

security and human development. As the government was developing specific policies, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, delaying the process and redefining priorities, which are still evolving.

The Plan Cuscatlan on Economy has the overall objective of promoting an inclusive and sustainable economic growth, which has been partly put into action by the Policy on Commerce and Investments 2020-2050 and the recently approved Plan de Desarrollo Social 2019-2024. The Policy on Commerce and Investments aims, amongst others, to attract investment in digital services and expand connectivity and digital skills, particularly among youth, while the Plan de Desarrollo Social also aims to promote digital skills and employability in the education sector. The overarching government policy to promote the country's digital transformation is the **Agenda Digital 2020-2030**, with four components: (1) Digital Identity; (2) Digital Governance; (3) Modernization of the State; (4) Innovation, education and competitiveness. The government is currently elaborating the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan for the implementation of the Digital Agenda with EU support. Digital connectivity and bridging the digital gap are two of the main objectives of the Agenda Digital.

To achieve the success of this agenda, one of the main challenges is the deployment of digital infrastructure that allows bringing the benefits of the digital agenda to unconnected areas. The other one is reducing the digital skills and competencies gap.

The **Ministry of Finance**, aware of the institutional, process and capacity weaknesses of the institution, has implemented its **Institutional Strategic Plan (PEI)** 2015-2019 and prepared a new plan for **2019-2024**. This Plan has allowed closing some gaps identified in the current planning system regarding best practices; improve the integration of the strategy with the operation; work on institutional capacity to execute strategic projects; optimize performance of the critical processes for the execution of the strategy and leadership; and strengthen monitoring and evaluation of PEI goals.

The new PEI 2019-2024 was formulated with the support of the TA of the European Union. The institutional strategy is based on the Fiscal Policy Guidelines for 2019-2024, aiming at the promotion of greater economic growth and social development; it focuses on 5 strategic pillars: 1) Income; 2) Expenditure; 3) Public Investment; 4) Debt Management; 5) Modernization and Institutional Innovation. Satisfactory progress was achieved on tax and customs administrations, but on the expenditure side, there has been limited progress. The IMF also emphasizes "the fight against corruption continues to be a top priority".

The public finances' components of this action aims to promote a transparent accountable and sound public financial management system for better public policies and a green and inclusive economic recovery in El Salvador. The objectives are strengthening strategic planning, human capital, expenditure effectiveness, transparency and finance statistics. It will contribute to the achievement of SDG 16: It will strengthen effective, accountable and more transparent institutions (Ministry of Finance and Court of Auditors), also contributing to a more responsive, inclusive and participatory decision-making.

The Education and Research Center for Agriculture and Livestock is one of the components of the "**Master Plan for Agricultural Rescue**", a political priority for the Government. It will provide support to private sector, and aims to become a regional benchmark for top-level academic training and technological developments, training new entrepreneurs with an agro-industrial vision. We envisage our support as a means to influence the centre's vision, enhancing its gender, climate action and digitalisation components.

Finally, the women's economic empowerment component remains a standalone project albeit providing a specific support to the implementation of the new **Plan Social**. It tackles one of the most pressing social issues in El Salvador, which is the lack of economic opportunities for women. Implementation through a member state agency is the most feasible course of action to attain its objectives.

At the national level, the action is aligned with the main instruments designed to achieve gender equality: The Law for Equality, Equity and the Eradication of Discrimination against Women (LIE); Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (LEIV); National Policy for Women and its National Equality Plan 2016-2020; Cuscatlán Plan, and more specifically with the Women Plan, Youth Plan and Economy Plan. Similarly, the project aims to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in El Salvador, specifically to the achievement of SDG 5: Gender Equality. We are envisaging the reinforcing of this component with a dedicated TA to the Government in support of the gender component of the new Social Plan, as a way to remain engaged in the transition from our BS programme to a new approach to be decided based on the country's developments in the short term.

The projected technical assistance (TA) aims to support the implementation of the country's social policy by supporting the new five-year "*Social Development Plan Social 2019-2025*" which has been recently adopted. It was developed in