debates. Meanwhile, collaboration with the EU strengthened disease surveillance, diagnostics and integration of health risks into DRR frameworks, enhancing a resilient public healthcare system aligned with EU standards.

Because the SDGs provide a normative framework for inclusion, social justice and leaving no one behind, while EU accession translates these principles into binding regulatory and institutional requirements, the UN-EU partnership ensures that Serbia's reform trajectory is both value-driven and structurally anchored, accelerating sustainable and inclusive progress towards EU membership.

CSO, academia and media

The UN advanced partnerships with civil society, academia and the media to promote human rights, GE, youth engagement and environmental governance, fostering inclusive, evidence-driven reforms. Collaborative initiatives strengthened policy advocacy, knowledge generation and public accountability, bridging research, practice and



decision making. Partnerships further enhanced social inclusion, maternal and reproductive health, youth empowerment, energy efficiency for vulnerable households and rights-based approaches for older persons, producing scalable, inclusive and socially transformative outcomes. Civil society and local governments implemented community-led environmental actions, from wetland restoration to green transition projects, while media campaigns reached hundreds of thousands of citizens nationwide. Engagement with academia expanded through cooperation with several universities and research institutes. Collaboration with the Faculty of Geography and the Institute for Demographic Sciences supported demographic research, while research on migration, including integration of foreign workers into the local labour market, was conducted with the Faculty of Political Science. The Faculty of Security Studies contributed to simulation exercises aimed at strengthening institutional preparedness and response to migration-related crises. Cooperation with the Faculties of Law in Belgrade and Novi Sad included legal clinics and collaboration with academic staff contributing to advocacy efforts and capacity-building trainings on refugee and asylum issues. Engagement with academia was strengthened through the Smart Manufacturing Innovation Centre and a multidisciplinary climate change master's programme, linking students, researchers and private sector partners. Additionally, UNCT reinforced its engagement with civil society, academia and independent media to advance human-rights-based action, protect fundamental freedoms and rebuild public trust, while facilitating dialogue and protection efforts for human rights defenders, activists and journalists, including through Human Rights mechanisms.

South-South and Triangular cooperation

In 2025, the UN advanced South-South and triangular cooperation to foster knowledge sharing, capacity development and institutionalization of innovative practices. Regional collaboration to combat trafficking and migrant smuggling was strengthened through cross-border trainings, expert exchanges and adaptation of good practices, enhancing professional networks and victim-centred responses. Migrant protection and inclusion systems, including for unaccompanied children, were reinforced and community initiatives improved social cohesion and evidence-based policymaking. Regional cooperation on SALW control was strengthened through Serbia's active participation in the SALW Commissions, the South-East Europe Firearms Experts Network, and technical workshops, supporting information exchange, confidence building and more coherent regional responses to shared security risks. Serbia also coordinated and monitored implementation of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap, with support from four Multi-Partner Trust Fund projects valued at USD 7.51 million. Triangular cooperation in service innovation was highlighted by the Digital Service Design Hub, embedding citizen-centred digital service design into government practice and supporting policy and regulatory shifts. Regional initiatives also empowered youth from Serbia and Kosovo⁴ to promote constructive and fact-based narratives, intercultural dialogue, diversity, GE and mutual understanding in the Western Balkans, engaging with youth from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia. By supporting youth coalitions, policy participation and resilience to divisive narratives and mis- or disinformation, the UN's Peacebuilding Fund delivered tangible achievements in youth leadership, inclusive narratives, youth exchanges, GE promotion and youth engagement in sports. Urban sustainability pilots in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Zrenjanin advanced low-carbon, smart city solutions and contributed Serbian case studies to global knowledge platforms. These partnerships delivered systemic, practical and sustainable solutions, combining national ownership with regional and global learning.

⁴ All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)



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

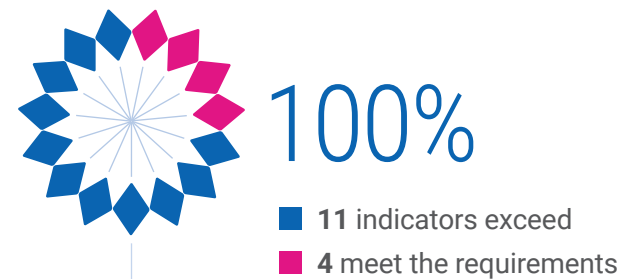
Planning and implementing together

In the final year of implementing CF 2021–2025, the UN further leveraged the benefits of joint programming to deliver coherent results, streamline interventions and enhance system-wide accountability. The Results Groups continued to serve as a key platform for identifying synergies and strengthening inter-agency collaboration. The joint programme portfolio expanded through continued access to global pooled funding mechanisms, including the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, SDG Fund, UN Disability Fund, Peacebuilding Fund and UN Road Safety Fund, alongside strong support from Member State partners such as the EU, Sweden and Switzerland, with total allocated funding of USD 35 million.

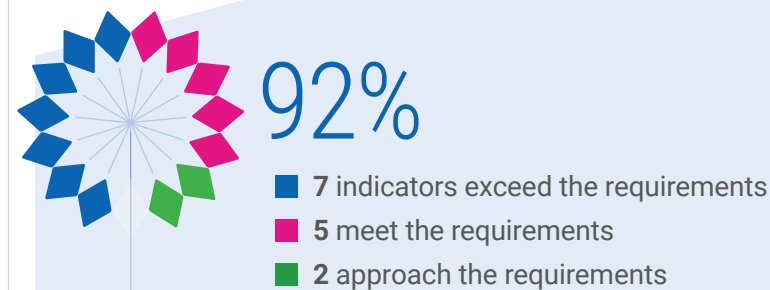
Building on extensive analytical work, UNCT conducted a foresight exercise in 2025 that informed the update of the Country Analysis. The exercise strengthened the UN’s collective anticipatory capacity and examined how emerging trends and uncertainties may shape Serbia’s social cohesion and development trajectory towards 2030. Using a structured 5-step methodology, including PESTLE horizon scanning,⁵ prioritization of drivers and Futures Wheel analysis, the process engaged UN technical staff and representatives from academia and civil society. The analysis identified participation, trust and institutional legitimacy as critical leverage points, pointing to two possible trajectories: renewal through participation or fragmentation through exclusion. Findings from the foresight exercise inform the UN system’s programmatic focus and implementation under Strategic Priority 3 of CF 2026–2030 on rule of law, human rights and accountable institutions.

5 Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental systematic identification of emerging trends, risks and signals

UNCT’s commitment to gender mainstreaming was further strengthened through implementation of the GE Screening Tool, ensuring that all individual and joint programmes integrate gender considerations systematically. The Team ensured the systematic use of gender and human rights markers in joint workplans. UNCT maintained its results in the annual System-wide Progress Assessment on GE, achieving 100% of indicators (Graph 4), while notable progress was made in the System-wide Progress Assessment on Disability Inclusion, with 85% achievement of indicators (Graph 5). Implementing the Youth 2030 Strategy is in focus for the UN Team, with USD 7.3 million invested in youth programming in 2025. UNCT engaged both directly and indirectly with youth from across the country, harnessing the power of three youth groups that support the UN’s strategic engagement: UNICEF Youth Advisory Board, PBF Youth Ambassadors and UNFPA Peer Educators.



Graph 4. GE scorecard



Graph 5. Disability scorecards

Operating Together

In 2025, the Operations Management Team in Serbia continued to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of common operations across procurement, human resources, finance, ICT, administration and logistics. Agencies implemented a range of cost-optimization and digitalization measures, including consolidation of vendor services, rationalization of recurring subscriptions, expanded use of virtual modalities to reduce travel costs and increased reliance on in-house capacities. At the UN House level, targeted actions to optimize building maintenance, physical security arrangements and ICT asset management contributed to further operational efficiencies. Energy efficiency efforts also advanced, including installation of a solar power system at UNICEF premises, expected to generate approximately USD 3,600 in annual electricity savings and reduce carbon emissions by about 10.4 tons per year. The continued shift toward digital signature solutions and upgraded digital security systems further streamlined workflows, reduced avoidable costs and supported the UN system’s broader digital transformation agenda.

Through the Business Operating Strategy (BOS; Figure 2), the Operations Management Team



remained committed to maximizing efficiency through common services. In 2025, BOS recorded an estimated and realized cost avoidance of approximately USD 0.3 million, with full completion of cost-benefit analysis and quality analysis processes and 75% agency validation. Cost avoidance was driven primarily by common administration services, which generated the largest share of savings (some USD 228–244k), followed by common human resources services (USD 21–39k), common ICT services (USD 11–17k), and common finance services (USD 9–13k). Overall, the results confirm steady progress in leveraging common services to enhance operational efficiency and system-wide cost effectiveness.

Figure 2. Business Operating Strategy, 2025



400,000+
accounts
reached
through the
16 Days of
Activism
digital campaign



Communicating Together

In 2025, joint communication supported the UN's programmatic work in Serbia by bringing key development priorities into the public space in a visible and consistent manner.

Communication efforts reinforced messages related to GE and prevention of GBV, human rights and inclusion, youth engagement, environmental sustainability and the green transition. A central joint initiative was **Tolerance**, implemented with the Council of Europe and supported by other partners, as part of broader efforts to address hate speech. The campaign extended into public space through a large-scale mural on the Silosi cultural centre and a public exhibition at Kalemegdan, accompanied by a coordinated digital component. Messages were further reflected through interviews and opinion pieces in national media, including appearances by the RC.

The **16 Days of Activism against GBV** remained a major joint advocacy moment. The coordinated digital campaign reached more than 400,000 accounts across platforms and generated some 450,000 video views and more than 5,000 interactions. Events organized across the country and continued media engagement reinforced attention to prevention efforts, survivor support and institutional responsibility.



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The **UN's 80th anniversary** was marked through a high-level event highlighting multilateral cooperation and the longstanding partnership between the UN and Serbia, a panel with beneficiaries and partners showcasing field results and presenting the Swiss Government's Operational Guide to the UN system, and a staff gathering marking the occasion internally.

In the lead-up to COP30, the annual high-level **climate talks** organized with the relevant ministry provided a platform for policy dialogue on climate action, complemented by broader communication on environmental priorities. International Women's Day, Human Rights Day and other global observances continued to serve as shared advocacy platforms throughout the year.

Through consistent messaging and media engagement, joint communication in 2025 supported greater public awareness of equality, inclusion and sustainable development efforts in Serbia, including through seven joint campaigns and numerous agency-specific communication initiatives implemented throughout the year.



Tolerance campaign

brought

anti-hate speech messages

into public space

→ large-scale mural
at Silosi
cultural centre

public exhibition at
Kalemegdan

→ 450,000
video views
5,000+
interactions

7 joint
communication
campaigns advanced
public awareness

of
equality, inclusion
and sustainable
development

2.5. Evaluations and lessons learned

The final evaluation of CF 2021–2025 was conducted in 2024 to assess the results achieved and inform the design of the next cycle.

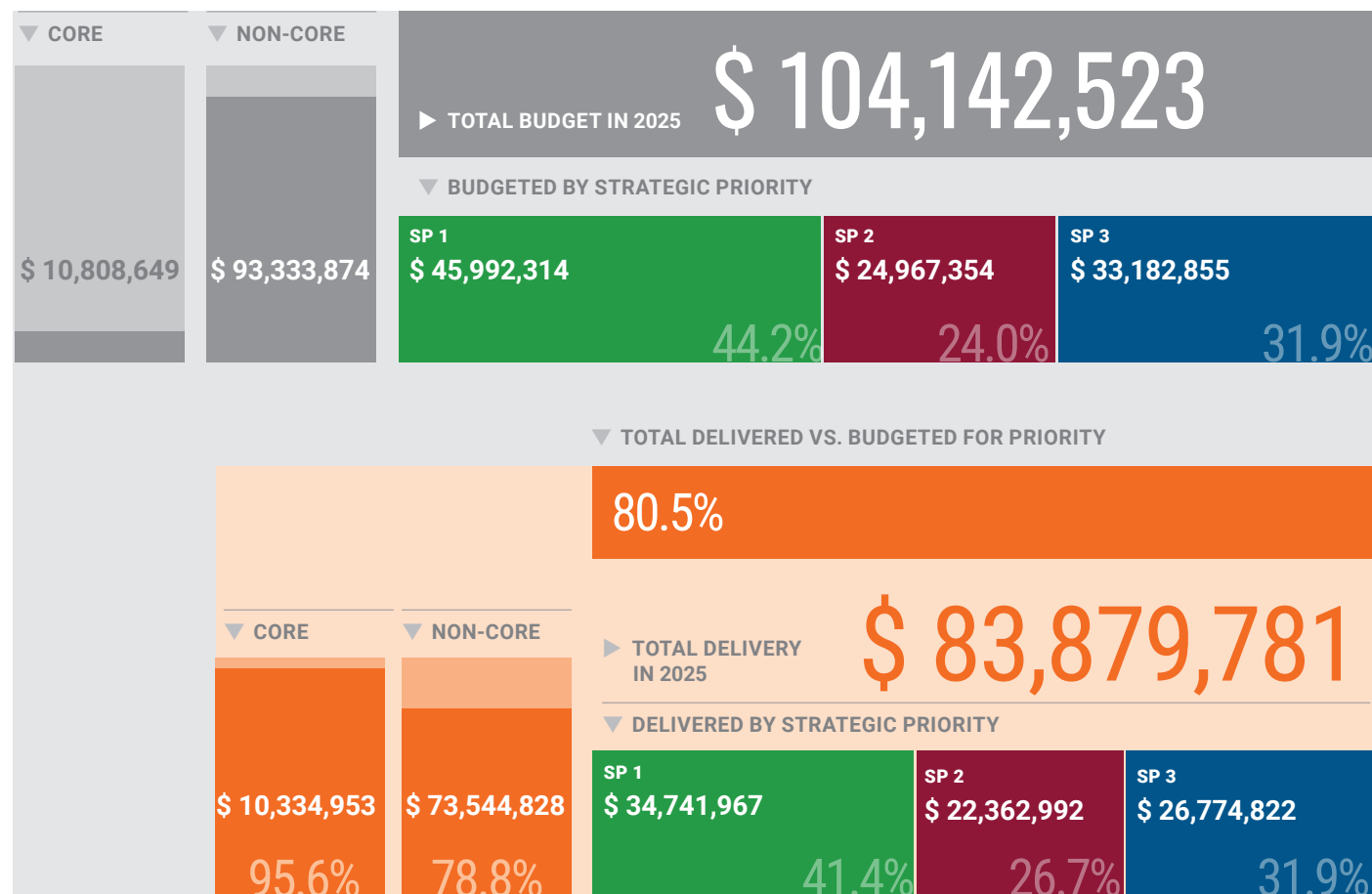
Implementation of the Management response is part of an ongoing process aimed at strengthening the UN's strategic positioning, coordination and results management. In 2025, consultations with key ministries and development partners informed articulation of the UN's comparative advantage in Serbia's upper-middle-income context and supported preparation of the CF 2026–2030. Initial steps were taken to implement the ten evaluation

recommendations, including strengthening capacity development approaches and coordinated advocacy through preparation of UNCT guidance and joint messaging around priority reforms. Monitoring and evaluation systems were also strengthened through refinement of the CF indicator framework and clearer guidance for Joint Work Plan implementation and Results Group accountability. Efforts to expand joint programming and UN-to-UN cooperation continued, particularly in social protection, digital transformation and the green transition, helping translate evaluation lessons into adjustments for the final year of the Framework and the design of the next cycle.

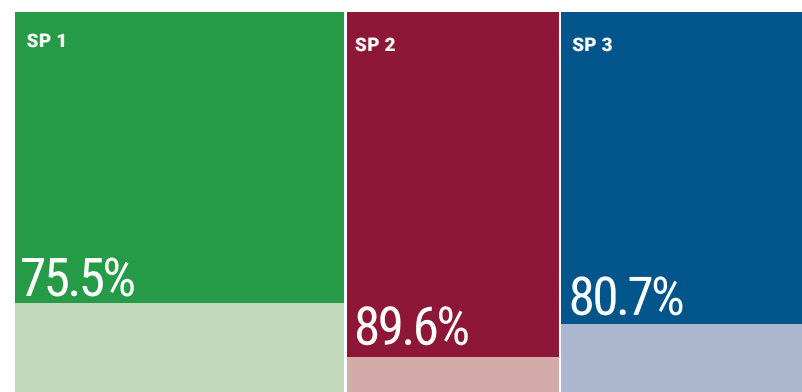
2.6 Financial overview and resources mobilisation

UNCT in Serbia allocated USD 104.1 million in 2025 across three strategic priorities of CF. The delivery rate by year-end was 80.5% (USD 83.9 million utilized). Strategic Priority 1 accounted for 41.4%, Priority 2, 26.7%, and Priority 3, 31.9%, of total delivery. Eighteen UN agencies utilized the resources in 2025.

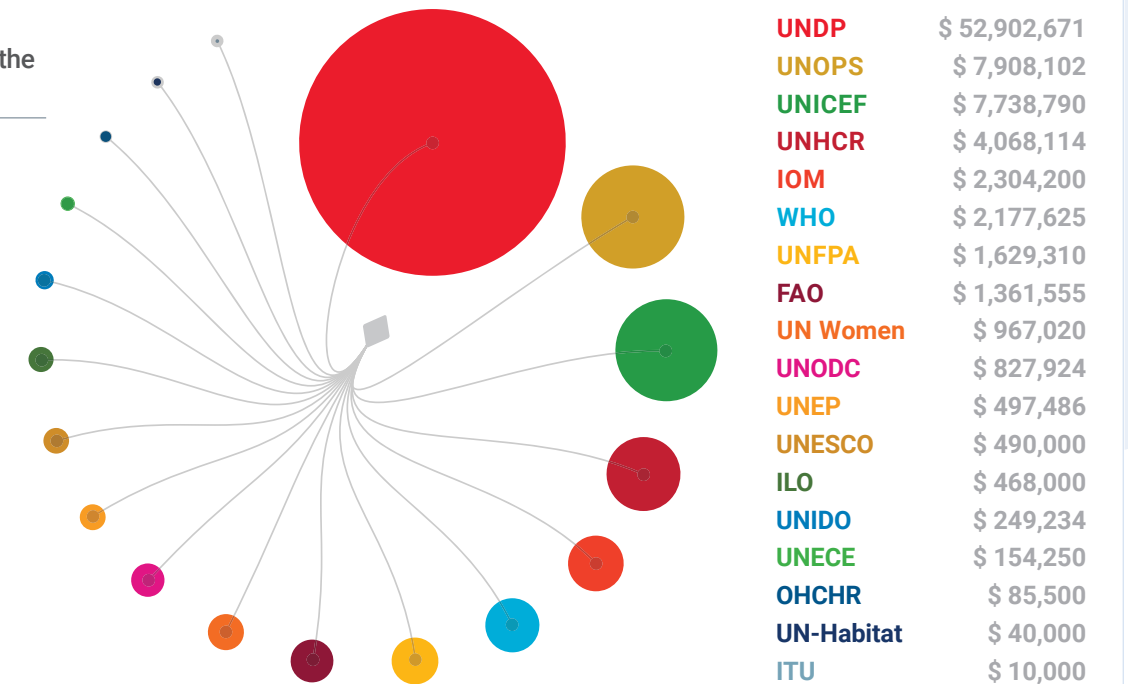
▼ Chart 1: UNCT total budget (core and non-core) vs. delivery (core and non-core), 2025



► Chart 2: Budget delivery for strategic priority in percentage

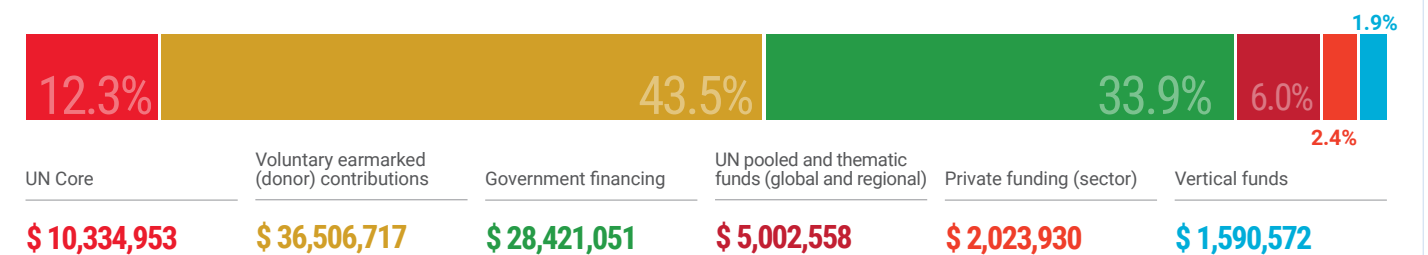


► Chart 3: Budget delivered by each of the 18 UN agencies

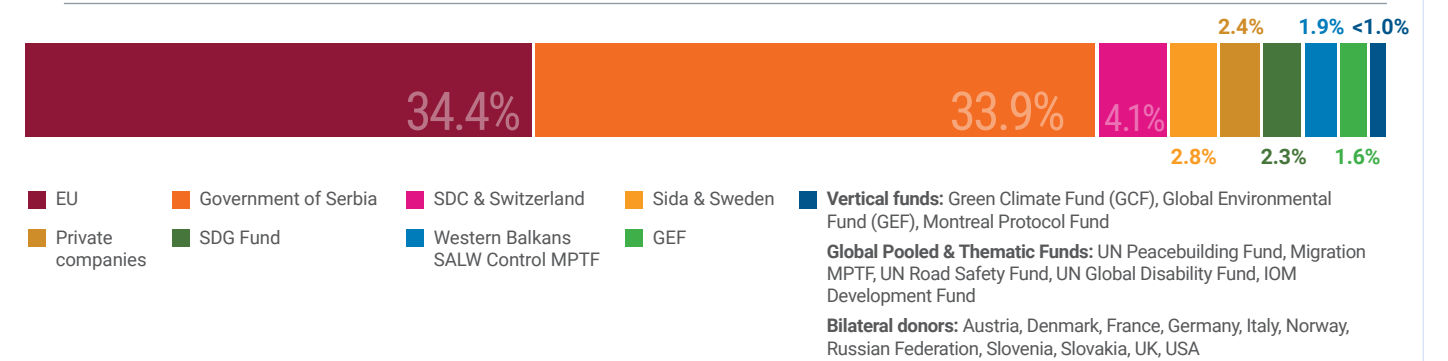


Diverse sources of financing were accessed in 2025. Locally raised earmarked donor contribution accounted for 43.5% of funding. The EU was the largest single donor (34.4%), followed by the government (33.9%). UN core resources accounted for 12.3%, pooled and vertical funds for 6% and 1.9%, respectively, and private sector funding, for 2.3%.

▼ Chart 4: Delivery by funding source



▼ Chart 5: Delivery by donor (%)



The total funding required to implement the Serbia–UN Cooperation Framework over the five-year period 2021–2025 was estimated to be USD 365 million. By the end of 2025, the UN system successfully mobilized USD 464 million, exceeding the original funding targets for 27% and ensuring achievement of all planned outputs for the duration of the strategy.

2025



UNCT key focus for next year

Looking ahead to 2026, the UN in Serbia enters a new strategic cycle at an important moment for both the country and the multilateral system. Building on the solid results achieved under CF 2021–2025, UNCT stands ready to strengthen its partnership with the Government of the Republic of Serbia and other stakeholders in support of the country's sustainable development and EU accession pathway.

A major milestone in 2025 was endorsement of CF 2026–2030, which will guide the collective contribution of the UN system in the coming years. As the primary instrument for planning and implementing UN development activities at the country level, the new Framework aligns closely with Serbia's national priorities and the SDGs, while maintaining a strong focus on leaving no one behind, human rights and GE.

As Serbia continues its reform trajectory, sustained attention to institutional strengthening, human capital development, green transition and digital transformation will remain essential for accelerating convergence with European standards and ensuring that the benefits of growth reach all segments of society. In line with national priorities, the UN will further strengthen its upstream policy and technical support to government institutions, to support legislative and normative frameworks and their effective implementation for tangible development results. The UN will continue to accompany nationally led reform efforts through integrated, evidence-based and demand-driven support, with emphasis on policy coherence, innovation and strengthened local capacities. The UN will continue to support the strong complementarity between the SDGs and Serbia's EU reform agenda, helping to translate shared priorities into coherent policy and institutional progress. In a context where the



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country is approaching electoral processes, the UN will remain a predictable and trusted development partner, maintaining its focus on results, institutional continuity and inclusive dialogue.

Globally, the operating environment for development cooperation is becoming more complex, marked by growing pressures on multilateral financing and increasing demands on the international system. In response, the UN has embarked on a system-wide modernization effort through the UN80 Initiative, aimed at making the Organization simpler, more coherent and more efficient, while protecting delivery at the country level. This transformation is also reflected in the United Nations 2.0 agenda, promoting more data-driven, innovative and forward-looking approaches to better support countries' development priorities. These efforts are intended to ensure that the UN remains fit for purpose and able to support member states effectively in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

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In Serbia, the UNCT will prioritize implementation of the new CF through integrated policy support, strengthened partnerships and more innovative and data-driven approaches. Particular focus will be placed on accelerating the green and digital transitions, supporting sustainable and inclusive economic growth and job creation, advancing social cohesion and human capital, and strengthening accountable and inclusive institutions, including in areas relevant to the country's European integration agenda.

At the same time, the UN will continue to enhance system-wide coherence and efficiency, ensuring that collective expertise and resources are used in the most strategic and impactful manner.

The UN remains grateful for the strong collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Serbia, development partners, civil society, the private sector and communities across the country. Guided by the new Cooperation Framework and the shared ambition of the 2030 Agenda, we stand ready to continue supporting Serbia's progress towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for all.



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2025

RESULTS
REPORT

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