



# FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

**Albania**

Thematic window  
Youth, Employment and Migration

## **Joint Programme Title:**

Youth migration: Reaping the benefits and  
mitigating the risks

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June | **2012**

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# Prologue

The [MDG Achievement Fund](#) was established in 2007 through a landmark agreement signed between the Government of Spain and the UN system. With a total contribution of approximately USD 900 million, the MDG-Fund has financed 130 joint programmes in eight Thematic Windows, in 50 countries around the world.

The joint programme final narrative report is prepared by the joint programme team. It reflects the final programme review conducted by the Programme Management Committee and National Steering Committee to assess results against expected outcomes and outputs.

The report is divided into five (5) sections. Section I provides a brief introduction on the socio economic context and the development problems addressed by the joint programme, and lists the joint programme outcomes and associated outputs. Section II is an assessment of the joint programme results. Section III collects good practices and lessons learned. Section IV covers the financial status of the joint programme; and Section V is for other comments and/or additional information.

We thank our national partners and the United Nations Country Team, as well as the joint programme team for their efforts in undertaking this final narrative report.

MDG-F Secretariat

## FINAL MDG-F JOINT PROGRAMME NARRATIVE REPORT

<b>Participating UN Organization(s)</b> <i>( indicate the lead agency)</i>  Lead agency: ILO Other agencies: IOM, UNDP, UNICEF	<b>Sector(s)/Area(s)/Theme(s)</b>  Youth, Employment, and Migration
<b>Joint Programme Title</b> Youth Migration: Reaping the benefits and mitigating the risks	<b>Joint Programme Number</b> <b>MDGF 1897</b>
<b>Joint Programme Cost</b> <b>[Sharing - if applicable]</b> <b>[Fund Contribution):</b> 3,310,000 USD  <b>Govt. Contribution:</b> USD <b>Agency Core Contribution:</b> USD <b>Other:</b> <b>TOTAL:</b> 3,310,000 USD	<b>Joint Programme [Location]</b>  <b>Region (s):</b> Albania overall with a focus on 2 Regions (Kukes and Shkodra)  <b>Governorate(s):</b>  <b>District(s)</b>
<b>Final Joint Programme Evaluation</b>  <b>Final Evaluation Done</b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Evaluation Report Attached</b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Date of delivery of final report</b> 06/08/2012	<b>Joint Programme Timeline</b>  <b>Original start date</b> 06/10/2008 <i>start date of the programme</i> <b>Final end date</b> 06/07/2012 <i>(including agreed extended date)</i>

### **Participating Implementing Line Ministries and/or other organisations (CSO, etc)**

- **Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**
- **Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports**
- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
- **National Employment Service and its local branches**
- **Ministry of Education and Science**
- **Albanian Investment Development Agency**
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**
- **Employers' (Business Albania) and business organizations, chambers of commerce (the Albanian British Chamber of Commerce and Industry, local chambers at regional level), and their members (enterprises)**
- **INSTAT**
- **Public Vocational Education Training Centres**
- **Multi-stakeholder Regional Coordination Mechanisms in Kukes and Shkodra**
- **Trade Unions (particularly BSPSH and KSSH)**
- **Youth organizations, particularly the Albanian Youth Council and Asan**
- **CSOs active in the target regions (such as ACLI and Don Bosco Institute)**
- **Producers' associations and specialised agencies in agro-business**

### **Report Formatting Instructions:**

- Number all sections and paragraphs as indicated below.
- Format the entire document using the following font: 12point \_ Times New Roman.

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## **I. PURPOSE**

- a. Provide a brief introduction on the socio economical context and the development problems addressed by the programme.**

For a long time, the Albanian labour market has been facing three major and interconnected challenges: a growing need to provide young women and men with access and transition opportunities to decent employment; high incidence of self-employment in the informal economy; and a rural/urban divide that fuels continuous migration flows from rural areas. Although economic growth has led to an overall decline in poverty rates, this has been uneven among population groups and geographical areas. Some authors argue that the decline is due to a combination of remittance flows to the countryside and a shift of employment from agriculture to higher productivity jobs in other sectors. However, both of these sources of growth have limited potential without job creation. Labour market outcomes are particularly unfavourable for women and for youth entering the labour market. Women experience lower rates of both labour force participation and employment and higher rates of unemployment compared to their male counterparts. The young Albanians are more educated than their parents and more willing to work in places different from those of birth. Nonetheless, transition to decent work remains extremely difficult for low educated and other disadvantaged youth.

The YEM programme was designed to offer some responses to these specific employment challenges of Albania, where strong and sustained economic growth (among the highest of all transition economies since the fall of the communist regime in 1990) did not always result in employment creation. Labour market data, though still limited prior to the implementation of the YEM programme, show how expansion of the private sector and increases in domestic demand and foreign direct investment were not matched by employment growth. Strong negative peaks were recorded in 2001 and 2009. The unemployment rate topped at 18.4 per cent in 1999 and remained in the two digits throughout the period 2000-2009. In 2009, it accounted for 13.8 per cent of the labour force, a further increase from 13 per cent in 2008 (LFS, 2009). Jobless growth has thus exacerbated vulnerability of many segments of the Albanian population, especially of young people. According to the 2009 Labour Force Survey (LFS 2009) youth are twice more likely to be unemployed than adults (INSTAT 2009), but in the rural areas unemployment is a less-affordable option and most young workers have to accept any job, including underemployment and informal employment. Thus, labour migration becomes the survival strategy to overcome poverty, especially for those working with low earnings and poor working conditions in the informal economy, in particular in agriculture.

- b. List Joint Programme outcomes and associated outputs as per the final approved version of the joint programme Document or last agreed revision.**

Against the backdrop described above, the main thrust of the YEM programme strategy revolved around three major components that combined i) the strengthening of the capacity of institutions (both at national and regional level) to design and implement youth-centred employment policies and programmes, with ii) demonstration programmes directed at the creation of more and better jobs for young people and minimization of the risks of migration of disadvantaged youth from rural areas and iii) building capacity to promote development through return migration and investment in the country. The institutional development component was geared at increasing the effectiveness of labour market institutions, including the social partners, in addressing the youth employment

challenge through better governance of the labour market and improved capacities to design, monitor, and evaluate policies, strategies, and action-oriented programmes on youth employment. The direct support component provided assistance for the development of targeted employment programmes and information campaigns for disadvantaged youth in rural areas, especially those facing discrimination, informality, risks of irregular migration, and social exclusion in two regions of Albania, Kukes and Shkodra. The third component focused on engaging the government authorities at the national and local level to engage in a direct dialogue about development opportunities in Albania, return and investment in the country. Box 1 lists outcomes and associated outputs of the joint programme

**Outcome 1: Youth employment is a priority of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI)**

***Output 1.1:*** The capacity of policy makers to address the nexus between information employment and migration of young people enhanced.

***Output 1.2:*** Migration, employment creation and youth policies of the NSDI aligned with labour market strategies and operationalized through Youth Employment National Action Plan (YE-NAP)

***Output 1.3:*** Public-Private partnerships (PPPs) for youth employment established and contributing to the implementation of the priorities of the NAP

**Outcome 2: Risks of migration are reduced through innovative employment programmes targeting disadvantaged youth in two pilot regions.**

***Output 2.1 :*** Youth employment coordination mechanism established in the regions of Kukes and Shkodra and responsible for managing the Employment Fund (EF)

***Output 2.2 :*** Labour market programmes targeting youth at risk of migration implemented through the EF in the regions of Kukes and Shkodra

***Output 2.3 :*** Youth awareness raised on employment and safe migration.

**Outcome 3: The positive impact of migration is increased through enhanced linkages between Albanian communities abroad and home communities.**

***Output 3.1:*** Increased number of Albanian young graduates returning home after studies abroad

***Output 3.2:*** Albanian communities abroad mobilised towards community development in the home county

**c. Explain the overall contribution of the joint programme to National Plans and Priorities**

In October 2007, the government of Albania launched the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI), which provides a long-term integrated planning system that sets a number of national goals, related to socio-economic development and to the promotion of Albania's regional and international integration, to be achieved by 2013. The Strategy is the resultant of 38 sectoral and crosscutting strategies that have been developed by several central and local institutions.

With the adoption of the NSDI, the government of Albania has committed itself to achieving a number of policy objectives that contribute to the attainment of the following four main development goals:

1. Achieve rapid, balanced and sustainable economic, social and human development,
2. Develop and consolidate a democratic state,
3. Establish the rule of law and fight corruption,
4. Integrate Albania in the European Union and NATO.

The NSDI assigns high priority to policies focusing on the role of young people in the economy. This priority is spelt out by the crosscutting strategy on youth development, by the strategy on migration (2004) and by the employment strategy and vocational training (2007-2013).

Since November 2008, within the context of the One UN Programme, the International Labour Office (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have been providing technical assistance to the Government of Albania through the One UN Joint Programme *Youth Migration: Reaping the benefits and mitigating the risks*. The joint programme (JP), financed by the Government of Spain through the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) with a contribution of US\$3.3 million, aimed to support the efforts of the Albanian government (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO), the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports (MTCYS), the Ministry of Science and Education, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to integrate policy priorities on youth employment and migration of the NSDI and the strategies on employment and vocational training, migration and youth development.

As part of the YEM interventions, a National Action Plan for Youth Employment (2010-13) (YE-NAP) was developed during a year-long capacity building programme. This included the review of key labour market indicators, policies and institutions for youth employment; the identification of key problems for policy prioritization; the development of a framework to ensure comprehensive and coherent approach to youth employment policy development; the design of objectives, targets and outcomes as well as the respective responsibilities of lead institutions; and the setting of costs, timeframe, coordination mechanism and monitoring and evaluation arrangements. The NAP is linked to the National Strategy for Development and Integration and contributes to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Sectoral Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training (2007-2013) and in the Employment Promotion Policy. The Ministry of Labour has reflected some of the outcomes and objectives of the YE-NAP into the preparatory work for the formulation of the new National Development Strategy of Albania (2013-20).

Moreover, the Joint Programme contributed to tackling some of the areas that were part of the recommendations made by the European Union in the latest EU report for Albania. These include: the need to improve labour market statistics; the need to improve the employment policy overall, including the spending on active labour market measures and monitoring of the employment policy; the continuation of efforts to train National Employment Service (NES)

staff, including in regional and local offices, and to develop guidelines for counselling, liaising with employers, and formalising work.

**d. Describe and assess how the programme development partners have jointly contributed to achieve development results**

Under the overall guidance of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the four Organizations – namely ILO, IOM, UNDP and UNICEF – provided technical assistance to the national partners for the implementation of the Programme. The participation of these Organizations brought a youth employment focus to the ongoing work of the UN Country Team. Furthermore, it contributed to the development of national capacities in meeting the obligations envisaged by international human rights treaties and international labour standards, particularly those relevant to young people.

At the time of formulation, the expected results by the end of the Programme included: 1) improved capacity of the Albanian government to monitor youth labour market indicators; 2) an inter-institutional mechanism able to design, monitor and evaluate youth employment and migration policies; 3) a permanent partnership mechanism between the public and the private sectors; 4) an improved knowledge and understanding of integrated policies and measures to tackle the informal economy and their impact on migration; 5) coordination system for social pacts for youth employment at local level; and 5) a system for mobilizing resources from Albanian communities abroad.<sup>1</sup>

**1. Improved capacity of the Albanian government to monitor youth labour market indicators**

The YEM Programme carried out two staff development programmes, each conducted in subsequent phases and extending over several months with the view of responding to the compounded challenges and emerging needs in terms of provision of labour market data for evidence-based policy making. One staff development programme targeted key experts of relevant line ministries, the National Employment Service, social partners, and other labour market institutions. With a focus on explaining the functioning of labour market information systems and the use of labour market statistics throughout the policy cycle, the programme culminated in Albania's first ever "National Policy Dialogue on Labour Market Statistics for evidence-based policy making", held in July 2011 under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Service. The second programme was tailor-made for INSTAT, with a view to enable INSTAT staff to carry out the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and include the relevant questions on school-to-work transition and employment in the informal economy. A series of training workshops were organized throughout the entire programme implementation, starting from the design of the new LFS questionnaire and up to the use and interpretation of labour market statistics for policy and programme design. These training events have also been organized around specific policy objectives, such as the re-orientation of the Government's PARD (Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) to target informal employment in agriculture, the use of labour market statistics in the design of the IPA IV project, the improvement of the analysis of the skills' needs survey, the development of the Municipal Plan for Youth Employment in Tirana, the use of statistics for territorial planning in the Kukes Region. Specific training materials and publications were developed in collaboration with the ILO HQs and made available in printed and soft copies to the participating institutions in view of facilitating induction processes of future staff members.

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<sup>1</sup> YEM Project Document, p. 17.

## **2. An inter-institutional mechanism able to design, monitor and evaluate youth employment and migration policies**

From early 2009 and until the end of the project, the YEM programme assisted an inter-institutional working group comprising experts of line-ministers, labour market institutions, and social partners in the development and implementation of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment (YE-NAP). The capacity building programme comprised four main components: i) a series of thematic seminars on the situation of the youth labour market in Albania; ii) a one week training workshop held at the International Training Centre of the ILO on youth employment policy development and implementation; iii) a number of follow-up workshops on monitoring and evaluation approaches; and iv) the design and implementation of programmes at the local level, such as the Territorial Employment Pact for Youth, the Regional Employment and Training Fund, the Municipal Action Plan for Youth Employment.

The YE-NAP revolves around four key objectives: 1) strengthening the governance of the youth labour market at both central and local level; 2) promoting labour market prospect of young people by enhancing their employability; 3) fostering the role of private sector in creating decent jobs for youth; and 4) promoting labour market inclusion of young people's through targeted measures.

The National Action Plan was finalized in 2010 and officially launched in July 2011. YEM invested resources directly in support of the implementation of Outcome 1.1, namely "The Employment Policy Department of MoLSAEO manages the (youth) employment policy cycle more effectively" and Outcome 3.5 "Young people are aware of their rights at work". Further, the YE-NAP was aligned with the National Strategy on Migration and the Reintegration Strategy for returning citizens.

## **3. A permanent partnership mechanism between the public and the private sectors**

An active labour market measure (ALMM) that combined work-training and wage subsidies was designed for disadvantaged youth with the aim of enhancing their employability. This active labour market measure was implemented in the context of public private partnerships (PPPs). The PPPs involved the National Employment Service (NES) and its local branches as front-line service providers, capitalizing on NES' strength in identifying the intended beneficiaries. An innovative aspect of the measure was the involvement of the private sector not only in the identification of existing vacancies, but also in the overall implementation and monitoring of the measure.

In addition, the introduction of the PPPs was not only an innovation, but it also proved to be a necessary step in the process of promotion of employment generally and youth employment specifically. According to international experience, ALMMs that combine different training approaches have a higher probability of yielding positive employment and earnings outcomes for the participants. The PPP aimed to combine on-the-job training with classroom training. The element of wage subsidies was important in order to provide incentives to the enterprises to recruit and retain the participants, especially in the crisis context.

## **4. An improved knowledge and understanding of integrated policies and measures to tackle the informal economy and their impact on migration**

Another strand of the work of the YEM programme focused on the provision of advisory services to various line ministers on measures to tackle the informal economy. Technical guidance was, for instance, offered to the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Agriculture to modify relevant by-laws concerning the administration of agricultural subsidies. This is estimated to have led to a 1.3% reduction of informal employment in agriculture and 1 ml USD additional revenue for the Government only in 2011.

Similar advisory services were offered to the Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Service with regard to the access to employment services in rural areas by youth at risk of labour market exclusion and migration. Moreover, the insertion of relevant questions in the LFS questionnaire on employment in the informal economy and migration (linked to the inclusion of the “youth module” and measurements of school-to-work transition) will allow to derive interesting data and information for the development of policies and programmes that tackle the nexus between informal employment and migration. The programme also supported the social partners, youth organizations and the education system to finalise training and awareness raising materials on the promotion of young people’s rights at work (Facilitator’s guide and toolkit to promote Youths’ Rights@Work). This material was distributed through the network of the employment services, trade unions and employers’ organizations as well as in education institutions. The Guide and accompanying awareness-raising brochure was also used to organize training and information sessions targeting different groups of young people (students, workers, unemployed and inactive youth).

### **5. Coordination system for social pacts for youth employment at local levels**

The design of employment programmes targeting disadvantaged youth in the regions followed and sustained the development of the YE-NAP. Hence, the social pacts for youth employment in the pilot regions were an integral part of the implementation of the NAP. With the technical assistance of the programme, both regions of Kukes and Shkodra established Regional Employment Boards, charged with coordinating the development and implementation of Social Pacts for youth employment at local level. To support Albanian labour market institutions in the provision of a series of integrated service lines for the transition to formalization of young workers and enterprises, the YEM programme worked with over 40 partners in the Kukes Region to prepare and launch a Territorial Employment Pact for Youth. In the Kukes Region, the Programme supported the Regional Employment Board (REB) in taking responsibility for the management and implementation of a Regional Employment and Training Fund. The key features of the youth employment programmes in these two regions revolve around the groups and geographical areas to be targeted and the type of programmes offered. The target group encompassed young men and women 15 to 29 years old, with priority given to young individuals who: i) had a low level of education; ii) were long-term unemployed, and iii) were “hard-to-place” due to their personal and household characteristics (e.g. at risk of social exclusion). While ongoing exchanges have taken place between the two Regional Employment Boards, for the last leg of the programme, the REBs and other relevant stakeholders were brought together to review progress and discuss and agree upon the guidelines for the design of future pacts. The implementation of capacity building activities was accompanied by the development of context-related tools, guidelines and other training materials.

### **6. A system for mobilizing resources from Albanian communities abroad.**

The YEM programme contributed also to engaging Albanian communities abroad for local development in Albania to promote return of qualified nationals and job creation for youth in order to prevent further emigration of youth from the country.

An intervention targeting young Albanian graduates abroad was designed with the aim of enhancing their employability and ultimately filling in the gaps in the skills needed by the Albanian labour market. The scheme has been implemented in a context of close partnerships with the private sector. In this respect, YEM partnered with the Albanian Students Abroad Network (ASAN) and a private sector intermediary. To assist in the identification of programme beneficiaries, an online mapping of the recent Albanian graduates abroad was designed at the website [www.punesimirinor.com](http://www.punesimirinor.com), while direct contacts with the Albanian graduates abroad were established during the outreach activities with the Albanian diaspora.

The latter were part of an intervention aimed at establishing dialogue and trust on the Albanian institutions, and at increasing communication between authorities and Albanian migrant communities on development issues in Albania. This intervention represents one of the first steps of the government institutions in developing a road map for engaging the Albanian Diaspora in development issues of the country. It is based on the approach that the long term project of building partnerships between governments and diasporas is much likely to succeed if it has strong foundation of good communication and mutual trust. This entails facilitating the creation of a welcoming environment for diaspora engagement in development activities which includes: improving the domestic business climate, greater transparency in regulations and licensing requirements, frequent information sharing on business climate, opportunities and regulations with the Albanian communities abroad, etc.

The programme facilitated direct contacts between representatives of central and local government, public investment agencies and Albanian communities in USA, the UK, Greece, Italy and Belgium where the Albanian diaspora groups of origin from Shkodra and Kukes regions are located. Despite the fact that the effects of migration activities abroad may only be measured over time, a number of follow up activities initiated by government institutions and/or migrant groups have been undertaken, and some others are ongoing.

## **II. ASSESSMENT OF JOINT PROGRAMME RESULTS**

- a. **Report on the key outcomes achieved and explain any variance in achieved versus planned results. The narrative should be results oriented to present results and illustrate impacts of the pilot at policy level.**

### **Outcome 1:**

Youth employment is now a high priority for the Government of Albania, which has included it in the vision for the new NSDI (2013-2020). The Ministry of Labour is implementing an action plan for youth employment (NAP) linked to the National Strategy for Development and Integration and in line with the Sectoral Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training (2007-2013). The targets and objectives of the YE-NAP are being reflected in local policies and strategies: beyond Kukes and Shkodra Regions, also the Municipality of Tirana is working on a Municipal Plan for Youth Employment and the Region of Lezha has announced the intention to constitute a Regional Employment Board and prepare a Territorial Employment Pact. During the joint programme implementation, some changes have been made to the initial design. An initial nation-wide survey was undertaken to analyse the nexus between informal employment and migration. Yet, the survey was a first attempt in this context for Albania and provided only for a generic overview of the nexus between informal employment and migration in the country. To ensure an optimal use of the survey content and information available, an inter-institutional working group on Labour Market Information was created and specific steps were taken to improve statistical data collection and generation through a comprehensive and inclusive process to review the Labour Force Survey (LFS) questionnaire and identify relevant definitions and indicators with regard to employment and labour market statistics. This exercise led to a sustainable solution to the chronic problem of insufficient labour market statistics in Albania, particularly through the insertion of questions on informal employment and migration in the questionnaire of the quarterly LFS (together with a youth module). Through the collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, a MoLSAEO/YEM-engendered change in the legislation regarding public sector support to agricultural projects, generated significant impact on the formalization of self-employed individuals in agriculture (estimated 6,000 people formalized nation-wide) in 2011.

## **Outcome 2:**

As a result of the joint programme, Regional Employment Boards in the two pilot regions have now greater ownership of local processes, both in terms of the implementation of innovative youth employment programmes and the necessary financing mechanisms. The Regional Employment Fund (REF) was established (even though with some delay) in the Shkodra region, which has a slightly broader and diverse industrial base and a more established local administration. The REF made the local government authorities and Regional Employment Office accountable for the funding allocation that was transferred directly from YEM to the regional partners. In the Kukes region it was not possible to set up a Regional Employment Fund. Therefore, the mitigation strategy consisted in developing a Territorial Employment Pact for Youth as a substitute to the initial objective of the Regional Employment Fund.

Youth labour market programmes, aimed at reducing the risk of migration, were put in place in the two pilot regions, including a massive information campaign and activation measures, facilitating the access of young people from the rural areas to employment services. At the national and at the regional level a number of innovative programmes were piloted to provide incentives to potential youth returns and for youth employment. Some of these included a training and subsidised employment period through a Private-Public Partnership (PPP); in other cases students from abroad were matched with potential employers; and a range of opportunities were devised and tried on experimental basis to see which could be most useful in providing employment opportunities for youth. Two Youth Employment Service (YES) centres were established in Shkodra and Kukes under the aegis of the joint programme, while additional YES centres are gradually being established in other regions of the country. There is therefore clear evidence to support the on-going relevance of the YEM JP objectives over the short to medium-term.

The programme also contributed to a greater awareness among disadvantaged youth in Shkodra and Kukes regions on safe migration and risks of irregular migration. At request of the Government counterparts, the awareness campaign was also placed in the context of the visa liberalization process between the European Union and Albania (concluded in December 2010).<sup>2</sup> It did so through the implementation of the Information and Awareness Raising Campaign “90 days. 6 months. Welcome Home” throughout 2011 in Shkodra and Kukes regions. At present, the government and programme partners are exploring ways to expand such intervention in other regions of the country and to diversify the range of the target group.

## **Outcome 3:**

Internet and social networks were used for the identification of young Albanian students graduating abroad. In cooperation with private enterprises, these data allowed for the creation of links with the national labour market. Cooperation with organizations of the Albanian Diaspora abroad has been actively pursued, in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The outreach events provided a platform for establishing dialogue and promoting interaction between national and local authorities and Diaspora representatives. The purpose was to raise the awareness of the diaspora and provide linkages both for investments into the country and to facilitate virtual and potential returns to Albania.

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<sup>2</sup> The impact assessment exercise conducted indicated that the Information Campaign has achieved its goal and objectives by contributing to increased awareness, understanding and knowledge of regular migration, risks and consequences of irregular migration amongst disadvantaged youth, primarily at schools as well as rights and obligations in the context of EU visa liberalization process and distinction between the latter and regular migration. See Impact Assessment Final Report, June 2012

During the programme implementation phase, a consultative process with national and regional authorities on how to best reach and mobilize Albanian communities abroad to contribute to local development in Albania was undertaken. Such consultations were deemed necessary to leverage synergies between the Brain Gain programme and the intended results on Diaspora engagement, as well as to address the lack of good practice examples in the Albanian context on linking emigration of Albanians and development of the country, both from a human and economic perspective. Thus, without changing the original programme result, media campaigns and massive information dissemination were replaced by four outreach activities with the Albanian diaspora and a seminar with the Albanian diplomats serving in main destination countries to Albanian migrants. The purpose of these events was to build trust and relationships between national/local authorities and diaspora and to create a welcoming environment for diaspora engagement in development activities (through frequent information sharing on business climate and regulations, proactive role of Albanian diplomatic missions abroad, etc). The recommendations of the outreach activities provided suggestions to national and local authorities for further policy planning and programming (as in the case of the formulation of the country Strategy on Migration for the period 2013-2018). Some of the recommendations are:

- Initiatives to promote investment of Diaspora in Albania should be based on concrete studies of the investment potential of diaspora groups in various countries of destination since the latest have different characteristics, needs and potential for investment. Relevant Albanian government institutions should take a lead on this (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy, AIDA, etc)
- The Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) is playing an active role in promoting foreign direct investments in Albania (including diaspora investments). Yet, in order to sustain outreach efforts to Albanian communities and increase their impact, it is recommended that more specific information on investment opportunities in Albania is prepared by AIDA for wider distribution in destination counties. Such information should include opportunities for investment in specific sectors of the Albanian economy, available labour force in the country (qualifications, skills and so on), projects already developed and for which the government is seeking financial support, and information on how to open and operate a business in Albania.
- Frequent exchanges between Albanian national and local authorities and Diaspora groups are key to promote investment in Albania, considering that Diaspora groups need to be continuously updated on legislative and institutional changes as well as the overall business climate. In this respect, the Albanian Diplomatic missions abroad should be encouraged to play this intermediary role between Albanian authorities and Diaspora groups. Support may envision frequent information to be provided to the Albanian embassies on all development aspects of the country and opportunities (through publications, notices on economic forums, etc), financial support to organize various events with the Albanian community (seminars, round tables, conferences).
- The Chambers of Commerce in Albania should play a more active role in promoting foreign direct investments in the country (including here migrant remittances and savings) in particular in less developed areas of the country but with a high potential for development in tourism or agricultural sectors. This can be done through better contacts with the Albanian Embassies abroad and contacts with Albanian entrepreneurs, business representatives in destination countries, and through a better coordination with all concerned parties. To the extent possible joint investment forums between Albania and destination countries should be organized with the support of Albanian business community in these countries (good practices are the British- Albanian Investment Forum, the Belgian Albanian Investment

Forum, the USA – Albania Investment Forum, etc).

- The financial crisis in neighbouring countries, which are also main destination countries to Albania migrants, Greece and Italy, should be managed with care. Contrary to overall expectations, massive returns of Albanian migrants did not take place, yet migrants in Greece are transferring their savings in Albania and Albanian financial institutions and the banking sector should be engaged to promote their productive use. The role of AIDA is seen as very important in promoting productive use of remittances and migrants' savings for investment in particular in the present situation. Albanian institutions should identify the best options to attract migrant's savings and remittances (for example guarantee funds for their deposits, grant schemes and so on).
- In relation to the above, specific attention should be paid to the migrants returning to rural areas and investing in the agricultural sector as this is the most underfunded sector of the Albanian economy, but with a huge development and employment generation potential, especially for young people. Joint ventures among farmers should be encouraged and financially supported in this respect by public and private financing institutions.
- As concerns the return of qualified nationals and overall support of the Brain Gain programme it was highlighted that in a few instances the procedures were long. In addition the programme supports primarily academia, while there are many good professionals from Albania in other fields too. Therefore the programme should widen its scope of support to other categories of professionals (technology experts, doctors, etc)
- Information campaigns of the Migration Counters (*Sportele Migracioni*) in destination countries should be undertaken with the support of Albanian Diplomatic missions abroad as these new structures and their services (including investment orientation) are unknown among Albanian migrant communities abroad.

Nevertheless, the effects of outreach activities for diaspora mobilization can only be measured over time.

**b. In what way do you feel that the capacities developed during the implementation of the joint programme have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes?**

One aspect that needs to be highlighted is the experimental nature of the YEM JP in fostering collaboration and dialogue among UN Agencies and participating Organizations, line Ministries and civil society, through joint planning and implementation (working groups, coaching, training). The new working methodology established among Ministries and between the national and regional levels may well represent a trigger for accessing IPA funding as well as the resources of the European Social Fund over the longer term. The close collaboration with and the involvement of MoLSAEO during all the processes has made possible that youth employment is now a high priority for the Government of Albania. In the same way, the successful implementation of decentralised employment programmes seen in Kukes and Shkodra came from the direct involvement of the YEM staff in capacity building interventions, which helped to build trust and mutual collaborations among partners at the local level.

Inter-institutional working groups have often been a vehicle at the national level to inject capacities and ensure sustainability of interventions. For instance, a large investment was made in the capacity development of Labour Market (LM) institutions to integrate and operationalize national policy priorities on youth employment through the development of a NAP, which emerged as a joint collaboration from policy makers in multiple line ministries, employment services, INSTAT, as well as workers' and employers' organizations. As a result, the YE-NAP outlines 44 policy options that cut across several policy areas, relying on the inputs of several LM institutions in the delivery of both supply- and demand-side interventions. By the same

token, the establishment of the interdisciplinary working group on Labour Market Information was an innovative tool for the identification of common criteria that allowed collecting reliable data for policy makers and labour market actors and increase the credibility of evidence that should underpin the country's policy. The YEM capacity building programme on labour market statistics allowed inserting in the LFS a set of variables (28) needed for monitoring the implementation of the NAP (and the broader employment policy), in view of integrating measurable targets on youth employment and migration in the NSDI.

At the regional level, regional councils are key partners that have been given responsibility for the local development of employment programmes through the use, for instance, of the REF in Shkodra and the TEP in Kukes. A network of regional actors that can contribute to the issue of youth employment has been established in both regions and have been participating in the delivery of several interventions of the programme, including outreach events to the diaspora and information campaigns. The capacity development provided to the regional employment offices through the establishment of the YES centres, as well as through capacity strengthening of Migration Counters has resonated throughout the implementation of decentralized interventions, where the Regional Employment Offices often assumed the leadership on technical issues through the YES centres and Migration Counters within the regional and local employment offices.

The collaborative delivery of activities with youth organizations and trade unions has also allowed to build their capacity to provide inputs on youth employment not only during YEM implementation but also in other fora where employment and social policy issues are discussed.

**c. Report on how outputs have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes based on performance indicators and explain any variance in actual versus planned contributions of these outputs. Highlight any institutional and/or behavioural changes, including capacity development, amongst beneficiaries/right holders.**

As indicated in the independent Final Evaluation Report, as a result of the JP implementation there has been an important change of mindset both at the national level and at the regional level on youth employment issues.<sup>3</sup> At the national level the JP achieved the following results: i) attitudinal change regarding employment and migration as multidimensional issues, which are not specific only to an institution but concern different actors at different levels. The implementation of the programme was determined to a large degree by the participation and cooperation of the different stakeholders. The JP has triggered a collaborative working culture within different institutions for the development of partnership between actors at different levels (government, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society, and young people themselves) to elaborate and implement strategies, in order to give young people a concrete chance to find a job and hope for a better future. ii) Based on the above, improved collaboration, knowledge sharing and increased dialogue between line ministries that were used to vertical reporting only.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to output 1.1 "The capacity of policy makers to address the nexus between informal employment and migration of young people enhanced" the inter-institutional working group on Labour Market Information Analysis (LMIA), led by MoLSAEO and INSTAT, has introduced in the LFS survey several new questions, as well as a Youth Module in order to capture informal employment, gender equality, and decent work conditions. The joint collaboration has contributed to avoiding data duplication among different institutions and has improved the capacity of the Albanian government to monitor youth labour market indicators

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<sup>3</sup> Report on the Final Evaluation of the YEM programme, page 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, page 29.

and thus to develop better-tailored interventions and programmes. From 2011 onwards, the quarterly LFS provides an increasing amount of quality data, which support evidence-based youth employment policy.

The YE-NAP (Output 1.2) is the result of the joint work and collaboration of the policy makers at ministries of Education and Science; Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports; Economy, Trade and Energy; Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection; Foreign Affairs; the National Employment Service of Albania, the National Statistical Institute and employers' and workers' organizations, coordinated by the Employment Policy Department of MoLSAEO. A very comprehensive approach was taken in the development of the NAP. It entailed the identification of suitable policy options at national and local level to address youth employment as well as the means of implementation. The National Action Plan on Youth Employment (2010-13) (YE-NAP) was officially adopted in 2010 and represents the most important guidance tool for the implementation of youth employment policies and programmes. Approximately 11ml USD were pledged for its implementation (by the Government and other partners). Other donors are now paying additional attentions to youth employment, allowing the Ministry of Labour to negotiate additional funds to be allocated for priorities highlighted in the YE-NAP. The Swiss Development Cooperation has pledged USD 2 ml toward the implementation of NAP objectives.

The overall development of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for youth employment created innovative collaboration between public and private sector for the implementation of the work training programmes targeting disadvantaged youth, through the combination of on-the-job training with classroom training and wage subsidy. These measures were designed to achieve a dual objective: enhance the labour capacities of disadvantaged unemployed youth, making them more attractive to the employers as well as providing incentives to the enterprises to recruit and retain the participants. An innovative aspect of the PPPs is the involvement of various actors in the provision of employment-related services. The National Employment Service (NES) and its local branches, as front-line service providers, as well as employers' organizations, chambers of commerce and other private sector intermediary organizations, trade unions, vocational training institutions, representative of youth organizations, and youth networks have partnered at different stages of the PPP schemes. An interesting aspect of the PPPs is the involvement of a private sector intermediary organization, not only in the identification of existing vacancies, but also in the overall implementation and monitoring of the measures. The introduction of this broker in the relationship between NES and private businesses has allowed NES to focus entirely on the provision of employment services and has increased the capacity of the programme to promote employment by matching skills of young people with the required standards of private businesses, in addition to adding a check-and-balance system in public-private relations. Thanks to the PPPs, 328 disadvantaged youth were placed on work-training programmes.

Regional Coordination Mechanisms (Regional Employment Boards, REBs) were established in both the regions of Kukes and Shkodra. The JP has triggered a change process by supporting the leading role of regional authorities, which represent an important step forward in the process of administrative decentralization. It contributed to capacity development of local actors to provide services and to express suggestions and concerns about the impact of current policies at local level. At the same time, thanks to instruments such as the Shkodra Regional Employment and Training Fund (Sh-RETF) and the Territorial Employment Pact for Youth (Y-TEP), central institutions have gained a better understanding of the dynamics and challenges of the local labour markets. The development of the Y-TEP, for instance, represents an institutional innovation based on consultation and negotiated planning of over 40 public and private actors at national and local level, which came together on developing employment objectives, with a special emphasis on formalization of young workers and enterprises as well

as on job creation. The TEP objectives revolve around 942 “measurable” jobs to be created/formalized within one year. An important element that allows measuring the quality of the intervention is its ability to trigger change by encouraging the establishment of consolidated networks that can be institutionalised through the Regional Employment Board. Such experience feeds also confidence on the feasibility of replicating the TEP model. Three new Y-TEPs will be realised in 2012 (after the end of YEM) in the Regions of Kukes, Shkodra, and Lezha, through a new UN joint project financed by the Swiss Development Cooperation. The TEP interventions come in support of policies targeting the development and formalization of the agricultural sector by promoting the formalization of small and micro enterprises, especially in remote areas. This is also due to a more systematic coordination among national government actors on youth employment objectives. For instance, TEP supported the Ministries of Labour, Agriculture and Finance to modify the criteria for accessing resources under the Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (PARAD). Likewise, the Shkodra RETF was designed along the model of the European structural funds, such as the European Social Fund (ESF). The Regional Employment Board identified priorities for the region with regard to employment promotion.<sup>5</sup> These priorities were implemented through individual projects run by participating organisations (known as ‘beneficiaries’). Beneficiary designed projects, applied for funding and, if this was granted by the REB through its Evaluation Committee, implemented the project. With an overall contribution of 90,000 USD the RETF created 305 jobs under the 2 priority areas.

The final evaluation report of the programme, recommended the support of value chain projects in particular for remote rural and mountain area development. It maintained that interventions in mountainous areas, part of the TEP activities in “Formalization of employment through upgrading of rural enterprises” should embrace the complete value chain (inputs, farming, processing, transport and marketing) rather than parts of the chain. The evaluation reiterates that processing level should have a special focus, which is in line with broader government of Albania policy to encourage the shift from subsistence to market-oriented agriculture and the development of agro-industry, since it creates the added value through commodity processing and transformation. This is a way of involving also disadvantaged youth in these areas through specific training on food processing, triggering a mechanism of youth employment as well as entrepreneurial area development.

A technical assessment of these interventions was initiated after the last extension of the joint programme, for a better design of TEP actions in the scope of the new SDC funded joint UNDP – ILO project. This assessment tried to take stock of the results achieved several months after the completion of the project support. Regarding the Territorial Employment Pact in Kukes, the focus was on assessing the level of impact of the 6 service lines (and the 12 associated actions) and how they have responded to the youth employment challenges of the region. With regards to the Shkodra RETF, the scope of the assignment is entailing the review of the designs of the intervention and the associated implementation process modalities, with

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<sup>5</sup> Under the YEM programme the SH-RETF supported innovative employment promotion measures within these two priority areas:

Priority 1. Job creation and options to enhance employability. Measures to expand employment and skills development opportunities for young workers (aged 16 to 29 years old) and facilitate the school-to-work transition; promotion of self-employment and social businesses/enterprises.

Priority 2. Gender-sensitive measures to support the transition to formalization of informal enterprises and informal young workers (particularly contributing family members) at risk of labour market exclusion and migration.

the aim of identifying implementation bottlenecks, and suggest mitigations measures should such an intervention be replicated.

Some of the key findings in Kukes after the implementation of the Pact show that:

- from 245 new job posts that were going to be created from Pact in non agriculture sectors:
- 48 persons continue to be employed in the relevant sectors (drilling and tourism industry),
- 30 youngsters (16-18 years old) that have dropped schools earlier, contribute during the summer season in the guest houses run by their families.
- from 195 new job posts that were going to be created by the Pact in the agriculture sector:
- 168 farmers continue to be employed in the sector and pay regularly the social insurance contributions.

After verifications with the Regional Directorate of Agriculture in the Kukes Region and the social insurance office appears that 168 out of 185 benefiting farmers of the 5 Pact schemes result to have paid their contributions to the Social Insurance Institute for the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2012. (185 farmers beneficiaries of Pact are insured for 12 months period, from June 2011 to June 2012, at SII as a result of the criteria defined from the YEM Programme for the Pact beneficiaries). During the Pact's designing phase, the Department of Agriculture was involved to establish supporting/activity schemes which would continue to be supported after the first year through the Agency for Agricultural and Rural Development (AZHBR) funds. i.e: farmers that sowed apple plantations through the support of the YEM Programme, during the second year they have been supported through AZHBR for the instalment of the irrigation system for that plantation; farmers that increased the quantity of their flock through YEM Programme now benefit from the flock scheme of AZHBR and so on.

Furthermore, as a direct result of this YEM intervention the Ministry of Agriculture (through AZHBR), MADA and SNV Albania, 3 most important investors of the rural and agricultural development in this Region from 2012, now accept applications and finance only farmers that are insured as self-employed in agriculture for the respective year. During consultations with the Agriculture Department it was found out that since during 2012 this criteria was applied for the first time, many farmers have applied in the name of the household members that are beneficiaries of old age pension and the specialists of the Regional Departments have accepted their applications. The Kukes region is the only region in all country that starting from 2012 has marked increase in the total number of the insured farmers, compared with 2011, with about 174 persons.

YES centres progress data (in Shkodra and Kukes– supported by the YEM – and in Fier, Durres, and Elbasan) include the following achievements:

- 1,340 youth from high schools received training and orientation sessions (in YES), based on the informative packages developed;
- 780 youth received career assessment and guidance sessions (in YES);
- 704 youth were successfully placed in a job (construction, services, clothes manufacturing) –;
- 772 youth were placed in internships schemes.

The capacity of the staff of the regional and local employment offices in Shkodra and Kukes on migration management were strengthened through training and provision of technical expertise. In addition, an information campaign on safe migration, risks of irregular migration and visa liberalisation was successfully carried out with the support of academic institutions, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Interior and local organizations. The impact assessment report emphasized that there was good evidence that the information campaign has achieved its goal and objectives by contributing to increased awareness, understanding and knowledge of regular migration, risks and consequences of irregular migration amongst disadvantaged youth, primarily at schools as well as rights and obligations in the context of EU visa liberalization process and distinction between the latter and regular migration. The campaign succeeded in reaching out to a higher number of youth than originally planned (11,000 vs. 3,500) and distributed more information packages than originally planned (6,500 vs. 3,500) at no additional cost.

Youth organisations, such as the National Youth Council, were active participants in the JP, as they actively engaged with the trade unions and the Ministry of Education in a massive multi-media national campaign on Youths' Rights at Work (YR@W). Based on the Albanian adaptation of the ILO manual for the promotion of the rights of young people in the World of Work, the campaign was officially launched on May 1st 2012 and will unfold until the end of the year (well beyond the end of YEM).

The JP has supported the process of mobilization of high skilled human resources from abroad for their successful return and integration in the Albanian labour market through the internship schemes and outreach activities with the Albanian diaspora in main destination countries. The scheme of internship is implemented in close partnerships with the private sector and a local association, the Albanian Students Abroad Network (ASAN), which developed a database of Albanian students abroad and has established extended relations with the private sector. This mapping of Albanian students is available on-line ([www.punesimirinor.com](http://www.punesimirinor.com)), where a revolving database of existing vacancies in the private sector can be accessed. The intention is to facilitate the employment of Albanian graduates from abroad in public administration and academia as well as in the private sector. In the process of matching of young Albanians studying abroad with private companies seeking young recruits through an internship programme, about 738 students registered into the existing website, 230 of which have applied and 100 have been selected for the internship experience. Following a final information campaign targeting recent Albanian graduates in December 2011, the target of 100 recent graduates being placed in local companies for internship positions was achieved.

The programme facilitated direct contacts and dialogue between representatives of central and local government, public investment agencies and Albanian communities in USA, the UK, Greece, Italy and Belgium (entrepreneurs, migrant associations, students, etc). Despite the fact that the effects of migration activities abroad may only be measured over time, a number of follow up activities initiated by government institutions and/or migrant groups have taken place, while others are on going. This is an important change in the attitude of programme partners to which the programme activities have positively contributed to.

The Albanian embassy in London organized the fourth Albania- UK Investment Forum on 25 January 2012 aimed at promoting foreign direct investments in Albania, among which those of Albanian citizens living and working in the UK.<sup>6</sup> On 5 June 2012 the Albanian embassy in Belgium in cooperation with Tirana Chamber of Commerce, the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) and Belgium Agency of Import and Export organized the first

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<sup>6</sup> The investments made by Albanian citizens living abroad are categorized by the Albanian law under foreign direct investments.

Business Forum Albania- Belgium<sup>7</sup>. The forum provided the opportunity for information exchange and identification of areas of cooperation between economic actors in Belgium and Albania. As a follow up to the conference in New York held on 3 December 2011, the representatives of SIVA partners, a real estate company, co-owned by a representative of the Albanian Diaspora undertook a visit to Albania and had a series of meetings with the Prime Minister to discuss investment opportunities in the tourism sector. After the Conference held in Milan, Italy on 9 June 2012, the Association of the Albanian Entrepreneurs in Italy (ASSOS), organized a visit of a group of Italian and Albanian businessmen from the region of Tuscany to Albania (in Tirana, Shkodra and Lezha) in mid -June 2012 to promote economic cooperation between Albania and Italy.

To facilitate further information provision to Albanian communities abroad on investment opportunities in Albania, the programme supported the preparation and publication of the first magazine in Albanian language on investment opportunities of the Albanian Investment Agency. The magazine provides information on the business climate in Albania, business registration and licensing, advantages of doing business in Albania, priority investment sectors, facilities for foreign investors, and so on. A TV spot, calling on the Albanian Diaspora to continue supporting socio-economic development of the country is constantly displayed in public televisions at the international airport of the country (as well as at AIDAs webpage).

- d. Who are and how have the primary beneficiaries/right holders been engaged in the joint programme implementation? Please disaggregate by relevant category as appropriate for your specific joint programme (e.g. gender, age, etc)**

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<sup>7</sup> The Forum was also attended by the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Mr, Edmond Haxhinasto)

**Direct Beneficiaries (as of 24 June 2012)**

Beneficiary type	Targeted	Reached	Category of beneficiary	Type of service or goods delivered
Youth female / NAP	32,500 <sup>8</sup>	3,000 <sup>9</sup>	Youth/Female	National and Local Employment Action Plans
Youth male / NAP	32,500 <sup>10</sup>	3,000 <sup>11</sup>	Youth/Male	National and Local Employment Action Plans
Youth female / TEP	350	342	Youth/Female	Capacity Building
Youth male / TEP	650	600	Youth/Male	Capacity Building
INSTAT	1	1	National Institutions	Labor Market Statistics Reflect YEM indicators
National Institutions	20	20	National Institutions	Enhanced Inter-institutional Coordination at Central, Regional and Local Levels
Kukes and Shkodra Regional Councils	2	2	Local Institutions	Enhanced Inter-institutional Coordination at Central, Regional and Local Levels
Kukes and Shkodra Regional Employment Offices	2	2	Local Institutions	Enhanced Inter-institutional Coordination at Central, Regional and Local Levels
Migration Counters within regional and local employment offices in the regions of Shkodra and Kukes	24	24	Migration Counters staff as well as other staff of employment offices	Training on migration management issues (policy, legislation and service delivery)
NGOs working for TEP implementation	14	14	Civil Society Organisations	Active Employment Policies

<sup>8</sup> This is the overall NAP target, which is beyond the implementation and the direct sphere of influence of YEM.

<sup>9</sup> This is an approximate figure of the number of direct beneficiaries that may have already been touched by the implementation of NAP policy options and interventions, either by YEM, Government, or other projects/partners.

<sup>10</sup> This is the overall NAP target, which is beyond the implementation and the direct sphere of influence of YEM.

<sup>11</sup> This is an approximate figure of the number of direct beneficiaries that may have already been touched by the implementation of NAP policy options and interventions, either by YEM, Government, or other projects/partners.

Men	20,000	20,000	Citizens/Men	Awareness Campaigns on Safe migration, risks of Irregular Migration and visa liberalisation
Men from Ethnic Groups	120	120	Citizens/Men	Awareness Campaigns on Safe migration, risks of Irregular Migration and visa liberalisation
Women	20,000	20,000	Citizens/Women	Awareness Campaigns on Safe migration, risks of Irregular Migration and visa liberalization
Women from Ethnic Groups	140	140	Citizens/Women	Awareness Campaigns on Safe migration, risks of Irregular Migration and visa liberalisation
High Schools	23	28	Schools (and 36 seminars) <sup>12</sup>	Awareness Campaigns on Safe migration, risks of Irregular Migration and visa liberalisation
Youth (both at school and not at school)	3500	11,000	Youth	Awareness Campaigns on Safe migration, risks of Irregular Migration and visa liberalisation
Albanian Diaspora living in UK, Belgium, USA, Greece, Italy	164	400	Albanian Citizens ;leaving abroad	Conferences to promote cooperation between authorities at the national and local level with Albanian Diaspora groups on development initiatives
Disadvantaged youth	164	156	Youth/Female	On-The Job Training
Disadvantaged youth	164	157	Youth/Male	On-The Job Training
Private enterprises	37	37	Business	PPPs – Work training programmes
Recent graduates from universities abroad	50	58	Migrant/Female	Internships / On-The Job Training
Recent graduates from universities abroad	50	42	Migrant/Male	Internships / On-The Job Training
Private enterprises	63	63	Business	PPPs – Internship schemes
Youth Employment Service (YES) Centers in Kukes, Shkodra, Elbasan, Durres & Fier regions	5	5	Local Institutions	Capacity Building
Employees serving at YES centers	12	12	Civil Servants/Women	Capacity Building

<sup>12</sup> Some schools were visited more than once because of the high number of students

Employees serving at YES centers	12	12	Civil Servants/Men	Capacity Building
Girls from Shkodra & Kukes regions	150	150	Youth/Female	Life Skills Training
Boys from Shkodra & Kukes regions	150	150	Youth/Male	Life Skills Training
Girls / Secondary Schools	170	170	Youth/Female	Curriculum and Training Materials Education
Boys / Secondary Schools	170	170	Youth/Male	Curriculum and Training Materials Education

**e. Describe and assess how the joint programme and its development partners have addressed issues of social, cultural, political and economic inequalities during the implementation phase of the programme:**

**a. To what extent and in which capacities have socially excluded populations been involved throughout this programme?**

In several instances, needs assessments have been carried out or updated prior to implementation of YEM interventions. These exercises have often included the institutions through which the services to the socially excluded populations would have been delivered (such as for instance in the case of NES, Don Bosco, etc), or the socially excluded people/groups themselves. In the case of Don Bosco, the following categories of youth have been targeted in the training:

- Unemployed (in partnership with the regional employment office (40%)
- Youth in informal employment (15%)
- School dropout (30%)
- Youth from marginalised groups: Roma, orphans, living with disability (15%)

There have been situations in which rural households have been invited to meetings to provide information about the main issues the YEM should address, or focus groups have been organised with young people from various social contexts to better design and target the interventions, or discuss the results of research and surveys. Furthermore, employment programmes have been carefully targeted to the local socio-economic situation. For instance, specific sectors were identified as critical ones in the realization of the PPPs. For the implementation of the TEP in Kukes, the target groups were represented by informal workers (self-employed) in agriculture, young people in vulnerable employment such as contributing family workers, young unemployed from remote areas, and so on. They were identified through local working groups that included also the local/traditional village “chiefs”. In the region of Shkodra, the target groups for the Regional Employment and Training Fund (SH-RETF) were identified by the Regional Employment Board and included young informal workers, long-term unemployed, young people coming from marginalized areas, low skilled women and youth and school drop-outs.

The information campaign on safe migration was developed on the basis of a field assessment of the situation in order to better identify the needs of youth for information on safe migration and to determine best communication channels.

**b. Has the programme contributed to increasing the decision making power of excluded groups vis-a-vis policies that affect their lives? Has there been an increase in dialogue and participation of these groups with local and national governments in relation to these policies?**

Youth groups that were traditionally excluded have been developing multi-layered levels of dialogue with local institutions. Youth selected from unemployed, in informal employment and from other marginalized groups were trained on livelihood, career development, rights at work, and entrepreneurship. The awareness on their rights and their capacity of taking decisions for themselves and letting their voice be heard have increased. The farmers and self-employed individuals who benefited from upgrading and advisory services acquired skills and knowledge that would allow them to increase their participation in economic and social life.

In some instances, participatory planning has been used intensively at the local level, such as in the case of the Y-TEP formulation. The process consisted of:

1. Participatory identification of a relevant territory (Kukes Region and micro-areas within Kukes, with similar challenges and potential for development).
2. Dialogue and collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and the regional and local governments to seek the commitment of those who have the resources and responsibility for the future development of the region and its communities.
3. Completion of a participatory strategic audit of the areas (for instance through value chain and sectoral analysis) for the determination of problems, common concerns, and prospects of the different actors who are active in the field of employment in the respective area.
4. Identification of a planning group/development agency responsible for the strategy (the Kukes Regional Employment Board, supported by a team of technical specialists from the Ministry of Labour and the YEM programme). The group is also responsible for continuous monitoring and for evaluation.
5. Selection of a set of strategic interventions that are attainable within the relevant time-scale and with measurable impacts in terms of employment generation/formalization. These are formally laid down in an agreement described as a “territorial employment pact”.
6. Mobilisation of the appropriate capacities and organisations for delivery, according to transparency and efficiency criteria. In this context, national and local authorities, as well as other public entities, undertake those commitments toward simplification and acceleration of procedures; banks and other credit institutions, within the limits of their statutes, assume the commitment to support financial assistance; private sector, trade unions and other civil society organizations carry out their roles as stipulated in the TEP.

The outreach activities with the Albanian communities abroad were attended by several migrant associations in the destination countries who voiced their concerns about the organization of the Albanian diaspora abroad, the need for more open and frequent communication with Albanian authorities in order to better engage Albanian diaspora in all development processes of the country (including policy formulation and implementation). This concern was also discussed in the seminar with the Albanian diplomats held in Tirana in July 2012, and consequently to address this, it was agreed that once the first draft of the new country Strategy on Migration for the period 2013-2018 will be ready, the Albanian Diplomatic missions in the main destination countries will undertake a consultative process of the draft strategy with the migrant/diaspora communities to ensure that their ‘voices are heard’ and that the strategy provisions reflect their needs and today migration reality.

- c. Has the programme and its development partners strengthened the organization of citizen and civil society groups so that they are better placed to advocate for their rights? If so how? Please give concrete examples.**

Young Albanians generally lack knowledge about their rights and responsibilities at work. This compromises their success in entering the labour market and makes them particularly vulnerable, also contributing to increase the number of people treading the forgotten meanders of informal economy. As part of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment (2010-13), MoLSAEO and the social partners (in particular BSPSH and

KSSH) committed to complementing their national-wide information and awareness raising campaigns with the development and information and training material to raise youth awareness about their rights at work. These materials on Youths' Rights at Work (YR@W) have been delivered to young people through schools, employment offices and the local networks of the social partners. Other partners were mobilized to join the initiative, such as the Ministry of Education, the Municipality of Tirana, the Administrations of Kukes and Shkodra regions through their respective multi-stakeholder Regional Employment Board. The partners used the structures and outreach of the Albania Youth Council (AYC). The AYC was responsible for supporting the trade unions in the preparation of Training of Trainers (ToT) in Tirana, Kukes and Shkodra. The trainees included trade union members, members of the network of social workers, member of youth organizations and teachers. ToT was the prelude to a massive nation-wide campaign on YR@W, which also used theatre representations in remote villages (with young volunteers transposing the YR@W training materials into plays) and social media (such as YouTube).

One specific service line offered through the Y-TEP placed particular emphasis on association building in view to offering voice and representation to informal workers (particularly self-employed) in agriculture. Within this framework, the YEM programme puts notable emphasis on the need for a stronger cooperation between national and regional institutions and tried to involve them in the implementation of the programme in order to facilitate the connections among local micro-enterprises, workers and unions. Several rural household joined networks of producers and agricultural associations through which they have now better chances to advocate for their rights and to affect policy decisions (at least at the local level).

**d. To what extent has the programme (whether through local or national level interventions) contributed to improving the lives of socially excluded groups?**

Thanks to the programme many individuals have improved their skills and their economic status. Many youth are now in decent work or in on-the-job trainings. Over 60% of the beneficiaries of the work-training programmes continue to be in employment. Many households working in agriculture were able to upgrade their activities, developed networks and established relations with retailers. Many young people received career counselling in order to enter the labour market more easily. In order to assess "to what extent" the programme was successful in these efforts, reference can be made to the Final Evaluation Report.

**f. Describe the extent of the contribution of the joint programme to the following categories of results:**

- a. Paris Declaration Principles
- Leadership of national and local governmental institutions

The Final Evaluation Report emphasizes the strong ownership of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, which has taken a very active role in supporting the implementation of YEM. This is reflected both at senior management level, through the co-chair of the Programme Management Committee and at the level of technical working groups responsible for specific activities (such as the National Action Plan on Youth Employment or the Working Group on Labour Market Statistics). While the commitment and willingness are constantly reiterated, limited

institutional capacity has at times proven to be an obstacle to the participation of government representatives and the continuous provision of inputs. Government institutions were front-runners with regard to YEM policy/decision making, management, and provision of services.

Several ministries have been involved in drafting of NAP and their staff received trainings in order to improve their ability to analyse economic policies.

The information and awareness raising campaign on safe migration serves an excellent example of ownership of the programme activities by Government entities. The outreach activities in all rural and urban areas of Shkodra and Kukes region were organized and delivered by the Ministry of Labour (with the support of Regional and Local Employment Offices where Migration Counters are located), the Ministry of Interior (Border and Migration Police) with the technical support of the Ministry of Education and Science. Furthermore, Migration Counters continue to provide information on safe migration opportunities and risks of engaging in irregular migration, reintegration opportunities upon return in the country to all interested individuals in particular potential youth migrants.

The out-of-country events aiming at mobilizing the Albanian communities abroad were also a positive example of good cooperation and ownership of the programme activities by government institutions at the national and local level, such as the Albanian Investment Development Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through its Institute of Diaspora and the Albanian diplomatic missions abroad,) the MoLSAEO (as the lead entity) and the Regional Councils of Shkodra and Kukes.

Regional governments were also clearly at the centre of implementation of programme activities. The Regional Counties have engaged in a number of initiatives with the Albanian entrepreneurs and business associations in destination countries aimed at enhancing investments in these two specific regions, which would bring economic prosperity and prevent emigration of youth from these regions. The regions have also extended through their support to the multi-stakeholder regional employment boards. The Region of Kukes, for instance, has pursued the implementation of the Territorial Employment Pact for Youth (Y-TEP) even throughout the complete change of Administration due to the elections. Both the Regional Employment Boards (REB) have become permanent fora for discussion about employment and labour market issues.

- Involvement of CSO and citizens

Enterprises and private sector intermediary organizations in Albania are relatively new to partnering both with government and international agencies to achieve development objectives. Through corporate social responsibility (CSR) and public private partnership approaches they have been progressively sensitised to what their role could be in the context of MDG Employment target to work jointly on some of the YEM activities.

Local agricultural organizations have been collaborating in the design and delivery of trainings. So have private sector training providers, such as the Don Bosco Institute. The private sector has been involved through the creation of PPPs and the delivery of on-the-job trainings, whereby enterprises have been committed to hire trained individuals.

Albanian migrant' associations in destination countries have played an important role in organizing Diaspora groups to attend and contribute in the discussions with the national and local authorities from Albania in all outreach activities. In particular, the Association of Albanian Entrepreneurs in Italy (ASSOS)<sup>13</sup> played a key role in organizing the programme outreach in Italy, and it is continuing to support all initiatives for investment in various regions of Albania as indicated earlier in the report.

- Alignment and harmonization

The YEM Programme aims to support the efforts of the Albanian Government to integrate policy priorities on youth employment and migration of the NSDI and the strategies on employment and vocational training, migration and youth development. Its implementation approach is based on a set of coordinated interventions that draw on the mandate, expertise and added value of the national and local partners as well as of the UN participating Agencies and IOM. The Programme is aligned with the One UN Programme, endorsed by the government in October 2007, and the UNDAF. It aims to contribute to the achievement of two of the five outcomes of the One UN Programme (i.e. more transparent and accountable governance, and regional development) and to promote partnerships for decent and productive work for youth (MDG8) through joint action. The results of the YEM programme also provided the basis of the employment pillar (Outcome 4) of the new Joint Programme of Cooperation between Albanian Government and the UN for the period 2012-2016 (signed in October 2011).

- Innovative elements in mutual accountability (justify why these elements are innovative)

The difference in the way the UN team in Albania works through Delivering as One has been notable. Most members have taken a lead role in moving the One UN Programme and reform effort. Different Agencies have also taken on leadership in Joint Programmes. Working principles adopted in 2009 with mutual accountability for UN team members and the resident coordinator continued to guide the team and the spirit of working together.

#### b. Delivering as One

- Role of Resident Coordinator Office and synergies with other MDG-F joint programmes  
At the invitation of the Resident Coordinator, the Joint Programme CTAs / coordinators of all JPs have been meeting to share lessons learned and experiences to improve and strengthen the work of all the JPs in the country. The Resident Coordinator has been guiding the strategic direction of the Programme and the strategic development of the JPs and leading resource mobilization efforts. Together with other agency heads, the resident coordinator advocated for a broader UN agenda and more inclusive employment policies based on the YEM experience. She has co-chaired all of the Programme Management Committee (PMC) meetings, which have been convened on a quarterly basis and together with the Lead Government partner

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<sup>13</sup> ASSOS was established in March 2012. Around 26,611 small and medium enterprises are run by Albanian migrants at present in Italy, and according to INAIL<sup>13</sup> 2011 data, 220,473 Albanians work in Italy

and have provided continuous oversight and guidance to all agencies participating in the joint programme.

- Innovative elements in harmonization of procedures and managerial practices (justify why these elements are innovative)

A Joint Programme office hosting some participating agencies, located with the government partner was set up facilitating coordination and fostering a sense of belonging among staff and opportunities for cross fertilization and brainstorming. The UN team in Albania has made considerable progress in terms of identifying innovative ways to work more consistently and harmonize UN practices, utilizing existing agency rules and regulations and finding common best practices and solutions. The need remains for major efforts to harmonize and simplify practices at the headquarters level and provide clear guidance to the UN Country Teams. Such changes include streamlining finance management systems across agencies to reduce difficulties in joint financial reporting, introducing common performance appraisal systems and recognizing the contributions of UN staff to joint work.

- Joint United Nations formulation, planning and management  
The activities of the Joint programme have been structured in order to complement each other and are closely interlinked to prevent the various components of the JP from running in parallel as separate sub-programmes.

### III. GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

#### a. Report key lessons learned and good practices that would facilitate future joint programme design and implementation

Some good practices of the YEM programme were highlighted in the Report on the YEM Final Evaluation. These include:

- the successful partnership with the government and the very good connection and alignment between the activities implemented at the national and regional levels;
- the development of various innovative and creative agreements with national and local level partners from government, private sector, and non-profit organizations;
- the strong responsiveness to changing situations at the regional level;
- the positive experience of the YES centres, through which visible results of dissemination and outreach activities have been recorded;
- the inclusive process to develop the NAP and TEP;
- the success in empowering the different stakeholders, as evidenced by the Shkodra REF experience;
- good technical capacity and ownership of actors at national and regional levels (statistics, LMI, regional development);
- strong technical competencies on employment, youth and migration provided through the participating UN agencies.

The Information Campaign on safe migration was delivered at the momentum of high public interest on EU visa liberalization process and coincided with an intensive audio-visual public information campaign by the Albanian government. While the latter was more a nationwide campaign targeting public at large, the YEM Information Campaign was more focused at regional and local level reaching out specific target audiences (mainly disadvantaged youth) in remote areas of the country where access to quality and reliable information is limited. This

particular context generated high response for cooperation and partnership from governmental institutions (MOLSAEO, MOI, MOED and their dependent institutions REOs, Migration Counters and schools) who considered this as an excellent opportunity to reach-out and inform remote communities, understand better the local context and particular needs for information, establish channels of direct communication and contacts and increase their visibility and role. Similar approaches may again be applied in future programmes by giving due consideration to the context and timing in which the programme takes place and to the necessity of synergizing with government priorities and actions to the benefit of reaching the most vulnerable and in need. The Evaluation Team also drew attention to some lessons learned from the Joint Programme. In particular,

“[...] the lack of lead-time necessary to prepare the ground for implementing these innovative and creative activities. Programmes are never implemented in a linear mode. Changes in the context, in the legislation, in the human resources, the degree of preparation of the different partners, the definition of a partnership strategy, the development of a good communication strategy, all affect implementation. At the design level too much focus is placed on the technical aspects (hardware) and not enough on the socialisation and communication necessary to make people receptive to change (software). A more cautious and realistic time-frame for implementation, recognising the lead-time necessary to prepare the critical mass of actors that will be ready to carry out the process, is needed in future programmes. This is to a large extent the primary reason behind the delays that affected JP implementation, in addition to the elections that were held. Another lesson is that it may be useful to develop a specific communication strategy for JPs. In the case of Albania given the ONE UN framework, a single communication strategy has been developed, but it does not sufficiently support the communication needs of the JP, particularly at the regional levels. To some extent this was addressed by the IOM in the TV spots and communication materials developed, as well as by the UNICEF, but a specific JP communication strategy would have been useful to transmit to all the stakeholders a clear vision of what the JP was trying to achieve, both nationally and regionally.”<sup>14</sup>

**b. Report on any innovative development approaches as a result of joint programme implementation**

The greatest innovative development approach resulting from the YEM joint programme is certainly represented by the support to the decentralization process. This ambitious and innovative process has been realized through the establishment of regional bodies that, just for being composed by local staff, are better informed on local needs and therefore can achieve more effectively the goals established at the national level. In particular, the YEM joint programme supported the activities of the Regional Employment Boards (REBs) in the regions of Shkodra and Kukes. The REB is responsible of the provision of general strategic orientations with regard to the main employment-related challenges and opportunities of the region and it is chaired by the Chairman of the Regional Council. This way, also the pre-existing regional institutions are involved in the decentralization process. The Regional Employment and Training Fund (RETF) was created by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

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<sup>14</sup> Report on the Final Evaluation of the YEM programme, page 7.

(MoLSAEO) and the Council of the Region of Shkodra, serving as a mechanism for the regional administration and other stakeholders to address employment challenges faced at the local level, with a particular focus on youth employment, within the framework of the UN Joint Programme. This represented a successful decentralized organ, established thanks to the cooperation between the government and the UN Joint Programme. The Territorial Employment Pact (TEP) was an absolute institutional innovation in Albania. Based on “negotiated planning”, where different actors at the local level assume complementary and inter-connected roles and responsibilities in view of employment objectives, the 2011 TEP involved around 40 national and local partners. Finally, the Youth Employment Service (YES) established in both regions of Shkodra and Kukes became a new function/capacity of the National Employment Service delegated to the regional employment offices. The service offers to youth information on job positions, vocational educational opportunities, provides job placement services and career counselling also through special institutional arrangements with the local Directorate of Education.

The information campaign on safe migration was conducted by a Communication Team with representatives of IOM, MOLSAEO and MOI, who draw on their institutional mandate and in-house capacities to provide the highest quality information on the issues of regular migration, irregular migration and risks and consequences associated with it, EU visa-free travel rights and obligations. The impact assessment highlighted that interactive information seminars organized in the schools were defined by interviewees as the “*heart and soul*” of the information campaign. It was not a standard information campaign, where participants (students) are subject to theoretical information, but it was designed as a two way dialogue communication campaign where participants were invited to share their information and knowledge on the issues, debate and argue on them by providing a baseline for the level of information among the target group and the relevant gaps to be filled by the communication team. The key messages seen or delivered in the information materials were “broken down” into detailed information, concrete examples and instructions for the audience. The Ministry of Labour and Interior have identified this practice as a very good approach to be applied in other migration related information and awareness raising campaigns.

**c. Indicate key constraints including delays (if any) during programme implementation**

**a. Internal to the joint programme**

During the course of the JP implementation some of the assumptions did not materialise and some changes were made to the initial JP design, which are documented in the Programme Management Committee minutes. These affected in particular Outcome 1, Output 1.1 and Outcome 2, Output 2.1, and Outcome 3.

YEM partners have experienced some challenges with regard to the efforts to integrate youth employment objectives and evidence-based policy-making. This is due to the difficulties in obtaining access to the existing LFS databases on labour market statistics. (see relevant PMC Reports). Thanks to the activities of the Working Groups and the capacity building programmes, INSTAT has taken on board a large share of the comments provided by the working group and has included 38 new variables on youth, informality and migration in the LFS. Nonetheless, it remained difficult for MoLSAEO to have access to the anonymised micro data of the to carry out its own elaborations.

For quite some time there was also hesitation on the part of the Ministry of Labour to launch the YE-NAP, as a considerable amount of resources needed to be mobilised.

Further to field visits to Kukes and meetings with the relevant local authorities, the Regional Employment Fund did not appear to be a feasible option in the Kukes Region. The PMC members were charged to come up with an alternative and less ambitious set of youth

employment initiatives for the region.

Changing circumstances led to the need to adapt elements of the information campaign and of the mobilisation of the Albanian diaspora. A pre-campaign field assessment was undertaken during April- June 2010 to better define messages and tools of the campaign on safe migration. The assessment highlighted a lack of accurate information about visa liberalization, a general awareness on regular migration, *but* a lack of detailed knowledge of consequences of irregular migration. Consequently it was proposed to the Project Management Committee to incorporate in the information campaign a component on visa liberalization process and rights and obligations stemming from it. The new component was well-timed with the EU visa liberalization process by responding to youth's and public's at large interest to know about travel procedures to EU countries, opportunities to work and study in the EU under the new circumstances.

During the YEM formulation phase it was difficult to put across strong elements that could constitute the basis of key and innovative interventions under outcome 3 in view of leveraging synergies between the Brain Gain programme and the intended "Diaspora mobilisation for community development" in Albania. This weakness was complicated by the lack of good practice examples in the Albanian context with regard to linking emigration of Albanians and development of the country from both a human and economic perspective. Therefore, during the implementation phase a consultative process with national and regional authorities involved in programme implementation, on how to reach and mobilize Albanian communities abroad to contribute to local development in Albania was undertaken. The exchanges between the Ministry of Labour, Foreign Affairs, Albanian Agency for Investment and Heads of Regional Councils and Mayors of Kukes and Shkodra, resulted in a change in the outreach approach. Consequently, it was considered opportune and therefore agreed to organize four out of country conferences throughout 2011-2012 instead of information campaign abroad. The conferences would aim at presenting recent developments in Albania, in particular in the targeted regions, development needs and challenges as well as would facilitate dialogue between national and local authorities and Diaspora representatives on how to jointly address these needs.

#### **b. External to the joint programme**

The initial implementation period was difficult because of the national legislative elections that were taking place in June 2009. Results were contested for several months and very late into 2009 a new Government was appointed. As a consequence, much time was lost because it was not possible to secure the commitment and ownership of some of the primary government counterparts, given the potential changes that could emerge from the elections. A similar situation occurred also in May 2011, when local elections took place and activities at the regional level had to drastically slow down in view of the uncertainty of the results (in Shkodra some by-elections had to be repeated, leading to a very delayed appointment of the Regional Council). Natural events, such as prolonged floods in the Shkodra Region and heavy snowfalls in the Kukes Region also caused delays in some of the activities at the local level.

#### **c. Main mitigation actions implemented to overcome these constraints**

The Programme continued to extend technical assistance to MoLSAEO and INSTAT to arrive to a constructive Memorandum of Understanding. Knowledge sharing events on Labour Market Statistics are also organized to facilitate dialogue among the partners (producers and users of labour market statistics)

MoLSAEO has used the National Action Plan on Youth Employment as a main reference in advising donors on key areas of intervention and also as an element of the new One UN programme (Pillar IV). Moreover, MoLSAEO has drafted some project proposals (which draw

on the YE-NAP) and that may obtain funding through other EU instruments in the future. MoLSAEO did undertake very concrete steps toward resource mobilization for the YE-NAP objectives. Some interest was indicated by the Swiss Government, which has launched a 4-year programme on youth employability starting in 2012. This programme takes into consideration the 4 main areas of intervention identified by Albania's National Action Plan on Youth Employment. Moreover, the IPA 2010 project, which started in September 2011, is addressing some of the main areas of intervention identified by the YE- NAP, particularly with regard to Vocational Education and Training.

The initial objective of developing a Kukes REF was substituted by developing a Territorial Employment Pact for Youth. This intervention turned out to be "a blessing in disguise", as the Y-TEP resulted to be a very powerful tool, tailor-made to the specific needs and realities of the region. It also proved to be a flexible, sustainable model, in which other donors have now invested (for replication) after the end of the JP.

**d. Describe and assess how the monitoring and evaluation function has contributed to the:**

**a. Improvement in programme management and the attainment of development results**

The Results Framework specifies the indicators, baseline, targets and means of verification of the project achievements at the output level and therefore could be easily monitored at the PMC meetings.

**b. Improvement in transparency and mutual accountability**

The JP monitoring reports provide the details regarding the outputs achieved. In particular, the need for flexibility and responsiveness from the JP to the constraints and limitations faced during implementation means that some of the initial activities or outputs had to be reformulated. But keeping in mind the strong ownership and commitment of the MoLSAEO throughout the life of the JP, the changes were always done in a way to keep steering the JP towards the achievement of the stated outcomes, particularly as regards to the employment component of the JP. Moreover, PMC Report were always submitted to all stakeholders prior to the PMC, so that, beyond an update of the delivery of outputs, PMC members would also be informed of challenges and possible mitigation factors. Through the process of circulating PMC reports prior to the meeting, informed and transparent decisions could be taken and subsequently reflected in the PMC minutes. Decisions of the PMC formed the basis for action by the YEM management team.

**c. Increasing national capacities and procedures in M&E and data**

As a direct result of YEM implementation, there is more awareness and more capacities on the part of the Ministry of Labour in terms of requesting the relevant data and information to monitor the employment policy cycle. Further work was done in terms of developing and undertaking the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Negotiations are ongoing between INSTAT and MoLSAEO in order for the latter to be able to access the LFS data, so as to inform policy making of labour market institutions. Other institutions, such as the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) are also negotiating similar agreements with INSTAT to have access to labour market and other data.

The Ministry of Labour has participated as external observer to the Final Evaluation of the YEM programme, in an effort to ensure further capacity development and ownership. A person from MoLSAEO, external to the programme was appointed to observe the meetings of the Evaluation Team.

**d. To what extent was the mid-term evaluation process useful to the joint programme?**

The PMC carefully took into account the recommendations made by the mid-term evaluation. The YEM management developed a response plan in order to respond to the recommendations raised in the report. In particular, recommendations revolved around:

- 1) Design of future JPs. These should put clear emphasis on exploring coordination and management mechanisms in order to strengthen efficiency. Whilst all UN agencies can potentially provide very valuable technical input, not all of them are equally resourced and organised to fully act as lead agency. Criteria such as residence status in the country, preferred implementation mechanisms should be considered and agreed prior to nominating the lead agency. Design of future JPs should also actively promote the identification of synergy effects.
- 2) Funding of the NAP as a key issue for sustainability. Whilst the MOLSAEO is actively searching for extra funds, the PMC should closely monitor the process taking place. In the event that the funding gap cannot be fully covered a reduction of activities in the NAP has to be expected. In that event, the PMC should advise MOLSEA to ensure that essential key activities of the NAP are prioritised and maintained, despite limited funds.
- 3) Future programmes. These should seek to increasingly involve national and local authorities, in order to stimulate ownership and capacity building. UN assistance should preferably be used to cover technical assistance and capacity building needs and to promote good practice in active labour market interventions, employment of youth and disadvantaged people, and migration.

**e. Describe and assess how the communication and advocacy functions have contributed to the:**

- a. Improve the sustainability of the joint programme

The programme contributed to raise awareness and support among the donor community about the Joint Programme and share information about the innovative tools and methodologies applied throughout YEM implementation.

The YEM Programme Management Committee has identified four main elements that underpin the sustainability of the results achieved so far in Albania:

- A. Early engagement of partners on sustainability matters. From the very incipit of programme implementation, the Team and the Programme Management Committee (PMC) have given considerable attention to the issue of the sustainability of the interventions. As reflected in the PMC Reports and Minutes, questions of sustainability have often been introduced on the PMC agenda. These discussions have also prompted the programme team to undertake particular actions/activities in response to the PMC recommendations as to ensure that sustainability would be built into the implementation from the early stages.
- B. The Management Improvement Plan (MIP). Emerged from the joint staff retreat with government, agencies and other relevant stakeholders, in response to the midterm Evaluation, the MIP provided a series of concrete recommendations and actions to be undertaken in conjunction with all partners to reinforce (and at times question) the sustainability of YEM interventions. The implementation of the MIP relies also on activities that will be completed during the requested extension period.
- C. Joint delivery of programme activities. The main objective is to ensure transfer of skills, knowledge, and novel business processes. From the very beginning,

YEM has relied to a large extent on the guidance and orientation of the Ministry of Labour and the close collaboration with the other institutions participating in the programme. However, in the last year of implementation the emphasis was on remote technical assistance in support of the leadership of national and local institutions/stakeholders. While this approach may have entailed a longer time frame in terms of gearing up all partners to the level where they could deliver on the programme objectives, it also aimed at reinforcing capacities through learning-by-doing. In turn, this would allow national partners to focus on scalable and replicable interventions (which are two important dimensions of sustainability). A short-term indicator of success is the on-going replication of YEM interventions with other (additional) resources.

- D. Participatory approach: As indicated early in the report, the communication between Albanian diaspora and representatives of national and local authorities in Albania through programme outreach activities helped to present and discuss the concerns of the Albanian communities about the organization of the Albanian diaspora abroad and the need for more open and frequent communication with Albanian authorities in all development processes of the country. Thus it can be concluded that the programme has contributed to a greater participation of its beneficiaries to policy planning in the area of migration management in the country, and to more sustainable efforts to mobilize communities abroad for local development in Albania.

- b. Improve the opportunities for scaling up or replication of the joint programme or any of its component

The main vehicle for ensuring the replicability of YEM components (such in the case of TEPs/ALMMs and YES centres) was the request of the relevant national and local authorities (MoLSAEO or local powers) that stemmed from the ownership of the process and the satisfaction with regard to the results delivered through the pilots.

- c. Providing information to beneficiaries/right holders

Though trainings and information campaigns the programme has delivered to young people new information about their rights and opportunities. The outreach activities in schools included:

- 1,080 students from public and private high schools participated in informal education classes in their schools
- 4,200 info packages were distributed directly or in coordination with project partners, from the beginning of the programme.
- 6,500 information packages on safe migration, rights and obligations were distributed to youth in the regions of Shkodra and Kukes during the information campaign on safe migration. Informative packages are also available at Migration Counters in the regions of Shkodra and Kukes that serve as “one stop shop” for obtaining information on migration issues for all population (including youth).

**f. Please report on scalability of the joint programme and/or any of its components**

- a. To what extent has the joint programme assessed and systematized development results with the intention to use as evidence for replication or scaling up the joint programme or any of its components?

The programme has developed a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy, which stemmed from the Mid-Term Evaluation and was devised in collaboration with local partners. The implementation of this Strategy is also part of the monitoring exercise. The interventions include:

- Reinforcing the capacity of national partners through the development of fundamental knowledge tools and transferring them to the Albanian implementing partners (e.g. staff development programme on labour market statistics and the blueprints for the YES centers). For instance, in view of improving Albania's labour market statistics framework and pursuing evidence-based policy making, Ministerial Order Nr. 1784 (Sept. 2010) institutionalised the dialogue process between MoLSAEO and INSTAT by creating a working group on the Labour Force Survey.
- Facilitating the ownership of the YEM initiatives of the national and local stakeholders through inter-institutional working groups (NAP on Youth Employment and LMIA working group), matched with capacity development programmes for the participants;
- Constantly involving civil society, and in particular, the social partners and members of the academia, both in policy design and implementation of measures. For instance, trade unions and private sector intermediary organizations are involved directly in the implementation of pilot initiatives by utilizing the tools promoted by YEM.
- Supporting, as much as possible, policy tools and measures related to Albania's transition into EU pre-accession status. An example is the information campaign on regular migration, which has been incorporated within the present GoA's awareness raising campaign on visa liberalisation. In addition, the YEM is constantly pursuing synergies with on-going activities/initiatives on employment either managed by national stakeholders or financed by the international donor community, such as the ILO NES reform project. Also, YEM is taking on board planned initiatives such as the new Instrument for Pre-Accession Project 2010 on Human Resources, funded by the European Commission.
- The Information campaign on safe migration has generated a number of initiatives at the local level among public educational institutions. The info campaign impact assessment exercise showed that school directors and teachers reported that issues like travelling to EU and regular migration are also treated in the open civic education classes, where the information materials provided during the campaign are used to promote positive respect to free travel rights and obligations in EU countries. Two schools mentioned the organization of school competitions on the theme: "EU Institutions and Travel to EU" where the information materials disseminated in the campaign are used as resource materials. The Ministry of Interior has continued to organize informative seminars with various target groups on safe migration and visa liberalization throughout the country.
- In addition, AIDA is now actively engaged in supporting all initiatives that aim to promote investments of Albanian communities in Albania (such as forums of investments, as shown earlier in the report)
- The recommendations of the outreach activities with the Albanian Diaspora will be factored in the new country Strategy on Migration and its

accompanying Action Plan for the period 2013-2018. The focus of these new policy documents as expressed by the Minister of Labour<sup>15</sup> will be on fostering the linkages between emigration Albanian migration and country development. As such, all issues pertaining to mobilising Albanian communities abroad for local development will be specifically articulated and relevant provisions for programmatic responses formulated.

**b. Describe example, if any, of replication or scaling up that are being undertaken**

Available data supports the relevance of the intervention logic as a series of products and processes that were started with the YEM are continuing even beyond the life of the JP. The implementation of the YE-NAP, specific activities such as the two projects that are be funded one by the Austrian (Vocational Training and Employment Activities) and the other by the Swiss Development Cooperation to replicate the TEP and active labour market measures under a joint programme UNDP/ILO, are also proof of the continuing relevance of the JP focus on youth employment as a continuous priority for the government and the United Nations System. The two new projects are direct spin-offs from the YEM JP, while the project "IPA National Programme 2010 for Albania/Human Resources Development" also takes on board some of the issues raised by the YEM JP, including the provision of decentralised services at the regional level.

In the new NSDI for the period 2013 – 2020, employment now appears as one of the priority areas for the government. This is further supported in the Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012 – 2016 under point 4.4.1. (Key state institutions and social partners are capable to develop and implement, in a fair and inclusive manner, employment policies and programmes that meet international standards).

While under the JP two YES (Youth Employment Service) centres were established in Shkodra and Kukes with the support of the UNICEF, additional YES centres are gradually being established in other regions of the country, outside of the YEM JP.

There is therefore clear evidence to support the on-going relevance of the YEM JP objectives over the short to medium-term.

- a. Describe the joint programme exit strategy and asses how it has improved the sustainability of the joint program

The YEM Programme Team recognizes that the Sustainability Strategy needs to account for the two main orientations of the YEM programme:

i) capacity development at institutional level (national and local) on issues related to youth development, employment, and migration. The YEM Programme Management Committee has identified three main elements that underpin the sustainability of the results achieved so far in Albania: A. Early engagement of partners on sustainability matters. From the very incipit of programme implementation, the Team and the Programme Management Committee (PMC) have given considerable attention to the issue of the sustainability of the interventions. As reflected in the PMC Reports and Minutes, questions of sustainability have often been introduced on the PMC agenda. These discussions have also prompted the programme team to undertake particular actions/activities in response to the PMC recommendations as to ensure that sustainability would be built into the implementation from the early stages.

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<sup>15</sup> During the Conferences held in Athens and Milan in May-June 2012

B. The Management Improvement Plan (MIP). Emerged from the joint staff retreat with government, agencies and other relevant stakeholders, in response to the midterm Evaluation, the MIP provided a series of concrete recommendations and actions to be undertaken in conjunction with all partners to reinforce (and at times question) the sustainability of YEM interventions. The implementation of the MIP relies also on activities that will be completed during the requested extension period.

C. Joint delivery of programme activities. The main objective is to ensure transfer of skills, knowledge, and novel business processes. From the very beginning, YEM has relied to a large extent on the guidance and orientation of the Ministry of Labour and the close collaboration with the other institutions participating in the programme. However, in the last year of implementation the emphasis was on remote technical assistance in support of the leadership of national and local institutions/stakeholders. While this approach may have entailed a longer time frame in terms of gearing up all partners to the level where they could deliver on the programme objectives, it also aimed at reinforcing capacities through learning-by-doing. In turn, this would allow national partners to focus on scalable and replicable interventions (which are two important dimensions of sustainability). A short-term indicator of success is the on-going replication of YEM interventions with other (additional) resources.

ii) direct implementation of youth employment programmes in two marginalized regions of Albania (pilot programmes). In this respect, the sustainability of employment promotion programmes (EPPs) is traditionally evaluated with specific techniques (experimental and non), which look at programme performance and labour market outcomes of beneficiaries, trying as much as possible to discern the actual impact on those who participated in the EPPs (treated) as opposed to those who did not benefit from the programme (non-treated).

With regard to the capacity development interventions,

The YEM project document proposes a three-pronged approach to sustainability, i.e. i) alignment with youth employment objectives of the Government of Albania; ii) the integration of YEM activities into longer-term programmes and policies (such as the new Strategy on Migration) ; iii) linkages with other on-going interventions on youth development, employment, and migration in the country.

#### IV. FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME

a. Provide a final financial status of the joint programme in the following categories:

1. Total Approved Budget
2. Total Budget Transferred
3. Total Budget Committed
4. Total Budget Disbursed

AGENCY	Total Approved	Total transferred to date	Total Committed to date	Total Disbursed to date
ILO	1.289.010	1.309.010	1.268.146	1.268.146

IOM	628.253	628.253	628.253	628.253
UNDP	789.516	789.516	789,516	779,500
UNICEF	603.221	603,221	603,221	603,221
Total	3.310.000	3.310.000		

- b. Explain any outstanding balance or variances with the original budget  
As indicated in the PMC minutes, when requesting the last instalment, UNICEF requested 20,000 USD less and ILO received 20,000 USD more as part of UNICEF contribution to the retention of the CTA for the third year and for the programme extension period.

## V. OTHER COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## VI. CERTIFICATION ON OPERATIONAL CLOSURE OF THE PROJECT

By signing, Participating United Nations Organizations (PUNO) certify that the project has been operationally completed.

PUNO	NAME	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE

## VII. ANNEXES

### 1. List of all document/studies produced by the joint programme

#### ILO

1. *National Action Plan for Youth Employment in Albania (2010-13)*, English and Albanian, July 2011, Daniela Zampini
2. *Workforce Survey - an enterprise perspective - Studimi i Fuqise Punetore nga Kendveshtrimi i Ndermarrjes*, Albanian, June 2011, National Employment Service,
3. *Territorial Employment Pact for Youth (2011) - Kukes Region*, English and Albanian, April 2011, Daniela Zampini, Fation Dragoshi
4. *Analysis of the link between informal employment and migration (based on local data collection)*, April 2010 Elisa Benes
5. *Training package on youth employment indicators and informal employment (includes a STATA training package on the Albanian LFS)*, English and Albanian, April 2010, Elisa Benes
6. *A guide to the main labour market indicators in Albania* English, October 2010, Daniela Zampini
7. *Training package on employment, migration and youth employment policies (policy cycle management)*, English and Albanian, November 2010, Daniela Zampini
8. *Territorial Audit of the Kukes and Shkodra Regions, with a focus on employment, youth employment and informality*, English, October 2008- Updated October 2010, Marjeta Cela and Fation Dragoshi
9. *Quarterly Reports (13) to the Programme Management Committee (PMC) with a series of 16 Technical Notes on youth employment and migration*, English, quarterly (2009-12), Daniela Zampini
10. *Policy Advisory Note on the formalization of employment in agriculture through the GoA's Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development*, English and Albanian, January 2011, Daniela Zampini and Emirjon Kaçai
11. *Biz-up: Self-Employment Skills for Young People - Rini sipërmarre - udhëzues praktik për vetëpunësimin e të rinjve – adaptation*, Albanian, February 2012
12. *Manual for the implementation of the Shkodra Regional Employment Fund*, Albanian, May 2010, Daniela Zampini
13. *Situation Analysis for the Preparation of a Municipal Plan for Youth Employment – Tirana*, English, May 2012, Daniela Zampini
14. *A framework for public private partnerships for youth employment* English, June 2010, Daniela Zampini

15. *Training package on the Evaluation of Albania's Active Labour Market programmes (2008-10)* English and Albanian, April 2011, Ada Hyso and Daniela Zampini
16. *Youths' Rights @ Work - Te drejtat e te rinjve ne pune* Albanian, April 2012, Emirjon Kaçai
17. *Guidelines for the preparation of Territorial Employment Pact for Youth* English, January 2012, Daniela Zampini and Fation Dragoshi
18. *Public private partnerships for youth employment: (1) a Review of YAPS Albania*, English, May 2009, Viola Gaudiano and Daniela Zampini
19. *Public private partnerships for youth employment: (2) a policy review for the promotion of social enterprises in Albania*, English, June 2012, Aida Gugu
20. *A Review of the Kukes Region Territorial Employment Pact for Youth*, English, August 2011, Alberto Tulumello

#### **UNDP:**

21. *Rapid Assessment of the Impact of the Global Economic and Financial Crisis in the Apparel and Footwear Industry*
22. *Operational Guidelines for the work-training programmes*
23. *Operational Guidelines for the internship schemes*
24. *Online mapping tool for recent Albanian graduates abroad*
25. *Midterm evaluation report of the work-training*

#### **IOM:**

26. *Survey report to identify emerging occupations in Kukes and Shkodra, Albania*
27. *Information and awareness raising Campaign Strategy*
28. *Impact assessment report of the awareness raising and information campaign on safe migration, including selected photos from outreach activities*
29. *Background paper for outreach activities with the Albanian Diaspora*
30. *Conclusions and recommendations of outreach activities with the Albanian Diaspora, including selected photos from outreach activities*

## **2. List of all communication products created by the joint programme**

### **ILO**

1. *Promotional video on Youth Employment in Albania (2 minutes 22 seconds video reportage)* – (Albanian and English) Daniela Zampini, 2009
2. *Promotional video on Youth migration: Reaping the benefits and mitigating risks (6 minutes 26 seconds interview)* – (English) Daniela Zampini, 2010
3. *Promotional video on Kukes miners learn about their rights in health and safety at work (3 minutes 58 seconds reportage)-* (Albanian and English) Daniela Zampini, 2010
4. *Leaflet on the UN Joint Programme: Youth employment and migration – Reaping the benefits and mitigating the risks* – (Albanian and English) Daniela Zampini, 2010.

### **UNDP**

5. *Information leaflet for the work-training programmes*
6. *Operational Guidelines for the internship schemes*
7. *Information leaflet for the internship schemes*

### **IOM**

8. *Information set of the programme information campaign on safe migration (poster, leaflet, brochure, passport folder, bus poster, bags, T-shirts)*
9. *2 Programme TV spots on safe migration campaign and Diaspora contributions for country development*
10. *AIDA Magazine on Investment Opportunities in Albania*

### **UNICEF**

11. *Career guidance guidelines for counsellors 400 copies*
12. *Preparing for labour market 4,500 copies*
13. *How to prepare your career portfolio 4,500 copies*
14. *Make a successful application 4,500 copies*
15. *Writing to your employer 4,500 copies*
16. *A successful application 4,500 copies*
17. *Preparing for an interview 4,500 copies*
18. *8 advices for young entrepreneurs 4,500 copies*
19. *A decent place of work 4,500 copies*

3. Minutes of the final review meeting of the Programme Management Committee and National Steering Committee
4. Final Evaluation report
5. M&E framework with update final values of indicators