International Partnerships Austria

Gender Alliance for Development Center
Qendra Aleanca Gjinore për Zhvillim

At What Cost?

Costing Specialised Services for Addressing Gender-based Violence in Albania

Gender Alliance for Development Centre, 2026

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Authors: Elona Gjika, Mirela Arqimandriti and Rudina Rama

Editing: Nicole Farnsworth

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ACRONYMS

AFMIS	Albanian Financial Management Information System
ALMP	Active labour market programs
AWEN	Albanian Women Empowerment Network
BPPM	Budget Project Portfolio Monitoring
Capex	Capital expenditures
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPD	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRM	Coordinated Referral Mechanism
DCM	Decision of the Council of Ministers
EPO	Emergency protection orders
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEEs	Gender Equality Employees
GEO	Gender Equality Officer
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
IC	Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics of Albania
IPH	Institute of Public Health
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
KWN	Kosovo Women's Network
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and other identifying persons
LSGU	Local Self-government Unit
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MTBP	Medium-term Budgetary Programme
NA	Not available
NAES	National Employment and Skills Agency
NCTVDV	National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
No	Number
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PEPO	Precautionary Emergency Protection Order
PO	Protection order
QSUT	University Hospital Center "Mother Teresa"
RA	Research Analysts
REVALB	National Electronic Register of Social Care Services in Albania
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SF	Social Fund
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SSS	State Social Service
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UN OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WB	Western Balkan
WHO	World Health Organization
WCSO	Women’s civil society organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines the funding and costs of specialised services for survivors of gender-based violence in Albania. It assesses the legal framework, national strategies, budgeting and public expenditure, as well as the resources needed to provide services in accordance with the Istanbul Convention and survivors' needs.

The study was conducted within the framework of a regional intervention in six Western Balkan countries. The analysis for Albania included six providers: the National Counselling Line for Women and Girls, the LILIUM Centre, the "Gruaja te Gruaja" shelter, the "Vatra" Centre, the "Different & Equal" Centre and the National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence in Kamëz. The methodology combines legal, institutional and budget analysis with unit costing and data obtained from institutions and providers. Costs were examined with regard to personnel, operations, administration, infrastructure, equipment and direct support for beneficiaries.

The findings show that Albania has a broad legal and strategic framework, strengthened by Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality" and Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence". However, funding does not yet fully reflect the legal obligations. Funds are distributed across several programmes and mechanisms, without dedicated and sustainable budget lines for all services. As a result, it is often not possible to determine clearly how much has been planned, approved, disbursed and spent for each service. Funding through donor projects and partial municipal support makes service provision less predictable.

The analysis also identifies shortages of personnel and gaps in the full provision of 24/7 services, as well as insufficient funding for reintegration, services for children, staff supervision, security, accessibility, and specialised health and legal care. The capacity of shelters is assessed as considerably below the indicative standard of one family place per 10,000 inhabitants. The study refers to an approximate need for 240 family places and an estimated capacity of 80–90 places; therefore, the estimated gap needs to be verified against the latest data and the national inventory of capacity.

For the 2026–2028 period, the calculations for the six providers present indicative overall needs of approximately ALL 219.4 million in 2026, ALL 219.6 million in 2027 and ALL 226 million in 2028. These amounts include baseline costs and identified additional costs, but do not constitute a complete national estimate. The estimate for the LILIUM Centre is partial, as its operating costs are integrated into the budget of the "Mother Teresa" University Hospital Centre and cannot be separated. In addition, municipal shelters were not included in the costing analysis because disaggregated and verifiable financial data are lacking. For this reason, the estimates should be read as indicative and not as approved allocations or full costs for the entire country.

The study recommends that the responsible institutions:

- establish dedicated budget lines and implement standardised methods for costing services;
- ensure predictable, multi-year public funding, including sustainable contracting of non-profit providers;
- clearly define the division of financial responsibilities between central and local government and expand shelter capacity;
- strengthen multidisciplinary staffing, 24/7 services, professional supervision and ongoing training;
- fund reintegration services, support for children, accessibility, and specialised health and legal services;

- improve data and expenditure tracking in REVALB, as well as reporting on service coverage, quality and results.

In conclusion, the study identifies a gap between Albania's legal obligations and the current funding of services. Closing this gap requires a shift from fragmented, short-term funding towards a coordinated, data-based public system, so that survivors can access safe, quality and continuous support, regardless of their place of residence or circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence constitutes a violation of human rights and a serious obstacle to achieving gender equality.[1] Preventing it and ensuring the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors require more than legal commitments and adopted policies: they require functioning institutions, accessible and quality services, qualified personnel, and adequate, sustainable and predictable public funding.[2]

All Western Balkan governments have committed to implementing the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention. The Convention requires states to develop an integrated response to all forms of violence against women, based on prevention, protection, prosecution and coordinated policies. It also requires the provision of adequate financial and human resources so that services are available, accessible and organised according to survivors' needs and rights.[3]

However, a considerable gap continues to exist between legal commitments and their implementation in practice. In the Western Balkan countries, services for survivors of gender-based violence often face limited institutional capacity, uneven territorial coverage and inadequate or unstable public funding.[4] In many cases, public budgets do not make it possible to clearly identify the funds planned, allocated and spent on specialised services. This makes it difficult to assess whether existing resources meet actual needs and the standards established by the Istanbul Convention.[5]

Women's civil society organisations play an important role in filling these gaps. They provide specialised and community-based services, such as safe accommodation, psychological and legal counselling, psychosocial support, assistance during institutional procedures, and rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. However, many of these organisations rely on short-term, project-based funding. The lack of sustainable public funding mechanisms limits the continuity of services and may jeopardise survivors' timely access to the quality support they need.

To respond to this situation, a regional network comprising seven women's civil society organisations is implementing the intervention "Institutionalising Quality Rehabilitation and Reintegration Services for Survivors of Violence II", with financial support from the Austrian Development Agency. The intervention aims to strengthen and institutionalise quality rehabilitation and reintegration services for survivors of gender-based violence, using gender-

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[1] Council of Europe (2011), Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, CETS No. 210, Articles 8, 20–25.

[2] Council of Europe (2011). Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CETS No. 210. Relevant provisions: Articles 3, 7–11, 15, 18, 20 and 22–26. https://rm.coe.int/168008482e

[3] Ibid. Articles 7–9 and 18–25;

[4] First thematic evaluation report - Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice, Albania. Online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/-/grevio-publishes-its-first-thematic-report-on-albania

[5] paragraphs 21–27 and 102–113; 4

responsive budgeting as a tool for assessing needs, calculating actual costs and directing public funds.[6][7]

Within the framework of this intervention, the study was conducted in six Western Balkan countries and examined public funding for specialised services to prevent and address gender-based violence during the 2023–2025 period. The analysis also includes the contributions of women's civil society organisations and the costs they cover to provide services. The study compares planned and approved funds with actual expenditure and also examines projected financial commitments for the 2025–2028 period.[8]

The main purpose of the study is to assess the actual cost of specialised services if they were provided in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention and the needs of survivors. In this way, the study aims to help the responsible institutions translate legal and policy obligations into concrete budget outputs, measurable indicators and adequate financial allocations.

The findings aim to support annual and medium-term budget planning by providing information on the resources needed to ensure quality, accessible and sustainable services. The study also aims to contribute to a clearer allocation of financial responsibilities among central institutions, local self-government units and service providers.

Beyond assessing existing funding, the study proposes standard costing methodologies and models that institutions can use in future budget cycles. Integrating these tools into regular budget planning, implementation and monitoring processes can improve expenditure traceability, strengthen accountability and support the shift from fragmented, short-term funding towards sustainable public funding for services.

At its core, this study is based on the principle that services for survivors of gender-based violence should not depend on ad hoc funding. They form part of the state's obligations to protect human rights and should be planned, costed, funded and monitored as essential public services.

About This Research: An Abbreviated Methodology

The methodology of this study is based on the principles and practices of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), existing guidelines for costing social and specialised services, and the methodology developed by the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) to calculate the costs of services for survivors of gender-based violence. This methodology was adapted to the legal, institutional and budgetary framework of each country included in the study.

Earlier costing research in Albania provides a useful point of comparison. The March 2025 study *How Much Does Protection Cost?*,[9] prepared by the Kosovo Women's Network at the request of the Albanian Women's Empowerment Network (AWEN), estimated the costs of

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[6] *Austrian Development Agency (n.d.). Institutionalizing Quality Rehabilitation and Reintegration Services for Violence Survivors II. Project description, objectives and partner organisations; implementation period 1 July 2024–30 September 2027.* https://www.entwicklung.at/en/projects/detail-en/institutionalizing-quality-rehabilitation-and-reintegration-services-for-violence-survivors-ii

[7] *Kosovo Women's Network (n.d.). WCSOs Ask: What's the Real Cost of Specialised Services for Gender-based Violence? Public description of the regional research, its scope, research questions and methodology. This page itself uses both 2023–2025 and 2022–2024; the research protocol must resolve the study's final reference period.* https://womensnetwork.org/wcsos-ask-whats-the-real-cost-of-specialised-services-for-gender-based-violence/

[8] *Kosovo Women's Network (n.d.). WCSOs Ask: What's the Real Cost of Specialised Services for Gender-based Violence? Public description of the regional research, its scope, research questions and methodology. This page itself uses both 2023–2025 and 2022–2024; the research protocol must resolve the study's final reference period.* https://womensnetwork.org/wcsos-ask-whats-the-real-cost-of-specialised-services-for-gender-based-violence/

[9] Nicole Farnsworth and Eleta Shala, *How Much Does Protection Cost? Costing Services Provided by the Albanian Women's Empowerment Network for Addressing Gender-based Violence in Albania* (Kosovo Women's Network, at the request of AWEN, March 2025), pp. 20–23.

existing services provided by AWEN members. The present study examines six selected public and non-governmental providers and includes projected baseline expenditure and additional resources needed to address identified gaps in service provision. Differences in provider coverage, service scope and costing assumptions mean that the estimates should be interpreted as complementary evidence and should not be directly combined.

The study primarily used a unit-costing approach. Through this approach, the resources needed by public institutions and other providers to deliver specialised services in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention were identified and calculated. The analysis took into account personnel, operational, administrative, infrastructure, equipment and direct beneficiary-support costs, according to the nature of each service.

The aim was not only to identify existing expenditure, but also to assess the resources that would be needed to ensure a quality, accessible, continuous service focused on survivors' needs and rights. For this reason, actual costs were examined alongside the required standards, market prices, providers' capacities and the expected level of coverage.

Scope and limits of the analysis

The analysis focused on selected specialised services supporting, rehabilitating and reintegrating survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). It did not include general costs related to the activities of the police, prosecution offices, courts, the penitentiary system or employment institutions. A full calculation of these costs would require a broader study, specific sectoral methodologies and detailed administrative data.

The study also did not calculate the costs of general services, such as healthcare, education, employment mediation and vocational training, when they are provided outside the structures of specialised service providers. However, when such services were provided directly by a shelter or a specialised provider and formed part of the support package, the relevant costs were included in the analysis.

Consequently, the study's results do not represent the overall economic and social cost of GBV. They present the estimated costs of providing the specialised services included within the scope of this analysis.

Research questions

The study was guided by two main questions:

1. To what extent did the governments of Western Balkan countries plan, allocate and spend sufficient funds during the 2022–2024 period to provide specialised services for survivors of GBV in accordance with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention? To what extent do medium-term budget documents provide for adequate and sustainable funding for these services during the 2025–2028 period?
2. What are the estimated costs of providing specialised services in accordance with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention during the 2026–2028 period, including funding for women's civil society organisations that provide such services?

The analysis distinguished between requested funds, funds planned in medium-term documents, approved allocations, disbursed funds and actual expenditure. This distinction is important because the inclusion of an amount in a planning document does not necessarily mean that it has been approved, disbursed or spent.

Research methods and data sources

To answer the research questions, the study used a combined approach, bringing together the analysis of available documents; legal, institutional and budgetary analysis; unit costing; and information collected directly from institutions and service providers.

Legal and policy analysis

The legal analysis examined international instruments, national legislation, bylaws, strategies and action plans that establish obligations for preventing and addressing GBV and providing specialised services.

Particular attention was paid to:

- obligations to ensure and fund services;
- the division of responsibilities between central and local institutions;
- minimum standards for service provision;
- requirements for personnel, infrastructure and operations;
- the inclusion of GRB in budget planning and monitoring;
- the alignment of the national framework with the Istanbul Convention.

The analysis aimed to identify not only legal gaps but also discrepancies between the obligations established by law, service standards and the financial resources provided for their implementation.

Institutional analysis

The institutional analysis identified the institutions responsible for planning, funding, coordinating, providing and monitoring specialised services. It examined the roles of ministries, subordinate institutions, local self-government units and women's civil society organisations.

Data were collected from:

- official websites and institutional documents;
- administrative and monitoring reports;
- strategic and budget documents;
- existing literature and studies;
- official requests for information;
- interviews with representatives of institutions and service providers.

This analysis helped to understand how responsibilities are divided in practice, how funding flows and which institutions cover the costs of each service.

Budget analysis

The budget analysis examined planned, approved and spent funding for specialised services during the period under review. It assessed whether public budgets contained identifiable budget lines, outputs or programmes for GBV and whether the available information made it possible to trace funds to the service and its beneficiaries.

Where data were available, the analysis included:

- budget requests and projections;
- approved allocations;
- disbursements and transfers;
- actual expenditure;
- source of funding;
- number of beneficiaries;
- unit or per-beneficiary costs;
- budget execution rate;
- performance indicators and reported results.

Sources included annual budget laws, Medium-Term Budget Programmes, budget execution reports, Treasury data, audit reports, information provided by institutions and the financial documentation of service providers.

Where services for GBV were funded within broader programmes and there was no separate budget line, the analysis noted the limitations in tracing the funds. In the absence of complete data, it was not assumed that the entire budget of the relevant programme represented funding for GBV.

Costing analysis

The costing analysis applied the principles of GRB and the unit-costing method to estimate the resources needed to provide specialised services in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.

Depending on the type of service, the calculation took into account:

- the number and profile of personnel;
- salaries, contributions and professional development costs;
- working time and requirements for 24-hour operation;
- premises, maintenance and utility expenses;
- safety, accessibility and confidentiality;
- food, clothing and basic needs;
- psychological, psychosocial and legal support;
- childcare;
- transport and emergency support;
- case management, documentation and reporting;
- rehabilitation and reintegration;
- administrative and operational costs.

To assess these costs, the study used data on existing expenditure, market prices, historical costs, legal and professional standards, and information obtained through interviews with institutions and providers. Where information was incomplete, reasoned and documented assumptions were used.

The costing results aim to support the development of budget projections for the 2026–2028 period. They should not be interpreted as approved allocations, but as estimates of the financial needs for providing services in accordance with the required standards.

Sample selection

General overview of the population benefiting from services

The study focused on specialised services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), as defined by the Istanbul Convention, namely rape crisis centres, emergency shelters and long-term residential social care centres.

Although the Istanbul Convention also defines national SOS helplines as an essential specialised support service, they were not included in the scope of this study. The costing methodology was designed to assess the costs of services provided in residential facilities, which directly provide shelter, rehabilitation and reintegration support. Helpline services operate according to a substantially different delivery model and funding structure and therefore require a specific costing methodology.

In Albania, the formal structure of specialised services consists of 13 municipal-level emergency shelters, seven long-term residential social care centres and one rape crisis centre, the "Lilium" Centre. Although administrative data indicate the existence of 13 municipal-level emergency shelters, interviews with stakeholders suggested that some of these facilities may not be operational or may not currently provide specialised services in practice. Since this could not be independently verified, only institutions whose operation and service provision could be confirmed were included in the study.

These specialised services are the main mechanisms through which survivors receive emergency protection, safe accommodation, psychosocial support, and long-term rehabilitation and reintegration services.

Sample selection strategy

Purposive sampling was used to identify institutions able to provide the detailed and reliable data required for the cost calculation analysis. The research team contacted three emergency shelters and four long-term residential social care centres in Albania.
The team also consulted the "Lilium" Centre, the Counselling Line for Women and Girls (SOS helpline), and key institutional actors, including the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSP), the State Social Service (SSS), Tirana Municipality and the Free Legal Aid Directorate.

One of the three emergency shelters and three of the four long-term residential centres provided complete responses, as did the "Lilium" Centre and the Counselling Line for Women and Girls. Stakeholder consultations included five interviews with representatives of central and local government institutions. The Budget Directorates of Tirana and Elbasan municipalities were also invited to participate but did not respond to the invitation.

The sample selection strategy prioritised depth of analysis over breadth, focusing on institutions able to provide complete and verifiable data sets that could support robust cost calculations. These data were then used to develop evidence-based budget estimates for comparable providers of specialised services.

Sample size and composition

Following repeated requests to all institutions for data, six institutions met the inclusion criteria and form the analytical sample: one rape crisis centre (the "Lilium" Centre), the Counselling Line for Women and Girls, one short-term emergency shelter and three long-term residential centres.

These institutions provided complete financial documentation, information on personnel and workload, data on service capacity and utilisation, and beneficiary profiles.

Inclusion criteria and data quality requirements

Institutions were included only if they submitted complete expenditure data, detailed organisational and staffing structures, accurate information on service provision—including capacity and occupancy rates—and profiles disaggregated by beneficiary characteristics. These criteria ensured the robustness of the analysis and comparability between different service delivery models.

Exclusion of municipal-level emergency shelters from the costing analysis

Although official documents and reports identify 13 municipal-level emergency shelters, their costs were not included in the final analysis of this study. Interviews conducted and a review of Treasury transaction data for the 2012–2023 period showed that expenditure for these facilities is not recorded and reported separately.

In most cases, municipalities do not have specific budget lines for emergency shelter or services for survivors of GBV. Costs for personnel, premises, food, utilities, security and direct support for beneficiaries are usually included within broader social care programmes or categories. Consequently, it was not possible to separate expenditure directly related to the operation of emergency shelters from the available financial documentation.

In addition, the data collected did not make it possible to consistently verify the operational status, capacity, level of use and service package provided by all reported facilities. Therefore, their mere identification in official documents was not sufficient to carry out a reliable unit-cost calculation.

In the absence of verifiable financial data disaggregated by shelter, type of expenditure and number of beneficiaries, it was not possible to apply the unit-costing methodology. For this reason, the exclusion of municipal emergency shelters is a methodological limitation of the study and should not be interpreted as indicating that these facilities have no costs or receive no public funding.

This gap demonstrates the need for municipalities to establish identifiable budget outputs or codes for emergency shelter and maintain standardised data on allocations, actual expenditure, capacity, length of stay and the number of people supported. This would make it possible to trace funding, compare municipalities and include these services in future costing analyses.

Validity and limitations of the study

The validity of the study is based on the quality, completeness and reliability of data provided by institutions and providers that met the inclusion criteria. The analysis was strengthened by triangulating sources and methods, combining legal, institutional and financial documentation, national Treasury data and five interviews with representatives of institutions and other relevant stakeholders. Comparing these sources made it possible to verify information, identify inconsistencies and develop a more complete picture of how specialised services are funded and operate.

However, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings, as set out below.

First, although administrative data and official reports identify 13 municipal-level emergency shelters, their operational status, capacity, level of use and service package could not be consistently verified for all facilities. In addition, financial data disaggregated by shelter and expenditure category were unavailable. Consequently, these facilities could not be systematically included in the costing analysis, and comparison between municipalities was not possible.

Second, the Counselling Line for Women and Girls, which provides the SOS telephone service, participated in the research process and provided valuable information for analysing funding and service delivery. However, it was not included in the same unit-costing analysis used for residential services and services provided in physical facilities. The helpline's operating model, staff organisation, duration and intensity of contacts, technological infrastructure and funding arrangements require specific indicators and a dedicated costing methodology.

Third, not all providers contacted submitted all the financial and operational data required. In some cases, detailed data on personnel, operating expenditure, number of beneficiaries or the allocation of costs by service were missing. The study does not draw conclusions or make assumptions about the reasons for the non-submission or incompleteness of these data. Only information that could reasonably be verified and compared was used in the final analysis.

Fourth, public budget data do not always make it possible to trace funding to the service level. Expenditure on GBV is often included in broader social protection, health, justice or local government programmes. The absence of specific budget lines or codes limits the ability to clearly distinguish between planned funding, approved allocations, disbursements and actual expenditure for each service.

Fifth, prices, salaries and operating costs vary according to location, provider type and reference period. For this reason, the calculations present reasoned estimates of the resources required rather than fixed rates. They should be updated periodically to reflect inflation, changes in the minimum wage and reference salaries, utility costs, and any changes to legal or bylaw standards.

Finally, although the sample includes a significant proportion of providers, given the relatively small number of specialised services for GBV in Albania, the findings should not be

interpreted as statistically representative of all providers. This limitation is particularly important for municipal emergency shelters, whose organisational models, capacities and financial resources may vary considerably from one municipality to another.

Despite these limitations, the selection of verifiable data, the use of multiple sources and the prioritisation of information quality over an artificial expansion of the sample provide a reasonable basis for the analysis. The findings enable a clearer understanding of the cost structure, funding arrangements and resource needs of the main specialised services for GBV in Albania. They also provide a starting point for improving data collection, standardising costing and developing more comprehensive analyses in the future.

What does this report contain?

The report is organised into two main chapters, linking the analysis of legal and budgetary obligations with the specific assessment of the costs of specialised services for survivors of gender-based violence.

The first chapter presents the legal, institutional and budgetary analysis. It first examines international standards that influence the organisation and funding of services, with particular attention to the Istanbul Convention. It then analyses the Albanian legal framework, including Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality", Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence", sectoral legislation and bylaws regulating social care services, legal aid, social assistance, housing and employment.

The chapter also assesses how legal obligations on gender-responsive budgeting are reflected in national strategies, the Medium-Term Budget Programme and annual budgets. The analysis focuses on the connection between legal obligations, institutional responsibilities, budget outputs, performance indicators and identifiable funding. Particular attention is given to fund traceability, the division of responsibilities between central and local government, the management of beneficiary data, and the distinction between secured public funding and temporary donor support.

The second chapter examines demand for services, existing capacities and the costs of providing them in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention. The analysis covers six selected providers: the Counselling Line for Women and Girls, the "LILIUM" Centre, the "Gruaja te Gruaja" emergency shelter, the "Vatra" Centre, the "Different & Equal" Centre and the National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence in Kamëz.

For each provider, the chapter examines legal responsibilities, capacity for gender-responsive budgeting, the number and profile of beneficiaries, demand for services, expenditure in previous years and baseline projections for the 2026–2028 period. The chapter also identifies the additional costs needed to address gaps in personnel, infrastructure, accessibility, safety, healthcare and psychological care, legal support, services for children and reintegration after leaving the shelter. The calculations distinguish between existing expenditure, additional needs and the overall budget that would be required to provide services according to the specified standards.

In the concluding section, the report brings together cross-sectoral findings, presents projected costs and explains the limitations of the data and methodology. On this basis, it makes recommendations for expanding capacity, strengthening human resources, institutionalising cost calculation, providing multi-year public funding, establishing sustainable contracting of non-profit providers, improving REVALB and strengthening monitoring and accountability. In this way, the report does not merely identify current expenditure, but assesses the gap between existing funding and the resources needed for the full implementation of legal standards and the Istanbul Convention.

CHAPTER 1. LEGAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter analyses the legal framework that defines the obligations of public institutions to fund, organise and provide services for victims of violence against women and domestic violence in Albania. The analysis focuses only on those international instruments and national laws that create obligations with a direct or measurable financial impact.
In particular, the chapter examines:

- general and specialised support services that must be guaranteed;
- the financial responsibilities of central institutions and local self-government units;
- the obligation to implement gender-responsive budgeting;
- the institutional costs of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms;
- the personnel, training, infrastructure and data systems required for the implementation of the law;
- economic support, housing, legal aid and reintegration measures;
- gaps between legal obligations and actual funding.

The analysis is based primarily on Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality" and Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence".[10] Law No. 11/2026 repealed Law No. 9669/2006 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations", as amended.[11] For this reason, the 2006 law is no longer analysed as the current legal basis, except where it is necessary to explain the transitional period for the implementation of bylaws.

International standards affecting the funding of services

International standards ratified by Albania establish direct obligations to prevent violence, protect victims and ensure accessible, quality services. These obligations require the provision of adequate financial and human resources, covering not only emergency response but also healthcare, shelter, legal aid, rehabilitation and long-term reintegration. The following instruments form the main basis for assessing the state's responsibilities and the cost of services for victims of gender-based violence.

Istanbul Convention

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence constitutes the main international standard for defining state responsibilities in this area. Albania ratified the Convention in 2013, and it entered into force on 1 August 2014.

From a costing perspective, the most important provision is the state's obligation to allocate appropriate financial and human resources for the implementation of integrated

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[10] Republic of Albania, Law No. 64/2025, dated 6 November 2025, "Për barazinë gjinore"; and Law No. 11/2026, dated 28 January 2026, "Për parandalimin dhe mbrojtjen nga dhuna ndaj grave dhe dhuna në familje". Online: Ligji nr. 64/2025; Ligji nr. 11/2026. shendetesia.gov.al

[11] Republic of Albania, Law No. 11/2026, Article 59(1), repealing Law No. 9669, dated 18 December 2006, as amended; Article 59(2), maintaining existing implementing acts in force until their repeal by acts adopted under the new law. Online: Neni 59. Dispozita kalimtare është konfirmuar në tekstin e ligjit. shendetesia.gov.al

policies, measures and programmes.[12] This obligation is not limited to funding shelters, but covers the entire continuum of prevention, protection, prosecution and reintegration.
The Convention requires funding for[13]:

- coordinated national and local policies;
- general social and health services;
- specialised services for women;
- safe and accessible shelters;
- helplines operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- referral centres for victims of sexual violence;
- psychological, psychosocial and legal counselling;
- support for children who are victims or witnesses of violence;
- training for professionals;
- programmes for perpetrators of violence;
- data collection, research and monitoring;
- support for civil society organisations that provide specialised services.

In this sense, funding for services is not a discretionary measure or one dependent solely on the availability of donor projects. It forms part of the state's positive obligation to exercise due diligence in preventing violence, protecting victims and holding perpetrators accountable.[14]
GREVIO's thematic evaluation of Albania, published in 2024,[15] identified progress in extending the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms to all municipalities. However, the report raised concerns about uneven territorial coverage, the dependence of some services on donor funding, the lack of sufficient specialised services and the need for systematic training of professionals. These findings show that the formal existence of a service is not sufficient: its actual capacity, quality, accessibility, continuity and funding must also be assessed.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the general recommendations of its relevant Committee recognise gender-based violence as a form of discrimination against women.[16]
General Recommendation No. 35 requires states to allocate adequate human and financial resources at national and local levels for the effective implementation of measures against gender-based violence. This includes funding for:

- prevention and awareness-raising;
- shelter and emergency protection;
- healthcare and mental health services;
- legal aid;
- rehabilitation and reintegration;

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[12] Council of Europe (2011), Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CETS No. 210, Articles 7–9 and 18–25. Online: https://rm.coe.int/168008482e?utm_source
[13] Ibid. Articles 7–11, 13–16, 20 and 22–26, concerning coordinated policies, resources, civil society, data, prevention, training, perpetrator programmes and support services.
[14] Ibid. Istanbul Convention, Article 5(2), read together with Articles 8–9.
[15] GREVIO (2024), Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice: Albania, First thematic evaluation report, GREVIO(2024)6, published 17 September 2024; sections on financial resources, professional training, coordinated support and specialist services. Online: https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-first-thematicevaluation-report-on-albania/1680b1a0ca
[16] CEDAW Committee (2017), General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19, CEDAW/C/GC/35, paragraphs 1 and 9. Dokumenti zyrtar

- accessible mechanisms for women facing multiple forms of discrimination;[17]
- monitoring of results and data collection.

In the costing process, consideration should be given not only to the total number of victims, but also to the additional cost of ensuring access for women with disabilities, women in rural areas, Roma and Egyptian women, migrant women, older women and other groups facing multiple barriers.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child[18] requires the state to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, ill-treatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Article 19 requires legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, as well as effective procedures for the identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of cases.

This standard is particularly important for children who:

- are direct victims of violence;
- have been present during domestic violence;
- accompany their mothers to emergency shelters or residential centres;
- need psychological, health, educational and legal support;
- are at risk of interrupting their education or losing access to basic services.

The Convention also requires child victims to be guaranteed physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration in an environment that protects their health, dignity and well-being.

For the costing of services, this means that children should not be counted only as accompanying persons of women staying in shelters. They are direct beneficiaries of services and require a tailored package, which may include:

- individual needs assessment;
- specialised psychological support;
- case management by trained professionals;
- continuity of education;
- transport to school;
- day care;
- healthcare;
- child-friendly environments and procedures;
- developmental and recovery activities;
- support after leaving the shelter.

Consequently, the cost of services for children should be identified separately in the budgets of shelters and residential centres and should not be included indiscriminately in general accommodation costs.[19]

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires states to recognise the higher risk of violence, abuse and exploitation experienced by women and girls with

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[17] CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 35, paragraph 12; Istanbul Convention, Article 4(3). CEDAW; CETS 210 - Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

[18] United Nations (1989), Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 3, 4 and 19.

[19] Ibid. United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 39; see also Articles 24, 28 and 19, and Istanbul Convention, Article 26.

disabilities. Articles 6 and 16 require specific measures to protect them and ensure that appropriate, accessible services are sensitive to gender and age.
The Convention requires protection and rehabilitation services to be accessible in practice. This includes not only physical access to buildings, but also:

- information in accessible formats;
- communication in understandable language;
- sign language interpretation;
- reasonable accommodation;
- assistive devices;
- personal assistance;
- accessible transport;
- professionals trained to work with people with different types of disabilities;
- accessible reporting and complaints procedures.[20]

From a costing perspective, accessibility should not be treated as an optional expense. It forms part of the minimum service standard. Costing should include investment in the physical adaptation of shelters and centres, communication tools, interpretation, transport, assistive devices and the additional support required.
The absence of these elements may make a service formally available but practically inaccessible to women and girls with disabilities.

Revised European Social Charter

The Revised European Social Charter complements the standards of the Istanbul Convention by guaranteeing rights that are essential for victims' protection and long-term reintegration. These include the right to health protection, social security, social and medical assistance, access to social welfare services, protection against poverty and social exclusion, and access to housing.[21]

For victims leaving a violent relationship, these rights directly affect their ability to build an independent life and avoid returning to the perpetrator for economic reasons.
The costing process should include:

- emergency and transitional economic assistance;
- social housing and rent bonuses;
- healthcare and mental health services;
- social welfare services;
- childcare;
- vocational training;
- employment mediation and support;
- measures against poverty and social exclusion;
- support after leaving residential care.

The Charter reinforces the argument that protection does not end when the immediate situation of danger has passed. The state must also ensure the social and economic conditions that make rehabilitation and sustainable reintegration possible.

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[20] United Nations (2006), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Articles 2, 6, 9, 13, 16, 20, 21 and 26, concerning reasonable accommodation, women with disabilities, accessibility, access to justice, protection from violence, mobility, accessible communication and rehabilitation. Online: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | OHCHR
[21] Council of Europe (1996), European Social Charter (Revised), ETS No. 163, provisions concerning health, social security, social assistance, social welfare services, family protection, poverty and housing; read subject to the provisions accepted by Albania. Online: Albania - Social Rights

Albania has accepted 64 of the Charter's 98 paragraphs. Therefore, not all the rights listed—particularly those under Articles 30 and 31—should automatically be treated as obligations accepted by Albania without first checking the table of accepted provisions.[22]

European Convention on Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights does not establish a specific list of services or a funding formula. However, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights has established that states have obligations to prevent violence, protect people at risk and conduct effective investigations when the authorities know or ought to have known about the risk.[23] These obligations relate in particular to:

- the right to life;
- the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment;
- respect for private and family life;
- the prohibition of discrimination;
- the right to an effective remedy.

From a financial perspective, meeting these obligations requires the state to ensure actual capacity and not merely formal competencies. This includes specialised police, risk assessment, emergency shelter, health and psychosocial support, effective investigation, legal aid and enforcement of protection orders.
Resource constraints do not remove the obligation to take reasonable protective measures within the authorities' powers where the applicable legal threshold for intervention is met. .

International Labour Organization Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment

International Labour Organization Convention No. 190 recognises the right of every person to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. It requires preventive policies, reporting and complaint mechanisms, protection against retaliation, training, awareness-raising and support measures.[24]

The Convention also recognises the impact of domestic violence on women's participation, productivity and safety at work. For this reason, state and institutional measures may include:

- confidential reporting mechanisms;
- training for employers and labour inspectors;
- support to retain employment;
- temporary adjustments to working hours or the workplace;
- referral to specialised services;
- protection against discrimination and dismissal;
- assistance with economic reintegration.

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[22] *Albania - Social Rights*

[23] *European Court of Human Rights, Opuz v. Turkey, application no. 33401/02, judgment of 9 June 2009; Kurt v. Austria [GC], application no. 62903/15, judgment of 15 June 2021. See also the Court's Factsheet on Domestic Violence. Online: Opuz v. Turkey; Factsheet — Domestic violence. hudoc.echr.coe.int*

[24] *International Labour Organization (2019), Violence and Harassment Convention, No. 190, Articles 4, 9–11. Albania ratified the Convention on 6 May 2022. Online: Ratifikimi nga Shqipëria. International Labour Organization*

For the current study, this Convention is relevant primarily to costing economic reintegration measures and employment support.[25] However, these costs should be distinguished from the core costs of shelters, the National Helpline and the LILIUM Centre.

Conclusion on international standards

Taken together, these instruments establish an integrated standard under which the state must fund not only emergency response, but the entire continuum of support: identification, reporting, protection, healthcare, shelter, legal aid, rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration.

They also require funding to take account of victims' different needs, particularly those of:

- children;
- women and girls with disabilities;
- women in rural and remote areas;
- Roma and Egyptian women;
- migrant and stateless women;
- older women;
- women with dependent children;
- victims facing multiple forms of discrimination.

Consequently, assessing the adequacy of funding cannot be based solely on the number of facilities or the total amount spent. It must assess whether allocated resources ensure, in practice, the availability, accessibility, quality, appropriateness and continuity of services for all victims.

Albanian legal framework and financial obligations for services for victims of violence against women and domestic violence

Introduction to the national legal framework

The Albanian legal framework for preventing and addressing violence against women and domestic violence has undergone a significant change with the adoption of Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality" and Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence". These two laws establish a new basis for organising, funding and monitoring the institutional response, shifting the focus from intervention primarily after incidents of violence to a broader system that includes prevention, immediate protection, specialised services, rehabilitation and long-term reintegration.

Law No. 64/2025 establishes the horizontal obligation to integrate gender equality and gender-responsive budgeting into the policies, programmes and budgets of public institutions. Law No. 11/2026, in turn, defines the package of rights, protective measures and services that must be guaranteed to victims. Read together, these laws require every obligation to provide a service to be accompanied by financial planning, human resources, quality standards, performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms.

The national framework is complemented by legislation on social care services, legal aid, social assistance, social housing, employment, local self-government and local finances. These laws regulate different components of the victim's pathway through the system:

[25] *International Labour Organization (2019), Violence and Harassment Recommendation, No. 206, paragraphs 17–20, supplementing Convention No. 190. Online: Recommendation nr. 206.*

identification and referral, shelter, economic assistance, healthcare, legal support, employment and economic independence.

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania forms the general foundation of this system.[26] The principles of equality before the law, non-discrimination, protection of life and dignity, physical and psychological integrity, private and family life, and the special protection of children create the state's obligation to prevent violence and ensure effective protection. In addition, international agreements ratified by Albania become part of the domestic legal system and prevail over ordinary laws that are incompatible with them. For this reason, national laws must be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention, CEDAW and other international instruments.

From the perspective of this study, what matters is not only whether a legal obligation exists, but also the public system's ability to implement it. The right to emergency shelter, for example, is not fulfilled merely by formally establishing a facility; it requires suitable premises, trained staff, 24/7 operation, food, security, transport, counselling, childcare and sustainable funding. Similarly, the functioning of a Coordinated Referral Mechanism requires a local coordinator, professional case management, interinstitutional communication, documentation, transport, secure data systems and monitoring.

The analysis of the Albanian legal framework therefore focuses on four main questions:

1. What services and measures must be guaranteed by law?
2. Which institution is responsible for organising and funding them?
3. What human, infrastructural and financial resources does implementation require?
4. Does the current framework make it possible to identify and monitor the funding required and the funding actually provided?

This approach helps to distinguish between the actual cost of the existing system and the normative cost of fully implementing the law. The difference between them represents the actual public funding gap.

Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality"

Law No. 64/2025 establishes the new general framework for guaranteeing and promoting gender equality in Albania.[27] It replaces Law No. 9970/2008 "On Gender Equality in Society" and strengthens public institutions' obligations to integrate a gender perspective into legislation, policies, programmes, budgets and services.

The importance of this law for costing the response to violence lies in the fact that gender-responsive budgeting is no longer treated only as a recommended practice, but as an obligation for central and local public institutions.

The law defines gender-responsive budgeting as an approach that systematically integrates gender equality objectives into:

- government policies;
- planning;
- budgeting;
- implementation;
- monitoring;
- evaluation;
- auditing.

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[26] Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Articles 18, 21, 25, 35–37, 54 and 122. Qendra e Botimeve Zyrtare

[27] Law No. 64/2025, "For Gender Equality", general provisions and final provisions. Online: https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Ligj-nr.-64-dt.-6.11.2025.pdf

The purpose is to identify the impact of public revenues and expenditure on women and men and to reorient resources so that different gender needs and priorities are addressed fairly.

Obligation to implement gender-responsive budgeting

Article 12 requires public institutions to implement gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting in the planning, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of budget policies, programmes, plans and projects.[28]

The obligation expressly applies also to local self-government units. This means that municipalities must integrate gender objectives, measures and indicators into:

- medium-term budget programmes;
- annual budgets;
- local social plans;
- the social care programme;
- the local social fund;
- projects and contracts for service provision.

In the context of violence against women, institutions should not limit themselves to presenting the amount currently spent. They should first identify:

- the actual need and demand for services;
- the expected number of beneficiaries;
- the type and intensity of the service;
- the minimum quality standard;
- the required territorial coverage;
- the unit cost;
- the source of funding;
- the gap between the required cost and the actual allocation.

Gender impact assessment

The law requires draft laws to be accompanied by a gender impact assessment. This obligation is important for policies addressing violence, as every legislative change or new programme must analyse its impact on women and men, as well as the needs of different groups.[29]

The gender impact assessment should be accompanied by a financial assessment. If a draft law creates the right to a new service, expands the categories of beneficiaries or establishes higher standards, it should identify:

- initial establishment costs;
- annual operating costs;
- additional personnel;
- infrastructure investment;
- training costs;
- the impact on central and local budgets.

Human resources and institutional mechanisms

The law requires qualified human resources for implementing gender equality policies. A dedicated structure for gender issues, at least at directorate level, must operate within the responsible ministry.[30] Ministries, public administration institutions and local units have obligations to cooperate, report and implement.

This creates costs related to:

- dedicated positions;
- salaries and contributions;

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[28] Law No. 64/2025, Article 12(1)–(3).

[29] Law No. 64/2025, Article 11.

[30] Law No. 64/2025, Chapter III, on the authorities responsible for achieving gender equality.

- initial and ongoing training;
- interinstitutional coordination;
- monitoring and reporting;
- technical support for local institutions.

Gender data and statistics

The law strengthens the obligation to collect, process and publish gender data and statistics disaggregated by sex. For the violence sector, this is essential for planning capacity and costs.[31]

Funding should include:

- electronic data systems;
- standardisation of indicators;
- interoperability of institutional systems;
- personal data protection;
- responsible personnel;
- quality control;
- periodic analysis and publication.

Without reliable data on the number of victims, types of violence, services received, duration of intervention and results achieved, it is not possible to develop a realistic budget.

Relevance to service costing

Law No. 64/2025 links the funding of services addressing violence to the general public finance system. Expenditure should:

- be identified in the relevant budget programmes;
- be linked to gender equality objectives;
- be accompanied by measurable indicators;
- be tracked from planning through to expenditure;
- be assessed in relation to outcomes for victims.

This shifts the analysis from the question "How much has been spent?" to the question "How much is required to implement the legal standard, and what results have been achieved?"

Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence"

Law No. 11/2026 constitutes the main current basis for preventing violence and protecting and supporting victims.[32] It repeals Law No. 9669/2006, as amended, and extends protection beyond violence in family relations.

The law covers violence against women and domestic violence in public and private life, including:

- physical violence;
- psychological violence;
- sexual violence;
- economic violence;
- technology-facilitated violence;
- sexual violence and harassment;
- violence against women in electoral processes and politics.

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[31] *Law No. 64/2025, Article 13.*

[32] *Law No. 11/2026, Chapters I–II, on scope, principles, definitions and forms of violence. Online: https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Ligj-nr.-11-dt.-28.1.2026-i-miratuar-ne-kuvend.pdf*

The law is based on a victim-centred approach, respect for dignity, safety, privacy and confidentiality, prevention of secondary victimisation, and ensuring access to justice and services.
From a financial perspective, the law establishes a broader standard than the previous framework. It requires not only an institutional response and protection orders, but a package of integrated services that are free, timely, easily accessible and adapted to victims' needs.

Individual assessment and risk assessment

The law requires an individual assessment of the victim and her protection and support needs. [33]The assessment must take into account risk, the nature and recurrence of the violence, health and psychosocial needs, the presence of children, disability and other circumstances of vulnerability.
This requires:

- trained professionals;
- standardised tools and methodologies;
- dedicated interview time;
- safe and confidential premises;
- interinstitutional coordination;
- periodic updating of the assessment;
- documentation and secure data storage.

Assessment should not be considered a cost-free administrative act, but a professional service that affects the quality and effectiveness of the intervention.

General and specialised support services

Article 16 recognises victims' right to support through general and specialised services.[34]
General support includes:

- information and support during reporting;
- information and referral for free legal aid;
- free legal counselling;
- free psychological and psychosocial counselling;
- free medical services;
- free forensic examinations;
- immediate shelter;
- economic assistance for victims of domestic violence for at least 30 days;
- social and economic integration;
- financial assistance and support;
- childcare;
- employment assistance;
- education and vocational training.

Specialised support must be guaranteed, in particular, to victims of sexual violence and, as applicable, to people experiencing violence or harassment in the workplace.
Services must be provided free of charge by trained professionals, in a personalised manner and in a language understood by the victim. Where possible, services should be provided in the same setting, supporting the development of integrated, "one-stop" models.

Service cost categories

Implementation of Article 16 requires funding for:

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[33] Law No. 11/2026, Articles 14–15.
[34] Law No. 11/2026, Article 16(1)–(6).

- staff salaries and contributions;
- shifts and 24/7 availability;
- accommodation and maintenance of premises;
- food, clothing and hygiene products;
- physical security;
- transport and accompaniment;
- translation and interpretation;
- adaptations for persons with disabilities;
- legal, psychological and psychosocial counselling;
- medical and forensic examinations;
- medicines and laboratory tests;
- childcare and support for children;
- emergency economic assistance;
- transitional and long-term housing;
- employment and vocational training programmes;
- case management and follow-up;
- support after leaving the shelter.

The law provides for the adoption of an instruction that will define the types of services, standards, procedures, coverage and rules for financial support. Until the secondary legal framework is completed, the analysis should clearly distinguish between the rights recognised by law and existing actual capacities.

Rehabilitation programmes

Article 17 requires the development and implementation of programmes for the rehabilitation of victims and perpetrators of violence.

Programmes for victims should aim to:

- support psychological and psychosocial recovery;
- improve safety and well-being;
- restore autonomy;
- prevent revictimisation;
- support social and economic reintegration.

Programmes for perpetrators should aim to reduce the risk of recurrence, change violent behaviour and, where necessary, address addictions or mental health problems.

Costing should include initial assessment, individual and group sessions, specialised staff, premises, monitoring of participation and evaluation of results.

Programmes for perpetrators should have separate funding. They should not be funded by reducing resources intended for victims' safety, support, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Protection measures and implementation costs

The law expands the measures that may be imposed through protection orders, including, as appropriate:

- removal of the perpetrator;
- prohibition of contact;
- placement of the victim and children in temporary accommodation;
- payment of rent or other obligations by the perpetrator;
- psychosocial, health and financial support;
- inclusion of the victim in rehabilitation programmes;
- requiring the perpetrator to attend rehabilitation programmes;
- protective measures addressing technology-facilitated violence;
- electronic monitoring, where available and necessary.

The costs of implementing protection orders should be included in the budgets of the police, municipalities, social services, courts, enforcement services and service providers.[35]

Coordinated Referral Mechanism and local responsibilities

Law No. 11/2026 recognises local self-government units and CRM structures as responsible frontline authorities.

Municipalities must take measures to:

- train social service structures;
- identify, address and refer cases;
- coordinate between institutions;
- implement and monitor protection orders;
- establish and improve social care services;
- operate rehabilitation centres;
- provide programmes for perpetrators of violence;
- inform the public about measures and services;
- guarantee access to services.

Article 56, paragraph 3, requires local units to plan and manage the output of the local social fund,[36] as part of the local budget programme for social care, for the establishment and provision of general and specialised services.

Services may be provided:

- directly by the municipality;
- through public institutions;
- through contracts with specialised non-profit organisations.

This provision creates a direct link between the legal obligation, the local social plan, the budget programme, the local social fund, the service standard and the contracting of a provider.

The costing of the CRM should include:

- the local coordinator;
- case management;
- staff time of members;
- multidisciplinary meetings;
- transport and accompaniment;
- secure communication;
- documentation;
- data systems;
- monitoring of protection orders;[37]
- follow-up on individual plans;
- referral and follow-up after the intervention is completed.

Obligations of the health system

Article 51 requires the ministry responsible for health and health institutions to guarantee medical and psychosocial assistance and specialised services for victims.

The obligations include:

- emergency services;
- family doctor services;
- treatment at health centres and hospitals;
- medical examinations;

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[35] Law No. 11/2026, Article 16(7), read together with Article 58.

[36] Law No. 11/2026, Article 56(2)–(4), particularly paragraph 3

[37] Law No. 11/2026, Articles 19–22; for implementation and electronic monitoring, Article 41.

- documentation of injuries;
- issuing medical reports;
- referral to specialised services;
- establishing new integrated centres for victims of sexual violence;
- strengthening existing centres;
- specialised mental health services;
- treatment for perpetrators with mental health disorders.

For the purposes of this study, the resources required to implement these obligations are estimated to include: medical intervention, specialised personnel, 24/7 availability, equipment, laboratory tests, medicines, collection and preservation of evidence, documentation, psychological support and coordination with the police, prosecution and social services.

These provisions provide the basis for assessing not only the current cost of the LILIUM Centre, but also the cost of expanding coverage through integrated centres for victims of sexual violence.

Obligations of the State Police

The law requires the establishment of responsible sections within the local structures of the State Police, staffed by judicial police officers trained and specialised in violence against women and domestic violence.
This obligation requires:

- dedicated personnel;
- initial and ongoing training;
- confidential interview premises;
- transport and accompaniment vehicles;
- equipment for documenting and preserving evidence;
- capacity to address digital violence;
- standardised risk assessment tools;
- monitoring of protection orders;
- electronic monitoring equipment, where used;
- reporting and data management systems.

These expenses should be identified as part of the response to violence and should not remain indistinguishable within general public order expenditure.

Mandatory training for professionals

Article 45 stipulates that victims should be treated only by trained and specialised professionals. Institutions responsible for training must develop training programmes and calendars and determine the budget required for ongoing and mandatory training.
Costing should include:

- training needs assessment;
- development and updating of modules;
- trainers and materials;
- participants' working time;
- training for new staff;
- periodic refresher training;
- professional supervision;
- assessment of knowledge and practice;
- annual reporting.

Training should be treated as a regular institutional expense and not as an activity carried out only when donor funding is secured.

Prevention and awareness-raising

The law requires central and local authorities to carry out annual public education and awareness-raising programmes and campaigns.

Measures should cover:

- forms of violence against women;
- reporting and available services;
- early identification;
- technology-facilitated violence;
- sexual harassment at work;
- engagement of men and boys;
- prevention among children and young people;
- materials in accessible formats.

These measures require predictable budgets for the development of materials, public communication, community activities, accessibility and impact assessment.

Data, statistics and prevalence study

Law No. 11/2026 requires:

- the collection and retention of administrative data;
- improvement of data systems;
- annual production and publication of statistics;
- data disaggregated by forms of violence;
- collection and publication of data on femicide;
- a national prevalence study every five years.

Implementation requires funding for:

- electronic systems;
- interoperability of databases;
- methodologies and indicators;
- personal data protection;
- personnel and training;
- quality control;
- analysis and publication;
- periodic national studies.

These data are needed to determine demand for services, required capacity, cost per beneficiary and the funding gap.

Sectoral laws with a direct financial impact

Fulfilling the obligations arising from Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" and the Istanbul Convention does not depend only on specific legislation on violence. It requires the interaction of a number of sectoral laws regulating social services, legal aid, economic support, housing, employment and local finances. These laws define the instruments through which victims' rights must be translated into concrete, funded services.

Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services in the Republic of Albania"

Law No. 121/2016 regulates the organisation, provision, standardisation and funding of social care services. It provides the legal basis for the operation of emergency and long-term shelters, residential and community services, counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration.[38]

[38] *Republic of Albania, Law No. 121/2016, dated 24 November 2016, "Për shërbimet e kujdesit shoqëror në Republikën e Shqipërisë", as amended. Legjislacioni i SHSSH-së.*

From a costing perspective, implementation of this law requires consideration not only of the number of people accommodated, but of the entire structure needed to provide a quality service. This includes the approved service standard, licensed capacity and actual capacity in use, the number and profile of beneficiaries, the ratio of personnel to beneficiaries, length of stay, direct and administrative expenditure, and the costs of monitoring and inspection.

The law is particularly important for financial analysis because it provides for funding from several sources: the central budget, the social fund and the budgets of local self-government units. It also establishes the basis for contracting non-public providers. Consequently, costing must identify not only the amount required to provide the service, but also the institution responsible for funding it and the mechanism through which funds should be transferred to the provider.

Law No. 111/2017 "On State-Guaranteed Legal Aid"

Law No. 111/2017 guarantees free legal aid to protected categories, including victims of domestic violence and sexual violence, under the conditions set out in the law. In practice, victims' legal needs extend beyond representation in a single proceeding. They may include primary legal counselling, preparation of documentation, applications for protection orders, representation in criminal proceedings, family and administrative matters, and translation and interpretation services.[39]

Costing should also take into account the territorial and social barriers that limit access to legal aid, particularly in rural areas. For this reason, mobile services, referral mechanisms and other forms of support may be needed. State-guaranteed legal aid does not necessarily replace the legal counselling provided within shelters and specialised services. The two forms have different but complementary functions and should be planned as part of the same support package.

Law No. 57/2019 "On Social Assistance in the Republic of Albania"

This law establishes the basis for economic support to individuals and families who do not have sufficient income. It should be implemented in connection with the obligation established by Law No. 11/2026 to provide economic assistance to victims of domestic violence for at least 30 days.[40]

However, financial support should not be limited to the emergency period. The assessment of needs should distinguish between immediate assistance, support during a stay in a shelter, transitional assistance after leaving, and medium-term measures that enable economic independence. Without this continuity, victims may face poverty, housing insecurity and an increased risk of returning to the violent environment.

Law No. 22/2018 "On Social Housing"

Law No. 22/2018 includes victims of domestic violence among the priority categories for benefiting from social housing programmes. Sustainable housing is an essential element of reintegration and a practical condition for long-term separation from the perpetrator of violence.[41]

Housing costs may include rent bonuses, temporary accommodation, social rental housing, rent or loan interest subsidies, adaptation of housing for persons with disabilities, guarantees and initial payments, and support for transitioning to independent living. The main

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[39] Republic of Albania, Law No. 111/2017, "Për ndihmën juridike të garantuar nga shteti", particularly Article 11 on special categories of beneficiaries. Kategoritë përfituese — DNJF.

[40] Republic of Albania, Law No. 57/2019, dated 18 July 2019, "Për asistencën sociale në Republikën e Shqipërisë", as amended; read together with Law No. 11/2026, Article 16(4). Fletorja Zyrtare nr. 113/2019.

[41] Republic of Albania, Law No. 22/2018, "Për strehimin social", as amended, including amendments introduced by Law No. 48/2023. Legjislacioni — Enti Kombëtar i Banesave

problem is not only the formal existence of these instruments, but victims' actual and timely access to them. Consequently, costing should also assess the difference between the number of people who meet the criteria and the number of people who effectively receive support.

Law No. 15/2019 "On the Promotion of Employment"

Law No. 15/2019 establishes instruments for employment, vocational training, labour market mediation, employment subsidies and self-employment. These measures complement the obligation under Law No. 11/2026 to ensure victims' social and economic integration and support them in employment, education and training.[42]

Costing this support should include vocational profiling and guidance, training, employment mediation, subsidised jobs and support for self-employment. At the same time, expenses that often determine whether a woman can actually participate in an employment programme should be calculated, such as transport, childcare, mentoring and follow-up after employment. Without funding these complementary elements, employment measures may remain formally available but practically inaccessible.

Legislation on local self-government and local finances

Legislation on local self-government and local finances is particularly important because a considerable part of the responsibility for planning and providing social services is exercised at municipal level. Municipalities must link needs assessment with the local social plan, the Medium-Term Budget Programme, the annual budget, the local social fund, service contracting, provider monitoring and reporting on results.[43]

However, the transfer of responsibilities to the local level should not become unfunded decentralisation. Fiscal capacity varies considerably between municipalities and, in the absence of adequate transfers and equalisation mechanisms, a victim's place of residence may determine the level of protection she receives. Where local resources are insufficient to guarantee the minimum standard, central funding should fill the gap and ensure a comparable level of services throughout the territory.

Bylaws and service standards

The practical implementation of the legal framework is supported by bylaws regulating the operation of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms, case management, standards for general and specialised services, and the methodology for funding social care services.
Law No. 11/2026 repealed Law No. 9669/2006 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations", as amended. However, Article 59 of the new law stipulates that bylaws adopted pursuant to the previous law remain in force until they are replaced. Consequently, the existing acts constitute a transitional framework: they continue to apply, but must be interpreted in accordance with Law No. 11/2026 and Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality".
For the purposes of this study, the following are directly relevant:

- Council of Ministers Decision No. 518/2018 on community and residential social care services;[44]
- Council of Ministers Decision No. 150/2019 on the methodology for calculating funds for financing social care services;[45]

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[42] Republic of Albania, Law No. 15/2019, dated 13 March 2019, "Për nxitjen e punësimit", as amended. Për tekstin përfundimtar përdor versionin e konsoliduar në QBZ.
[43] Republic of Albania, Law No. 139/2015, "Për vetëqeverisjen vendore", and Law No. 68/2017, dated 27 April 2017, "Për financat e vetëqeverisjes vendore", as amended. Ministria e Financave — Financat vendore.
*[44] **Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers Decision No. 518, dated 4 September 2018**, "On community and residential social care services, eligibility criteria and procedures, and the amount allocated for personal expenses of beneficiaries of organised services." Official text*
*[45] **Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers Decision No. 150, dated 20 March 2019**, "On the methodology for calculating funds for financing social care services." Official text. sherbimisocial.gov.al*

- Council of Ministers Decision No. 327/2021 on the functioning of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism;[46]
- Council of Ministers Decision No. 430/2016 on the standards of the National Counselling Line;[47]
- Council of Ministers Decision No. 505/2011 on service standards in public and non-public residential centres;[48]
- Instruction No. 816/2018 on the standards and operation of crisis management centres for cases of sexual violence;[49]
- Instruction No. 744/2019 and Instruction No. 354/2022 on emergency and safe shelter services;[50]
- Orders No. 100 and No. 101/2020 on standard operating procedures for social care service workers and health professionals.[51]

These acts define elements that directly affect the cost of services: the number and qualifications of personnel; 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week operation of emergency services; accommodation, safety and confidentiality conditions; food and basic needs; psychological, psychosocial and legal assistance; healthcare and forensic examinations; childcare; risk assessment; case management; and rehabilitation, reintegration, documentation and monitoring.

However, most of these acts were adopted before the new laws entered into force and were developed primarily around the concept of domestic violence. Law No. 11/2026 considerably broadens the scope of protection to include other forms of violence against women, sexual violence, technology-facilitated violence, and violence against women in elections and politics. At the same time, Law No. 64/2025 requires planning, funding, implementation and monitoring to be based on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting.

This creates a temporary mismatch between the broader rights and obligations provided for by the new laws and operational standards that are still based on the previous framework. The review of the bylaws should therefore harmonise terminology and scope, define the minimum package of services and standard unit costs, and clarify the division of financial responsibilities between central and local government. It should also establish sustainable procedures for contracting non-profit organisations and guarantee access for victims with disabilities or those facing multiple forms of discrimination.

Until new acts are adopted, cost calculations should be based on existing standards, supplemented by the broader obligations arising from Law No. 11/2026, Law No. 64/2025 and the Istanbul Convention. For this reason, the results of this study should be considered in the

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[46] ***Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers Decision No. 327, dated 2 June 2021***, *"On the mechanism for coordinating the work of the responsible authorities for referring cases of violence in family relations and the procedures for supporting and rehabilitating victims of violence."* State Social Service legislation register.

[47] ***Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers Decision No. 430, dated 8 June 2016***, *"On the approval of service standards for the National Counselling Line for Victims of Domestic Violence."* Official text.

[48] ***Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers Decision No. 505, dated 13 July 2011***, *"On the approval of social care service standards for victims of domestic violence in public and non-public residential centres."* Official text.

[49] ***Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Instruction No. 816, dated 27 November 2018***, *"On the approval of standards for service delivery and the functioning of crisis management centres for cases of sexual violence."* State Social Service standards register.

[50] ***Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Instruction No. 744, dated 15 November 2019***, *"On the approval of minimum social care service standards for victims/survivors of gender-based violence and domestic violence in public and non-public short-term emergency residential centres (emergency shelters)."* State Social Service standards register.

[51] ***Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Instruction No. 354, dated 2 June 2022***, *"On the approval of standards for safe emergency accommodation services."* State Social Service standards register.

context of a transitional framework and reviewed if new acts change the standards, minimum package of services, unit costs or division of financial responsibilities.

Implications for the costing methodology

The new legal framework requires a shift from calculating the expenditure of some existing institutions to calculating the cost of a complete package of rights and services. The main unit of analysis should be the victim's full pathway, starting with identification and reporting and continuing with risk assessment, protection and emergency transport, shelter, healthcare and forensic care, psychological and psychosocial support, legal aid, case management, economic support, rehabilitation, long-term housing, employment and follow-up after the intervention is completed.

For each link in this pathway, the responsible institution, minimum standard, expected number of beneficiaries, existing and required capacity, intensity and duration of the service, unit cost, source of funding and territorial coverage should be defined. The contributions of civil society organisations and donors should be identified separately so that external funding is not mistakenly presented as funding guaranteed by the state.

It is also necessary to distinguish between four financial categories:

- the normative cost of implementing the standard;
- the public budget allocated;
- actual expenditure;
- needs that remain uncovered.

In-kind contributions, unpaid work and expenses covered by organisations or donors should also be included in this analysis. These resources may temporarily keep the system operating, but they do not constitute sustainable public funding. The difference between the normative cost, guaranteed funding and actual expenditure represents the actual funding gap.

Conclusions

Law No. 64/2025 and Law No. 11/2026 establish a stronger basis for funding the prevention of and response to violence against women and domestic violence. The Gender Equality Law requires gender needs and objectives to be integrated at every stage of the budget process, while the new law on violence defines a broader package of free services and clearer responsibilities for central and local authorities.

Law No. 11/2026 provides for the right to general and specialised services, emergency shelter, psychosocial assistance, economic support, social and economic integration, integrated centres for victims of sexual violence, training for professionals and improvement of data systems. It also creates opportunities for funding through the local social fund and for contracting non-profit organisations.

However, the expansion of legal rights is not yet accompanied by the full definition of standard costs for each service, the level of support per beneficiary or a formula for dividing funding between central and local government. Without these elements, there is a risk that the new obligations will remain underfunded or be implemented unevenly across municipalities.

Consequently, cost analysis should not be limited to reproducing the expenditure of existing facilities. It should determine the cost of fully implementing the standards established by national legislation and the Istanbul Convention. Only a comparison between this normative cost, allocated funding and actual expenditure can provide an accurate picture of the funding gap and the additional resources that must be mobilised.

National strategies and funding of measures against violence against women and domestic violence

Purpose and scope of the analysis

This section assesses whether Albania's main strategic documents provide an adequate basis for planning, funding, implementing and monitoring measures against violence against women and domestic violence. The analysis is not limited to a formal review of whether gender-based violence is mentioned in these documents, but assesses whether strategic commitments have been translated into costed measures, clear institutional responsibilities, identifiable funding sources and measurable results.

In this sense, a strategy is considered suitable for planning and budgeting purposes only if it clearly specifies what service should be provided, by which institution, for how many beneficiaries, at what cost, from which budget programme and within what timeframe. It is equally important that the document makes it possible to compare the estimated cost, planned funding, approved allocation, disbursed amount, actual expenditure and results achieved.

The analysis covers the entire continuum of support for victims: from identification, reporting and emergency intervention to shelter, psychological support, legal aid, rehabilitation and long-term reintegration. Within this framework, it also examines whether strategic documents distinguish the initial costs of establishing or adapting a service from its ongoing operating costs, and whether they clearly define the division of financial responsibilities between central government and local self-government units.

Strategic documents analysed

The analysis focuses on three documents directly linked to the measures and services addressed in this study:

1. National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030;[52]
2. National Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030;[53]
3. Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime 2024–2030.[54]

These strategies cover different but complementary dimensions of the state response: policies addressing gender-based violence and specialised services; the social care, housing and reintegration system; and the protection of victims during proceedings and access to justice.

Other sectoral strategies, including documents on youth, health, and sexual and reproductive health, contain measures with an indirect impact on the prevention of or response to violence. However, they have not been analysed separately because they do not provide identifiable funding for the services within the scope of this study: the National Counselling Line for Women and Girls, the National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence, the LILIUM Centre, emergency shelters and long-term residential centres. Including them would increase the risk of overlap and double counting of measures or financial resources reported in several documents at the same time.

The new legal standard for strategic and budget planning

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[52] Council of Ministers Decision No. 400, dated 30 June 2021, approving the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030 and its action plan; particularly Strategic Goal III and the corresponding implementation matrix. Online: Strategjia dhe plani i veprimit. shendetesia.gov.al

[53] Council of Ministers Decision No. 152, dated 13 March 2024, approving the National Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030 and its implementation action plan. Online: Strategjia dhe plani i veprimit. arkiva.shendetesia.gov.al

[54] Council of Ministers Decision No. 729, dated 13 December 2023, approving the Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime 2024–2030, its action plan and indicator passport. Online: Vendimi, strategjia dhe anekset. drejtesia.gov.al

All three strategies were adopted before the entry into force of Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality" and Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence". Consequently, they continue to provide the main basis for strategic planning, but cannot automatically be considered sufficient to meet the new legal standards. Action plans, costs, indicators, and institutional and financial responsibilities must be reviewed and aligned with these obligations.

Law No. 64/2025 requires central and local public institutions to implement gender-responsive budgeting at all stages of the policy and budget cycle. In practice, this means that strategic measures should be based on an analysis of gender needs and inequalities, identify target groups and the expected number of beneficiaries, identify the services to be funded and calculate the related costs. Each measure should be linked to an implementing institution, a funding institution and an identifiable budget programme. Indicators should make it possible to measure not only the completion of activities, but also coverage, quality and outcomes for victims.

At the same time, Law No. 11/2026 broadens the scope of protection and the package of services that must be reflected in strategic and budget planning. This package includes information and support during reporting, individual assessment of needs and risks, free legal, psychological and psychosocial counselling, medical assistance and forensic examinations, transport and 24/7 emergency shelter, economic assistance, support for children, services for victims of sexual violence, and social and economic rehabilitation and reintegration. It also includes the operation of Coordinated Referral Mechanisms, training for professionals, data management, specialised structures and programmes for the rehabilitation of victims and perpetrators of violence.

Alignment with the new law cannot be achieved merely by adding new activities to existing plans. Each obligation must be accompanied by a service standard, an estimated cost, a sustainable source of funding, a responsible institution, an implementation timeframe and measurable indicators.

National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030

The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030, adopted by Council of Ministers Decision No. 400, dated 30 June 2021, constitutes the main policy document for advancing gender equality and addressing gender-based violence in Albania. Strategic Direction III aims to reduce all forms of gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful practices.

The Strategy covers prevention and awareness-raising, improvement of the legal and institutional framework, strengthening of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms, expansion of access to general and specialised services, building the capacity of professionals, rehabilitation and reintegration, and improvement of data collection and use. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has primary responsibility for coordination and monitoring, while other tasks have been assigned to line ministries, the State Police, justice institutions, the State Social Service, INSTAT and local self-government units.

From a planning perspective, the Strategy and its action plan contain measures, timelines, responsible institutions, indicators and financial estimates. This is an important development, but the current costing structure does not always make it possible to identify the funding planned for each service. Costs are presented mainly at the level of a measure or activity and not as distinct costs for the National Counselling Line, the LILIUM Centre, emergency shelters, long-term residential centres, case management by the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms or support after leaving a shelter.

Another limitation is the absence of standard unit costs for services. The documents do not systematically provide information on the cost of a call or case handled by the National Line, the cost of a case managed by the Coordinated Referral Mechanism, the daily cost for a woman or child in a shelter, or the cost of a complete rehabilitation and reintegration package.

Without this data, it is difficult to link the budget to the number of beneficiaries, service capacity and the required quality standard.
The action plan identifies the state budget, local budgets and support from development partners as sources of funding. However, it is not always clearly distinguished which portion is approved and secured and which remains conditional on future funding or donor support. Similarly, identifying the institution responsible for a measure is not necessarily accompanied by identifying the budget programme that should cover the expenditure.
The Strategy therefore provides a broad and important policy framework, but the link between measures, concrete services and budgets remains partial. Alignment with the new laws should serve to transform it from a primarily programmatic document into a stronger instrument for financial planning and accountability.

National Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030

The National Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030 and its action plan, adopted by Council of Ministers Decision No. 152, dated 13 March 2024, constitute the main framework for developing social assistance and social care services. The Strategy aims to improve the system's coverage and effectiveness, expand community and residential services, strengthen the social fund, improve local social plans, standardise services and build the capacity of professionals.

Its connection to the subject of this study is direct, because emergency shelters, residential centres, community services, and rehabilitation and reintegration measures operate within the social care system. The action plan contains financial estimates and provides for a combination of state budget funding, local budgets, the social fund, programmes of the responsible institutions and funding from development partners.

However, services for victims of violence are not always presented as distinct budget outputs. They are often included in broader categories of services for people in need. This makes it difficult to track the amounts planned and spent specifically on shelters, psychological and psychosocial support, case management, transitional housing and the reintegration of victims.

The costing does not always make the necessary distinction between the initial investment required to establish or adapt a service, its annual operating cost, its cost per beneficiary and the funding needed to meet the standards. This is a particularly important limitation for emergency shelters. The formal existence of a facility or a specified number of places does not demonstrate that the personnel, security, infrastructure, food and support services needed for its continuous operation have been funded.

The Strategy identifies the role of municipalities in assessing needs, preparing local social plans, budget planning, establishing and administering services, co-financing through the social fund and contracting non-public providers. However, the division of costs between central and local government is not always clear or guaranteed. This creates the risk that legal responsibilities will be transferred to municipalities without the necessary resources, resulting in territorial inequalities in the availability and quality of services.

The problem is more evident for services that cover several municipalities or have a regional function. In the absence of clear intermunicipal funding and co-financing mechanisms, the municipality where the service is physically located may bear a disproportionate share of the cost. Similarly, funding through the social fund should not be limited to the initial establishment of a service, but should ensure continuity of operation and compliance with standards.

The Strategy establishes an important basis for developing the social services system, but it does not yet make dedicated funding for victims of violence fully visible. Alignment with Law No. 11/2026 should clarify the minimum package of services, the division of financial responsibilities and the mechanisms that guarantee equal coverage nationwide.

Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime 2024–2030

The Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime 2024–2030, its action plan and its indicator passport were adopted by Council of Ministers Decision No. 729, dated 13 December 2023. The Strategy aims to establish a coordinated system for informing, protecting and supporting victims and ensuring their access to justice. Among others, it covers victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual violence, child victims or witnesses, and victims of trafficking.

The Ministry of Justice is the lead institution, while other responsibilities are assigned to justice institutions, the Ministry of Interior, the State Police, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and local self-government units.

The Strategy is relevant to this study primarily in relation to the costs of informing victims, legal aid and representation, protection during proceedings, appropriate interview settings, psychological support, medical and forensic examinations, professional training and referral to social services. It should not be used as the primary document for costing shelters or residential services, as its main focus is access to justice and protection during criminal proceedings.

The action plan identifies costs, responsible institutions and expected sources of funding. However, costs for victims of violence against women are often included in broader categories of crime victims. Consequently, funding specifically for violence against women cannot be fully distinguished. Expenditure on training, psychological support and referral is also often presented in aggregate, while long-term rehabilitation and reintegration remain outside the Strategy's central focus.

Alignment with Law No. 11/2026 should strengthen the costing of individual and risk assessments, measures to prevent secondary victimisation, treatment by specialised professionals, immediate referral to shelter, free medical and forensic examinations, implementation and monitoring of protection orders, measures addressing technology-facilitated violence, management of data on violence against women and femicide, and victim compensation mechanisms.

Coherence and complementarity between the strategies

The three strategies cover different links in the same system, as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Coherence and complementarity between the strategies

Strategic document	Main area
National Strategy for Gender Equality	Prevention, coordination, policies addressing gender-based violence and specialised services
National Social Protection Strategy	Social care services, housing, rehabilitation and reintegration
Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime	Information, protection during proceedings, legal aid and access to justice

Source: *Authors' analysis of the three national strategies and their accompanying action plans and indicator frameworks.*

This division can support a comprehensive response only if measures, responsibilities, indicators and budgets are coordinated across the documents. Currently, the same intervention may appear in several strategies without clearly identifying the lead institution, the funding programme, the share of the cost to be covered by each institution, or how results are to be reported. This risk is particularly present in the areas of professional training, awareness-raising, data collection, legal aid, psychological support, case management and reintegration.

To avoid fragmentation and double counting, a joint interinstitutional map is needed. It should link each measure to the relevant legal obligation, expected result, lead institution, budget programme and output, funding source, number of beneficiaries and performance indicators. This map should make it possible to track the amount planned, allocated, disbursed and spent for each service.

Table 2. Consolidated assessment

Criterion	Gender equality	Social protection	Protection of victims of crime
Contains direct measures addressing violence	Yes	Yes, within the social services system	Yes, within the victim protection system
Includes costs for all measures	Partially	Partially	Partially
Separates the costs of specialised services	Not fully	Not fully	Not fully
Defines the responsible institutions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Identifies the funding budget programme	Partially	Partially	Partially
Distinguishes secured funding from expected funding	Not fully	Not fully	Not fully
Guarantees national coverage solely through public funding	Not fully	Not fully	Not fully
Includes distinct costs for reintegration	Partially	Partially	To a limited extent
Fully reflects the new laws	No; alignment is required	No; alignment is required	No; alignment is required
Allows actual expenditure to be tracked by service	Not systematically	Not systematically	Not systematically

Source: Authors' analysis of the three national strategies and their accompanying action plans and indicator frameworks.

Overall assessment of strategic funding

The analysis shows that Albania has a relatively broad strategic framework for preventing violence, protecting victims and providing services. The main problem is not a complete absence of measures, but their fragmentation across documents, institutions, levels of government and funding sources.

Costs are not systematically defined at service level, and the use of standard unit costs remains limited. Expenditure is often presented in general categories, making it difficult to identify the amount planned and spent for each specialised service. It is not always clear whether the costs included in action plans are covered by approved public funds or depend on future funding and donor support.

Furthermore, the link between a strategic measure and the relevant budget programme remains partial. This is particularly problematic when responsibility is shared between central and local government. In the absence of a clear funding formula, a

municipality's fiscal capacity may determine the level of protection a victim receives, thereby creating territorial inequalities.

Identifying an institution as responsible for implementation does not prove that the institution has a dedicated and sufficient fund. Similarly, including an amount in an action plan does not prove that it has been approved, disbursed or spent. For this reason, financial analysis must clearly distinguish between the estimated cost, planned funding, approved allocation, disbursed amount, actual expenditure and result achieved.

When the documentation does not make this comparison possible, the methodological conclusion should be that the data are insufficient. Lack of information should not automatically be interpreted as proof that funds have not been allocated or spent; it does, however, demonstrate insufficient financial transparency and traceability.

Conclusions and main directions for alignment

National strategies establish an important basis for planning measures against violence against women and domestic violence, but they do not yet form a single, coordinated and fully financially traceable framework. Law No. 64/2025 and Law No. 11/2026 require a shift from general planning, focused mainly on activities, to an approach based on rights, service standards, territorial coverage, measurable costs and verifiable results.

Within this framework, alignment should focus on several fundamental directions:

- defining a minimum national package of services that must be accessible throughout the territory;
- establishing standards and unit costs for each type of service;
- linking each measure to a specific institution and budget programme;
- clearly dividing financial responsibilities between central and local government;
- establishing equalisation mechanisms for municipalities with limited capacity and for services covering several municipalities;
- guaranteeing continuous public funding for services that constitute legal obligations;
- establishing multi-year mechanisms for contracting specialised organisations;
- monitoring service coverage, accessibility and quality alongside financial execution;
- consolidating the reporting of costs, allocations, disbursements, expenditure and results.

The costing conducted within the framework of this study should be used not only to document existing expenditure, but also to assess the resources needed to fully implement national legislation and the Istanbul Convention. The difference between the normative cost of services, approved funding and actual expenditure provides the basis for identifying the system's actual funding gap in the protection, support, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims.

Legal obligations for gender-responsive budgeting in funding measures addressing gender-based violence

Purpose and scope of the analysis

This section analyses how the legal framework and the public financial management system in Albania require gender-responsive budgeting to be integrated into the planning, funding, implementation and monitoring of measures addressing gender-based violence. The focus is on institutional responsibilities, integration of gender objectives into the Medium-Term Budget Programme, identification and tracking of funding, and reporting on results achieved. Obligations relating to the establishment, organisation and operation of general and specialised services are addressed in the relevant section of the legal framework analysis. To avoid repetition, this section examines mainly how these obligations should be translated into

policy objectives, budget programmes, measurable outputs, performance indicators and identifiable financial allocations.

The analysis is based on the principle that recognising a right or assigning institutional responsibility is not sufficient unless accompanied by the resources needed to implement it. For this reason, it assesses whether the budget system makes it possible to establish a verifiable link between the legal obligation, the service to be provided, its cost, approved funding, actual expenditure and the result achieved for victims.

Legal basis for gender-responsive budgeting

Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality" constitutes the main and most up-to-date legal basis for gender-responsive budgeting. It defines the latter as the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the budget process, requiring revenues and expenditure to be assessed from a gender perspective and restructured in order to achieve equality between women and men.

Under Article 12, central and local public institutions must implement gender-responsive budgeting throughout the entire budget cycle: in budget planning and programming, budget management and implementation, programme monitoring, evaluation of results and reporting on the use of public resources. This formulation extends the obligation beyond the formal inclusion of a gender objective in budget documents. Institutions must demonstrate how their policies and expenditure address gender inequalities, which groups benefit and whether the resources used have produced the intended results.

The law also requires gender impact assessments of draft laws, the production and use of sex-disaggregated data, and the integration of a gender perspective into public policies, programmes, projects and budgets. These requirements are particularly important for measures addressing gender-based violence, as they establish the legal basis for identifying needs, estimating costs in advance, defining target groups and measuring coverage and results.

The framework is complemented by Law No. 9936/2008 "On the Management of the Budgetary System in the Republic of Albania", as amended, the acts regulating preparation of the Medium-Term Budget Programme, and the annual instructions of the Ministry of Finance. These instruments define how policy objectives should be linked to budget programmes, outputs, performance indicators and financial resources.

At local level, Law No. 68/2017 "On Local Self-Government Finances", as amended, must be implemented together with Law No. 64/2025 and the instructions for preparing local budgets. Municipalities must link the needs identified in their territories to local social plans, budget programmes, planned services and allocated resources. This is essential for measures addressing violence, as some social services, referral mechanisms and support for victims are organised or funded at local level.

Law No. 10296/2010 "On Financial Management and Control", as amended, establishes the principles of managerial accountability, internal control and the regular, economical, efficient and effective use of public funds. Although this law supports financial discipline and accountability, it is not the main source of the specific obligation to implement gender-responsive budgeting. This obligation arises directly from Law No. 64/2025 and is made concrete through budget legislation and instructions.

Taken as a whole, the legal framework provides the necessary basis for integrating a gender perspective into the public finance system. However, its effectiveness depends on how these provisions are translated into concrete requirements for costing, allocation, tracking and reporting of expenditure.

Institutional responsibilities

Implementation of gender-responsive budgeting requires a functional division of responsibilities between institutions that develop gender equality policies, institutions that lead the budget process, and institutions that administer programmes and services.

The Ministry of Finance has primary responsibility for the procedural framework for preparing, implementing and monitoring the budget. It includes gender-responsive budgeting requirements in the instructions for preparing the budget and Medium-Term Budget Programme, defines how gender objectives, outputs and indicators are to be presented, reviews budget requests and administers financial and performance reporting systems. Its role is not limited to formally checking documents, but also includes assessing the quality of the link between the gender objective, the funded output, the indicator and the resources requested.

The ministry responsible for gender equality, currently the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, has a coordination and monitoring function for gender equality policies and measures addressing gender-based violence. In cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, it should support institutions in analysing gender needs, formulating objectives, developing indicators and assessing the impact of policies and expenditure.

Line ministries and other public institutions are responsible for integrating a gender perspective into the programmes they administer. They must define the results they aim to achieve, the services and outputs to be funded, the expected number of beneficiaries, the related costs and the indicators to be used to measure performance. They must also report not only on financial execution, but on concrete results for women and girls.

Law No. 64/2025 provides for institutional functions and structures to implement gender equality. The terminology, position and duties of the structures or persons responsible should be aligned with the new law and with the bylaws to be adopted pursuant to it. Responsibility for gender-responsive budgeting should not be assigned only to one employee or gender equality structure. It should be integrated into the work of policy, finance, statistics, monitoring and programme management units.

Local self-government units have direct responsibilities for planning and funding some social and protection services. These responsibilities should be reflected in local social plans, budget programmes, the local social fund and monitoring mechanisms. When services are jointly funded by central government, municipalities and donors, the source of funding, the responsible institution and the portion of funding that is actually secured must be clearly identified.

This division of responsibilities requires ongoing coordination. Without a functional link between policy, finance and implementation institutions, there is a risk that gender objectives will remain disconnected from budget decisions or that legal responsibilities will be transferred to institutions without the necessary resources.

Integration into the Medium-Term Budget Programme

The Medium-Term Budget Programme is the main instrument for translating gender equality policies and obligations addressing violence into multi-year financial commitments. For several years, its preparation instructions have required budget institutions to include objectives, outputs and indicators linked to gender equality, supported, where possible, by sex-disaggregated data.

Effective integration of gender-responsive budgeting into the Medium-Term Budget Programme should begin with identifying the problem and gender inequality. The target group, expected result, service to be funded and its cost should then be defined. Only after that can the funding source be identified, baseline indicators and annual targets set, and relevant allocations approved. Implementation should be followed by tracking disbursements and expenditure, monitoring performance and evaluating impact.

These stages must be clearly distinguished. A budget request does not constitute approved funding; an approved allocation does not prove that the funds have been disbursed; and disbursement does not demonstrate that the expenditure has produced the intended result. Similarly, monitoring expenditure after the end of the year cannot replace advance costing of a measure or service.

Analyses of the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting in Albania show that the country has made progress in its formal institutionalisation, particularly through Medium-Term Budget Programme instructions, gender tagging and the inclusion of gender objectives in budget programmes. However, the quality of integration varies between institutions, and the link between the gender problem, funded output, indicator and result is not always complete.

Data on the number of programmes considered "gender-responsive" should also be interpreted with care. Different documents may count budget requests, gender objectives, tagged programmes or programmes with gender indicators. These categories are not necessarily comparable. Moreover, the overall percentage of the budget classified as gender-responsive does not automatically indicate the amount spent on measures addressing gender-based violence or the quality of the results achieved.

AFMIS, gender tagging and funding traceability

The Albanian Financial Management Information System supports the preparation and monitoring of budget programmes by enabling the recording of objectives, outputs, indicators and allocations. Gender tagging in this system helps identify programmes or outputs that aim to promote gender equality.

However, tagging is an identification tool, not proof of the adequacy or effectiveness of funding. Its value depends on the quality and level of detail of the information recorded. To be useful in monitoring measures addressing gender-based violence, tagging must be accompanied by a clear definition of the service, the target group, baseline indicators and annual targets, a direct link to the budget allocation, and reporting on actual expenditure, territorial coverage and results.

A programme tagged as gender-related may contain only a limited component related to gender equality. For this reason, the programme's total value should not automatically be presented as expenditure on gender-responsive budgeting or on measures addressing violence. Where possible, tracking should be done at the level of an output, activity or service. This is particularly important for large social, health, justice or public order programmes, within which services for victims account for only a portion of expenditure.

Implementation in measures addressing gender-based violence

Law No. 11/2026 "On the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" considerably expands the state's substantive and institutional obligations. In implementation of Law No. 64/2025, these obligations must be translated into identifiable objectives, outputs, indicators and funds in the Medium-Term Budget Programme and annual budgets.

This means that the responsible institutions must be able to specify which legal obligations are covered by each budget programme, the cost of implementation, which portion is funded by the central budget, local budget or external sources, and how much funding has been approved, disbursed and spent. Reporting should also show the number and profile of beneficiaries, the territorial distribution of services and the results achieved in protecting, supporting and reintegrating victims.

In this regard, Article 45 of Law No. 11/2026 is particularly important. It links the organisation of ongoing professional training with the responsible institutions' provision for the necessary budget. This provision illustrates the principle that a legal obligation should not be considered implementable without corresponding financial planning. The same logic should

apply to emergency shelter, counselling, legal aid, healthcare, case management, rehabilitation and reintegration.

The provisions on local funding and the local social fund also require municipalities not to limit themselves to formally including services in social plans. They must identify the specific source, amount, timeframe and funding mechanism. Where local fiscal capacity is insufficient, additional resources from the central budget or co-financing mechanisms should be identified.

Dependence on donors should be presented separately and transparently. External funding may support the development, expansion or improvement of services, but should not be treated as guaranteed funding for the entire period when it is based on time-limited projects. For services arising from ongoing legal obligations, a baseline level of public funding should be identified to guarantee their operation after donor projects end.

Monitoring and reporting

Albania has developed mechanisms for integrating gender-responsive budgeting at the planning stage, but tracking implementation and evaluating results remain less consolidated. The Ministry of Finance published a specific report on monitoring the performance of gender-responsive budgeting for 2020. *The documents reviewed for this study did not provide a consistent annual series of dedicated GRB performance-monitoring reports comparable to the 2020 report*.

Budget execution reports generally present information at programme or sector level, rather than by outputs linked to gender equality or services addressing violence. Consequently, it is often difficult to establish a direct link between the allocation presented in the Medium-Term Budget Programme, the gender objective, actual expenditure, the number of beneficiaries and the result achieved.

Improving monitoring requires periodic reports to distinguish at least five financial stages: budget request, approved allocation, disbursed funding, actual expenditure and result achieved. Reporting should include indicators for the coverage, accessibility, quality and continuity of services, not only indicators of financial execution.

Data should be disaggregated by sex and, where necessary, by age, disability, territory, ethnicity and other characteristics that may affect access. In this way, monitoring would show not only how much was spent, but also whether the funds reached the groups facing the greatest barriers and whether they genuinely improved their protection.

Overall assessment

Table 3. Overall assessment

Criterion	Assessment
A legal obligation to implement gender-responsive budgeting exists	Yes. Law No. 64/2025 expressly defines it in Article 12.
The obligation applies at central and local levels	Legally, yes, but capacity and quality of implementation vary between institutions.
Institutional responsibilities are defined	Mainly yes. Further alignment of bylaws and stronger interinstitutional coordination are needed.
Gender objectives are integrated into the Medium-Term Budget Programme	Yes, through instructions and gender tagging, but the quality of objectives and indicators is not consistent.
Funding for measures addressing violence is identified separately	Partially. Many interventions are included in broader social, health, justice or public order programmes.

Actual expenditure can be tracked	Partially. Traceability at output, activity or service level remains limited.
Results and impact are monitored	Insufficiently. Reporting focuses more on allocations and financial execution.
Public funding is distinguished from donor funding	Not always. Separate reporting is needed for the central budget, local budgets and external sources.
The framework allows the adequacy of funding to be assessed	Only partially, because standard costs and outcome-related reporting are lacking.

Authors' assessment based on Law No. 64/2025, applicable budget legislation, MTBP instructions and the financial documents reviewed.

Conclusion

Albania has a stronger legal basis for gender-responsive budgeting. Law No. 64/2025 makes it an obligation throughout the entire budget cycle, while Law No. 11/2026 defines concrete obligations for preventing violence and protecting, supporting, rehabilitating and reintegrating victims. These obligations must be supported by adequate, predictable and sustainable public resources.

The main challenge is no longer only the formal inclusion of gender objectives in the Medium-Term Budget Programme. The essential issue is to create a measurable and verifiable link between the legal obligation, the planned service, its cost, the source of funding, the approved allocation, actual expenditure and the result achieved.

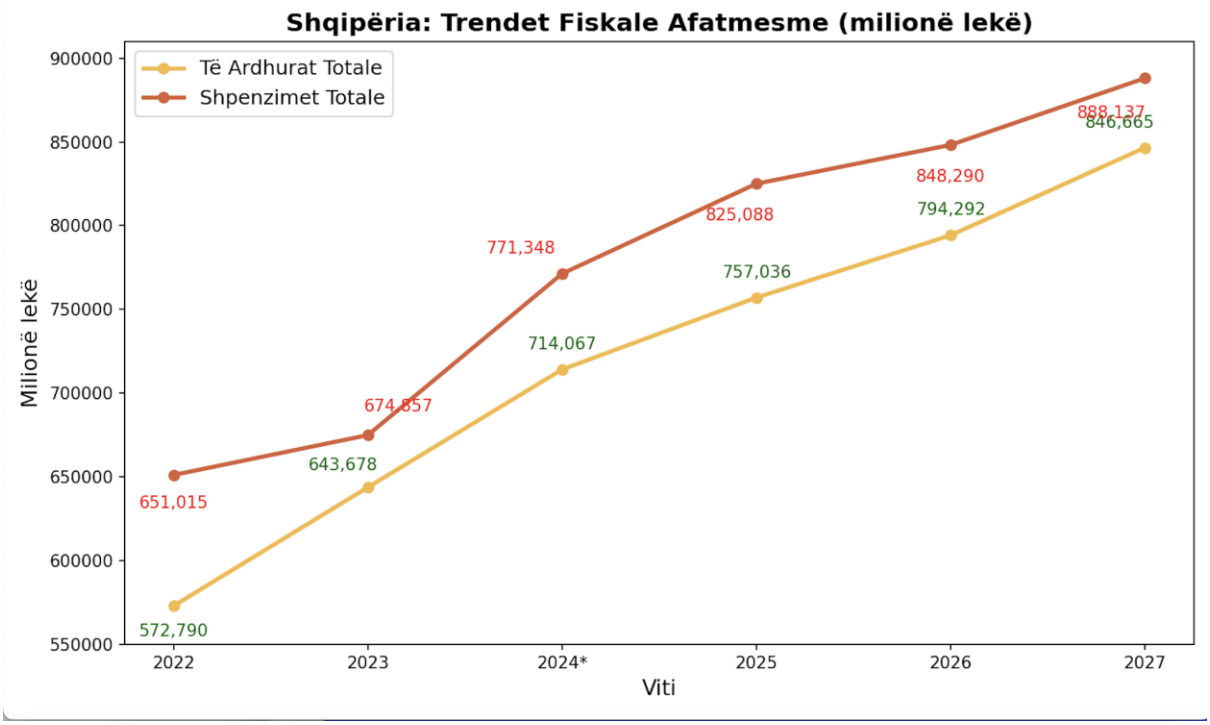
Without this link, it is not possible to assess whether funding is adequate, whether funds have been used for the specified purpose, or whether they have genuinely improved victims' safety, protection and independence. Consequently, strengthening gender-responsive budgeting in this area requires not only better budget tagging, but also standardised service costing, tracking at output level, disaggregated data and reporting directly linked to results.

Medium-term budget commitments to address gender-based violence

This section examines the extent to which funding to address gender-based violence is reflected in the objectives of the medium-term budget framework, and whether indicators, baselines and measurable targets have been established to assess progress.

During the 2022–2027 period, Albania's fiscal trajectory reflects a steady increase in both revenues and public expenditure, in line with the country's medium-term fiscal planning objectives.

Figure 1. Albania: Mid-term Fiscal Trends (Million Albanian Lekë)



Source: *Ministry of Finance, Medium-Term Budget Programme documents for 2023–2025, 2024–2026, 2025–2027 and 2026–2028, Annex 2 on Gender-Responsive Budgeting; specify the phase and publication date used for each period.*[55]

Note: Values are presented in million lekë. Data for the 2024–2027 period are projections.

Total revenues are projected to increase from ALL 572.8 billion in 2022 to ALL 846.7 billion in 2027, representing cumulative growth of approximately 48%. This trend is supported by strengthened tax administration, the expansion of economic activity, and the expected benefits of formalising the economy and improving tax compliance. During the same period, total expenditure is projected to increase from ALL 651.0 billion in 2022 to ALL 888.1 billion in 2027, corresponding to cumulative growth of approximately 36%. Although expenditure remains higher than revenue, the fiscal gap narrows proportionally over time, indicating gradual progress towards fiscal consolidation.

The projected increase in revenues and control of expenditure growth may create potential room for the strategic prioritisation of resources, including funding for social services and measures related to gender equality. Increased revenues may provide opportunities to raise budget allocations for priority services, such as healthcare, education, and the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, while maintaining fiscal sustainability.

Medium-term expenditure planning enables line ministries to plan multi-year funding for gender-responsive programmes, improving service continuity. Improved tax administration and expenditure management may create additional fiscal space for targeted investments, including specialised services for victims of gender-based violence. The trend towards fiscal consolidation may also strengthen Albania's credibility with donors and create opportunities for co-financing, whereby state budget funds are complemented by externally funded programmes.

In summary, the macroeconomic outlook may provide a basis for increasing and sustaining the funding of gender equality and social inclusion priorities, provided that the

[55] *Online: Arkivi zyrtar i PBA-ve. Për 2026–2028: Faza II dhe Faza III.*

additional fiscal space is used strategically and is based on clear priorities, well-supported costing and measurable results.
Although medium-term financial planning has given attention to gender-responsive budgeting, it has not yet fully and distinctly integrated expenditure specifically related to gender-based violence. The allocations projected for gender-responsive budgeting in the Medium-Term Budget Programme are summarised in the table below.

Table 4. Allocations for gender-responsive budgeting in the MTBP

Period	Number of budget programmes with GRB (requests)	Value of planned GRB expenditure for the first year of the MTBP (in lekë)	Percentage of planned GRB expenditure in relation to total expenditure
MTBP 2023–2025	48 (out of 75 programmes)	60 380 387 485	9%
MTBP 2024–2026	76 (out of 130 programmes)	74 391 692 193	10.1%
MTBP 2025–2027	77 (out of 131 programmes)	88 937 832 664	10.8%
MTBP 2026–2028	81 (out of 131 programmes)	Not yet identified	Not yet identified

Data source: Ministry of Finance, Annex 2 "Gender-Responsive Budgeting", part of the Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP) documents for the periods 2023–2025, 2024–2026, 2025–2027 and 2026–2028. The data reflect the number of budget programmes containing requests related to gender-responsive budgeting, as well as the value and share of the corresponding planned expenditure, according to the information presented in each MTBP document.

Although attention to improving budget planning mechanisms and monitoring gender policies has increased, the current implementation of gender-responsive budgeting does not yet appear to include a specific and systematic approach to planning, analysing and monitoring data and expenditure related to gender-based violence. A review of Annex 2 of the MTBP 2025–2027 shows that funding for GBV is reflected only partially and inconsistently in the medium-term budget framework:

- Funding related to GBV is explicitly included in some sectoral programmes, mainly in the areas of social protection, justice and public order. However, it is not systematically integrated across all relevant sectors, such as health and education, although these sectors have important responsibilities in preventing, identifying, referring and addressing cases of violence.
- For some outputs directly related to GBV, the MTBP contains calculated costs for the relevant period, for example, for implementing immediate protection orders, shelter services and specialised forms of support for victims. In other cases, the documents present only partial or indicative values and do not provide complete advance costing. Information produced through monitoring after budget implementation may show actual expenditure, but it does not replace the need to fully cost interventions before the budget is approved.

- The link between GBV funding and MTBP objectives is stronger in programmes where specific GBV objectives have been defined, accompanied by measurable indicators, baseline values and targets. Other programmes use general wording, such as "improvement of social services", without a clear performance dimension that would make it possible to measure results in preventing and addressing GBV.
- Allocations for services funded at local level are not fully reflected in the central MTBP documentation reviewed. This limits the possibility of developing a consolidated picture of funding from the state budget, municipal budgets, the Social Fund and external sources.

In conclusion, funding for GBV is identifiable in some parts of the MTBP, but its representation remains incomplete. Some specialised services and measures by law enforcement institutions are costed and linked to measurable objectives, but coverage varies between sectors and does not fully include all levels of government. Costing is often partial or indicative, while the absence of consolidated data on local funding prevents an overall assessment of the resources planned and spent on preventing and addressing GBV.

At the same time, Albania's macroeconomic outlook may create more favourable conditions for strengthening funding for services related to GBV. Projected revenue growth, combined with expenditure management and gradual fiscal consolidation, may create potential space for funding priority social services. However, increased revenues do not automatically guarantee the creation or use of fiscal space for GBV. This depends on fiscal constraints, government priorities, the quality of budget requests and decisions on the allocation of funds.

Existing GRB mechanisms show progress in integrating a gender perspective into budget planning, but they still do not make it possible to systematically identify and track all expenditure related to GBV across sectors and levels of government. Improving this situation requires:

- integrating GBV into all relevant budget programmes;
- developing standardised methodologies for advance costing;
- clearly distinguishing between requests, approved allocations, disbursements and actual expenditure;
- using measurable indicators with baseline values and targets;
- including funding from local self-government units;
- distinguishing secured public funding from temporary donor contributions;
- reporting on service coverage, quality and results, not only on financial execution.

Strengthening these elements would enable Albania to make better use of any fiscal space created and to ensure more sustainable, predictable and institutional funding for preventing and addressing gender-based violence.

Annual budget commitments to address gender-based violence

This section examines the extent to which the annual state budgets for 2022–2025 provided for funding each of the services previously identified for preventing and addressing gender-based violence. The analysis aims to determine whether specific budget lines exist for these services, the value of the funds planned and the institutions responsible for administering and implementing them. Where separate budget lines are absent, it examines the possibility of identifying funding within broader budget programmes, outputs or categories.

Central and local government expenditure on social care services is recorded mainly under Social Welfare Programme No. 10430. This programme includes a broad range of expenditure, including:

- cash transfers, including economic assistance and payments for persons with disabilities;

- funding for social care service providers;
- administrative costs of the State Social Service;
- funding through the Social Fund;
- other expenditure related to social protection policies and administration.

There does not appear to be a single, specific and comprehensive budget line within this programme for services related to GBV. Funding for these services may be included in broader social protection outputs or categories, alongside expenditure for other groups and services. Consequently, in many cases it is difficult—and sometimes impossible—to directly identify how much has been planned, allocated and spent specifically on preventing and addressing GBV. This lack of budget separation limits the possibility of comparing approved funding with the actual needs and costs of services. It also makes it harder to monitor disbursements, actual expenditure, the number of beneficiaries and results achieved.

Funding for social care services is administered by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare through three main funding channels, which are analysed in the following subsections.

Direct funding through the State Social Service

Each year, the State Social Service makes direct transfers to fund selected social care institutions.[56] A review of Treasury transactions for 2020–2022 and data provided by the State Social Service for 2023–2024 identified allocations specifically related to gender-based violence services for only two institutions. These allocations are presented in the table below.

Table 5. Expenditure on two services related to GBV, funded by the State Social Service

Social care service provider (in million lekë)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking	20.9	22.5	20.0	24.1	28.5
National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence	22.7	21.7	21.9	25.4	29.7
Total	**43.6**	**44.2**	**41.9**	**49.5**	**58.2**

Source: Calculations by the research team based on the analysis of Treasury transactions for 2020–2022 and data provided by the State Social Service for 2023–2024.

Indirect funding through the Social Fund

The Social Fund operates as a competitive public funding mechanism, through which funds are allocated to local self-government units or regions from the central budget line "Social Fund" (91307AH).

A review of Treasury transactions did not make it possible to determine how these funds were distributed among the various social care service providers. However, the State Social Service provided partial information on the amounts received by some providers through the Social Fund.

The table below presents identifiable expenditure for services related to GBV within this funding mechanism, based only on data on state budget funds. It should be noted that these social service providers may also receive funding from donors, non-governmental organisations or other sources. However, data on these contributions are not reported on a consolidated basis and are not publicly available. Consequently, the amounts presented do not necessarily represent each provider's total funding or the full cost of the services provided.

[56] Ministry of Finance, annual budget and programme documentation for the years reviewed; ministry responsible for social protection, Programme 10430, together with the applicable economic and programme classifications.

Table 6. Expenditure related to gender-responsive budgeting, funded through the Social Fund

Social care service provider (in million lekë)	2022	2023	2024
Centre for Protective and Emergency Services for Children and Families, Durrës	3.5	3.5	3.5
Tjetër Vizion, Elbasan	9.0	9.0	12.9
"Vatra" Centre, Vlorë	11.8	11.8	17.4
Shelter Centre, Kukës	2.0	1.7	1.7
ALO 116 111 Centre, Tirana	6.0	6.0	7.1
Centre for the Provision of Services for Victims of Gender-Based Violence, Tirana	6.8	6.8	8.4
Provision of services for victims of gender-based violence, Gjirokastër	2.0	2.0	2.0
Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence, Berat	3.1	1.2	1.2
Social and economic integration of underage girls in vulnerable situations, Lezhë	–	4.4	13.2
"Different & Equal", Tirana	–	9.1	13.4

Data source: *Authors' calculations based on Treasury transaction extracts for 2020–2022 and financial data supplied by the State Social Service for 2023–2024.*

General unconditional transfers

General unconditional transfers are provided each year to local self-government units and regions, in accordance with the annual budget law. The recipient authorities are entitled to use these funds according to priorities and needs determined at local level.

Some providers of services for victims of GBV may be partially funded through the unconditional transfer. However, financial reporting does not present the amounts disaggregated by provider, type of service or expenditure category. Expenditure for social care service providers is generally reported in aggregate under a single budget programme—the Social Protection Programme—while annual budgets do not show a clear breakdown of allocations for each provider.

One of the main reasons for the absence of this information is that many providers are not recognised as separate spending units. Consequently, they do not prepare separate budgets and are not identified in Treasury transactions through distinct codes. This prevents public funds from being tracked from the point of allocation to the provider and specific service.

In addition, funding provided directly by donors to providers is generally not reflected in state budget data. For this reason, it is not possible to create a complete picture that includes funding from the central budget, local budgets, the Social Fund and external sources.

In general, the current budget planning and financial reporting framework does not provide sufficient transparency to determine the amount of public funds allocated and spent on services related to GBV. Funding spread across several mechanisms, the absence of dedicated budget lines, limited reporting at provider level and the exclusion of donor funding make it impossible to create a consolidated picture of the total resources used to address GBV.

As a result, public institutions and other stakeholders cannot accurately assess whether existing funding is consistent with policy commitments, legal obligations, service standards and survivors' actual needs.

Law on the Management of the Budgetary System: Opportunities to influence the budget process

This section aims to support evidence-based contributions during the budget process by presenting a brief overview of Albania's budget preparation calendar. In particular, it examines the timeframes during which medium-term and annual draft budgets are:

1. prepared by the relevant institutions responsible for providing services to prevent and address GBV;
2. subject to public consultation;
3. reviewed and approved by the responsible authorities.

Under the Law "On the Management of the Budgetary System in the Republic of Albania", line ministries, local self-government units and some independent institutions are required to prepare the Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP). Through the MTBP, policy planning is linked to financial planning for a three-year period by defining objectives, programmes, outputs, performance indicators and the resources needed to achieve them.

Under this framework, the budget process deadlines for central government units are set by the MTBP calendar, prepared by the Ministry of Finance and approved each year by the Council of Ministers. A summary of the budget process is as follows:

- **Preparation by the relevant institutions:** Ministries and other institutions that provide services prepare their draft budgets during April–June, as part of the MTBP process. At this stage, they should integrate gender analysis and define at least one gender objective and the key performance indicators.
- **Public consultation:** Institutions are required to hold public consultations on their draft budgets during July–August, ensuring input from civil society.
- **Approval:** The MTBP is finalised in September, and the annual budget law is submitted to Parliament in mid-October. Parliamentary discussions and approval take place during October–December, while the final budget is approved before the end of the financial year.

At local level, the budget preparation process is regulated by the Law on Local Self-Government Finances and the Ministry of Finance's 2018 "Standard Instructions for the MTBP at Local Level". The municipal budgeting process takes place in three main stages:

1. **Planning and initial approvals (December–March):** The municipal council approves the budget calendar, reviews revenue forecasts and approves preliminary expenditure ceilings. The mayor then issues the budget preparation instructions.
2. **Drafting and submission (April–July):** Municipal structures prepare the MTBP, which the mayor submits to the Ministry of Finance. After review and incorporation of the Ministry of Finance's recommendations, the municipal council communicates the updated expenditure ceilings to all spending units.
3. **Review and final approval (September–December):** The process concludes with the municipal council's approval of the final MTBP and annual budget, which are then published before the end of the year.

Conclusions

Overall, Albania's legal and policy framework demonstrates strong alignment with international commitments, including the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW, and establishes a comprehensive institutional framework for preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV). However, these commitments are not yet accompanied by a sufficiently coherent and sustainable funding framework.

Although gender-responsive budgeting is mandatory for all public institutions, GBV is only partially reflected in the Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP), with allocations concentrated in a limited number of sectors and services. Across all the strategies and action

plans reviewed, many GBV interventions are not fully costed, dedicated budget allocations are often absent, and municipal funding is largely excluded from planning documents. As a result, resource requirements for implementing national commitments cannot be assessed comprehensively.

The analysis of annual budgets further shows that funding for social services related to GBV is fragmented across several budget mechanisms, without dedicated budget lines or sufficiently disaggregated reporting. This makes it difficult to identify the overall level of public expenditure allocated to GBV, assess whether funding is adequate or effectively monitor implementation. Reliance on donor funding and municipal co-financing further reduces the predictability and sustainability of service provision, while expenditure information remains too limited to assess whether planned allocations have been translated into actual expenditure.

Overall, the findings indicate a considerable gap between Albania's policy commitments and the financial mechanisms supporting their implementation. Strengthening the costing of GBV interventions, improving the integration of GBV into the MTBP, establishing more transparent budget classification and reporting, and ensuring predictable funding at both central and municipal levels would considerably strengthen the sustainability and accountability of GBV service provision. Albania's favourable macroeconomic outlook suggests that fiscal space exists to progressively increase investment in specialised GBV services, provided that future budget allocations are guided by the principles of gender-responsive budgeting to which the country has committed.

CHAPTER 2. IN SUM: THE COSTS OF SPECIALISED SERVICES FOR ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

This chapter examines, for each specialised service, the extent to which the Government of Albania allocated and spent sufficient funds to provide GBV services in line with the IC during 2022-2024, and whether it has budgeted adequately for 2025-2028. The selected timeframe enables the identification of multi-year trends, consistent with good practices in GRB. For every service covered in this chapter, the analysis begins by outlining institutional mandates and legal responsibilities related to specialised GBV services. Towards assessing demand, it then reviews the availability and quality of publicly accessible administrative data on beneficiaries, noting gaps in institutional data management where relevant. The chapter does not assess institutional knowledge, skills or professional capacities in implementing legal obligations, which would require separate research, but it does highlight deficiencies in data systems that impede effective planning and budgeting.

To respond to the question on the estimated costs of providing specialised services in line with IC requirements for the period 2026–2028, a structured costing approach has been applied. This approach combines historical expenditure analysis with forward-looking projections. Actual expenditure data for 2022–2024 (and 2025 forecasts), covering both public provision and services delivered by WCSOs where data is available, are used to establish a baseline cost structure and identify trends in service delivery and resource allocation. These baseline costs are then projected forward using an annual growth rate of 5%, comprising 3%

to reflect projected inflation in Albania and an additional 2% to account for modest adjustments in salaries and operational expenditures. The inflation assumption is aligned with medium-term projections of around 3%, as reported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2024).[57]. In parallel, qualitative evidence collected through interviews with service providers has been used to identify gaps in current service provision relative to IC standards, including gaps in coverage, staffing, accessibility and continuity of care. The additional resources required to address these gaps are costed separately and include, inter alia, expanded staffing, strengthened reintegration support, improved accessibility, and more predictable and adequate funding mechanisms for WCSOs.

The total estimated cost of specialised service provision for 2026–2028 therefore represents the sum of (i) projected baseline expenditures and (ii) the additional resources required to close identified service gaps and ensure full compliance with IC requirements.

The Counselling Line for Women and Girls

Responsibilities and Legal Framework

This service was included in the study because it is the only nationwide specialised counselling line dedicated exclusively to women and girls experiencing gender-based violence in Albania. Although not a state-run facility, the Counselling Line for Women and Girls (CLWG) operates with partial, continuous public financial support through the SF mechanism and carries nationwide referral and coordination responsibilities within the CRM. Therefore, it is the primary specialised remote-access service providing crisis counselling, risk assessment, safety planning, legal information and referral support to survivors across the country.

The CLWG operates within the framework of Law No. 9669/2006 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations" (as amended), Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services" and in alignment with Albania's obligations under the IC, particularly Article 24 concerning 24/7 helplines. The service functions as a specialised support mechanism complementing state institutions and municipal services by ensuring immediate, confidential and free-of-charge counselling via telephone and digital platforms. Its mandate includes crisis intervention, psychosocial counselling, safety planning, legal information, accompaniment and referral to police, shelters, health services and courts, as well as follow-up support when required.

The Line is governed by a Board of Directors and led by an Executive Director who carries overall managerial and strategic responsibility. The management structure includes a Financial Manager, Project Manager, Coordinator, administrative staff, a communication officer and a Monitoring and Evaluation specialist. Direct service provision is ensured by a core team of approximately ten full-time counsellors, supported by trained volunteers. All counsellors are engaged full-time in delivering services related to gender-based violence, including emergency response, case documentation and inter-institutional coordination.

The Line does not operate accommodation facilities. However, its operational model requires continuous availability, nationwide outreach and high levels of inter-sectoral coordination. While staffing allows for 24/7 service provision, the number of counsellors and administrative personnel remains limited in relation to workload, especially during peak reporting periods and high-risk cases requiring accompaniment and intensive follow-up.

Budgeting responsibilities lie with the Executive Director, supported by the Financial Manager. The annual financial plan is prepared based on projected service demand, staff costs and operational expenses, and is submitted through the applicable SF mechanism and relevant

[57] *International Monetary Fund (IMF), Albania: Staff Report for the Article IV Consultation, 2024. The report projects inflation to gradually converge toward the Bank of Albania's target of 3% over the medium term*

public authorities for approval. However, as the service operates with a mixed financing model (public funds and donor contributions), financial planning remains dependent on annual funding allocations rather than multi-year state budget commitments.

Capacities for Gender-responsive Budgeting

Officials responsible for budgeting within the Counselling Line demonstrate general familiarity with GRB. Staff recognise GRB as a legal and procedural obligation within Albania's MTBP framework and confirm that gender budgeting documentation is required when applying for public funding through the SF mechanism. The organisation also previously has supported local-level authorities in understanding and applying gender budgeting principles, reflecting a strong conceptual awareness of the approach.[58]

While the formal requirement is acknowledged, the practical application of GRB remains largely procedural. Budget proposals are prepared annually and submitted through the relevant administrative channels, but the integration of gender analysis into detailed cost projections is limited. In practice, budgeting focuses primarily on staff salaries and core operational expenses, with less systematic incorporation of differentiated needs of specific groups of women and girls, such as women with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian women, survivors from rural areas or women requiring long-term psychosocial support.

The organisation conducted a structured service cost calculation for the first time in 2019, and since then prepares annual cost estimations, particularly when applying for state funding. These calculations primarily cover personnel expenses and direct service delivery costs. However, indirect and structural costs — including IT infrastructure, cybersecurity upgrades, electronic data archiving systems and long-term capacity development — are not consistently incorporated into comprehensive multi-year budget projections. As a result, the full cost of delivering a nationwide 24/7 specialised counselling service is not always reflected in funding applications or state allocations.[59]

Beneficiary data are collected through a digital database system developed with international donor support. The database contains detailed case-level information, including sex, age, type of violence, referral pathway and service provided. Nevertheless, data are not systematically used to produce forward-looking cost simulations or medium-term expenditure scenarios. Forecasting of beneficiary numbers is conducted on a yearly basis due to uncertainty in funding streams, rather than through structured three-year projections aligned with the MTBP cycle.[60]

Budget planning is coordinated primarily between the Executive Director and the Financial Manager. While programme staff provide input regarding service needs, there are no formalised internal budget planning sessions integrating financial and programmatic analysis on a systematic basis. No dedicated gender equality or gender budgeting officer is formally engaged in the budgeting cycle. Gender impact analysis is not consistently embedded in financial planning.[61]

Monitoring of budget execution occurs periodically, primarily to ensure compliance with donor and public reporting requirements.[62] However, there are no structured mechanisms linking expenditure data with outcome indicators related to gender-based violence prevention

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[58] Law No. 64/2025, Article 12; for gender impact assessment and gender data, Articles 11 and 13. Ligji.
[59] Law No. 68/2017, "Për financat e vetëqeverisjes vendore", as amended, read together with Law No. 64/2025, Article 12(2). Financat vendore.
[60] Law No. 10296, dated 8 July 2010, "Për menaxhimin financiar dhe kontrollin", as amended. QBZ — akti bazë.
[61] Ministry of Finance, annual instructions for preparation of the Medium-Term Budget Programme, including the applicable provisions on gender analysis, gender objectives, performance indicators, outputs and costs. Udhëzimet vjetore.
[62] Ministry of Finance, Supplementary Instruction for the MTBP 2025–2027, section on gender budgeting and civil society participation. Udhëzimi.

and response under the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030. This weakens the analytical link between allocated resources, service demand trends and measurable impact.[63]

Beneficiaries and Demand for Services

As the only nationwide specialised counselling line dedicated exclusively to women and girls experiencing gender-based violence, the Counselling Line plays a central role in Albania's institutional response framework. Unlike residential shelters or municipal social services, the Line provides immediate, remote, confidential support and often serves as the first point of contact for survivors prior to any formal institutional engagement. Its nationwide scope enables access for women in both urban and remote areas, including municipalities where specialised GBV services are limited or non-existent.

The Line serves women survivors of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, stalking, psychological and economic abuse, as well as women involved in high-conflict separation or custody disputes where safety risks are present. Beneficiaries also include accompanied minors and direct child victims, as well as women from Roma and Egyptian communities, women with chronic illnesses and those living in rural or peri-urban areas. Although survivors with disabilities do contact the Line, access barriers remain, particularly in cases requiring physical accompaniment or coordination with in-person services.

The service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, requiring continuous staffing and case management. Demand fluctuates throughout the year and tends to increase during periods of heightened public awareness, economic stress or institutional reforms.

Forecasting of beneficiary numbers is conducted on an annual basis rather than through multi-year projections. Based on interview findings, uncertainty in public funding allocations—typically approved on a yearly basis—limits the extent to which longer-term service expansion is planned in practice. While beneficiary needs can be projected independently of available resources, the absence of predictable, multi-annual financing constrains the translation of these projections into concrete planning and service development.

Beneficiary data are stored in an internal digital system capturing key variables such as sex, age, type of violence, referral pathways and services provided. While the database contains detailed case-level information, systematic disaggregation by ethnicity, disability status and geographic origin is not consistently used for financial modelling purposes. This limits the organisation's ability to conduct differentiated cost projections or to estimate the specific resource implications of serving high-vulnerability groups.

The Line frequently coordinates referrals to police, shelters, health institutions, courts and municipal CRM. In cases requiring accompaniment—such as court appearances, medical treatment or emergency shelter placement—the service incurs additional operational burdens, particularly in terms of transport and staff time. These costs are not fully reflected in core funding allocations and often require ad hoc arrangements.

Despite partial public funding, the Line remains structurally dependent on donor support to sustain nationwide coverage. As a central entry point into the protection system, any disruption in financing would have wider systemic implications for referral coordination and survivors' access to services.

[63] *Supreme State Audit, performance audit report on women's economic empowerment in Albania, section on gender-responsive budgeting. Raporti i auditimit.*

Costing Exercises and Budget Allocations 2022-2024

The CLWG remains predominantly financed through donor-funded projects. While the organisation receives funding from the SF administered by the Tirana Region (*Qarku Tiranë*), this mechanism covers only staff costs for 10 counselling staff members and does not finance any other operational expenditures. Importantly, the allocation from the SF is not guaranteed annually; it depends on approval decisions at the central level and available budget envelopes. Similarly, at the municipal level, there is no dedicated and stable budget line covering the full operational costs of this specialised GBV service. The Municipality does not conduct a needs-based costing assessment for the Line. Nor is the SF allocation linked to caseload projections or service-level costing. At the central level, there is no institutionalised costing methodology for this specialised service. Although the organisation conducts internal annual cost estimations—primarily for staffing requirements to apply for SF support—these calculations are partial and project-driven. Non-staff costs (including rent, utilities, IT infrastructure, security systems, digital data protection, transport gaps, supervision, reintegration support, and emergency assistance and prevention activities) are not incorporated into any state-recognised costing framework.

Operational financing therefore remains structurally donor driven. Beyond the SF contribution (limited strictly to counsellor salaries), the CLWG's functioning depends almost entirely on external donors. The Government remains the smallest contributor relative to other funding sources. Meanwhile, key donors identified through the interview include the Hamaneu Foundation (the longest-standing donor), AWEN, EU programmes, UN agencies (periodically and project-based). Donor funding is often project-restricted and does not consistently cover overhead costs or unforeseen operational needs. The absence of flexible core funding creates structural operational vulnerabilities and limits long-term planning capacity. Consequently, financial sustainability remains fragile. Public financing, both municipal and central, covers only a narrow portion of personnel costs and does not address the full spectrum of specialised service requirements, leaving the shelter highly dependent on external, time-bound donor financing.

In addition to operating the Helpline, the Centre delivers a broad portfolio of complementary services that extend beyond GBV case management. These include the Helpline for Men and Boys, which focuses on the rehabilitation of male perpetrators and preventive activities primarily targeting young boys and fathers, as well as counselling and support provided both within and outside the penitentiary system. The Centre also hosts the "Centre for Security and Peace Albania", a dedicated department addressing violent extremism and religious radicalisation. This department works mainly with women and children returned from the Al-Hol and Al-Roj camps and supports all 12 prefectures of the country in the functioning of Regional Committees against Violent Extremism. In addition, the organisation implements institutional capacity-building activities, legal interventions, research studies, monitoring assignments and policy-related work across various sectors. These diverse interventions are often implemented through integrated projects, where staff time, administrative costs, facilities and operational resources are shared across multiple service components and thematic areas. As a result, expenditures are not structured in a way that allows for a clear and consistent separation of costs attributable exclusively to the Helpline for Women and Girls. Given this integrated service delivery model, the cross-cutting use of human and operational resources and the absence of disaggregated cost accounting by service line, a precise costing analysis limited solely to the Helpline for the period 2022–2025 is not feasible within the scope of this study.

Forecasts 2026-2028 (MTBP)

The RA prepared expenditure projections for subsequent years in line with the methodology described in this Chapter, using the 2026 budget provided by the CLWG as the

baseline. The following subsections provide: (1) a projected baseline expenditures for 2026 – 2028, (2) estimates for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with the IC, and (3) estimated total budget including additional costs.

Projected baseline expenditures for 2026–2028

The budget estimates presented in the table 7, reflects the Centre's current expenditure patterns and operational model, as observed in recent years.

Table 7. Counselling Line Budget Estimates 2026-2028 in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	13,493,484	14,168,158	14,876,566
Operational expenditures	19,820,860	20,811,903	21,852,498
Prevention and visibility	1,500,000	1,575,000	1,653,750
Capital expenditures	610,000	640,500	672,525
Total costs	**35,424,344**	**37,195,561**	**39,055,339**

Source: CLWG data for 2026 and RA for 2027-2028

The total projected budget for 2026 amounts to 35,424,344 ALL, with expenditures concentrated primarily in operational and personnel costs. Operational expenditures represent the largest share, accounting for approximately 56% of the total budget, reflecting the service intensive dependent nature of the Centre's work. Within this category, the largest spending items are counselling services (approximately 33% of operational costs), training and workshops (around 18% of operational costs) and legal services (approximately 12% of operational costs). Office rent alone accounts for about 10% of operational expenditures. In comparison, salaries and social contributions represent 38% of total expenditures, indicating a relatively balanced structure in which payroll costs do not disproportionately dominate overall spending. Prevention and visibility activities account for 4% of the total budget, while capital expenditures represent only 2%, demonstrating limited space for infrastructure investments. Overall, the expenditure structure shows that the Centre operates primarily as a direct service-delivery organisation, with the majority of resources allocated to operational and frontline service costs rather than administrative overhead or capital expansion.

Estimates for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with the IC

These estimates are informed by interviews with the CLWG. They should be interpreted as additional costs complementing the organisation's existing budget.

Additional Staffing

- To address capacity gaps, the addition of three staff positions is proposed, with the following estimated monthly costs including 16.7% social contributions). It should be noted that the proposed salaries are aligned with current staff costs and are broadly consistent with market salary levels. An additional Project Coordinator is required due to the high workload currently borne by existing staff. With a gross monthly salary of 150,000 ALL, the total monthly cost including social contributions amounts to 175,050 ALL, corresponding to an annual cost of 2,100,600 ALL. This position will reduce operational pressure, improve coordination and ensure compliance with donor reporting and implementation standards.
- Dedicated Financial/Accounting Support is needed to address limited financial management capacity. With a gross monthly salary of 100,000 ALL, the total monthly cost including social contributions amounts to 116,700 ALL, corresponding to an annual

cost of 1,400,400 ALL. This role will strengthen financial oversight, internal controls and reporting accuracy.

- A part-time Procurement Specialist is proposed, as there is currently no dedicated procurement function. With a gross monthly salary of 60,000 ALL, the total monthly cost including social contributions amounts to 70,020 ALL, corresponding to an annual cost of 840,240 ALL. Establishing this function will enhance transparency, compliance with procurement standards and operational efficiency.

The total estimated additional monthly cost for these three positions is 361,770 ALL, equivalent to a total annual cost of 4,341,240 ALL, representing a necessary investment to ensure sustainable service delivery and institutional compliance.

Staff Supervision

Regular staff supervision sessions are essential to prevent professional burnout and secondary trauma among counsellors and social workers who deal daily with high-stress GBV cases. The nature of the work, including crisis intervention, court accompaniment and continuous exposure to traumatic experiences, places significant psychological strain on frontline staff. To ensure adequate psychological support, monthly group supervision sessions are planned for all frontline personnel, including 10 permanent staff members and 8 volunteers (18 participants in total). At a cost of 2,500 ALL per participant per session, the monthly cost amounts to 45,000 ALL. On an annual basis, the total cost is 540,000 ALL. This allocation reflects the minimum level of structured professional supervision required to safeguard staff wellbeing, maintain service standards and facilitate sustainable delivery of specialised GBV services.

Emergency Food and Hygiene Packages

Emergency food and hygiene packages constitute a critical component of immediate response services provided to women and girls affected by GBV. These packages are designed to address urgent basic needs, particularly for survivors who arrive in crisis situations without financial resources, stable housing, or access to essential goods, and typically include food items, clothing, hygiene products, basic medical supplies, and, where relevant, items for children, as well as limited logistical support. Currently, the provision of emergency packages is not guaranteed every year, as it depends entirely on the availability of donor funding. According to the interview, the average cost per emergency package is 6,000 ALL, and the Centre supports approximately 350 women per year. Based on this caseload, the estimated annual cost amounts to 2,100,000 ALL (350 beneficiaries × 6,000 ALL).

Legal Support: Court Fees and Court-Ordered Psychological Assessments

Legal support constitutes a core component of specialised GBV services, particularly in cases involving divorce, child custody and protection orders. While court filing fees are generally low in monetary terms and are occasionally covered through ad hoc donor support, they are not systematically budgeted or guaranteed each year. A more significant financial burden arises in cases where the court requires a psychological assessment as part of divorce or custody proceedings. In such cases, the cost of the psychologist, approximately 50,000 ALL per case, must be paid by the parents/family. For many survivors of violence, this amount represents a substantial financial barrier to accessing justice. The Line handles approximately 25 such cases per year, implying an estimated annual cost of 1,250,000 ALL for court-mandated psychological assessments alone. Given the frequency of these cases and their direct link to survivors' access to justice and child protection outcomes, budgeting for this expenditure would reduce financial barriers, strengthen legal protection and ensure more equitable access to court procedures.

Security System and Maintenance

The Line currently does not have a formal security system in place, such as surveillance cameras, alarm systems or controlled access mechanisms, despite the highly sensitive nature of the services provided. According to the interview, no dedicated budget line exists for security infrastructure, and previous considerations to install cameras were not pursued due to financial constraints. Further, the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection has previously raised concerns regarding data protection and the handling of sensitive information, highlighting gaps in secure electronic archiving and overall information security protocols. The absence of an integrated security system increases exposure to potential data breaches, unauthorised access and cyber risks, especially in the context of outdated ICT equipment and the lack of internal data protection systems. Addressing these security gaps would require a dedicated investment in a comprehensive security package, including CCTV surveillance cameras, an alarm system and a basic monitoring service. The estimated initial investment for installing a combined CCTV and alarm system amounts to approximately 100,000 ALL. At present, no dedicated budget line exists for this purpose, and the required security upgrade remains unfunded.

Case Management and Security Systems – Annual Maintenance

The Line operates an in-house case management system to securely record, monitor and manage survivor cases. This digital infrastructure is essential for ensuring data protection, confidentiality, service continuity, reporting accuracy and compliance with professional standards for GBV service provision. Given the highly sensitive nature of beneficiary information, continuous system functionality, cybersecurity protection and data integrity are critical. The maintenance cost of the case management software amounts to 120 EUR per month (equivalent to 11,640 ALL per month, based on an exchange rate of 1 EUR = 97 ALL).

On an annual basis, this corresponds to 139,680 ALL per year. In addition, ongoing annual monitoring and maintenance costs for the security system, including CCTV and alarm system servicing, are estimated at 50,000 ALL per year. Together, the total annual allocation required for the maintenance of ICT systems, case management software and security infrastructure amounts to 189,680 ALL per year.

Accessibility Adaptations (one-off capex)

The Line is currently located on the fourth floor of a building that does not have an elevator, creating a significant accessibility barrier for women and girls with physical disabilities, mobility limitations, injuries resulting from violence or other health-related constraints. This structural limitation restricts equal access to specialised GBV services and is not aligned with principles of non-discrimination, inclusion and accessibility under national legislation and the IC. To ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, an initial investment is required for the installation of an elevator serving the fourth floor. According to the CLWG, the estimated one-time installation cost amounts to 824,500 ALL. In addition, ongoing maintenance costs are estimated at 1,500 ALL per month, equivalent to 18,000 ALL annually, to ensure safe and continuous operation, totalling to 842,000 All.

In total, the estimated extra costs for 2026 are detailed in Table 8.

Table 8. Estimated additional Costs for the Counselling Line (for 2026)

Service per IC	Budget line (# name)	2026
Additional staff	Salaries and social contribution	4,341,240
Staff Supervision (group + quarterly individual)	Operational expenditures - Training (account 602)	540,000
Emergency Food and Hygiene Packages	Operational expenditures - Food and hygiene package (account 602)	2,100,000
Court-Ordered Psychological Assessments	Operational expenditures - Assessment (account 602)	1,250,000
Case Management and security system – maintenance	Operational expenditures - System maintenance (account602)	189,680
Security system (one off capex)	Capital expenditure - (account 231)	100,000
Accessibility adaptations (one-off capex)	Capital expenditure - (account 231)	842,000
		9,362,920

Estimated Budget for 2026-2028 including additional costs

Based on prior experience and anticipated forthcoming needs, the RA has developed expenditure projections for the Counselling Line for the period 2026–2028, as summarised in Table 9. These projections build on the current cost structure while incorporating additional costs required to strengthen and expand service provision.

Table 9. Estimated Budget for Counselling Line including additional costs requirements for 2026-2028 in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	17,834,724	18,726,460	19,662,783
Operational expenditures	23,900,540	25,095,567	26,350,345
Prevention and visibility	1,500,000	1,575,000	1,653,750
Capital expenditures	1,552,000	640,500	672,525
Total costs	**44,787,264**	**46,037,527**	**48,339,404**

Rape Crisis Centre and Referral Centre

According to IC Article 25, states are required to take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure the establishment of appropriate and easily accessible rape crisis and sexual violence referral centres. These centres must exist in sufficient numbers to provide survivors with medical and forensic examinations, trauma support and counselling. The Convention sets a standard of one Rape Crisis Centre per 200,000 inhabitants.

In addition, this standard should be complemented by a minimum geographical coverage principle to ensure access in smaller or more remote municipalities where services may not be readily available.

As shown in Table 10, Albania requires at least 13 additional centres, distributed geographically based on population size and territorial coverage. At present, only one such centre is operational nationwide.

Table 10. Rape Crisis Centre Demand in Albania

REgions (Qark) (By Size)	Total Population[64]	% of Albania's Total Population	Required Rape Crisis Centres (1 per every 200,000 inhabitants)	Current Crisis Centres	Crisis Centres needed
Tiranë	925,198	33.5%	5	1	4
Durrës	289,987	10.5%	1	0	1
Fier	270,655	9.8%	1	0	1
Elbasan	254,084	9.2%	1	0	1
Korçë	193,325	7.0%	1	0	1
Shkodër	187,801	6.8%	1	0	1
Vlorë	182,278	6.6%	1	0	1
Lezhë	113,233	4.1%	1	0	1
Berat	110,471	4.0%	1	0	1
Diber	107,710	3.9%	1	0	1
Kukës	71,806	2.6%	0	0	1
Gjirokastër	52,474	1.9%	0	0	1
Total	2,761,785	100%	14	1	15

Responsibilities and Legal Framework

The Lilium Centre was established in December 2018 by MHSP in cooperation with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the first specialised centre in Albania for

[64] *Albania Statistical Institute, Albania's Population, 2023, p. 4.*

survivors of sexual violence. Its establishment was formalised by the Order of the Secretary General of MHSP.[65] It operates in accordance with approved standards "For services and functioning of crisis management centres for cases of sexual violence."[66] According to these standards, the crisis management centre for cases of sexual violence functions under the authority of MHSP and is established within the premises of the University Hospital Centre "Mother Teresa" (QSUT). Its financing is provided through public funds within the budget of QSUT.

The Centre's mandate is to provide immediate and short-term specialised services to survivors of sexual violence, including emergency medical assistance, psychosocial counselling, legal information and referral to longer-term rehabilitation and support services. It operates 24/7 and serves all survivors of sexual violence irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity or social status.

Responsibility for delivering services lies with the Centre's Coordinator, supported by the medical and psychosocial staff of QSUT. Meanwhile, the Centre submits annual statistical reports on cases treated.

Capacities for Gender-responsive Budgeting

The Lilium Centre is integrated within the structure of QSUT and does not carry out independent budgeting. Budgeting responsibilities lie entirely with the Directorate of Finance at QSUT, while the Centre only submits an annual statistical report on cases treated. Consequently, there is no separate cost centre or earmarked budget line for the Centre, and all expenses related to medical and support staff, utilities, food, hygiene kits and operational needs are fully covered under the general QSUT budget.

While the Lilium Coordinator is familiar with the concept of GRB, it is not applied in practice as the Centre is not directly engaged in financial planning. The only dedicated costing exercise was undertaken in 2018-2019, supported by UNDP during the establishment phase. However, the results were not updated or published, and no systematic mechanism exists to assess unit costs or forecast future needs. The research team did not receive the costing exercise and is therefore unable to assess its accuracy or usefulness for future planning.[67] The fact that the Centre has no role in decision-making, budgeting or monitoring of financial allocations constrains its ability to plan sustainably or apply GRB principles.

Forecasting of beneficiaries is done informally, with expectations of an increase in cases, particularly among younger age groups (9-12). Government funding is complemented by limited support from UNDP mainly for training activities. Data on beneficiaries is collected but not analysed by the Centre; it is reported to QSUT in aggregate form and is not used as a basis for financial forecasting.

Beneficiaries and Demand for Services

The Lilium Center systematically records beneficiary data and reports quarterly, semesterly and annually to QSUT. Information is disaggregated by sex and age (women and girls), allowing a basic understanding of the profile of service users. Data is not collected on ethnicity, nationality, rural/urban location or disability. However, data collection remains limited to descriptive statistics. No analysis by other socio-demographic factors (such as ethnicity, economic status or disability) is conducted. Reports are not publicly available, restricting external monitoring and evaluation.

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[65] Order of the Secretary General of the MGSP No. 817, dated 27.11.2018, "On the establishment and functioning of the Center for the Management of Cases of Sexual Violence".

[66] Instruction No. 816, dated 27.11.2018, "On the approval of standards for services and functioning of crisis management centers for cases of sexual violence."".

[67] The costing exercise was requested by the research team; however, it was not shared and no specific justification was provided

Between 2019 and 2022, the Centre served an average of 29 beneficiaries annually, with a consistent majority being girls. Trends suggest a stable yet slightly increasing demand, especially among younger survivors (ages 9-12). During the interview, the Coordinator highlighted that actual demand may be higher, as not all cases are referred to Lilium due to institutional practices and the resolution of cases at earlier stages. Based on past patterns, the Centre is expected to experience gradual growth in service demand in the coming years.

Table 11: Number of beneficiaries actual and forecasted

Year	# of beneficiaries	Women (18+)	Girls (<18)	Total
2019	Actual	8	23	31
2020	Actual	3	21	24
2021	Actual	6	22	28
2022	Actual	1	31	32
2023	Actual	12*	31*	43
2024	Actual	14*	31*	45
2025	Forecast	15	33	48
2026	Forecast	16	35	51
2027	Forecast	17	36	53
2028	Forecast	18	37	55

Data source: RA, based on interview with Lilium representatives, 2024

* Figures for 2023 and 2024 are based on reported totals; disaggregation by women/girls is estimated proportionally to earlier patterns as data was unavailable. Forecasts for 2025-2028 assume an average annual increase of 2-3 beneficiaries, in line with the growth observed in the last two years.

Data indicate that the number of beneficiaries of the Lilium Centre has steadily increased, particularly in 2023 and 2024, when the average reached 43-45 cases per year, compared to fewer than 30 cases in prior years. This growth reflects an increase in reporting and referrals as awareness of the Centre's services expands, as well as broader institutional recognition of the need for specialised support for survivors of sexual violence. At the same time, interview evidence suggests that actual demand may be underreported, since not all cases are referred to the Centre, with some resolved internally by other institutions. Forecasts for 2026-2028 therefore anticipate a gradual rise in beneficiaries, reaching an estimated 55 cases by 2028, with a particular increase expected among younger age groups (9-12 years). External factors such as awareness campaigns related to reporting and Lilium services could contribute to further increases in reporting and demand for Lilium's services.

Costing Exercises and Budget Allocations 2022-2024

The Lilium Centre depends entirely on QSUT for budgeting and allocations. It has not been recognised as an independent cost centre. Funding for Lilium is fully integrated into QSUT's consolidated budget, with no earmarked budget line for its services. Expenditures for staff, medical supplies, food, hygiene and operational costs remain embedded within QSUT's general allocations. Donor contributions, such as UNDP support for training, have occasionally supplemented these resources but are sporadic and not systematically reported. Therefore, no clear data is available on past expenditures.

Forecasts 2026-2028 for the MTBP

Due to the absence of a dedicated budget line and transparent financial reporting, it is not possible to generate a comprehensive estimate of future costs for the Lilium Centre. Therefore, this analysis provides estimates only for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with international standards, such as the IC. These estimates are informed by recommendations of the People's Advocate and findings from interviews with Lilium staff. They should be interpreted as additional costs complementing QSUT's existing budget, rather

than a complete reflection of the Centre's financial needs. The following subsections provide a rationale and references used for estimating additional costs for Lilium's functioning.

Expansion of Premises and Accessibility

The Lilium Centre's facilities are insufficient to meet the standards required for specialised services for survivors of sexual violence. Expanding the premises, as recommended by the People's Advocate, will enable Lilium to accommodate the projected increase in beneficiaries while ensuring confidentiality, safety and accessibility (People's Advocate of Albania, *Recommendation on Lilium Centre*, 2024), [68] . The People's Advocate report, recommend constructing two additional rooms, each 20m^2, with costs estimated based on government-approved construction reference prices (People's Advocate of Albania, *Recommendation on Lilium Centre*, 2024).[69] Based on the average market price of 102,300 ALL per square meter in the cadastral zone ZK8130 (QSUT area), the estimated cost for constructing two additional rooms with a total area of 40 square meters amounts to 4,092,000 ALL. To ensure the Centre meets approved service standards and provides equal access for all beneficiaries, adaptation works for disability access have been included in the budget. These works are essential to accommodate survivors with disabilities and children with mobility restrictions, aligning the facility with principles of inclusiveness and non-discrimination. The interventions foreseen include the construction of ramps, estimated at 50,000 ALL, to provide barrier-free entry; the installation of accessible indoor and outdoor signage to guide individuals with mobility or visual impairments, estimated at 20,000 ALL; and the adaptation of two bathrooms to ensure that sanitary facilities are usable by persons with disabilities through wider doors, grab bars and accessible fixtures, at a cost of 100,000 ALL. The total estimated cost of these works is 170,000 ALL, representing a necessary investment to guarantee that survivors with disabilities can access shelter services in a safe, dignified and independent manner. Thus, the total required investment is 4,262,000 ALL as a one-off investment.

In the successive years, Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expenditures are calculated. In the absence of specific national standards in Albania for determining O&M costs of public service facilities, a 2% rate of the initial investment cost is applied for the Lilium Centre. This estimate is based on international best practices widely used by development partners such as IMF[70] and the World Bank[71], which recommend allocating between 2-5% of capital investments annually to ensure the sustainability of facilities. The 2% benchmark (or 85,240 ALL) is a conservative and realistic assumption, reflecting the need for regular upkeep of infrastructure and facilities while remaining proportionate to the scale of the Centre's operations. Including this provision in the budget helps prevent deterioration of services, ensures compliance with standards and safeguards the quality of care provided to survivors of sexual violence.

Warm, Child- and Family-friendly Environment

Survivors, particularly children, require a safe and welcoming environment to support recovery and reduce trauma. This requires child-friendly furniture, rugs, privacy screens and wall decorations. Child- and family-friendly environment costs for the Lilium Centre are

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[68] People's Advocate of Albania, Recommendation on Lilium Centre, Tiranë, 20 December 2024, available at:https://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/media/manager/website/media/Rekomandim%20Qendra%20LILIUM.pdf

[69] People's Advocate of Albania, Recommendation on Lilium Centre, Tiranë, 20 December 2024. Cost estimates based on government-approved construction reference prices, available at: https://ekb.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/IMG_1247.pdf

[70] https://www.elibrary.imf.org/display/book/9781557752222/ch008.xml?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[71] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/654101468149684064/pdf/656000NWP00PUB07B0UDS13CIP00PUBLIC0.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

estimated as a one-off expense and are based on general market prices and price estimates for typical classroom furniture, amounting to 80,000 ALL.

Staffing – Case Manager

Effective victim-centred services require dedicated case management to coordinate emergency support, referrals and follow-up care. Currently there is not an approved Case manager position and appointing one ensures continuity, reduces service fragmentation and strengthens long-term support for survivors. The cost estimation is based on public sector benchmarks for comparable social work positions in Albania. The average salary for a case manager is 95,033 ALL per month and social and health contributions amount to around 15,870 ALL monthly, totalling 110,903 monthly or 1,330,836 annually.

Professional Training

To ensure that professionals working at the Lilium Centre maintain the necessary skills to address sexual violence cases effectively, a structured annual training program is included as an additional cost. The inclusion of professional trainings is also consistent with the requirement for continuous professional development applicable to other categories of health and social service professionals, as stipulated under IC Article 23, which calls for appropriate training of professionals dealing with victims of violence to ensure adequate and sensitive service provision. The program consists of three training days per staff member annually. The cost calculation is broken down in several components. First, the trainer fee is estimated at ALL 60,000 per day, reflecting the rate for experienced external trainers, such as psychologists, legal experts or medical professionals. This ensures high-quality, specialised content tailored to the complex needs of survivors of sexual violence. Second, training materials are estimated at ALL 2,500 per participant, covering handouts, manuals and case studies designed to reinforce practical application. Third, venue and logistics are estimated at ALL 25,000 per day, covering the rental of a training room within QSUT or a nearby facility. Finally, lunch and coffee breaks are estimated at ALL 2,000 per participant per day for 12 staff. In total, annual training costs are projected at ALL 357,000 in the first year, when the full three training days are implemented. Costs gradually decline to ALL 248,000 in the second year (two days) and ALL 139,000 in the third year (one day), reflecting a reduced need for external trainers as in-house expertise improves.

Psychological Support and Supervision for Staff

To ensure high-quality and victim-centred services, psychological support and supervision shall be systematically extended to all staff directly handling cases of sexual violence, even if they are not full-time at Lilium. This approach is in line with the Peoples Advocate's recommendation to provide structured psychological support to reduce burnout, strengthen resilience and improve service quality (People's Advocate of Albania, *Recommendation on Lilium Centre*, 2024).[72]

The estimation of costs for psychological support and supervision is based on the assumption that all staff directly handling cases of sexual violence should be systematically included, regardless of whether they are fully employed by the Lilium Centre or belong to external institutions such as QSUT. In line with this approach and the People's Advocate's recommendation, supervision is assumed to be provided on a monthly basis (1 hour per month) to approximately 7 staff members, including the Centre Coordinator (1), psychologists on rotation (at least 2), and 3–4 key medical staff (emergency, gynaecology and nursing). Based on an estimated unit cost of ALL 2,500[73] per hour of supervision, the total monthly cost amounts to ALL 17,500 (7 staff × ALL 2,500), corresponding to ALL 210,000 annually. These

[72] *People's Advocate of Albania, Recommendation on Lilium Centre, Tiranë, 20 December 2024, available at:https://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/media/manager/website/media/Rekomandim%20Qendra%20LILIUM.pdf*

[73] *The rate is determined in line with the prevailing costing practices applied by comparable service providers.*

costs represent the additional resources required to ensure that all frontline personnel, including non-Lilium staff, receive structured psychological support and supervision.

Interpretation and Translation Services

Interpretation and translation services are necessary to ensure access to services for foreign women. Given the increasing number of foreign clients, interpretation is required to guarantee effective communication, ensure accurate understanding of sensitive cases and provide equal access to psychosocial and medical services. The cost estimation for interpretation and translation services is based on an hourly rate of 50% of 5,040 ALL, which reflects the official tariffs established under the Instruction "*On the Determination of Tariffs for the Provision of Official Translation".*[74] Based on the prior number of foreign clients, it is anticipated that interpretation support will be required for approximately five hours per month to ensure accessibility for foreign clients approaching the centre. Over a twelve-month period, this results in a total of 151,200 ALL per year (2,520 ALL × 5 hours × 12 months). This allocation ensures that the centre can provide inclusive and equitable services in line with national standards and obligations for accessibility.

Table 12. Forecasts for additional costs for the Lilium Centre (2026–2028)

Service per IC	Budget line (# name)	Amount to be Budgeted		
		2026	2027	2028
Expand premises and adapt for persons with disabilities	Capital expenditure – Building (account no 231)	4,262,000	85,240	85,240
Create warm, child and family-friendly environment	Capital expenditure – Equipment & Furnishing (account no 231)	80,000	-	-
Hire Case Manager	Personnel Costs – Salaries (account no 600&601)	1,330,841	1,330,841	1,330,841
Regular training for professionals	Training (account no 602)	357,000	248,000	139,000
Psychological support & supervision for staff	Training (account no 602)	210,000	210,000	210,000
Interpretation/translation services	Translation (account no 602)	151,200	151,200	151,200
		6,391,041	**2,025,281**	**1,916,281**

Source: RA calculations

Challenges and Priorities

The Lilium Centre continues to face several challenges that directly affect the quality and sustainability of its services. Persistent staffing gaps, particularly the absence of a full-time case manager, limit the centre's capacity to ensure continuous follow-up and comprehensive case coordination. Additionally, data limitations remain a constraint, as there are no systematic records of budgeted versus actual expenditures for 2022-2024, nor any structured analysis of funding gaps between allocated resources and actual needs. Moreover, certain budget lines remain underfunded, particularly those related to staff training, psychological supervision and interpretation services for foreign clients.

[74] *Instruction No. 8, dated 19.7.2022, "On the Determination of Tariffs for the Provision of Official Translation and Sign Language Interpretation Services and the Rules for Exemption from Payment of Tariffs for Categories of Persons Benefiting from Legal Aid."*

To address these challenges, three funding priorities have been identified. First, the centre must hire a dedicated case manager to strengthen case management and ensure continuity of support. Second, there is a need for specialised and ongoing training for medical, psychological and support staff to enhance their capacity to handle sensitive cases of sexual violence in line with best practices. Third, structured psychological supervision for staff should be institutionalised to safeguard their well-being, prevent burnout and sustain high-quality service delivery.

Shelters

According to IC Article 23, states shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure the establishment of appropriate and easily accessible shelters, available in sufficient numbers to provide safe accommodation and to proactively reach out to survivors, especially women and their children. The Convention further recommends the provision of at least one family shelter place per 10,000 inhabitants, ensuring adequate capacity to meet demand.

Based on the analysis presented in Table 18, the current availability of shelter places in Albania falls significantly below this standard. In total, approximately 275 family shelter places are required nationwide, while only 8 places are currently available, leaving a gap of around 267 additional places. This shortfall is particularly pronounced in larger municipalities such as Tirana, where the need is highest, but is also evident across smaller municipalities where no shelter capacity exists at all. Overall, the limited number and uneven distribution of shelter places undermine the ability of the system to provide timely and equitable protection and support to survivors.

Table 13. Shelter Family Places: Required vs Existing by Municipality

Municipality (By Size)	Total Population [75]	% of Albania's Total Population	Required Shelter Family Places (1 family place per 10,000 population)	Current Shelter Places	Shelter Places Needed
Tiranë	925,198	33.5%	93	1	92
Durrës	289,987	10.5%	29	1	28
Fier	270,655	9.8%	27	0	27
Elbasan	254,084	9.2%	25	1	24
Korçë	193,325	7.0%	19	1	18
Shkodër	187,801	6.8%	19	1	18
Vlorë	182,278	6.6%	18	1	17
Lezhë	113,233	4.1%	11	0	11
Berat	110,471	4.0%	11	1	10
Diber	107,710	3.9%	11	0	11
Kukës	71,806	2.6%	7	1	6
Gjirokastër	52,474	1.9%	5	0	5
Total	2,761,785	100%	275	8[76]	267

The current shelter system in Albania is characterised by very limited capacity and uneven geographical distribution. As shown in Table 18, only 8 shelter places are currently available nationwide, compared to an estimated need of 275 places, with several municipalities lacking any shelter capacity. Existing shelters are concentrated in a small number of locations and operate with varying levels of capacity and service provision.

Against this background, the following subsections examine the costs of operating three selected shelters. These cases were chosen to reflect different service models and operational contexts, and to provide a more detailed understanding of cost structures and resource needs. The selection is based on the criteria outlined in the methodology section.

[75] *Albania Statistical Institute, Albania's Population, 2023, p. 4.*
[76] *UNDP, Mapping case of Social Services in Albania, 2023, p. 21.*

Woman to Woman (emergency shelter)

Responsibilities and Legal Framework

The NGO "*Gruaja te Gruaja"* [Woman to Woman] operates a specialised shelter in Shkodër that provides 24/7 emergency accommodation and support services for women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence, including cases of physical, sexual and psychological violence, as well as trafficking.[77] In line with the Law No. 9669/2006 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations" and Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services", the shelter is mandated to provide safe housing, psychosocial and legal assistance, case management and reintegration support. Responsibility for managing these obligations lies primarily with the Service Manager, supported by an administrator, financial officer, case manager, psychologist, lawyer and social worker. Together, they ensure both the day-to-day provision of shelter and specialised services, as well as administrative compliance with national legislation and the IC.

This shelter was included in the study because it met the sampling criteria outlined in the methodology. It is one of the few specialised short-term emergency shelters in Albania able to provide complete and verifiable financial records, alongside sufficiently detailed data on staffing and service delivery necessary for the costing analysis. The findings presented in this section draw on institutional documentation supplied by the organisation, financial and operational datasets submitted for the study and qualitative insights obtained through interviews with the shelter's management staff.

Capacities for Gender-responsive Budgeting

Representatives of Woman to Woman demonstrate familiarity with GRB as both a legal requirement and a guiding principle. However, they emphasise that GRB remains more a normative framework than an actively used budgeting tool. They are aware that specialised GBV services must be financed in line with national legislation and Albania's commitments under the IC, but practical implementation is limited.

Annual budgeting is prepared around core services, including shelter, psychosocial and legal support, case management and reintegration, based on the average number of women and children hosted, staff costs and essential operational expenditures. Partial costing of annual expenses (staff, food, hygiene products, medicines, clothing and maintenance) is undertaken primarily for donor reporting. Budgeting continues to be tied to donor funding. Municipal contributions remain largely confined to providing the shelter premises.

Budgeting is coordinated internally among the financial officer, administrator and programme staff, including the service manager. Collaboration is functional but basic, and it does not systematically link programme objectives to longer-term financial strategies or GRB processes. The organisation does not have a formal system for monitoring how allocations influence service outcomes budget or gender equality goals. Monitoring relies mainly on donor reporting and internal annual reviews, with no linkage to the national MTBP.

Beneficiaries and Demand for Services

The NGO maintains an electronic Excel database of service users, updated by programme staff under the supervision of the service manager. Beneficiaries are systematically recorded by sex and age, enabling basic tracking. However, the system does not consistently disaggregate data by ethnicity, disability or place of residence. As a result, the Centre cannot systematically generate statistics on women from Roma and Egyptian communities or women with disabilities, despite recognising the importance of such data for budgeting and service planning.

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[77] *Gruaja te Gruaja. (n.d.). Available at: https://gtg.al (accessed March 2026).*

The lack of multi-dimensional disaggregation limits the Centre's ability to analyse trends over time, estimate differentiated needs or calculate costs per beneficiary—constraints that ultimately weaken the integration of GRB principles into financial planning. In addition, the use of Excel as the primary data management tool restricts more advanced analysis, such as cross-tabulations (e.g. women with disabilities, Roma women, or beneficiaries from rural areas), which are essential to assess whether financial allocations adequately reflect diverse needs.

Demand for services consistently exceeds available capacity. Women survivors—often accompanied by children—constitute the majority of cases, while the caseload also includes child victims. The shelter has also provided support to women from Roma and Egyptian communities. Fewer beneficiaries have been identified as persons with disabilities or from rural or peri-urban areas; however, this likely reflects barriers to access, including physical accessibility constraints, stigma and limited awareness of available services, rather than lower levels of need.

The Centre does not publish aggregated beneficiary data. According to staff, this is primarily due to the absence of a formal requirement to publish non-personal, aggregated information. As a result, quantitative data were not made available during the assessment, and demand can only be described in qualitative terms. Available evidence suggests that current demand is underestimated, as many cases remain unreported. Future demand is expected to increase, particularly with expanded outreach and stronger coordination through CRMs. This has important implications for budgeting, as future allocations will need to account not only for existing demand, but also for anticipated increases linked to improved reporting and awareness.

Costing Exercises and Budget Allocations 2022-2024

Woman to Woman shelter is financed predominantly through donor-funded projects. The Municipality of Shkodër provides an in-kind contribution by allocating the shelter premises and covering a small portion of utility and maintenance costs through its social services budget.[78] However, the municipality does not have a dedicated budget line for specialised GBV services, and its contribution is not based on a formal assessment of annual service needs.

At the central level, MHSP has not institutionalised costing for specialised GBV services, nor conducted service-level costing for this shelter during 2022-2024. No state budget line exists for covering operational costs such as salaries, psychosocial support, reintegration services or essential supplies. As a result, operational financing continues to rely predominantly on donor support rather than stable public funding.

The organisation prepares detailed project-based budgets for donors, covering staff salaries, food, hygiene products, medicine, utilities, transportation, clothing and maintenance. These budgets serve as the shelter's de facto financial planning framework. Internal costing is performed annually to track expenditures, but this is a project-oriented exercise rather than part of a government-led or IC-aligned costing process.

Although no government cost calculations exist, the NGO maintains its own estimated annual budget needs (based on average caseloads and expected operational requirements), which can be compared against actual expenditures. This gap between required annual costs and funds secured through donors offers important insight for future state budgeting. Evidence from Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN) confirms that shelters often secure only part of their total required budget and adjust expenditures to available donor

[78] *Based on interviews; contributions include premises, partial utilities and minor maintenance support, but no operational or staffing costs.*

funding rather than to actual service needs.[79] Woman to Woman shelter reflects this broader pattern.

Consequently, financial sustainability remains heavily dependent on external donors. Public financing whether municipal or central remains partial, unpredictable and insufficient to meet the full costs of specialised services. Similarly, GREVIO found that specialised GBV services in Albania continue to rely disproportionately on donor funding, with limited long-term state investment[80].

During 2022-2024, the shelter did not benefit from a direct state budget allocation. Operational expenditures were covered almost entirely through donor-funded projects. While this prevents an assessment of government under-spending trends, an analysis comparing the shelter's planned annual budget needs with actual expenditures reveals structural financing gaps that must be addressed in future state budgeting.

Forecasts 2026-2028 (MTBP)

The RA prepared expenditure projections for subsequent years in line with the methodology described in this Chapter, using the 2025 budget provided by the Center as the baseline. The following subsections provide: (1) a projected baseline expenditures for 2026 – 2028, (2) estimates for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with the IC, and (3) estimated total budget including additional costs.

Projected baseline expenditures for 2026–2028

Based on prior experience and foreseen forthcoming costs, Woman to Woman has estimated their overall budget for 2025, and the RA estimated for 2026-2028 as summarised in Table 14. This budget reflects the Centre's current expenditure patterns and operational model, as observed in recent years.

Table 14. Budget Estimates for 2025-2028 in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2025	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	3,960,000	3,960,000	4,158,000	4,365,900
Operational expenditures	1,533,300	1,533,300	1,609,965	1,690,463
Prevention and Visibility	-	-	-	-
Technical equipment	-	-	-	-
Total costs	**5,493,300**	**5,493,300**	**5,767,965**	**6,056,363**

Source: Woman to Woman 2025 and RA for 2026-2028

The current annual budget of 5,493,300 ALL allows the shelter to maintain only essential operations, with staff salaries accounting for nearly 72% of total expenditures. The staffing structure includes three part-time positions—a psychologist, social worker and financial coordinator—each earning 60,000 ALL per month, complemented by an on-call team providing 24-hour emergency coverage for around 100 days per year (1.8 million ALL annually).

Operational expenses total 28% of the budget and are primarily directed toward utilities (120,000 ALL/year), food (198,000 ALL), medicine and medical analyses (220,000 ALL) and child-related materials (190,000 ALL). These allocations cover only the most basic needs, leaving little space for staff training, outreach or reintegration support for survivors. The financial structure thus sustains minimal service provision, ensuring subsistence-level care

[79] *AWEN (2022) notes that shelters often face a funding gap between their full operational needs and the donor funds secured, resulting in expenditure levels that reflect available funding rather than actual service demand.*
[80] *Council of Europe, GREVIO. (2023). Report on Albania (1st evaluation round). Available at: https://rm.coe.int*

but limiting the shelter's ability to deliver continuous psychosocial, medical and child-support services essential for long-term recovery and empowerment of beneficiaries, as foreseen in the IC.

Estimates for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with the IC

The following estimates were informed by interviews with the NGO. They should be interpreted as additional costs complementing the shelter's existing budget.

Additional Staffing

Currently, the NGO employs the Administrative & Financial Manager on a full-time basis, while the Psychologist and Social Worker are engaged on a part-time basis; additional staff (currently on hold) are envisaged to provide 100 days of 24-hour coverage at an estimated cost of ALL 18,000 per day. However, interviews revealed that the limited number of staff does not allow continuous service provision or full compliance with national standards for 24/7 multidisciplinary care. Under Decision of Council of Ministers (DCM) No. 505, dated 13.07.2011, shelters are required to guarantee access to management, psychosocial, medical and reintegration support for all beneficiaries and accompanying children. The IC (Article 23) further mandates that such services be available on a continuous and integrated basis. To address these gaps, several additional positions are required to ensure effective and sustainable service delivery and the proposed salary levels are based on current staff costs and are benchmarked against prevailing market rates for comparable positions. All the additional positions required for the shelter include:

- A Director is needed to provide overall management, coordination and supervision of all operations in the shelter. The cost of this position is estimated at 140,000 ALL per month, amounting to 1,680,000 ALL annually.
- A Case Manager is necessary to coordinate multidisciplinary interventions, oversee the preparation of individual service plans, and maintain linkages with employment and social protection institutions. The cost of the Case Manager is estimated at 90,000 ALL per month or 1,080,000 ALL per year.
- A nurse is required to provide first aid, monitor ongoing health conditions and coordinate access to specialised health services. This position is critical given the frequent cases of physical trauma, chronic illness and substance dependency among residents. The estimated cost for a part-time Nurse is 70,000 ALL per month for six months, or 420,000 ALL annually.
- A Child Caregiver/Educational Staff would provide daily assistance to minors through learning, play and emotional support activities, ensuring that their developmental and educational needs are met. This position responds IC Article 18, which includes the obligation to provide age-appropriate and child-sensitive care. The estimated cost for this position is 86,000 ALL per month, corresponding to 1,032,000 ALL per year.
- A part-time Lawyer is essential to provide survivors with timely legal assistance, including the preparation of protection orders, legal documentation, representation in judicial and administrative proceedings, and referrals within the justice system. While Albania provides state-funded free legal aid, legal support within shelters remains necessary because survivors often require immediate, trauma-informed, and integrated legal assistance that is closely coordinated with case management, psychosocial support, and safety planning. This enables survivors to access legal protection promptly during the critical period following admission to the shelter. The inclusion of legal support is consistent with Articles 57–59 of the Istanbul Convention, which guarantee victims' access to legal assistance and effective

judicial remedies. The cost of a part-time Lawyer is estimated at 60,000 ALL per month for 12 months, amounting to 720,000 ALL annually.

- A Sanitary/Cook position is proposed to handle food preparation, hygiene and disinfection tasks within the facility. The annual cost for this position is 744,000 ALL, based on a monthly salary of 62,000 ALL.
- In addition to the new positions above, the existing staffing arrangement requires adjustment to ensure continuous service provision. The Psychologist and the Social Worker, currently engaged part-time, need to be converted to full-time positions to guarantee uninterrupted psychosocial support and case management, at a gross monthly cost of 90,000 ALL (1,080,000 ALL annually) and 80,000 ALL (960,000 ALL annually), respectively. The on-call team providing 100 days of 24-hour coverage per year is retained at 18,000 ALL per day (1,800,000 ALL annually), equivalent to approximately 2.5 additional full-time staff. Compared with the current salary budget of 3,960,000 ALL, these adjustments entail an incremental cost of 600,000 ALL per year which, together with the new positions (5,676,000 ALL), brings the total additional staffing cost to 6,276,000 ALL.

Staff Supervision

Regular staff supervision sessions are essential to prevent professional burnout and secondary trauma among counsellors and social workers dealing daily with high-stress GBV cases. Monthly group supervision (2,500 ALL × 5 participants) is planned to have structured psychological support for frontline staff for a total amount of 150,000 ALL.

Specialised Health Services (External)

Some survivors require medical interventions beyond the generic healthcare package covered by the shelter. Based on prior experience, on average, two beneficiaries per month are referred for external medical visits, each requiring two sessions. This results in approximately 48 sessions per year. Based on the official tariffs applied in university hospitals (3,000 ALL per visit), regional hospitals (2,000 ALL per visit) and district hospitals (1,500 ALL per visit), the average unit cost of a medical visit is estimated at 2,167 ALL. Therefore, the projected annual cost amounts to 104,016 ALL (48 sessions × 2,167 ALL). Unless the state removes tariffs for persons who have suffered violence, these expenses are essential to guarantee compliance with IC standards, which require shelters to ensure access to comprehensive healthcare for survivors, including specialised medical and psychological support.

Post-Shelter Rent and Food Support

In line with IC Article 23 (requirement for adequate and accessible housing) and national reintegration policies, temporary rent and subsistence support is provided for survivors leaving the shelter. The model assumes 25 beneficiaries (half of annual cases) will require such support, each for three months at 25,000 ALL per month (including 15,000 ALL for rent + 10,000 ALL for food), resulting in 1,875,000 ALL per year.

Outreach and Communication Activities

To strengthen community awareness and referral networks, the shelter foresees implementing monthly outreach and visibility activities. These will include awareness campaigns, community engagement events and the production of visibility and informational materials, totalling an estimated cost of 12,000 ALL per month, equivalent to 144,000 ALL per year.

Office Equipment (one-off)

To maintain service continuity and efficient documentation, the shelter needs two laptops and one printer. The investment, though minor, is about 171,000 ALL as a one-off purchase.

Accessibility Adaptations (one-off)

To ensure the shelter meets approved service standards and provides equal access for all beneficiaries, adaptation works for disability access have been included in the budget. These works are essential to accommodate survivors with disabilities and children with mobility restrictions, aligning the facility with principles of inclusiveness and non-discrimination. The capital expenditures (capex) foreseen include the construction of ramps, estimated at 50,000 ALL, to provide barrier-free entry; the installation of accessible indoor and outdoor signage, estimated at 20,000 ALL, to guide individuals with mobility or visual impairments; and the adaptation of two bathrooms, at a cost of 100,000 ALL, to ensure that sanitary facilities are usable by persons with disabilities by providing wider doors, grab bars and accessible fixtures. The total estimated cost of these works is 170,000 ALL, representing a necessary investment to guarantee that survivors with disabilities can access shelter services in a safe, dignified, and independent manner.

Security System (One-off)

Given the sensitivity of GBV cases and potential safety risks, a security camera and alarm system are required to protect residents and staff. This one-time cost is 80,000 ALL based on average market price.

In total, the estimated extra costs for the next three years are detailed in Table 15.

Table 15. Estimated additional Costs for Woman to Woman (2026-2028)

Service per IC	Budget line (# name)	Amount to be Budgeted for additional costs		
		2026	2027	2028
Additional staff	Salaries and social contribution	6,276,000	6,589,800	6,919,290
Staff Supervision (group + quarterly individual)	Operational expenditures - Training (account no 602)	150,000	157,500	165,375
Specialized health (external)	Operational expenditures - Medical service (Account no 602)	104,016	109,217	114,678
Post-shelter rent support	Operational expenditures - Rental fee (account no 602)	1,875,000	1,968,750	2,067,188
Outreach and communication	Prevention and visibility - (account no 602)	144,000	151,200	158,760
Office equipment	Capital expenditure- office equipment (account 231)	171,000	-	-
Accessibility adaptations (one-off capex)	Capital expenditure- (account 231)	170,000	-	-
Security system	Capital expenditure- office equipment (account 231)	80,000	-	-
		8,970,016	**8,976,467**	**9,425,290**

Estimated Budget for 2026-2028 including additional costs

The RA has developed an overall budget for the shelter for the period 2026–2028, building on the Centre's current cost structure as presented in the section Estimated Budget for 2026–2028. The projections use the 2025 budget as a baseline (reflecting existing costs) and incorporate additional costs required to strengthen and expand service provision.

Table 16. Estimated Budget for Woman to Woman Centre including additional costs requirements (2026-2028) in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	10,236,000	10,747,800	11,285,190
Operational expenditures	3,662,316	3,845,432	4,037,703
Prevention and Visibility	144,000	151,200	158,760
Capital expenditures	421,000	-	-
Total costs	**14,463,316**	**14,744,432**	**15,481,653**

Challenges and Priorities

For the Woman-to-Woman shelter, capacity constraints are acute. With only eight beds and three family spaces, demand regularly meets or exceeds available capacity. The absence of a state mechanism that links financing to caseload means that increased demand cannot be matched with corresponding resources. This leads to reduced accessibility, waiting times or reliance on ad hoc support arrangements, all of which undermine the quality of services.

Data limitations compound these challenges. While the Centre maintains sex- and age-disaggregated beneficiary data, it lacks systematic disaggregation by ethnicity, disability or geographic origin. As a result, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, LGBTQ+ survivors and rural women may be underrepresented in planning and budgeting processes—even when they face disproportionately high barriers to access. This limits the organisation's ability to practise intersectional budgeting or to quantify differentiated needs in line with GRB standards.

The Excel-based system tracking beneficiaries further restricts analysis of long-term trends, cost-per-beneficiary estimates and cross-tabulations needed to align financial planning with service outcomes. These shortcomings ultimately hinder both evidence-based budgeting and strategic advocacy for public funding.

Although Woman to Woman does not publish aggregated beneficiary data, staff indicated that this is due to limited internal capacity and the absence of a formal requirement to publish non-personal statistical summaries. For this reason, detailed beneficiary numbers were not shared during the interview.

Vatra Centre (Long-term Shelter)

Responsibilities and Legal Framework

The NGO "Vatra" is a psycho-social specialised Albanian centre in providing prevention, protection, rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims of human trafficking, domestic violence and other forms of gender-based and societal violence. Established in 1999 and licensed since 2004 by the National Licensing Centre, Vatra delivers both residential and community-based services in line with national legislation governing social care and protection services.

In accordance with Law No. 9669/2006 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations", Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services" and Albania's commitments under the IC, Vatra is mandated to provide comprehensive support to survivors, including emergency accommodation, psychosocial counselling, legal assistance, case management, health support and long-term reintegration services. Its work also aligns with the national framework on combating trafficking in human beings and victim protection.

Operational responsibility for fulfilling these obligations rests with the Shelter Director and Reintegration Coordinator, supported by a multidisciplinary team that includes social workers/case managers, psychologists, legal specialists, health professionals, education and employment specialists and administrative and financial staff. This structure ensures both the

continuous provision of specialised services to beneficiaries and compliance with regulatory, licensing and reporting requirements.

Vatra Centre was included in this study as it met the sampling criteria defined in the methodology. It is one of the few specialised shelters in Albania able to provide complete, verifiable and multi-year financial data, detailed staffing information and structured programme documentation necessary for a robust costing and budget analysis. Findings presented in this section are based on institutional documentation, detailed budget and expenditure datasets for the period 2022–2025 and qualitative information obtained through interviews with senior management and programme staff.

Capacities for Gender-responsive Budgeting

Representatives of Vatra demonstrate a solid understanding of GRB principles, particularly as they relate to Albania's legal obligations under the IC and national social care legislation. However, as with many specialised service providers, GRB is applied more as a reporting framework than as an integrated budgeting and planning tool.

Annual budgeting is structured around core service components, including shelter operations, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, staff salaries and social contributions, food and essential items, operational expenditures and technical equipment. Partial costing exercises are regularly conducted to meet donor and state reporting requirements, especially for rehabilitation and reintegration services. A comprehensive costing exercise explicitly aligned with IC standards has not yet been undertaken.

Budget preparation is coordinated internally by the financial officer in close collaboration with programme management and administrative staff. While this coordination ensures operational continuity, budgeting processes are not systematically linked to outcome-based indicators, long-term financial sustainability planning, or formal GRB monitoring mechanisms. Monitoring of expenditures and allocations relies primarily on donor reporting frameworks and internal annual reviews with no formal linkage to Albania's MTBP.

Vatra's financial sustainability remains highly dependent on a mixed funding model. State funding primarily from the MHSP through the Vlora District Council and the Municipality of Vlora covers staff salaries and food costs and has shown a gradual upward trend. However, donor funding continues to play a critical role in supporting rehabilitation, reintegration, prevention, capacity-building and advocacy activities, with limited predictability beyond short- or medium-term project cycles.

Beneficiaries and Demand for Services

Vatra maintains structured records of beneficiaries served through its shelter and reintegration programmes. Beneficiary data are routinely disaggregated by sex and age, enabling the organisation to track women survivors and their children as primary service users. In 2025 alone, Vatra supported *166 survivors and 54 children*, including both new and ongoing cases from the previous year.

However, data are not systematically disaggregated by ethnicity, disability status or migration background, despite the acknowledged relevance of these dimensions for service planning and budgeting. This limits the Centre's capacity to conduct multi-dimensional analysis of service demand, estimate differentiated costs per beneficiary group, or fully integrate GRB principles into financial planning.

Demand for Vatra's services consistently exceeds available capacity. Women survivors often accompanied by children constitute the majority of cases, including a significant number of victims of trafficking, foreign nationals and individuals requiring long-term reintegration support. While beneficiaries from Roma and Egyptian communities and women with disabilities are present, they likely under-use services and thus the level of need is likely underestimated due to barriers related to accessibility, stigma and limited outreach.

Vatra does not routinely publish aggregated beneficiary statistics, as there is no formal requirement to disclose non-personal operational data. As a result, demand trends are primarily assessed internally. Staff report a steady increase in both the complexity and volume of cases, driven by improved identification, outreach through mobile units and stronger coordination with referral mechanisms.

Future demand is expected to rise further as awareness-raising activities, improved coordination through Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs) and outreach to vulnerable and migrant populations expand. Available qualitative evidence from service providers suggests that increased outreach and identification efforts have already contributed to higher case detection, although this trend is not yet systematically captured in national data. This implies that future budget allocations must account not only for baseline demand, but also for increased service needs linked to improved reporting, identification and reintegration requirements, particularly in relation to foreign survivors and complex trafficking cases.

Costing Exercises and Budget Allocations 2022-2024

Vatra has conducted its own internal costing exercises, primarily at the request of donors. The most recent comprehensive costing was carried out in 2024, with a strong focus on rehabilitation and reintegration services. Cost projections are based on analysis of past expenditures, trends in the number and profiles of beneficiaries and the types of services delivered under Vatra's five core programmes (prevention, direct assistance and shelter, access to justice, capacity building and advocacy). The budgeting process relies on historical expenditure data, case management records and trends in service demand. Vatra also considers the average length of stay and the evolving needs of different beneficiary groups, including survivors of trafficking and gender-based violence. Since mid-2024, an improved beneficiary database has supported more accurate forecasting.

Funding for Vatra comes from a mixed and relatively unstable financing structure. State funding is received mainly through the SF mechanism, as well as periodic calls from the Ministry of Justice and other ministries. These allocations are not guaranteed annually and depend on competitive application processes. The Municipality of Vlora provides in-kind support such as covering the shelter rent, utilities and some operational costs. Donor funding plays a critical role and includes support from UN Women, UNDP, UNHCR, GIZ, AWEN, Terre des Hommes and others, typically on a project basis without long-term certainty. Table 17 has expenditures for 2022-2025.

Table 17. Annual Cost Structure of the Shelter by Budget Line (2022–2025, ALL)

Budget line (# name)	2022	2023	2024	2025 (forecast)
Salaries and social contributions	13,683,612	13,925,114	17,900,000	18,398,142
Rehabilitation and reintegration cost	17,220,664	18,083,430	18,743,600	18,769,470
Operational expenditures	6,378,603	6,021,924	7,086,380	8,013,120
Technical equipment	114,300	341,000	231,000	229,801
Total costs	**37,397,179**	**38,371,468**	**43,960,980**	**45,410,533**

Between 2022 and 2023, Vatra Centre's total costs remained broadly stable (+2.6%). Salaries and social contributions increased slightly (+1.8%). Rehabilitation and reintegration costs rose moderately (+5.0%), indicating a gradual expansion of direct support services. Operational expenditures declined slightly (-5.6%), while technical equipment spending rose sharply (+198%), linked to some one-off investments in equipment and tools needed for service delivery.

From 2023 to 2024, total expenditures increased significantly (+14.6%), marking a scale-up in activities. The largest driver was the rise in salaries (+28.6%) in 2024. Operational expenditures also rebounded (+17.7%), reflecting higher program intensity and the growing needs of shelter operations, legal support, counselling and logistics. Rehabilitation and reintegration costs continued to grow (+3.6%), confirming sustained commitment to survivor support. Technical equipment spending declined (-32.3%) after the previous year's investments.

For 2025, total costs were forecast to increase more moderately (+3.3%). Rehabilitation and reintegration expenditures remained stable, suggesting a steady level of service provision. Operational costs were forecasted to rise (+13.1%), due to expanded activity levels, while technical equipment remained largely unchanged.

It is important to note that prevention, capacity building and visibility programmes are funded separately by donors and are not included in these figures. Their funding structure allows Vatra to expand awareness and prevention efforts while keeping core shelter and support services financially stable.

Forecasts 2026-2028 (MTBP)

The center prepared expenditure projections for subsequent years in line with the methodology described in Chapter 2. The following subsections provide:(1) a projected baseline expenditures for 2026 –2028, (2) estimates for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with the IC, and (3) estimated total budget including additional costs.

Projected baseline expenditures for 2026-2028

Based on prior experience and foreseen forthcoming costs, Vatra has estimated their overall budget for 2026-2028 (see Table 18). This budget reflects the Centre's current expenditure patterns and operational model, as observed in recent years.

Table 18. Budget Estimates in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	22,700,560	27,129,428	27,219,933
Rehabilitation and reintegration program	23,517,196	23,595,160	23,700,320
Operational expenditures	8,313,120	8,213,120	8,415,122
Capital expenditures	340,300	350,000	384,420
Total costs	**54,871,176**	**59,287,708**	**59,719,795**

Source: Vatra for 2026-2028

The projected annual budget of 54.9 to 59.7 million ALL for 2026 to 2028 allows the shelter to maintain core operations while strengthening reintegration services for survivors. Staff salaries and social contributions are the largest expense, rising from 41% of total costs in 2026 to about 46% in 2027-2028, reflecting the need for a stronger multidisciplinary team to address increasingly complex cases. The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme consistently represents around 40-43% of the budget, covering psychosocial, medical, legal, educational and employment support for beneficiaries and their children. Operational costs account for roughly 14-15%, ensuring the daily functioning of the shelter, while capital expenses remain minimal (under 1%), limited to essential equipment. Overall, the forecast shows a transition from minimum service provision toward more stable, staff-centred and reintegration-focused support.

Estimated Additional Costs for 2026-2028

The following cost estimates for 2026-2028 were informed by interviews with the Centre. They should be interpreted as additional costs complementing the Centre's existing budget.

Staffing – Additional Case Management Capacity

The shelter already ensures core administrative and psychosocial support functions. However, interviews confirmed that the current number of case management staff is insufficient to guarantee continuous multidisciplinary support and full compliance with national standards for 24/7 care. Under DCM No. 505 (13.07.2011), shelters must ensure access to psychosocial, medical and reintegration services for all beneficiaries and accompanying children. IC Article 23 further requires that such services be available on a continuous and integrated basis. The increasing complexity of cases and the growing demand for individualised reintegration support highlight the urgent need for additional case management capacity. Case management is essential for coordinating emergency responses, preparing and monitoring individual support plans, managing referrals to employment and social protection institutions and ensuring follow-up after exit from the shelter.

The cost estimate is based on public-sector standards for comparable social work positions in Albania. The average monthly cost per Case Manager, including social and health contributions, is 119,124 ALL. The annual additional cost for three Case Managers is only for 2026 in the amount of 4,288,464 ALL as for the other years was already budgeted by the centre.

Staff Supervision and Well-being

The allocation includes monthly group supervision sessions for frontline staff at a unit cost of 2,500 ALL per participant. With 12 participants over 12 months, the annual cost of

group supervision amounts to 360,000 ALL. In addition, the budget includes complementary staff well-being support services, which are essential to maintain staff resilience, service quality and continuity of care. These additional welfare and psychological support measures are estimated at 1,000,000 ALL per year.

Interpretation and Translation Services

The provision of interpretation and translation services is necessary to ensure accessibility for foreign women seeking support at the Centre. Given the increasing number of foreign beneficiaries, interpretation is required to guarantee effective communication, ensure accurate understanding of sensitive cases and provide equal access to psychosocial, legal and medical services. The cost estimate is based on an hourly rate of 5,000 ALL, in line with official tariffs established under the Guideline "On the Determination of Tariffs for the Provision of Official Translation." Based on the Centre's experience, interpretation is expected to be required for approximately five hours per month, per 12 months, for 60 foreign beneficiaries, resulting in a total annual cost of 1,500,000 ALL.

Notarial Expenses and Legal Documentation

Although a small allocation for legal documentation already exists, the Centre has identified the need for a modest increase to cover additional cases. Survivors often require multiple legal documents such as identification cards, civil status certificates or other official extracts to access services, exercise rights or complete reintegration procedures. Using an average cost of 2,500 ALL per document, the additional annual cost is estimated at 52,500 ALL. This allocation supplements the minimal existing budget and ensures that survivors can obtain essential documentation without delay.

Post-Shelter Rent Support

In line with IC Article 23, which requires accessible and adequate housing solutions, temporary rent support is necessary to prevent survivors from returning to unsafe environments or facing homelessness after leaving the shelter. The model assumes a monthly allocation of 25,000 ALL per person for a six-month transition period. For 50 beneficiaries per year, the total annual cost is 7,500,000 ALL. This support is essential to enable safe reintegration and independent living.

Centre Transportation Costs for Foreign Beneficiaries

Transportation assistance is required to support the safe return of foreign survivors to their countries of origin, in accordance with protection standards and individual reintegration plans. The cost per person is estimated at 120,000 ALL. For an average of 40 foreign cases per year, the total annual transportation cost amounts to 4,800,000 ALL.

Accessibility Adaptations (one-off capital investment)

To ensure the Centre meets approved service standards and provides equal access for all beneficiaries, adaptation works for disability access are required. These interventions align with principles of inclusiveness and non-discrimination. The planned works include construction of access ramps, widening of doors and installation of accessible sanitary facilities (WC). The total estimated one-off cost for these accessibility adaptations is 170,000 ALL.

In total, the estimated extra costs for the next three years are detailed in Table 19.

Table 19. Estimated additional Costs for Vatra (2026-2028)

Service per IC	Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Additional staff	Salaries and social contribution	4,288,464	-	-
Staff Supervision (group + quarterly individual)	Operational expenditures - Training (account no 602)	1,360,000	1,428,000	1,499,400
Translation services	Operational expenditures - translation (account no 602)	1,500,000	1,575,000	1,653,750
Post-shelter rent support	Operational expenditures - Rental fee (account no 602)	7,500,000	7,875,000	8,268,750
Notarial expenses and legal documentation	Operational expenditures - Legal documentation (account no 602)	52,500	55,125	57,881
Transportation cost	Operational expenditures - Transportation (account no 602)	4,800,000	5,040,000	5,292,000
Accessibility adaptations (one-off capex)	Capital expenditure - (account 231)	170,000	-	-
		19,670,964	**15,973,125**	**16,771,781**

Estimated Budget for 2026-2028 including additional costs

The RA has estimated Vatra's overall budget for 2026-2028 as summarised in Table 20, which includes additional costs required to strengthen and expand service provision.

Table 20. Estimated Budget for Vatra Centre including additional Costs requirements (2026-2028) in Lek

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	26,989,024	27,129,428	27,219,933
Rehabilitation and reintegration program	23,517,196	23,595,160	23,700,320
Operational expenditures	23,525,620	24,186,245	25,186,903
Capital expenditures	510,300	350,000	384,420
Total costs	**74,542,140**	**75,260,833**	**76,491,576**

Challenges and Priorities

Vatra Psycho-Social Centre faces a set of interrelated challenges that affect both the quality and long-term sustainability of its services. *Human resource constraints* represent one of the most critical pressures. Although Vatra operates with a multidisciplinary team and has significantly expanded its scope of services, current staffing levels are insufficient to respond adequately to the growing number and increasing complexity of cases. In particular, the demand for intensive case management, long-term follow-up during the reintegration phase and specialised legal and psychological support exceeds existing human capacity. The lack of approval for additional publicly funded social workers further exacerbates this gap and increases the risk of staff overload and burnout, especially in a long-term shelter setting.

A second major challenge relates to *staff supervision and well-being*. While Vatra recognises the importance of professional supervision and trauma-informed staff support, funding for these activities remains limited and largely dependent on donor resources. Given the prolonged exposure of staff to complex trafficking and GBV cases, the absence of

systematic and adequately funded supervision risks compromising service quality, staff retention and continuity of care.

Financial sustainability constitutes a structural challenge. Although Vatra benefits from a mixed funding model that includes state contributions—primarily for staff salaries and food—as well as municipal support for shelter operations, the Centre remains heavily dependent on short-term and project-based donor funding. This creates uncertainty in medium- and long-term planning, particularly for reintegration services, post-shelter support and specialised assistance for foreign beneficiaries. Rising operational costs linked to inflation, security requirements and transportation further intensify financial pressure. This situation highlights a broader systemic gap: despite IC articles 22 and 23 requiring stable public funding for specialised services, long-term financing for NGO-run shelters in Albania remains fragmented and insufficiently institutionalised.

Service delivery is also constrained by *the needs of specific beneficiary groups,* particularly foreign survivors of trafficking. These cases require extended legal assistance, interpretation and translation services, documentation support, and, in some instances, transportation for safe return to countries of origin. While Vatra provides these services in practice, the associated costs are not fully or predictably covered through existing budget lines, resulting in recurrent funding gaps.

Additionally, *post-shelter reintegration* presents a persistent challenge. Demand for transitional housing, rent subsidies and economic support exceeds current allocations, especially in a context of rising rent prices and limited access to public housing or rental bonus schemes. Without sufficient post-shelter support, survivors face increased risks of homelessness, re-victimisation or return to unsafe environments.

Different and Equal (Longterm Shelter)

Responsibilities and Legal Framework

The centre *Të ndryshëm të barabartë* [Different and Equal] operates as a licensed, non-governmental long-term social care service provider, mandated to offer protection, rehabilitation and reintegration for victims of violence and trafficking. Its responsibilities are defined by the Law on Social Care Services[81] and by the Instruction "On the Approval of the Standards of the Safe Emergency Shelter Service"[82], which sets out the requirements for shelters, including case management, individual treatment plans and continuous monitoring of beneficiaries' rights. The Director of the Centre is responsible for overseeing service delivery and ensuring compliance with these standards. As a recipient of the SF through the Tirana Region since 2022, the Centre reports to the SSS, while also maintaining accountability through regular reporting to its Board of Directors.

Capacities for Gender-responsive Budgeting

The Centre has over 23 years of experience working with women and girls, and budgeting is strongly rooted in this mandate. Attention to gender-specific needs is a core consideration in planning, and the annual budget is prepared to reflect the requirements of survivors of trafficking and domestic violence.

However, gender-responsive budgeting is not yet fully institutionalised. While gender considerations are integrated in practice, this is primarily driven by organisational experience and commitment rather than by formalised methodologies, systematic costing tools or standardised procedures aligned with GRB principles.

Beneficiaries and Demand for Services

[81] *Law No. 121/2016 On Social Care Services.*
[82] *Instruction No. 354 "On the Approval of the Standards of the Safe Emergency Shelter Service", 2022.*

The Centre maintains a structured data system in Excel, recording detailed characteristics of each beneficiary, including age, gender, nationality, geographic location (rural/urban), disability status, type of exploitation, services received, entry and exit dates and reintegration costs. Each case is coded to ensure confidentiality. These records are used both for reporting to state authorities and donors, as well as for projecting future service costs. A key limitation remains the absence of integration with centralised government databases, which would enable more systematic monitoring and comparability across institutions. Also, child-related costs are not fully accounted for despite many beneficiaries being mothers with children who are sheltered together with them, also requiring specialised services.

Forecasts point to a gradual increase in demand for services, particularly among minors and foreign nationals, driven by global migration flows, regional instability and improved public awareness of the Centre's services.[83]

Table 21. Number of Beneficiaries, Actual and Forecsted

Year	**No. of beneficiaries**	**No. of beneficiaries**
2022	Actual	25
2023	Actual	25
2024	Actual	39
2025	Forecast	40
2026	Forecast	40
2027	Forecast	40
2028	Forecast	40
Source: Different and Equal, 2025		

Data demonstrate a notable increase in 2024, when the number of beneficiaries rose to 39 compared to 25 in earlier years. This increase reflects both higher reporting and referrals, as well as stronger institutional recognition of the need for specialised services for survivors of sexual violence. Looking forward, the Centre anticipates having approximately 40 beneficiaries annually from 2025 to 2028.

Costing Exercises and Budget Allocations 2022-2024

To date, no systematic costing exercise has been undertaken by the government specifically for shelter services. The Centre has carried out internal costing projections as part of donor-funded projects, with annual estimates prepared for 2022-2027 covering staff, operational costs and direct beneficiary support. The budget process considers daily food quotas (as defined by the SSS order[84] on a yearly basis), reference salaries (set by the Council of Ministers every year) and trends in past expenses in the operational experience of the shelter.

Funding for the Centre comes from a mix of state transfers and donor contributions. MHSP through the SF has provided the most consistent state allocations, which have increased over time and are projected to rise further in 2025. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) also provides regular annual support. Other sources, such as GIZ, UN OHCHR, Terre des Hommes and various foundations, contribute on a project basis without guaranteed continuity.

The planned budget lines cover staff salaries and social insurance, rent and utilities, food, clothing, medicines and direct support for beneficiaries, training and capacity-building, transport, fuel and vehicle maintenance, as well as security services. Between 2022 and 2024,

[83] *Interview with the Centre's Director, 2025.*
[84] *The latest order "On the indexation of food quota for 2025" was Order no 5398/3, dated 31.07.2025.*

expenditures show a gradual nominal increase, driven mainly by inflation in operational costs and higher security expenses (Table 22).

Table 22. Actual expenditures in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2022	2023	2024	2025 forecast
Salaries and social contribution	15,516,217*	16,332,860*	17,192,484	17,192,484
Operational expenditures	20,649,713	19,777,378	23,819,540	23,301,409
Prevention and Visibility	1,191,000	456,560	350,000	1,191,000
Technical equipment	240,000	598,200	372,314	372,314
Total costs	37,596,930	37,164,998	41,734,338	42,057,207

*Source: Different and Equal expenditures data; *salaries were estimated to have increased 5% annually*

Between 2022 and 2023, total costs remained relatively stable (-1.1%), with a modest increase in salaries and social contributions (+5.3%), while operational expenditures declined slightly (-4.2%). Prevention and visibility expenditures dropped sharply (-61.7%), whereas spending on technical equipment more than doubled (+149%), indicating a shift in priorities. From 2023 to 2024, total expenditures increased by 12.3%, mainly due to the significant rise in operational costs (+20.4%) and the continued growth in salaries (+5.3%). In contrast, prevention and visibility allocations contracted further (-23.3%), while technical equipment declined (-37.8%). Overall, the three-year trend shows steady increases in personnel-related costs and a strong rebound of operational expenditures in 2024, while prevention and visibility remain consistently underfunded. Equipment costs fluctuated according to specific needs.

In 2024, the largest share of expenditures, except salaries, was dedicated to housing rental expenditures for victims (20%) and security services (12.5%), reflecting the high costs of ensuring safe accommodation and protection for beneficiaries. Significant allocations also were made for food for victims (10.8%) and teacher/trainer services (7.6%). Together, these categories account for over 50% of the total annual budget, underlining that housing, security, and subsistence have been the centre's primary costs.

Forecasts 2026-2028 (MTBP)

As mentioned, the Centre prepares regular projections of expenditures as most of its fundings comes from SSS (through the SF) and from donors that require budgeting in time to continue activities uninterrupted. The RA prepared expenditure projections for subsequent years in line with the methodology described in this Chapter, using the center budget data as the baseline. The following subsections provide: (1) a projected baseline expenditures for 2026 –2028, (2) estimates for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with the IC, and (3) estimated total budget including additional costs.

Projected baseline expenditures for 2026-2028

Based on prior experience and anticipated forthcoming costs, Different and Equal has estimated its overall budget for 2025. This budget reflects the Centre's current expenditure patterns and operational model, as observed in recent years.

Table 23. Projected baseline expenditures for Different & Equal Centre (2026-2028) in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	17,192,484	18,052,108	18,954,714
Operational expenditures	25,669,955	26,088,539	26,088,539
Prevention and Visibility	1,191,000	1,191,000	1,191,000
Technical equipment	372,314	372,314	372,314
Total costs	44,425,753	45,703,961	46,606,567

Source: Different & Equal, 2025 and RA for 2026-2028

1. Estimates for additional costs for 2026-2028

These estimates are informed by interviews with the Centre. They should be interpreted as additional costs complementing the Centre's existing budget.

Staffing – Two Case Managers and a Psychologist

The shelter already covers basic medical needs. However, staff emphasised that many survivors require psychiatric evaluation and specialised mental-health treatment, including for depression, Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance use and suicide risk. These services cannot reliably be accessed through state health institutions. Although mental healthcare is formally available free of charge, public services lack professionals trained in trauma-informed care and violence-against-women. Further, waiting times are long, making timely intervention impossible in acute cases. Moreover, GREVIO has noted that Albania's public health and mental health services do not systematically provide the specialised, survivor-centred psychological support required under the IC, highlighting gaps in protocols, professional training and accessibility for GBV survivors.[85] As a result, survivors' mental health needs cannot be adequately met through existing public pathways, necessitating additional support from the shelter.

Since specialised mental health treatment is not systematically budgeted for, the shelter must rely on ad hoc arrangements or external referrals. Under IC Article 23, shelters must ensure access to comprehensive psychological support; where such services are unavailable in-house, they must be procured externally. To address this critical gap, the shelter would need to recruit a psychologist capable of providing ongoing, trauma-specific mental healthcare and ensuring continuity of treatment.

In addition, the complexity of cases and the growing demand for individualised support highlight the urgent need for two additional Case Managers. Case management is essential to coordinate emergency response, manage referrals and provide follow-up care. The cost estimation is based on public sector benchmarks for comparable social work positions in Albania. For example, the average salary for a Case Manager and psychologist is 95,033 ALL/month, with social and health contributions of approximately 15,870 ALL/month, bringing the total to 110,903 ALL/month per Case Manager. The extra cost for two case managers on a yearly basis will be 2,661,672 ALL.

Psychological Support and Supervision for Staff

[85] *GREVIO. Baseline Evaluation Report: Albania. Council of Europe, 2023.* https://albania.un.org/en/download/174513/284898

To ensure high-quality and victim-centred services, psychological support and supervision shall be systematically extended to all staff directly handling cases of violence. Increasing counselling capacity by adding one more psychologist, is necessary to manage a growing caseload. The annual cost is estimated at 1,330,836 ALL (based on a salary of 110,903 ALL/month × 12). For supervision, the estimation of costs is based on the number and type of staff involved, which is 13 staff with a unit cost of ALL 2,500 per month,[86] amounting to ALL 390,000 annually. The calculation is designed to ensure that supervision reaches all critical staff categories, reflecting both the frequency of their involvement in cases and the intensity of psychological support required.

Interpretation and Translation Services

The provision of interpretation and translation services is necessary to ensure accessibility for foreign women seeking support at the centre. Given the increasing number of foreign clients, interpretation is required to guarantee effective communication, ensure accurate understanding of sensitive cases and provide equal access to psychosocial and medical services. The cost estimation for interpretation and translation services is based on an hourly rate of 50% of 5,040 ALL, which reflects the official tariffs established under the Instruction "On the Determination of Tariffs for the Provision of Official Translation".[87] It is anticipated that interpretation support will be required for approximately five hours per month to ensure accessibility for foreign clients approaching the Centre (according to prior experience centre). Over a twelve-month period, this will total of 151,200 ALL per year (5,040 ALL/2 × 5 hours × 12 months). This allocation ensures that the Centre can provide inclusive and equitable services in line with national standards and obligations for accessibility.

Childcare and Education Support for Children

Budgeting for the children of beneficiaries is a necessity, as women seeking shelter often arrive accompanied by their children. In such cases, the Centre is responsible for ensuring that children's needs are adequately met. For this reason, a dedicated budget of 420,000 ALL per year has been estimated, which includes food (360,000 ALL/year), basic school supplies (24,000 ALL/year), and recreational activities (36,000 ALL/year) for at least two kids staying in the Centre. These costs are essential to guarantee daily nutrition, facilitate access to learning and provide opportunities for socialisation and emotional well-being. By addressing both the immediate and developmental needs of children, the Centre creates a safe and supportive environment that responds comprehensively to the realities of beneficiaries arriving with their families.

Specialised Healthcare (External)

Survivors frequently require access to services that cannot be provided in-house, such as psychiatric evaluations and consultations with specialist doctors. On average, two beneficiaries per month are referred for external medical visits, each requiring two sessions. This results in approximately 48 sessions per year. Based on official tariffs applied in university hospitals (3,000 ALL per visit), regional hospitals (2,000 ALL per visit) and district hospitals (1,500 ALL per visit), the average unit cost of a medical visit is estimated at 2,167 ALL. Therefore, the projected annual cost amounts to 104,016 ALL (48 sessions × 2,167 ALL). Unless the state removes tariffs for persons who have suffered violence, these expenses are essential to guarantee compliance with IC standards, which require shelters to ensure access to comprehensive healthcare for survivors, including specialised medical and psychological support.

Notary and Legal Documents

Although a small allocation for legal documentation already exists, the Centre has identified the need for a modest increase to cover additional cases. On average, at least 5-6

[86] *The rate is determined in line with the prevailing costing practices applied by comparable service providers.*

[87] *Instruction No. 8 "On the Determination of Tariffs for the Provision of Official Translation and Sign Language Interpretation Services and the Rules for Exemption from Payment of Tariffs for Categories of Persons Benefiting from Legal Aid", 2022.*

survivors per year require multiple legal documents such as identification cards, birth certificates or civil status extracts. Each survivor typically needs a package of 3-4 documents, with costs ranging between 1,500 and 2,500 ALL per document, depending on the document type and notary service. While Albania provides *some* free or reduced-cost administrative documents for individuals in situations of economic need, there is no dedicated provision that guarantees free notary services or documentation specifically for survivors of gender-based violence. In practice, survivors frequently face administrative barriers, unclear eligibility pathways and inconsistent application of fee waivers by local authorities. Therefore, shelters often need to cover these costs directly to ensure timely access to essential documentation. Using an average unit cost of 2,000 ALL per document, the incremental annual cost is estimated at 36,000 ALL (6 survivors × 3 documents × 2,000 ALL). This is necessary to supplement the existing minimal budget for these expenses and to ensure survivors have timely access to essential legal documents, which are critical for securing rights, accessing services and facilitating reintegration.

Post-shelter Rent Support

While the shelter has allocated some funds for rent subsidies, the need for a modest increase to cover additional cases beyond currently budgeted expenditures, particularly for cases insufficiently addressed by the existing municipal allocation. The only applicable legal framework is the Decision of the Municipal Council of Tirana "On the approval of procedures for 'Rent Subsidy'".[88] According to this Decision, support may cover up to 100% of social housing rent for families receiving or eligible for economic assistance, and up to 100% of the average market rent in the respective local government unit for families renting in the open market.

Given variability in rent levels and the lack of clarity in how the subsidy is applied in practice, interviews with Municipality of Tirana staff indicated that there are three different rent bonus levels considered for this support: 33,619 ALL for Zone A, 25,062 ALL for Zone B and 19,800 ALL for Zone C. To ensure a cautious approach, an average estimate of 26,160 ALL per month per beneficiary has been applied as a conservative assumption, so that survivors do not return to unsafe environments or face homelessness after leaving the shelter. For four beneficiaries, a monthly allocation of 26,160 ALL per person is needed to facilitate their transition to independent living for three months. This amounts to 106,640 ALL per month and a total of 313,920 ALL per year.

Adaptation for Disability Access (one time - capex)

To ensure the Center meets approved service standards and provides equal access for all beneficiaries, adaptation works for disability access have been included in the budget. These works are essential to accommodate survivors with disabilities and children with mobility restrictions, ensuring the facility upholds principles of inclusiveness and non-discrimination. The interventions foreseen include the construction of ramps, estimated at 50,000 ALL, to provide barrier-free entry; the installation of accessible indoor and outdoor signage, estimated at 20,000 ALL, to guide individuals with mobility or visual impairments; and the adaptation of two bathrooms, at a cost of 100,000 ALL, to ensure that sanitary facilities are usable by persons with disabilities by providing wider doors, grab bars and accessible fixtures. The total estimated cost of these works is 170,000 ALL, representing a necessary investment to guarantee that survivors with disabilities can access shelter services in a safe, dignified and independent manner.

In total, the estimated extra costs for the next three years are detailed in Table 24.

Table 24. Estimated Extra Costs for Different & Equal (2026-2028)

[88] *Decision of the Municipal Council of Tirana, No. 10 "On the approval of procedures for implementing the social housing program 'Rent Subsidy'", 2020.*

Service per IC	Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Add 2 Case Managers (post-shelter follow-up)	Salaries and social contribution	2,661,672	2,661,672	2,661,672
Add 1 Psychologist	Salaries and social contribution	1,330,836	1,330,836	1,330,836
Staff Supervision (group)	Operational expenditures - Training (account no 602)	390,000	390,000	390,000
Interpretation/ Translation services	Operational expenditures - Translation services (account no 602)	151,200	151,200	151,200
Childcare/Education support for accompanying children	Operational expenditures - Educational activities (account no 602)	420,000	420,000	420,000
Specialised health (external)	Operational expenditures - Medical service (Account no 602)	104,016	104,016	104,016
Notary & legal documents – top-up	Operational expenditures - Notary expenses (account no 602)	36,000	36,000	36,000
Post-shelter rent support	Operational expenditures - Rental fee (account no 602)	313,920	313,920	313,920
Accessibility adaptations (one-off capex)	Technical equipment - (account no 231)	170,000	-	-
		5,577,644	**5,407,644**	**5,407,644**

Source: RA calculations

Estimated total budget for 2026-2028 including additional costs

In total, the estimated costs for the next three years including the additional costs required to strengthen and expand service provision for the period 2026-2028 are detailed in Table 25.

Table 25. Budget Forecast for 2026-2028 including additional costs in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	21,184,992	22,044,616	22,947,222
Operational expenditures	27,085,091	27,503,675	27,503,675
Prevention and visibility	1,191,000	1,191,000	1,191,000
Technical equipment	542,314	372,314	372,314
Total costs	**50,003,397**	**51,111,605**	**52,014,211**

***S**ource: RA calculations*

Challenges and Priorities

The shelter faces a series of interrelated challenges that affect both the quality and sustainability of its services. Human resource constraints are among the most pressing. Although a multidisciplinary team is in place, staffing levels remain insufficient to respond to rising demand particularly for follow-up support, community-based case management and specialised psychological care. Irregular funding for staff supervision further heightens the risk of burnout and compromises continuity of care.

A second challenge concerns the needs of survivors accompanied by children. While many residents arrive with children, costs for their food, school materials and recreational activities are not systematically budgeted. This creates recurrent unfunded obligations that directly affect service quality.

Financial vulnerability is a structural constraint across the NGO shelter sector, and Different & Equal is no exception. Operations rely almost entirely on external donors, with only a few providing predictable contributions. Volatility in donor cycles, combined with rising prices for food, utilities and essential supplies, places significant pressure on the shelter's budget. This situation reflects a systemic financing gap. Under IC articles 22-23, states must ensure *sustainable, long-term public funding* for specialised services. Yet, in Albania neither central nor municipal budgets guarantee the continuity of NGO-run shelters. Ad hoc or limited funding mechanisms such as irregular municipal contributions or occasional access to the SF do not meet the requirements of the IC.

Service limitations also extend to mental and physical health support. The shelter lacks in-house specialised psychiatric or trauma-focused psychological services, requiring referrals to external providers whose costs are not consistently covered in the budget. Public mental health services do not reliably provide trauma-informed care for GBV survivors, limiting their practicality as an alternative.

Capacity constraints remain a challenge as well. With 15 beds distributed across four rooms, the shelter has faced situations where survivors, particularly foreign victims of trafficking could not be accommodated. The dormitory structure also raises concerns about the ability to separate individuals who have experienced different forms of violence or who require additional safety and privacy measures. This limitation affects compliance with international standards that emphasise safety, privacy and trauma-informed accommodation arrangements.

In light of these challenges, the shelter has identified several immediate priorities:

- *Strengthen human resources*, including recruiting additional case managers and psychologists, and ensuring regular staff supervision and trauma-informed training.
- *Establish a dedicated budget line for children's needs,* covering nutrition, school materials and age-appropriate activities.
- *Invest in specialised training and continuous professional development,* including on trauma, substance use, digital risks and complex case management.
- *Improving financial sustainability* through predictable, multi-annual support from donors and, crucially, through the gradual integration of shelter financing into municipal and state budgets in line with IC obligations.
- *Expanding services for post-shelter reintegration,* including transitional housing, rent subsidies, legal documentation and interpretation services for migrant survivors.

The National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence – Kamza

Responsibilities and Legal Framework

The National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence (NCTVDV) was included in the study because it is the only state-run specialised emergency shelter for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence in Albania, operating with continuous public funding and nationwide referral responsibility. Therefore, it represents the primary governmental residential service providing protection, crisis intervention and multidisciplinary support to survivors. Located in Kamza, it operates under the authority of the MHSP and is regulated by Law No. 9669/2006 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations" (as

amended) and Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services."[89] Its primary mandate is to provide immediate protection, accommodation, psychosocial and medical assistance, legal counselling and reintegration support for survivors of gender-based violence, including women, children and other vulnerable groups. The Director of the Centre carries overall responsibility, supported by the Head of the SSS, case managers, psychologists, social workers and administrative and support staff.

The Centre employs 18 staff members. This includes a Director and a Head of SSS, supported by a core team of eight specialists covering social work, psychology, legal assistance, medical support and programme coordination. Operational functions are carried out by four carers, two cleaning staff, one cook and one driver. This structure provides a multidisciplinary professional core of ten staff members, complemented by eight operational staff who ensure the day-to-day functioning of the facility. While the staffing model aligns with the requirements set out in DCM No. 505/2011 "On Social Care Service Standards for Victims of Domestic Violence in Residential Centres",[90] the number of professionals remains insufficient when the Centre operates at or near full capacity.

Budgeting responsibilities lie with the Director, supported by the finance specialist, who prepares the annual financial plan. This plan is submitted through the supervising directorate and subsequently approved by MHSP as part of the Centre's integration within the public social care system.

Capacities for Gender-responsive Budgeting

Officials responsible for budgeting at the Centre demonstrate partial familiarity with GRB. They recognise it as a legal obligation linked to Albania's MTBP and MHSP's annual instructions, but their technical understanding of GRB's analytical dimensions remains limited. Staff confirm that GRB is formally required, as budget proposals are first drafted by the Centre and then consolidated at the SSS level within the MHSP budget program for "Social protection". However, application is mostly procedural, with insufficient capacity to translate gender-responsive needs into specific cost lines.

Beneficiary data are collected in a simple Excel database, recording sex, age, and selected socio-demographic characteristics. However, the system does not consistently disaggregate information by ethnicity, disability or rural/urban origin, which limits the Centre's ability to analyse the differentiated needs of vulnerable groups or to conduct accurate cost projections for these populations.

Although the Centre is a state institution, its data system is not yet fully integrated with the National Electronic Register of Social Care Services in Albania (REVALB)[91]. According to staff, the Centre continues to operate an older, stand-alone internal database because REVALB is primarily designed for tracking cases through municipal CRMs and for administrative monitoring, rather than for managing the detailed residential-service records required by shelters. Additionally, the Centre has not been equipped with the technical modules or training needed to synchronise real-time case information with REVALB, and no SOP has been issued by MHSP to mandate or regulate such integration. As a result, information exchange remains partial and inconsistent, reducing the potential for system-wide data harmonisation and

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[89] Republic of Albania. (2006). Law No. 9669 "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations" (as amended). Official Gazette of Albania. As amended
Republic of Albania. (2016). Law No. 121 "On Social Care Services in the Republic of Albania". Official Gazette of Albania.
[90] Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania. DCM No. 505 On Social Care Service Standards for Victims of Domestic Violence in Residential Centres, 2011.
[91] REVALB is Albania's national electronic system for recording and managing data on beneficiaries of social care services, administered by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. It is used to support case management, service coordination and planning across social services, including services addressing domestic and gender-based violence.

limiting the Centre's ability to link beneficiary profiles with budget planning or service outcomes.

Budget planning is coordinated mainly through the administrative-financial specialist, and cooperation with programme staff is ad hoc. Formal joint budget planning meetings are not institutionalised, reducing the ability to align financial planning with service delivery needs. No dedicated gender equality officer is formally engaged in the budget cycle at the Centre. As a result, gender analysis often is absent when estimating costs for specialised services.

Monitoring of budget execution occurs every four months, but there are no structured mechanisms to evaluate the impact of expenditures on indicators related to gender-based violence within the MTBP or in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021–2030.[92] This limits accountability and weakens the link between allocated resources and service outcomes.

Beneficiaries and Demand for Services

As the only state-run specialised residential facility for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, the Kamza Centre plays a central role in Albania's institutional response to violence. Its unique status unlike municipal accommodation facilities or NGO shelters makes it the primary publicly funded option for emergency protection, multidisciplinary support and temporary housing.

The Centre has an official capacity of 27 persons, distributed across eight rooms, with priority given to women survivors and their children. When mothers arrive with children, the number of distinct family cases that can be accommodated decreases, often bringing the Centre close to or above its effective operational capacity. Staff report that demand regularly exceeds available space, particularly during periods of increased referrals from police, CRMs or courts.

Beneficiary data are stored internally in an Excel-based system. While information is consistently disaggregated by sex and age with women and children forming the majority of residents, data are not systematically broken down by ethnicity, disability or rural/urban origin. This limits the Centre's ability to identify differentiated needs or estimate the resource implications for groups with higher vulnerability (e.g., Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, survivors from remote areas). The lack of integration with REVALB further restricts the potential for system-wide analysis and coordinated budgeting.

The caseload includes women survivors, accompanied children, minors who are direct victims and a smaller number of women from Roma and Egyptian communities. Survivors with disabilities and those from rural or peri-urban areas appear underrepresented. This is not necessarily due to lower incidence, but rather to barriers such as stigma, inadequate transport and limited outreach.

Despite being a public institution, the Centre relies on cooperation with external actors to address specific needs that fall outside its core mandate including legal aid, dental treatment, specialised medical examinations and psychiatric care. These constitute "hidden costs" that are not fully covered through the Centre's staff salaries or standard operational budget and often require ad hoc arrangements with external service providers.

NGO-run specialised shelters complement the state system, but only a few receive partial and irregular government support, typically limited to staff salary subsidies that must be applied for annually. This assistance does not extend to operational or service-related costs, leaving a significant portion of specialised service provision reliant on donor funding.

Costing Exercises and Budget Allocations 2022-2024

[92] *Council of Ministers, DCM No. 400, "On the Approval of the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021–2030." Official Gazette of Albania, 2021.*

Funds for NCTVDV are allocated from the state budget and approved annually by MHSP. The Centre submits its budget request through the state SSS (budget line number 1013142), which is then consolidated at a ministry level. The approved allocation is included in the annual budget of social care institutions and covers salaries, insurance and operational expenditures such as food, utilities, cleaning and security. The body responsible for implementing approved budget lines is SSS, while the NCTVDV Director and finance specialist oversee day-to-day expenditure and reporting. Local government is not directly involved in financing, but municipalities cooperate in referrals through CRMs.

The budget is not based on a systematic costing exercise of actual service needs. Budgeting is historical with adjustments reflecting changes in salaries or operational costs. A precise, recurring costing methodology is not applied. Cost calculations are approximated at the end of each year when the Centre estimates the value of services provided (legal, psychological, medical, dental, etc.) and the specific needs of cases handled. These approximations are internal and serve as financial overviews rather than as an official costing basis for government allocations.

Government financing covers salaries, insurance and core operating expenses (food, hygiene, medicine, utilities, transport and security). However, it does not extend to specialised needs such as long-term reintegration support, housing rental assistance for survivors after exit or continuous professional training for staff. In practice, such needs are either unmet or addressed through partnerships with other state institutions, NGOs or donor-funded projects.

In 2022-2024, the allocated budget ensured basic service provision and uninterrupted 24/7 operations. Yet, the funding level was insufficient to respond fully to survivors requiring specialised medical, psychological or legal services. Nor could NCTVDV guarantee reintegration support. Indeed, "Albania's public financing of shelters and specialised services is stable in covering core costs but remains incomplete and heavily dependent on donors" (GREVIO, *Thematic Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention*, 2024).[93]

Table 26 summarises NCTVDV's budget for 2022-2024. Notably, during the interviews, staff noted that allocations were described as insufficient, covering only core operations and not reintegration, specialised health services or staff training needs.

Table 26. NCTVDV 2022-2024 Expenditures in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2022	2023	2024
Salaries and social contribution	11,135,000	13,419,000	15,992,760
Operational expenditures	10,917,000	12,015,000	11,363,823
Prevention and visibility	-	-	-
Technical Equipment	-	-	240,000
Total	**22,052,000**	**25,434,000**	**27,596,583**

Source: Data for 2022 and 2023 from SSS; for 2024 from the Centre

The budget of the NCTVDV is provided through the State Social Service (SSS), an institution operating under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP). NCTVDV's total expenditures increased from 22,052,000 ALL in 2022 to 27,596,583 ALL in 2024, marking a 25% rise. The largest driver of this growth is salaries and social contributions, which rose steadily from 11,135,000 ALL in 2022 to 15,992,760 ALL in 2024, a 43.6% increase. The

[93] *GREVIO. Baseline Evaluation Report: Albania. Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2023.* https://albania.un.org/en/download/174513/284898

budget for operational expenditures also grew between 2022 and 2023, from 10,917,000 ALL to 12,015,000 ALL, but then dropped in 2024 to 11,363,823 ALL, showing a slight downward adjustment of about 5% compared to the previous year. Despite this decline, operational costs remain the second-largest component of the budget. New categories appeared in 2024, such as Technical Equipment, allocated 240,000 ALL. Prevention and visibility had no budget allocation in 2022 and 2023. The new allocations in 2024, though relatively small, indicate efforts to expand spending areas beyond core salaries and operating costs.

The budget structure is dominated by personnel costs, which rose from 50.5% of the total in 2022 to 58% in 2024. Meanwhile, operational expenditures have decreased in relative weight. This reflects a trend where more resources are being absorbed by staff-related costs, leaving relatively less space for operational, visibility and preventive measures.

Detailed expenditures reported by NCTVDV centre enabled further analysis for 2024. The Centre's total budget centre amounted to 27.6 million ALL, with operative expenditures making up 11.4 million ALL. Within operative costs, the largest item is security and security systems, absorbing 6.3 million ALL, or more than half of all operational spending. Other significant expenses include facility maintenance (1.1 million ALL), electricity (820,000 ALL), transportation and fuel (952,047 ALL) and cleaning products (560,000 ALL). These categories reflect the high costs of maintaining essential infrastructure and ensuring safety. Smaller but notable allocations include financial services (280,000 ALL), vehicle maintenance (240,000 ALL), office supplies (120,000 ALL) and other expenses (750,000 ALL).

Overall, the cost structure is heavily weighted toward security and maintenance-related expenses, highlighting NCTVDV's prioritisation of safety and core operational needs, while leaving limited resources for prevention, visibility and capacity-building investments.

Forecasts 2026-2028 (MTBP)

As mentioned, the Centre prepares regular projections of expenditures. However, the RA modified these projections for subsequent years in line with the methodology described in this Chapter, using the 2026 budget provided by the center as the baseline. The following subsections provide: (1) a projected baseline expenditures for 2026 –2028, (2) estimates for additional costs required to fill service gaps and align with the IC, and (3) estimated total budget including additional costs.

1. Projected baseline expenditures for 2026–2028

Based on prior expenses, the Centre estimates that it will need the costs summarised in Table 27 to continue its current operations.

Table 27. Estimated Budget for NCTVDV (2026-2028) in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	15,992,760	16,792,398	17,632,018
Operational expenditures	11,363,823	11,932,014	12,528,615
Prevention and visibility	-	-	-
Technical equipment	240,000	252,000	264,600
Total costs	**27,596,583**	**28,976,412**	**30,425,233**

Data Source: NCTVDV and RA forecasts

2. Estimates for Additional Costs for 2026-2028

The following subsections forecast additional costs required to address service gaps and align with IC standards. These estimates are informed by findings from interviews with the NCTVDV.

Psychological Support and Supervision for Staff

To ensure high-quality, victim-centred services, psychological support and supervision should be systematically extended to all staff directly involved in handling cases of violence. The cost estimation is based on the number and categories of staff involved, covering eight staff members at a unit cost of ALL 2,500 per month[94], amounting to ALL 240,000 annually. This calculation is intended to ensure that supervision reaches all critical staff categories, taking into account both the frequency of their involvement in cases and the intensity of psychological support required.

Specialised Healthcare (External)

Survivors frequently require access to specialised healthcare services that cannot be provided in-house, such as psychiatric evaluations and consultations with specialist doctors. On average, an estimated two beneficiaries per month have been referred for external medical visits, each requiring two sessions. This results in approximately 48 sessions per year. Based on the official tariffs applied in university hospitals (3,000 ALL per visit), regional hospitals (2,000 ALL per visit) and district hospitals (1,500 ALL per visit), the average unit cost of a medical visit is estimated at 2,167 ALL. Therefore, the projected annual cost amounts to 104,016 ALL (48 sessions × 2,167 ALL). These expenses are essential to guarantee compliance with IC standards, which require shelters to ensure access to comprehensive healthcare for survivors, including specialised medical and psychological support.

Notary and Legal Documents

Although the NCTVDV already has allocated some funds for legal documentation, it has identified the need for a modest increase to cover additional cases. On average, at least 5-6 survivors per year require multiple legal documents such as identification cards, birth certificates or affidavits. Each survivor typically needs a package of 3-4 documents with costs varying between 1,500 and 2,500 ALL per document, depending on the type of document and the notary service. Using an average unit cost of 2,000 ALL per document, the incremental annual cost is estimated at 36,000 ALL (6 survivors × 3 documents × 2,000 ALL). These additional funds are necessary to ensure survivors have timely access to essential legal documents, which are critical for securing rights, accessing services and facilitating reintegration.

Post-shelter Rent Support

Although the NCTVDV has allocated some funds, it needs a modest increase to cover additional cases that fall outside or are insufficiently addressed by the existing municipal allocation. The Decision of the Municipal Council of Tirana for rent subsidy is applicable for this shelter as well.[95] To ensure a cautious approach, an average estimate of 26,160 ALL per month per beneficiary has been applied as a conservative assumption for addressing unmet housing needs, so that survivors do not return to unsafe environments or face homelessness. For 12 beneficiaries, a monthly allocation of 26,160 ALL per person is assumed to facilitate their transition to independent living for three months. This amounts to 313,920 ALL per month or 941,760 ALL per year.

Outreach and Communication

The budget for outreach and communication amounts to 20,000 ALL per month and 240,000 ALL annually. Of this amount, 8,000 ALL per month (96,000 ALL annually) is allocated to awareness campaigns to cover activities such as information distribution through posters, brochures, media coverage and awareness initiatives. Community engagement accounts for 9,000 ALL per month (108,000 ALL annually), supporting meetings with local groups, schools, NGOs and other mobilisation efforts that directly connect communities with services. Finally, 3,000 ALL per month (36,000 ALL annually) is dedicated to visibility and materials, including printing, branding and communication tools such as flyers, banners and event materials. Such

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[94] The rate is determined in line with the prevailing costing practices applied by comparable service providers.

[95] Decision of the Municipal Council of Tirana, No. 10, "On the approval of procedures for implementing the social housing program 'Rent Subsidy'", 2020.

resources are important for raising awareness about the services available and facilitating broader access to these services.

In total, the estimated extra costs for the next three years are detailed in Table 28.

Table 28. Estimated Costs for NCTVDV Centre (2026-2028) in ALL

Service per IC	Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Staff Supervision	Operational expenditures - Training (account no 602)	240,000	252,000	264,600
Specialized health care	Operational expenditures - Medical service (account no 602)	104,016	109,217	114,678
Notary and legal documents	Operational expenditures - Notary expenses (account no 602)	36,000	37,800	39,690
Post-shelter rent support	Operational expenditures - Rental fee (account no 602)	941,760	988,848	1,038,290
Outreach and communication	Prevention and visibility - (account no 602)	240,000	252,000	264,600
		1,561,776	**1,639,865**	**1,721,858**

Source: RA calculations

Estimated Budget for 2026-2028 including additional costs

In total, the estimated costs for the next three years including the additional costs required to strengthen and expand service provision for the period 2026-2028 are detailed in Table 29.

Table 29. Budget Forecast including additional costs in ALL

Budget line (# name)	2026	2027	2028
Salaries and social contribution	15,992,760	16,792,398	17,632,018
Operational expenditures	12,685,599	13,319,879	13,985,873
Prevention and visibility	240,000	252,000	264,600
Technical equipment	240,000	252,000	264,600
Total costs	**29,158,359**	**30,616,277**	**32,147,091**

Source: RA calculations

Challenges and Priorities

The NCTVDV Centre operates reliably with respect to its core functions. Yet, it remains under-financed regarding several elements essential to a comprehensive and survivor-centred response. Key gaps include post-shelter reintegration, continuous staff training and supervision, specialised health and legal services, proactive outreach and capital investments such as vehicles, safety systems and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment. These unfunded elements prevent full alignment with the requirements of the IC, which obliges states to ensure adequate, specialised and sustainably financed services for survivors of violence.[96]

Capacity pressures intensify these challenges. The Centre frequently operates at or near full occupancy, and when mothers are admitted with children, the number of distinct

[96] *Council of Europe. Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Treaty Series No. 210, 2011.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention

family cases that can be accommodated decreases significantly. Overflow cases are commonly redirected to NGO shelters. This reflects a structural shortfall in national capacity: Albania's population is approximately 2.4 million,[97] and IC Article 23 implies a need for roughly one family place per 10,000 inhabitants or about 280 family places nationally.[98] Current availability across the Kamza Centre and NGO shelters combined remains extremely limited—estimated at fewer than 10 places—leaving a gap of over 260 family places nationwide, as shown in Table 18.

Financial sustainability is another concern. Although the Centre benefits from stable core funding from MHSP, its budget does not sufficiently cover specialised services or survivor-specific needs. NGO shelters that complement the Centre face even more acute constraints: only a few receive partial state support, and this is generally limited to staff salary subsidies rather than operational or service-related costs. GREVIO has highlighted this system-wide overreliance on donor funding, noting that Albania has not yet ensured a predictable, long-term public financing model for specialised services as required under the IC.[99]

Data limitations further restrict evidence-based planning. While sex- and age-disaggregated information is available, the Centre does not systematically record disability, ethnicity or rural/urban origin, hindering its ability to identify barriers faced by under-served groups such as women with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian women, or survivors from remote areas. Expanding data fields—together with basic tagging of cost types and outcome indicators—would strengthen budget proposals and enable more robust reporting aligned with GREVIO's recommendations.

Immediate priorities include expanding the budget to cover:

- Staff supervision and continuous training;
- Specialised health and psychiatric services;
- Legal/notary documentation;
- Dedicated outreach and visibility activities;
- A rolling capital reserve for safety and ICT needs; and
- A structured reintegration package, including short-term rent support linked to municipal schemes where possible.

Over the medium term, the Centre's current use of data for planning and budgeting remains limited, particularly in relation to utilisation rates, turn-away cases and service outcomes. Existing financing arrangements also do not fully reflect the scope and cost of services provided, with limited integration of operational and specialised service costs into public funding frameworks. As a result, challenges persist in ensuring equitable access for under-served groups, maintaining staff well-being and supervision, and sustaining operational continuity. These constraints also limit the pace at which national shelter capacity can expand toward the standards set by the IC.

[97] *INSTAT. Population of Albania, 1 January 2024. Tirana: Institute of Statistics. https://www.instat.gov.al.*
[98] *Council of Europe, Istanbul Convention Explanatory Report, para. 142, specifying one family place per 10,000 inhabitants as the recommended standard for shelter provision*
[99] *GREVIO. Baseline Evaluation Report: Albania. Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2023. https://albania.un.org/en/download/174513/284898*

Estimated Costs of Providing Specialised Services in Line with IC Requirements (2026-2028)

Cross-cutting Findings

The analysis of six specialised service providers reveals a set of systemic, cross-cutting constraints that undermine the sustainability, accessibility and quality of GBV services in Albania.

i. Absence of predictable and dedicated public financing. A key structural weakness is the lack of dedicated and stable state budget lines for specialised GBV services. Services provided by WCSOs rely predominantly on donor funding, short-term project cycles and fragmented municipal support. As a result, funding levels do not reflect actual demand, and service provision is often adjusted to available resources rather than needs.

ii. High dependence on donor funding and project-based financing. The current financing model is characterised by short-term, project-based funding, which creates significant uncertainty for service providers. This undermines continuity of services, limits long-term planning and restricts investments in infrastructure, staffing and service quality. It also affects staff retention, training and supervision, which are critical for delivering specialised, trauma-informed care.

iii. Limited integration into the Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP). Specialised GBV services, particularly those delivered by NGOs, are not systematically integrated into Albania's MTBP 2025–2028. This limits the ability of the Government to plan, scale and sustain services over the medium term and reinforces reliance on external funding, contrary to IC obligations.

iv. Chronic capacity gaps and insufficient staffing. Across all service typologies, there are persistent gaps in human resources, including insufficient multidisciplinary staffing and limited provision of 24/7 services. These constraints affect the quality, accessibility and continuity of care and limit the ability to respond to increasingly complex cases.

v. Underfunding of critical service components. Key elements required for IC compliance—such as reintegration support, services for children, staff supervision, outreach, security and specialised interventions—are systematically underfunded or financed on an ad hoc basis. This affects both immediate service delivery and long-term outcomes for survivors.

vi. Weak data systems and limited use of costing for planning. Data systems remain fragmented and insufficiently developed to support evidence-based planning and budgeting. The absence of standardised costing methodologies and limited data disaggregation constrain the ability to assess demand, monitor performance and allocate resources effectively.

vii. Lack of a unified costing and financing framework across service providers. Service providers operate under different financing and budgeting models (state budget, donor-funded projects, or embedded institutional budgets), resulting in non-comparable cost structures and limiting the possibility of developing national cost benchmarks for GBV services.

viii. Insufficient shelter capacity relative to IC standards. Current shelter capacity falls significantly below the IC benchmark of one family place per 10,000 inhabitants, indicating a substantial gap in service availability and geographic coverage.

Estimated Costs

Overall, the findings demonstrate that current spending levels are insufficient to meet IC requirements, and that achieving compliance will require a substantial and sustained increase in public financing.

The costing analysis undertaken for six representative specialised service providers offers indicative estimates of the financial resources required to deliver GBV services in line with the Istanbul Convention (IC) for the period 2026–2028. These estimates combine projected baseline expenditures with additional costs required to address identified service gaps and ensure compliance with IC standards.

Across all service typologies—including rape crisis centres, short-term emergency shelters, long-term residential shelters and helpline services—the analysis identifies a consistent set of cost drivers associated with IC-aligned service provision. These include the need for 24/7 multidisciplinary staffing, full operational funding, strengthened reintegration programmes, improved medical and forensic capacity (for crisis centres), accessibility upgrades and adequate provision for transport, outreach, safety and security. Additional investments are also required in staff training, supervision, data systems and standardised costing tools.

Further, the 2026-2028 forecasts for Lilium Centre are partial since its operating costs are embedded in QSUT's budget and cannot be separated. Table 30 summarises budget forecasts for these six centrees.

Table 30. Estimated Total Budget for the Studied Specialised Service Providers in Million ALL

Centre	2026	2027	2028	Costs Include (IC-Required Additions)
National Counselling Line for Women and Girls	44.8	46	48	Additional staff; disability accessible infrastructure; psychological support; emergency food and hygiene packages; system maintenance
Lilium Centre – Rape Crisis Centre *(partial costs)*	6.39	2.02	1.91	Expansion of premises; accessibility upgrades; creation of a case manager role; structured staff training; psychological supervision; interpretation and translation services. Current operating costs are not included because they are embedded in QSUT's budget and cannot be disaggregated.
Woman to Woman – Short-term Emergency Shelter	14.5	14.7	15.5	Additional multidisciplinary staff; clinical supervision; specialised healthcare; post-shelter rent support; outreach and visibility; accessibility adaptations; safety and security improvements
Vatra Centre – Long-term Residential Shelter	74.5	75.2	76.5	Three case managers; staff supervision; interpretation; legal documentation; rent support; disability accessible infrastructure
Different & Equal – Long-term Residential Shelter	50.0	51.1	52.0	Two case managers; psychologist; staff supervision; interpretation; child-related costs; specialised medical care;

				legal documentation; rent support; disability accessible infrastructure
NCTVDV – State-run Long-term Shelter	29.2	30.6	32.1	Structured staff supervision; specialised healthcare; legal documentation; post-shelter rent support; outreach and visibility

Interpretation and Caveats

However, even with detailed costing for these six institutions, the findings cannot be fully generalised to produce comprehensive national estimates for the four service typologies, helpline, rape crisis centres, short-term shelters and long-term shelters. While the analysis provides indicative costing approaches and examples for each typology, these cannot be reliably extrapolated to capture the full cost of specialised service provision across the country. This is due to several structural barriers.

Incomplete National Coverage

Only one rape crisis centre operates nationally (the Lilium Centre). The study could not include the 13 municipal emergency shelters. Interviews with the Municipality of Tirana and an analysis of Treasury transaction data for 2021-2023 confirmed that municipalities do not maintain separate expenditure records for emergency shelters. Nor do they have a dedicated budget line for emergency accommodation or GBV-related services. Expenditures for these shelters are absorbed within broader municipal social service budgets, making it impossible to extract shelter-specific costs. As a result, these municipal shelters could not be included in the costing methodology that requires disaggregated and verifiable financial data.

Non-standardised Cost Structures

Shelters in Albania operate under fundamentally different budgeting systems, which makes it impossible to generate comparable typology averages. NGO-run shelters rely almost entirely on donor-based project budgets, with expenditures structured around grant cycles and reporting requirements. State-run institutions, by contrast, use treasury budget lines approved annually through the MHSP, following public financial management rules rather than programme-based costing. The Lilium Centre represents a third model: its costs are fully embedded within QSUT's consolidated financial structure, with no standalone cost centre or separate budget line. Because each type of shelter uses a different budgeting framework, relies on different financing sources and reports expenditures through different systems, no unified cost structure exists across the sector. Therefore typology-wide averages cannot be calculated.

Missing Valuation of Municipal and Hospital In-kind Contributions

Municipalities often provide buildings and some operating support in kind, such as the payment of some maintenance costs or utilities, but these are not monetised in budgets. Without valuing these contributions, any national cost figure would underestimate the true resource needs.

Historical (not needs-based) Budgeting

State budgets, particularly for NCTVDV and the Lilium Centre, are constructed primarily on the basis of historical expenditures rather than on a systematic costing of services required under the IC or an assessment of beneficiaries' future needs and projected case numbers.

Alignment of 2026-2028 Budget Projections with Other Studies

The projected budgets for 2026-2027 generated through this study fall closely in line with the cost ranges identified in the AWEN report for comparable types of GBV service

providers.[100] Both analyses show that shelters and crisis-response centres operate within a relatively consistent annual cost envelope, with staffing, 24/7 service continuity and essential operational expenses representing dominant cost drivers. For example, the short-term shelter Woman to Woman, which appears in both studies, shows highly consistent annual expenditure levels: AWEN reports annual costs in the range of 14–14.7 million ALL, while the projections in this study estimate approximately 14.7–15.5 million ALL for 2027-2028. This close alignment suggests that the methodologies used in both assessments capture similar operational realities and cost pressures, including inflation, retention needs for specialised staff and the growing intensity of service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Deriving from this report's findings, the following recommendations are for the MHSP, SSS, municipalities and NGO service providers. They are designed to be actionable, cost-effective and aligned with Albania's obligations under the IC and national strategies.

Human Resources and Staff Well-being

While the legal framework establishes minimum staffing standards for specialised residential centres, including multidisciplinary teams and 24/7 support, important gaps remain in relation to caseload limits, supervision requirements and the systematic provision of trauma-informed training. In addition, the absence of structured and regular clinical supervision affects staff well-being, retention and the overall quality and consistency of service delivery.

Strengthening the operational framework to include clear staffing ratios, mandatory supervision and government-funded continuous training would significantly improve the resilience and effectiveness of both state and NGO shelters. To this end, the MHSP, the SSS and service providers should:

- Recruit additional case managers, psychologists and specialised staff to ensure continuity of care, reduce caseloads and strengthen follow-up support.
- Institutionalise regular clinical supervision and psychological support for staff to prevent burnout, improve retention and enhance service quality.
- Provide ongoing accredited training programmes on trauma-informed care, child protection, substance abuse and digital risks, delivered through certified providers and integrated as a recurring annual budget line.

Capacity Expansion and Compliance with the IC

Albania's current shelter capacity falls significantly short of the IC standard of one family place per 10,000 inhabitants, which requires approximately 240-250 family places based on Albania's current population of 2.4 million. At present, the total available capacity (of state and NGO shelters combined) is estimated at 80-90 places, leaving a national shortfall of at least 150-170 family places. Using the IC benchmark and INSTAT population figures, the estimated number of additional family places needed per region is summarised in Table 31.

[100] *Costing of Specialist Services for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Albania. Tirana: AWEN, 2024.*

Table 31. Estimated Regional Needs for Shelter Capacity Based on IC Benchmark (1 Family Place per 10,000 Inhabitants)

Municipality / Region	Population (2024)	Required Family Places	Estimated Existing Places	Additional Places Needed
Tirana Region	925,198	90	~20	70
Durrës	289,987	26	~10	16
Fier	270,655	26	~5	21
Elbasan	254,084	27	~10	17
Shkodër	187,801	19	~10	9
Korçë	193,325	20	~10	10
Vlorë	182,278	18	~5	13
Other regions combined	~140,000	14	~5	9

Thus, Albania needs 150-170 more family places. Priority expansion areas include Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Elbasan, Vlora and Korçë, where population size and referral data show the highest unmet need. Recommended actions for the MHSP and municipalities to take to comply with the IC include:

- Expand shelter capacity in priority regions to progressively meet the IC benchmark of one family place per 10,000 inhabitants, through:
    - commissioning new municipal or regional facilities, and
    - contracting qualified NGO service providers under multi-year agreements.
- Finance capital investments, including renovation of premises, vehicles for transport and outreach, ICT systems and physical and digital security infrastructure, ensuring shelters operate safely and continuously.
- Guarantee accessibility by incorporating adapted spaces, assistive devices and transport subsidies in all new or expanded shelters, ensuring equal access for women with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian women, elderly survivors and rural residents.

Financial Sustainability and Budgeting

Institutionalise Costing within the Government Budget Cycle

Costing must become a systematic part of public budgeting for state-managed services and a contractual requirement for NGO partners:

Costing should become a systematic component of public budgeting for both state-managed services and NGO-contracted services. To achieve this, the MHSP, the SSS, the Ministry of Finance and municipalities should:

- Establish dedicated budget lines within MHSP and municipal budgets for emergency shelters, long-term residential centres, rape crisis services and reintegration programmes.
- Formally adopt and standardise the costing templates developed through this study for mandatory use by state institutions and NGOs receiving public funds, ensuring a unified costing system through structured institutional dialogue.
- Require municipalities to apply the same costing methodology when contracting NGO-run services, to ensure consistency and comparability.
- Ensure that costing frameworks align with IC requirements (e.g. one rape crisis centre per region and one family place per 10,000 inhabitants), while incorporating specialised services such as trauma counselling, forensic support, disability

accommodations, mobile/outreach units and long-term reintegration pathways. These cost elements should be integrated into MTBP planning and into funding frameworks for contracted services.
- Apply annual inflation adjustments (e.g. a provisional 5% index) where MTBP-specific deflators are not yet available.
- Ensure that all relevant national and local strategies are accompanied by clearly defined costing and budget allocations, in line with existing legal and policy obligations.

Shift to Programme-Based and Predictable State Financing

Municipal and regional GBV/social care providers are not recognised as spending units, so they cannot prepare their own budgets. Their costs are absorbed into broad municipal social care budgets, limiting transparency and preventing accurate cost assessment and budgeting. At the same time, the MHSP's project-based SF model creates short-term, unstable financing and favours municipalities with higher administrative capacity, without assessing efficiency, effectiveness or impact. To ensure financial sustainability and alignment with service standards and IC obligations, the Government of Albania should:

- Transform the SF from project-based to programme-based financing, enabling multi-year, stable service delivery.
- Replace annual grants with multi-year service contracts for both state and contracted NGO providers.
- Link public financing to compliance with service standards, including staffing ratios, 24/7 coverage, safety and reintegration support.

Strengthen REVALB as a Core Instrument for Costing and Planning

REVALB can serve as Albania's central system for evidence-based GBV planning. MHSP, SSS, Ministry of Finance and municipalities should:

- Address inconsistent municipal reporting, incomplete NGO records and existing data gaps, including by strengthening the linkage between REVALB and NCTVDV and establishing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for data entry and validation.
- Ensure mandatory and regular training for all REVALB data-entry staff.
- Develop dedicated oversight capacity within MHSP to support data quality and consistency.
- Expand interoperability to allow REVALB to support cost forecasting, gender-responsive budgeting processes and budget planning at national and municipal levels.

Service Quality and Specialised Support

MHSP, SSS, municipalities and NGO service providers should collaborate to:

- Expand funding for specialised medical, psychiatric and legal services, ensuring survivors have guaranteed access rather than relying on ad hoc or donor-financed arrangements.
- Allocate targeted funds for outreach, awareness and visibility campaigns, improving reporting and access among underrepresented groups (e.g., Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, rural women and foreign victims of trafficking).
- Apply intersectional budgeting and service planning, incorporating tailored approaches for diverse groups through adapted spaces, interpretation and translation services and inclusive programming.

- Allocate dedicated funds for the specific needs of children accompanying survivors, such as child-friendly environs, nutrition, educational materials, psychosocial support and recreational activities, ensuring holistic care for families.

Data, Monitoring, and Accountability

MHSP, SSS and municipalities should:

- Upgrade beneficiary databases to include disaggregation by disability, ethnicity and rural/urban origin. Fully integrate these datasets into the national system (REVALB).
- Introduce regular monitoring of budgeted versus actual expenditures at both state and NGO levels, enabling efficiency tracking and the identification of funding gaps.
- Develop and adopt key performance indicators (KPIs) for specialised GBV services (e.g., occupancy rates, turn-away cases, reintegration success, staff turnover) to align monitoring with GREVIO standards and Albania's MTBP.
- Commission independent evaluations every three years to assess service outcomes, inform future allocations and strengthen accountability.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Albania's specialised services for GBV survivors remain structurally under-financed, unevenly distributed and heavily dependent on external donors. While the country has made important progress in developing a legal framework aligned with the IC, current financing practices do not yet ensure the availability, accessibility or sustainability of services required under articles 20-25. The gaps identified through the costing analysis include insufficient shelter capacity, reliance on project-based funding, limited integration of specialised services into the MTBP and the absence of unified data systems. These systemic issues require coordinated state action.

Findings from both NGO shelters and the NCTVDV in Kamza reinforce a consistent picture: resources allocated today do not reflect the actual cost of providing comprehensive, survivor-centred services, including trauma-informed psychological care, legal assistance, children's needs and post-shelter reintegration. Costing evidence also shows that Albania currently provides only a fraction of the family places implied by the IC benchmark of one family place per 10,000 inhabitants. This capacity gap, combined with fragmented financing, leaves survivors facing unequal access, overstretched services and inconsistent support across the country.

Transitioning towards a more sustainable, state-led financing approach is therefore essential. This requires institutionalising transparent costing methodologies, building predictable multi-annual budget lines and strengthening integration between service providers and national systems such as REVALB. Improved data collection particularly on disability, ethnicity, rural/urban origin and service outcomes will be necessary to align financing with differentiated needs and to meet GREVIO's recommendations for coherent national monitoring.[101]

A modernised financing framework must also recognise the pivotal role played by NGO shelters, which currently provide a substantial share of specialised care. Establishing clear contracting mechanisms, multi-year funding arrangements and co-financing models between

[101] *Council of Europe. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention. Paragraph 142. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2011.*

MHSP, municipalities and NGO providers will be indispensable for ensuring continuity and quality of services. Likewise, capital investments in infrastructure, safety systems, ICT and vehicles for outreach are not optional upgrades but core requirements for delivering protection and meeting Albania's treaty obligations.

Ultimately, the evidence presented in this study provides a roadmap for moving from a fragmented, donor-reliant system toward a state-led, coherent and evidence-based financing architecture for GBV services. Strengthening costing practices, expanding shelter capacity, improving data infrastructure, and embedding specialised GBV services into the MTBP will position Albania to meet international standards and, most importantly, to ensure that every survivor regardless of geography, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic status has timely access to safe, high-quality and sustained support.

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Annex 1. List of Research Participants

- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MHSP) – Central-level institution
- State Social Service (SSS) – National supervisory and service authority
- Tirana Municipality – Social Services Directorate
- Counselling Line for Women and Girls - National hotline and specialised counselling service for survivors of GBV
- Edlira Haxhiymeri Centre – Long term emergency shelter
- Kamza Shelter – Long-term emergency shelter
- Vatra Centre, Vlora – Long-term emergency shelter
- Te ndryshem dhe te barabarte - Long-term emergency shelter
- Lilium Centre - Rape crisis 182,278
- Women to Women (*Gruaja te Gruaja*) – Short-term emergency shelter
- Residential Social Care Centre, Elbasan – Short-term emergency shelter