



Technical Assistance for
Civil Society Organisations



This project is funded
by the European Union

Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations in the IPA Countries TACSO

EuropeAid/127427/C/SER/Multi/5

ALBANIA

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Tirana
29 January 2010

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INTRODUCTION

This study is one of eight country assessments of civil society capacities conducted as a preliminary activity within the EC-funded project Technical Assistance to Civil Society (TACSO) in IPA Countries (EuropeAid/127427/C/SER/Multi/5), implemented by SIPU International, during the period August 2009 – July 2011. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of civil society in Albania and the environment that it works in, including its strengths and weaknesses, and its impacts to date and the challenges it faces to its further development. The study is based upon a combination of desk research embracing all relevant documentation, including legal and financial legislation applicable to civil society, previous civil society mappings and evaluations, situation analyses, policy documents and country-specific academic literature, and a consultative stakeholder analysis carried out by means of focus groups, interviews and questionnaire surveys with civil society organisations (CSOs), government actors, donor organisations and other institutional players. The study is an integral part of the project inception and it provides the premise for the majority of other project activities by serving as the basis of the development of regional as well as national work plans to be implemented during the project's duration.

In line with the project's Terms of Reference and SIPU's technical proposal, the study understands civil society in the following two complementary ways:

1. All organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens. This definition clearly emphasises the associational character of civil society, while also accentuating its representational role. Civil society would include a variety of organisational types, including, NGOs, mass movements, cooperatives, professional associations, cultural and religious groups, trades unions and grassroots community groups (CBOs), etc.
2. A space for views, policies and action supportive of alternatives to those promoted by government and the private sector. This definition places the emphasis on social inclusion, social and political pluralism and the rights of expression in developing a participatory democracy.

The paper is composed of four sections:

- Section one provides an analysis of the civil society environment, including the legal framework governing CSOs and their work, the current donor opportunities and other sources of civil society funding, the government mechanisms for cooperation with and support of civil society and the policy framework determining government-civil society relations and public perceptions and support for civil society and its activities.
- Section two gives an overview of the main features of civil society: the types of organisation represented and their key organisational characteristics, the types of activity they carry out and their main sectoral interests, their geographical distribution and way they are structured within an overall civil society architecture. CSOs are assessed according to their technical, organisational and institutional capacities, including human resources and technical skills, strategic strengths, analytical capabilities, external relations with other actors including other CSOs, government and the community, and material and financial stability and resilience.
- Section three summarises the main achievements of civil society to date, noting key milestone achievements and broader social impacts, and also identifies shortfalls in civil society performance in need of strengthening and further development.
- Section four sums up the most important institutional and organisational capacity needs of civil society in the country and identifies key strategic issues for the implementation of the project. By

way of conclusion, recommendations are made for both the project's regional work plan and country-specific work plan.

1. THE CIVIL SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Legal framework – an analysis of relevant law and financial regulations

On paper, the legal framework governing civil society organisations (CSOs) and their operations is favourable and in line with accepted international standards and regional practice. However, there is a lack of clear regulations associated with the key CSO law and its implementation which means that many procedures remain opaque. In particular, financial reporting and taxation are areas of uncertainty. There is a need to clarify the tax framework, under which the distinction between CSOs and profit-making businesses is insufficiently distinct, and also to provide additional tax benefits to the CSOs to benefit their longer-term sustainability.

Law on Not-for profit Organisations

CSOs currently operate under the Law on Non-profit Organisations (no. 8788), which was drawn up by the Government in close cooperation with CSO leaders over an extended four-year period of consultations. CSOs are defined as not-for-profit membership-based **associations**, **foundations** for the management of financial capital and property, and **centres**, in effect or building-based associations. Albania is unusual in not requiring a minimum endowment for the registration of foundations, considerably easing their establishment.

Registration and regulation of trades unions, political parties and other forms of non-profit organisation lie outside this Law, and strictly speaking are not considered as CSOs are not part of this law, for their activity, functioning and organisation is regulated through another law.

Key features of the Law on Non-profit Organisations, applying to all three CSO forms include:

- All natural and legal persons, including foreigners, may establish an CSO;
- Recognition of the right of individuals to establish informal, unregistered associations;
- Establishment of a procedure for international and foreign organisations to obtain legal entity status in Albania;
- Provision of broad discretion to CSO founding members to structure the internal governance of organisations
- Provision of appropriate governance rules and measures to avoid conflicts of interest, to carry out conflict resolution and to ensure organisational self-determination;
- Permitting CSOs to engage in economic activities, including charging for services and products;
- Explicit recognition of the right of CSOs to receive grants and donations from any private or public person, Albanian or foreign;
- Establishment of a framework for the public financing of CSOs, opening the door to the contracting of CSO services by government.

- Limiting state power to close a CSO or otherwise interfere with its normal operations.

The procedures for registration of CSOs are considered clear and simple, but the requirement to register centrally at the District Court of Tirana has proved a barrier for many smaller grassroots organisations from outside Tirana.

Economic activities and profits tax

Grants and membership dues are exempt from taxation.

CSOs are allowed to engage in economic activities in order to achieve “the purpose and object of their activities,” as well as to manage and maintain their property, as long as economic activities are not CSOs’ primary purpose. As the tax laws have not been amended in accordance with the Law on Not-for-profit Organisations, the financial regulations do not distinguish between CSOs and commercial enterprises. Consequently, CSOs are liable to profits tax on all income from economic activities on the same basis as other legal entities.

CSOs and any other legal entities which carry out public benefit activities; that is, “religious, humanitarian, charitable, scientific and educational activities,” are exempt from tax, provided that the property or profits are not used for the benefit of founders or members.

CSOs are also explicitly permitted under the Law on Not-for-profit Organisations to raise income from their assets by means of investments, and the renting and sale of property. Income from these activities is also subject to standard tax.

Over the years there has been considerable confusion surrounding the implementation of the above tax regulations. Tax-exempt CSOs are required to possess a tax code and report to the tax authorities in the same way as profitable businesses and non-exempt organisations.

Deductibility of Charitable Contributions

Businesses which pay standard profits tax may claim back tax on donations (classed as a business “sponsorship”) to CSOs of up to 4% of taxable income. For individual “traders” who pay small business taxes, tax may be deducted on donations of up to 1% of taxable income. This incentive remains, to all intents and purposes, notional as businesses have only made use of it on very rare occasions. Not only is the law not widely known and understood among the business community, but also corporate philanthropy remains in its earliest stages of development in Albania (see below section 1.2).

Albania is one of the few countries in the region which provides no tax incentives for individuals to give charitably.

Value Added Tax

CSOs are not required to register for VAT and thus they are exempt from charging VAT on their services. Otherwise they are liable to pay VAT at the full 20% rate on all services and products they themselves buy.

In 2008, the Government introduced arbitrary changes to the tax law, without consultation with civil society, which were in direct contradiction of the measures set out in the Law on Not-for-profit Organisations. These required CSOs to pay 20% VAT on all donations received and service contracts, thus undermining significantly the sector’s ability to carry out activities in a

sustainable and cost-effective way. CSOs launched a vigorous campaign to have the amendment revoked, to which the Prime Minister responded in early 2009 by forming a working group, consisting of representatives from both the Ministry of Finance and civil society, to review the whole issue of the issue of taxation of NGO grants and earned income. In addition to the specific issue of VAT, civil society advocated strongly to full harmonisation of all tax regulations with the provisions of the Law on Not-for-profit Organisations and a separation of CSOs' not-for-profit economic activities from normal commercial activities, in order to clarify both tax and reporting obligations.

While the Ministry of Finance has so far not responded to the majority of civil society proposals, the principle of grants and donations free of VAT has been re-instated.

1.2 Donors and funding opportunities

In general, the current funding opportunities for civil society in Albania are insufficient to meet its financial needs (USAID 2009). CSOs in Albania remain largely dependent on international donor assistance. However, in recent years, in common with most countries in the region, bilateral donors have reduced their support to the country, including civil society, and some have even left altogether. Denmark, previously an important supporter of civil society strengthening and the media, ceased support to CSOs in 2008 with the ending, after 8 years, of its regional Neighbourhood Programme. The Netherlands, while still providing small grants to CSOs, have reduced their engagement and are restructuring and slimming down their MATRA programme. A number of major programmes supporting CSO activities, such the World Bank's Social Service Delivery Project have ended, while other donors, such as USAID are delivering support for areas of concern to civil society, such as the promotion of democracy, strengthening governance and the fight against democracy, directly to the Albanian government and public institutions.

The EC, with responsibility for supporting Albania's progress towards European integration by means of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), is now the single most important foreign donor to civil society. Although the current Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD), 2009-2011 maintains that support to civil society remains a priority area of EC intervention in Albania, particularly for strengthening the sector and improving its capacity for engaging the Government in policy dialogue, there is the perception in Albania that civil society's importance to the EU has diminished and that EC funding of CSOs is insufficient. The MIDP predicts a total of 4 million EUR to civil society in this period under IPA I (institutional building), or around 2% of the total, with further support available from IPA II for Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC), but current opportunities under IPA do not match this commitment.

EU IPA and other funds

In the period 2009-2011, 1.5 million EUR of IPA support is earmarked for CSOs dealing with the fights dealing with the fight against corruption, organised crime and human trafficking, along with environmental protection and education, as well as poverty alleviation. In addition a further 1.2 million EUR is slated under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) for actions aimed at the children, women and minority rights, people with disabilities

and mental illnesses and access to justice. Current project and opportunities include:

1. **CARDS 2005 – Support for CSOs’ Capacity Building and their Greater Involvement in European Policy Debate.** Grants of 50,000 – 90,000 EUR, to a total of 300,000 EUR, for actions of 12-18 months to strengthen the capacity of CSOs for:
 - a. Advocacy and PR to enhance public decision making
 - b. Networking and the development of partnerships with the Government and private sector for dialogue and cooperation.

This CARDS 2005 programme is due to end in 2010.

2. **CARDS 2006 – Support to Albanian CSOs’ Engagement with Environmental Protection and Environmental Education.** Grants of 50,000 – 100,000 to a total of 600,000 for actions between 12 and 18 months. Actions cover awareness-raising through information dissemination and education, actions to counter environmental degradation, and organisational strengthening of environmental CSOs. Programme to end during 2010.
3. **EIDHR – 2008. Strengthening the Role of Civil Society in Promoting Human Rights and Democratic Reform in Albania.** 75,000 – 100,000 to a total of 600,000, projects to be completed in early 2010
4. **Cross-Border Cooperation.** – Small grants of 20,000 – 50,000 to CSOs and municipalities for a range of socio-economic two-country partnership projects, with all EU and potential EU member countries. 2009 calls for proposals: Albania - FYR of Macedonia (IPA II 2007), with 340,000 EUR allocated to Albanian partners, 680,000 to Macedonian partners; Albania - Montenegro (IPA II 2007), with 767,000 EUR allocated to Albanian partners, 540,000 to Montenegrin partners. A total of 31.5 million EUR is earmarked for all IPA II cross-border cooperation projects in Albania for the year 2009-2011, much of which will be allocated to grants schemes for which CSOs may compete.
5. **Other EU-funded programs** – CSOs may also apply to EU Community Programmes which Albania participates in including, the 7th Research Framework Programme, the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Framework Programme and the Europe for Citizens programme

Other International Donors

Netherlands Embassy - is reducing its commitment to civil society in Albania.

1. **Civil society fund**, for support to small-scale initiatives costing up to 25,000 EUR and last 12 months or less. Particular areas of emphasis include gender and good governance.
2. **Matra** support direct from the Netherlands. “Matchmaking” funds for Dutch-Albanian NGO partnerships for activities to strengthen pre-accession and good governance. The whole Matra programme is currently being reviewed so continuation of this and Matra KAP below is uncertain.
3. **Matra – KAP** – small grants for development cooperation.

CIDA (Canadian Agency for International Development) – provides Canadian \$50,000 (33,000 EUR) a year through its Canada Fund for projects delivered by Albanian CSOs, managed by its embassy in Italy.

UK embassy - in Tirana has a small Devolved Fund to which CSOs may apply for typically one-off activities under the value of £5000 (5,700 EUR).

SIDA (Swedish Agency for International Development) – provides institutional support to Albanian NGOs which work towards influencing decision making, to improve equality, so that women can have greater influence in politics and to ensure that environmental issues receive attention. This support is provided through Swedish NGOs who in the main work with long-standing Albanian partner CSOs; for example, Kvinna Hill Kvinna which works with 7 Albanian women's CSOs.

Government Funding

Central government provides funding to CSOs by contracting for service delivery and dispensing project grants through its line ministries. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities contracts CSOs to run a number of its services such as, care centres, training and education centres and vocational training. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports provides a total of approximately 740,000 EUR for CSO projects in the fields of culture, arts, sports, cultural heritage and youth. Other ministries, including the Ministry of Integration, Ministry of Education develop financing agreements with CSOs on a less systematic, case-by-case basis for service delivery.

In 2009, as an outcome of a two year, GTZ-funded project to strengthen government support for and cooperation with civil society (see also below section 1.2), the Government established a Civil Society Fund, financed directly from the state budget, for financing social services provided by CSOs. The Fund's annual budget will amount to 150 million Lekë (approx. 1 million Euro), with guarantees that its total will not be eroded in successive years. The Fund is currently still carrying out the process of drafting regulations for establishing the criteria under which CSOs will apply for and be awarded contracts and implement and monitor services.

The USAID NGO Sustainability Index 2008 (USAID 2009) reports that local governments are beginning to increase support to CSOs which provide services in the community, although, overall, local government funding is limited in scope and size.

Albanian foundations

Open Society Foundation Albania (OSFA) – Part of the worldwide network of foundations established by the financial entrepreneur George Soros, OSFA has operated as an independent Albanian organisation since 1992. In that time it has been one of the most important investors in capacity building of CSOs. However, in recent years it has scaled down its activity in this area considerably. Currently, its core budget is approximately US\$ 1,700,000 (2010 core budget). OSFA provides small and grants of between from US\$2,000 (approx.1,400 EUR) and US\$ 40,000 (approx. 28,500 EUR), and also implements several operational projects by itself. Its strategy consist of three priority areas: Good Governance and European Integration, Human Rights and Rule of Law, and Social Inclusion, through monitoring and watch dog projects, advocacy & lobbying, accountability and capacity building. Funds allocated by the Foundation in 2010 for

the strengthening of civil society through capacity building and support for CSO networking amounts to approximately US\$150,000 (approx. 107,000 EUR).

Community support and business contributions

Despite good economic growth in Albania over the last decade and reasonable incentives for corporate philanthropy, funding of CSOs by private businesses is extremely limited, if not negligible. Generally, this support comes in the form of small funds for one-off activities without any sense of strategic or social purpose, in the main because the business community does not yet understand the role of civil society. Only 5 out of the 31 CSOs consulted for this study reported ever having received support from the business sector.

At the end of 2007, the Vodafone Company in Albania established the first, and so far only, commercially funded foundation for providing assistance to civil society initiatives, the Foundation Vodafone Albania. This intends to make a positive contribution to local communities by making direct grants to locally registered CSOs (and international NGOs) to support projects which will make a social impact, specifically in the fields of education, health, social welfare and environment. Target groups are people in need, especially children with special needs, as well as other vulnerable groups.

Individual giving to CSOs is similarly restricted and insignificant as a form of project or organisational support. There are no tax incentives to individual giving and Albania has no tradition or culture of this kind of philanthropy.

1.3 Government mechanisms for civil society – government cooperation and the policy framework determining government – civil society relations

Although to date, neither the Government nor civil society have developed a strategy for developing cooperation between the two sectors or strengthening civil society and improving the environment in which it works, the Government is nearing the end of a process for establishing a set of formal mechanisms for mediating its relations with civil society. Over the last two years, under the auspices of the GTZ-funded project “Strengthening civil society and empowerment of local democratic structures,” the Government has taken a number of important and increasing steps towards setting up an administrative system or architecture for providing systematic and strategic support to CSOs, for the establishment of regularised cooperation with civil society and for the institution of standardised ethical practices across government for its dealings with CSOs.

Civil Society Charter

On the basis of a series of study trips to various EU members states by government representatives,¹ followed by a series of round tables attended by government and civil society representatives, a jointly conceived draft of a Civil Society Charter has been drawn up which is intended to regulate the CSO-government relations. The Charter remains work in progress, as there is still an issue among participants whether it should be limited in scope to defining the

¹ The participating government departments were Office of the Prime Minister, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry for European Integration and the Ministry of the Interior,

key principles and ethical standards for the relationship, or whether it should go further in establishing firmer obligations on both parties with supporting mechanisms for monitoring their implementation.

Agency for Supporting Civil Society

On March 9 2009, the Albanian Parliament adopted the Law on the Organisation and Functioning of the Agency for Supporting Civil Society (Law No. 10093). The law was signed by the President and was published in the Official Journal of Albania on April 2, 2009. The Agency will broadly support activities aiming to encourage the sustainable development of civil society and the creation of favorable conditions for civic initiatives, including better coordination with central government. The principal structure with the Agency will be the the Civil Society Fund described above in section 1.2. In addition to supported organisations, part of its funds will go to individuals for research, participation in international events, and trainings and scholarships related to civil society.

The Agency will be constituted as an independent body at “arms length” from government, and its board will include a majority of five civil society representatives, with a further four civil servants from the central public administration. Board members will serve four-year terms, with the possibility of being re-elected only once. Since the Law came into force in early 2009, the Council of Ministers has prepared the procedures for the nomination of board members, as well as established the full regulatory and implementing framework necessary to make the Agency functional. However it has not yet appointed the first supervisory board, so that the Agency still has a little way to go before becoming operational.

1.4 Government (local and national) institutional capacities for engaging civil society

Relations between the Government and CSOs are generally poor and their development continues to be beset by misunderstandings and institutional snags. While relations between the two sectors have tended towards increasing cooperation over the last decade, the imposition by government of VAT on CSO income (see above section 1.1) has soured relations to a certain extent. In many quarters of public administration CSOs continue to be viewed with suspicion; civil society is often considered as a political opponent of the Government and also as a potential obstacle to the ongoing reform process. There is also the perception that CSOs exist to serve the interests of private individuals or selective fractions of society rather than the public at large. A survey of CSO conducted in 2008 concluded that CSOs do not believe that government considers civil society a serious or important influence on its efforts to increase transparency and accountability (EPD 2009)

Very few government ministries and departments have established mechanisms for engaging with civil society and their administrative capacity to do so is inadequate. Where mechanisms designed to enhance CSO participation in policy decisions do exist, they remain weak. Cooperation between government and CSOs is usually conducted in a haphazard and ad hoc process, usually owing more to solicitation from interested CSOs than a desire from the public administration to undertake systematic and open consultation with the public. Consequently,

CSO participation in the policy-making process is low and has little impact. However, it should also be noted that recent times have seen a substantial decrease of CSO-led advocacy activities, largely owing to the difficulties CSOs face with securing adequate financial resources as foreign donors scale down their support to Albania, which has reduced the civil society's ability to influence government policy. A further factor in a general weakening of civil society's effectiveness in the policy arena is the open affiliation of many think tank leaders to political parties, which has clearly compromised their ability to enhance public representation and participation in the policy-making process.²

Examples of successful government-civil cooperation society include:

- Inclusion of civil society in consultations for the preparation during 2000 of the National Strategy for Social and Economic Development (NSSD), or PRSP. Central and local government, civil society (including non-governmental organisations, private business, and other citizen groups) and donors were all engaged in this broad process. For the first time the civil society was able to articulate sector based priority actions in the field of education, health, agriculture and social protection.
- Drafting of the Law on Measures Against Violence in Family Relations (adopted June 2007). This measure was based upon a draft law presented by women's NGOs to Parliament in 2006, with the backing of a public petition signed by 20,000 people. Apart from defining domestic violence as a crime punishable by law, the Law also established coordination of government authorities for fighting domestic violence, led by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- CSO involvement in strategy and policy development by the government Committee for Gender Equality, such as the preparation by the Municipality of Tirana of a plan for protection against domestic violence.
- The Law On Legal Aid (December 2008), which establishes provision for a structured system of legal aid and access to justice for people in need, was the work of a project organised by the Tirana-based NGO the Free Legal Service Tirana, in co-operation with government and civil society partners.³
- The Law on Anti-discrimination was prepared in consultation with civil society, but has yet to be adopted by Parliament.

² While institutional arrangements for government-civil society cooperation of all kinds have never been developed satisfactorily, in retrospect it can be seen that during the early 2000s in Albania, relations between the two sectors were broadly collaborative and civil society enjoyed increasing influence. Broadly speaking, the government established a supportive environment for CSOs involved in service delivery and contracted CSOs directly with increasing frequency; government consulted regularly with CSOs, particularly specialist think tanks, when drafting policy; and owing to sustained pressure from CSO advocacy networks, the Government was often prompted into revising or enacting new legislation in key areas of social policy needed reform, such as the fight against corruption. Since 2005, a general weakening of civil society solidarity and effectiveness and a rise in government circles of old suspicions and antagonisms towards CSOs, has undermined these earlier developments towards government-civil society cooperation: government, particularly at the local level, has reduced the number of services it contracts CSOs to carry out directly, CSO engagement in the legislative and policy-making process has subsided and government has made moves to amend financial legislation to the detriment of CSO sustainability.

³ Partners included, the Women Advocacy Center, the Albanian Helsinki Committee, Office of Citizen Protection, National Advocacy Center, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor, the High Council of Justice, General Prosecutor's Office

- The Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) has been instrumental in helping the government draft a strategy for addressing disability issues and monitoring its progress (USAID 2007).
- A Consumer Protection Commission (CPC), a decision-making body, was established in April 2009 and has started to address the first disputes between consumers and service providers. The CPC's five members include representatives of the Government and of civil society.
- Drafting of a variety of national strategies including the Strategy on Gender Equality and Violence, the Strategy Against Trafficking of Human Beings, the National Strategy for People With Disability and the Strategy for Children's Rights and Their Protection.

While legislation provides for participation of citizens in decision-making at the local level, this has not been effectively realized because of (a) the absence of detailed rules at the local level facilitating participation; (b) citizens' lack of awareness of their rights and the responsibilities of local governments; and (c) apathy for civic engagement in governance.

1.5 Public perceptions and support of civil society and its various segments

The public profile of CSOs is low (USAID 2009); there is only limited public awareness of CSO activities, and an incomplete understanding of civil society's role in representing public interests and advancing good governance. Civil society is probably best known for its involvement in anti-corruption activities and election monitoring, but according to the 2008 Corruption in Albania Survey, civil society (although in second place behind the Media) scored under 50 out of 100 on public perceptions of its effectiveness in combating corruption. This means that the public does not see civil society as helping to fight corruption. CSO leaders scored higher than the average on public perceptions of honesty in public life, but once again, the score was below 50 (IDRA 2008).

Many members of the general public have the impression that CSOs exist only to benefit the interests of their leaders and staff and that they do not represent grassroots opinion of the interests of target groups or the general public. CSOs are often poorly connected with the communities in which they work and, accordingly, often have weak memberships and are poorly supported by their constituencies.

The lack of a tradition of voluntary associational behaviour in Albania, whether for social, political, religious or other purposes, militates against stronger and more enthusiastic public participation in CSO activities. There is also no tradition of voluntarism, which is a further obstacle to public involvement and support for civil society.

2. CSO ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITIES

2.1 Overview of the civil society community in Albania

Structure of civil society

Albania's CSO sector is small and relatively undeveloped. Officially there are 2,231 registered associations, 311 foundations, and 552 centres. However, recent civil society assessments estimate the total number of active CSOs to number between 400 and 450 (USAID 2009 & HDPC 2009).

Prior to the collapse of the communist regime in 1990 there were no CSOs operating in Albania and consequently the sector is young and emergent. Consultations carried out for this study, with an admittedly limited sample of 31 organisations, suggest that a majority of Albanian CSOs are less than 10 years old, with only 35% dating back to the 1990s.⁴ Civil society in its initial formative years attracted considerable institutional and project funding from international donors, including, in very many cases, longer-term support from non-operational international NGOs which pursued their missions by means of supportive partnerships with their young Albanian partners. A great many of the country's largest, most organisationally well-developed and sustainable CSOs are those that benefited from this support during this earlier age of donor enthusiasm for civil society in Albania.

Unsurprisingly, there is a marked concentration of CSOs of all types in the capital Tirana, and to a lesser extent in the main northern town of Shkodra, and there are considerably higher numbers of organisations in the central region (which includes Tirana and major towns such as Durrës and Elbasan), than in the northern or southern areas. Civil society is weakly represented in all rural areas.

Almost all of the larger, fully professional CSOs, which include a high proportion of the country's rights-based advocacy and research organisations (such as those promoting human rights, the protection and rights of children, democracy and good governance, as well as policy think tanks) as well as those dealing in economic development, are based in Tirana. However, there is a clear capacity gap between urban and rural CSOs of all sorts, with those in Tirana, in particular, being assessed as having greater organisational strength and individual human capacities than CSOs elsewhere (HDPC 2009 & Partners-Albania 2005).

Although associations (as opposed to foundations and centres) are membership-based, self-help organisations or those which exist solely for providing services to members are few in number. Thus, organisations tend to provide benefits for wider target groups in the community and the membership base of CSOs is often relatively small. This also reflects a generally poor level of constituency development by CSOs and low levels of community support. Numbers of active, informal community-based groups are negligible.

Some of the most active and influential organisations at the community level, those working to provide rights-based education and mobilise citizens to participate in the decision-making process, are the professional Tirana-based elite, many of which have regional and local offices

⁴ 11 CSOs or 35% are over 10 years old, 14 (46%) between 6 and 10, 5 (15%) between 3 and 5 years and only one (4%) under two years old.

and centres. A number of these, such as Co-PLAN and the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) carry out this work as part of a wider mandate to promote local economic development and local government reform and improved governance.

Very few CSOs are fully professional, both in terms of execution of the activities they carry out and in their ability to retain permanent, salaried staff. The tendency to part-time or voluntary working practices impacts negatively on CSOs' level of engagement and activism and even many relatively well-organised outfits are not continuously active.

Typically, Albanian CSOs, particularly if situated outside Tirana, are small organisations with three or less staff members receiving remuneration for their services, light on professional skills and experience and financially insecure. Dependence on scarce project funding from international donors determines that very many CSOs adopt broad missions as a hedge and consequently they lack specialist knowledge of any particular area of activity.

Resources for supporting CSO development and providing organisational capacity support and training in the country are insufficient to meet demand. There is a slim structure of six Civil Society Development Centres in provincial towns, originally established by the OSCE in 2001, which provide limited support in their localities, but specialist assistance rests on a handful of highly sophisticated capacity-building specialists, such as Partners-Albania and ANTTARC.

The sector as a whole is poorly integrated and represented. There is no sector-wide forum or network dedicated to the coordination of CSO efforts, and the establishment strategy and the development of civil society as a whole, and no single organisation is accepted by CSOs as a leader or representative.

Field of operation / activities

The last ten years in Albania have seen a gradual increase in the number of advocacy activities carried out by CSOs of all sorts, as well as a growing interest in engaging the Government and local authorities in policy dialogue. This includes notable examples of well-organised election monitoring, campaigning against corruption, human rights monitoring and government watchdogs. While this is to be expected considering the large number of CSOs which are active in areas of human rights, gender and women's issues, youth, minority rights and the promotion of democracy and mobilisation of citizens and communities, there is a sense that many CSOs have embraced advocacy as it became the funding priority for international donors in recent times, and CSO capacities to operate effectively in this area, particularly for CSOs outside Tirana, are insufficiently developed. Regardless of this trend, Albanian civil society in essence continues to be most active, and probably most effective, in providing social services to the community, either as a part of the governmental system of social provision, or as means of delivering supplemental or alternative services in areas such as health, education, and legal advice.

The fields of activity and target groups covered by CSOs are not extensive in their number, and tend to focus on issues of rights and empowerment of minority and discriminated groups, issues surrounding good governance and service provision, all of which reflect the continuing basic concerns in society surrounding fundamental human rights, the need to improve democratic culture and to address poverty and poor living standards. Specialisation among

CSOs is low, and organisations, even those with the barest organisational structures and resources at their disposal, will claim to focus on multiple target groups or fields of activity.⁵ During the consultations for this report, CSOs admitted that implementing activities addressed to multiple target groups (such as, women, youth, vulnerable groups, etc.) is an instrumental tactic to broaden their funding base by appealing to as wide a range of donor interests and opportunities as possible. Some CSOs have even changed their profile, which has resulted in the implementation of fund-driven rather than cause-driven types of activities.

2.2 Human resources and technical skills

Financial constraints determine that most CSOs in Albania face serious challenges in engaging permanent professional staff. In most cases, CSOs retain between one and three professional personnel, who are employed on short-term project contracts, or on an annual basis.⁶ Consequently, staff structures are small, but invariably unstable. This is particularly so for CSOs located outside of Tirana. Paid staff members are supported by part-time or occasional assistants, very often working on a voluntary basis. Of the 31 organisations consulted for this study, eight said that they hired a limited number of part-time professional staff (from 2-4 people), while almost all of them (30 in number) indicated that their activities were supported by volunteers. Over half of them engage more than ten volunteers, while eight make use of between one and five volunteers, and the remaining six CSOs mobilise between five and ten at any one time. It is doubtful though whether very many CSOs have the human and financial resources necessary to both strengthen the capacities of their volunteers and also to manage them effectively (Partners-Albania 2005).

Previous civil society assessments indicate that a high number of CSOs in Albania (89%) have established formal policies and procedures for human resource management, including detailed job descriptions for board members (UNDP 2006). Despite this, most CSOs lack solid management and also leadership structures, in many cases purely owing to small organisational size and over-dependence on a single manager or the president / chair of the board of directors.

Although these key figures in the organisation are often well qualified and highly motivated individuals, they cannot compensate for the general shortfalls in management and administration skills experienced by many CSOs and the overall paucity of organisational capacity.

CSOs have been the subject of many foreign-funded capacity building programmes over the last ten years. The vast majority of CSOs have received basic technical trainings in areas such as PCM and financial management. Very many of them have also undertaken courses in areas such as advocacy, lobbying and policy dialogue. This study found that, in general, CSOs in the northern and eastern parts of the country had received considerably less training and capacity support than those in the central and southern regions.

⁵ See Annex 3 for self-classification according to field of activity by Albanian CSOs in earlier civil society assessments.

⁶ A survey of CSOs carried out by Partners-Albania in 2005, with a sample of 131 CSOs, noted that the average staff size was four (with overall staff size ranging from 0 – 92 members), but that 40% of the CSOs responding did not employ any professional staff.

Regardless of this, CSOs continue to demand assistance and training in a range of often quite basic skills and capacities. In the course of conducting this needs assessment CSOs listed their capacity-building priorities in the following order:

- Project Cycle Management
- Project Management,
- Advocacy and Lobbying
- Human Resources Management
- Public-Private Partnerships for improved local governance

An earlier study by Partners-Albania (2005) dedicated to advocacy had also concluded that CSOs rarely possess the skills necessary to carry out effective advocacy, and also that most of them are further constrained by shortfalls in financial and organisational capacities, including low human resources (staff numbers).

One reason identified for the apparently disappointing outcomes of CSO capacity building is that it has concentrated overly on the technical training of individuals, often with little or no follow-up and consolidation, to the detriment of more process-oriented means with teams and whole organisations which focus on the production of concrete outputs and provide opportunities for learning by doing.

Consultations for this study confirm the broad thrust of the above conclusions, but participants identified a further set of often fundamental capacity-building challenges commonly experienced by CSOs in Albania:

- Lack of long-term strategic vision and plan of action;
- Poor leadership skills – especially the concentration of decision-making and executive powers in the hands of a small number of people, excluding managers and staff;
- Poorly developed culture of cooperation with other stakeholders: low number of project partnerships, weak networking, poorly linked to grassroots and lack of constituency, CSOs working in isolation;
- Low absorption capacity for (EU) funding – finding matching funds, low human capacities, project management skills. Difficulties with understanding and carrying out the EC application procedures for grant funding.

2.3 Strategic strengths of CSOs in Albania

Strategic thinking in the Albanian civic sector remains poorly developed. Although over two thirds of CSOs consulted for this study (24 out of 31) reported that they have strategic plans in place, it is much more usual for CSOs to be lacking in long-term strategic direction. HDPC (2009) found that 62% of respondents to its CSO mapping confirmed that they possess no strategic documents whatsoever. Short-termism in the sector generally, financial weakness and lack of consistency in donor policy are key reasons for low levels of objective-oriented long-term planning and management, as well as the regular occurrence of “mission creep” among Albanian

CSOs; that is the practice of straying from or even abandoning one's mission, vision and organisational strengths in favour of chasing any or all funding opportunities.

Very often strategic plans are conducted in a cursory manner to satisfy donor requirements, and the consultation and analytical process necessary to their effective development is found wanting. Many of those that this study consulted conceded that their plans had been developed by external consultants (usually Partners-Albania) and that, furthermore, these plans remained only on paper and were not used as instruments for guiding the organisation's programming and development.

Lack of effective division between CSO boards and management structures (or individuals) and also the tendency for boards to simply provide formal oversight of the organisation (providing a "rubber stamp" to executive decisions), are common indications of low levels of strategic leadership within CSOs.

2.4 Analytical capacities

At the central level, in theory, there is a relatively large number of CSOs with the analytical capacities necessary for effective advocacy and policy dialogue. Albania is well-furnished with well-established professional social and economic think tanks,⁷ as well as a number of prominent and sophisticated CSO promoters of human rights and participatory democracy.⁸ Unusually for the region, a considerable number of these think tanks (for example IDM, or IDRA) are well connected to wider civil society and contribute to greater public participation in policy making. Four of them (AIIS, ICS, IPLS and The European Centre) were members of NOSA, a small civil society coalition supported by OSFA (from 2006-2008), which was dedicated to promoting civil society and its role in policy dialogue, advancing social strategies and supporting civic activism towards the implementation of these visions and policies. Unfortunately, the network ceased to exist when funding from OSFA came to an end.

Within wider civil society, analytical capacities are generally poorly developed, despite the relatively high level of advocacy activities. Few organisations undertake the most basic social research to ascertain constituency need or to assist in project identification. Documentary or internet-based research is seldom carried out for programming purposes or setting strategy, although it should be noted that geographical isolation and lower-than-normal access to the internet (in the region) for many CSOs in rural areas, makes this kind of research problematic.

⁷ The greater majority of think tanks were founded before 2001. Among the more prominent are: ACER (Albanian Centre for Economic Research) IPLS (Institute for Policy and Legal Studies), HDPC (Human Development Promotion Centre), ACIT (Albanian Centre for International Trade), IDM (Institute for Democracy and Mediation), the European Centre, NACSS (Albanian National Centre for Social Studies), PPF (Public Private Finance Institute), Institute of Fiscal Education, and the Albanian Centre for Parliamentary Studies.

⁸ For example, Mjaft! ("Enough!" - a movement for campaigning on citizen's rights), Co-Plan (participatory democracy and decentralisation), CAO - Citizens' Advocacy Office (government transparency, anti-corruption, citizens' rights), Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania, and the Albanian Helsinki Committee.

2.5 Relationships with other actors –networking and partnerships

CSO – CSO relationships

When surveyed, CSOs in Albania show an understanding of the importance of intra- sector cooperation and networking among themselves, especially for greater sharing of information and expertise (UNDP 2006). However, while most CSOs participate in some form of informal network - usually at the local level, but also commonly at the national or international level -, the quality of CSO networking in Albania is poor in terms of the active participation of CSO members, the solidarity, cooperation and exchange networks provide and the benefits accrued to organisational strength and programme activities. Very few CSO networks are built around a set of concrete programme objectives, or based on formal partnership agreements which establish the network's mode of operation and the responsibilities of the member organisations. In most cases, networks are established in a more-or-less ad hoc manner, operate weakly and are donor driven. Cooperation in networks is often built on personal relationships and not on institutional needs.

In recent times, possibly as competition has risen between CSOs for dwindling foreign donor funds, CSO participation in networks has declined. In 2009, HDPC's CSO mapping found that 55% of the 80 CSOs responding to the survey declared that they did not belong to any formal network. 35% of the remainder which do participate in networks stated that they are members of both national and international networks, while a little over half are only members of networks at the local level.

In the past, a number of important CSO networks were active, but most have failed to establish a lasting presence. In 2001, USAID supported the formation of the Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC), embracing 40 CSOs. The ACAC, benefitting from strong donor support early on, particularly from the US, provided an important means of monitoring government performance in the fight against corruption, but appears to have become in the last two or three years.

Cooperation between CSOs appears to be strongest among business organisations, and environmental groups, as well as among networks formed to promote specific purposes by like-minded rights-based organisations, such as National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Network Against Trafficking, and the Children's Alliance.

CSO – state and government relationships

This area is described in detail in sections 1.3 and 1.4.

2.6 Material and financial stability and resilience

CSOs in Albania remain highly dependent on foreign funding, but reduced support from donors means that the resources available are insufficient to meet the needs of the whole sector. There is anecdotal evidence that sector is shrinking as a result of the increasing number of failures of CSOs of all types owing to their inability to access adequate finance.

Most CSOs report that they have insufficient funds to carry out activities, in particular advocacy and campaigning (HDPC 2009). A particular problem is that foreign donors mostly provide project funding to support activities and only in very rare cases do they support administrative and institutional needs (USAID 2007).

Generally, CSOs' capabilities to absorb donor funds are low. Many CSOs are too small and organisationally weak to manage larger grants, few CSOs have the institutional capacities to fulfil donor conditions for matching funds, and also to undertake required monitoring and reporting.

A limited number of larger CSOs are eligible for EC funding, but they report limited success here and often complain that the EC application procedure is overly complicated and extremely bureaucratic. This experience highlights the low quality of technical know-how of project development and proposal writing in the sector generally.

Very few CSOs have sound financial management systems or well developed fundraising skills which are deployed effectively to secure stable and secure financing arrangements. Few organisations have made serious efforts to diversify their funding base by developing alternative domestic sources of financial support. A large number of CSOs do not consider the business sector as a potentially viable source of funding and are poorly apprised of the tax incentives offered to businesses to enter into charitable "sponsorships" with CSOs. CSOs rarely charge fees for their services or engage in economic activities to support their non-profit activities. Poorly developed organisational memberships, particularly for grassroots organisations, are a further constraint, limiting the potential support from the community.

3. CIVIL SOCIETY MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS, IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES

3.1 Milestone achievements and impacts in the country

Favourable legal environment for CSOs

The current Law on Non-profit organisations (no. 8788), at the time of its adoption in 2001, gave Albania one of the most enabling environments for civil society in the region. Regardless of the unfavourable nature of related financial regulations, the Law continues to provide generally encouraging conditions for civil society. It was achieved through a multi-stakeholder working group including civil society and the Ministry of Labour, largely as a result of sustained advocacy on the part of CSOs dealing with gender, human rights, youth and small business (HDPC 2009).

Think tank policy capability

The proliferation in the late 1990s of skilled think tanks, well supported by foreign donors, has resulted in an impressive and continued resource for contributing to social and economic policy. In particular, Albanian think tanks have a role to play in furthering the government reform process and assisting the Government align policy, strategy and legal frameworks with the EU in order to advance European integration.

Effective election monitoring

All national and local elections since 2003 (including last year's national elections) have been comprehensively monitored by the concerted efforts of CSOs. In 2003 a coalition of 18 CSOs established the Forum of Domestic Observers which covered local elections across the whole country.

In 2005, CSOs, the Society for Democratic Culture, Albanian Institute for Election System Development, KRIIK, Mjaft, Women and Children Kombinati Center and Women for Global Action, as well as Partners-Albania, formed "The Coalition of Domestic Observers" to provide independent oversight of the 2005 parliamentary elections. Some 2,500-3000 short-term independent observers in polling stations and 540 count observers in the local commissions were mobilised.

The Coalition was revitalised for local and national elections in 2007 and 2009 respectively, with observers covering 100% of polling stations in 100% of urban areas and approximately 20% in rural areas. In addition, in 2009 USAID supported Mjaft, ECA (Elections to Conduct Agency) and KRIIK to carry out a Parallel Vote Count, which consisted of 450 trained monitors observing and verifying the counting process in 66 counting centres across the country.

3.2 Shortfalls in CSO performance

Advocacy and policy dialogue

Despite the relatively high number of rights-based CSOs operating in Albania, the presence of well developed think tanks and the declared interest of many CSOs in engaging government, there is an absence of *effective* civil society participation in advocacy and policy dialogue. CSOs are constrained by poor networking, inability to mobilise citizens' participation, low levels of analytical research and coordination with think tanks, the inability to plan programmatically over the long-term (rather than in the short-term project framework), and poor access to, as well as limited capabilities to form partnerships with government

Civil Society Coordination

There is no nationwide network of CSOs or an accepted CSO forum or organisation providing leadership and integration of civil society activities. Consequently civil society is fragmented and poorly coordinated. Civil society has not achieved a strategy setting out the direction for its long-term development; it lacks a clear vision both in terms of future action as well the public interests it represents.

Mobilising constituency support

Civil society remains poorly understood by a majority of the the general public and it has so far failed to communicate effectively its values and purpose. Public participation in CSO activities is low and membership-based organisations generally have low levels of community support and have done insufficient to build their constituencies. The importance of public support for achieving advocacy and policy goals is poorly appreciated within civil society.

Civil society is also insufficiently transparent and accountable. This is correlated to low the absence of a code of conduct and clear standards for CSO operations, as well as a reluctance to include memberships and constituents in the needs analysis and programming process. Improved performance here would assist CSOs to dispel the continuing public perception that civil society exists to further the individual interests of CSO leaders and staff.

Participation in European Integration

Apart from a number of newly formed think tanks which are very active in working on issues of European integration (Albanian European Movement 2009), Albanian CSOs are poorly apprised of the SAP and Albanian government's efforts to reform the country according to EU standards. Outside of Tirana, awareness of European integration is scant, while generally, but CSOs generally admit to a very low knowledge of the key EC policy documents relating to Albania, as well as Albanian government EU strategy (ECAS 2008). CSOs complain that they are not consulted during drafting of documents such as the Accession partnership, and Action plans, as well as for EC programming documents, such as the IPA MIPD or IPA multi- annual and annual action programmes. However, civil society itself has not requested inclusion in these processes and so far has shown a relative lack on interest in substantive participation in influencing Albania's path towards European integration (ECAS 2008).

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Summary of strategic issues of relevance to the project

- The low level of understanding and interest of Albanian civil society in European integration and its implications for the ongoing development and reform processes in the country, as well as Albania's eventual accession, is a serious gap in the institutional performance of civil society and also in the integration process itself. Measures to address this gap, through information dissemination, education and coordination with the EC delegation and relevant government bodies, should be integrated into all project activities.
- Political commitment now exists – through the adoption of the Law On the Organisation and Functioning of the Agency for Support of Civil Society and the acceptance of the principle of a Civil Society Charter – for building national institutional structures and a policy framework for regulating and promoting cooperation between government and civil society, and also for supporting the sustainable development of civil society. The process towards achieving this has been initiated, but is progressing slowly. The project should ensure that relevant support is given to the Government and civil society leaders to advance and accelerate the process, complementing existing initiatives and providing new forms of

support wherever gaps exist..

- The clear capacity gap that exists between better developed and more capable CSOs in Tirana and those located elsewhere, suggests that the project should focus its capacity support in key selected locations outside the capital.

4.2 Needs assessment conclusions

Civil society environment

- The legal framework governing CSO operations is broadly favourable. However, financial regulations and the tax framework for CSOs are inconsistently applied and in contradiction with the Law on Non-profit Organisations, in particular in that they do not distinguish between CSOs and commercial enterprises.
- Current funding opportunities for civil society, domestic and international are insufficient to meet its financial needs.
- Foreign donor funds are markedly reduced in recent times. The EC has become the principal source of international support for civil society, but its predicted allocation for the coming three years is insufficient to provide for current donor priorities of support to policy dialogue and the strengthening of good governance.
- Domestic sources of CSO finance are under-developed. Central government is the most important of these sources, but provides only moderate support for CSOs, generally disbursed through tendered direct contracts, mainly for the provision of social services.
- Until the present time there have been no formal mechanisms established for mediating relations between the government and civil society and there is no strategic framework for developing government-civil society cooperation or the strengthening and development of civil society.
- The Government is in the process of setting up an Agency for Supporting Civil Society signalling its commitment to developing effective coordination with civil society and to providing financial support to CSOs and their organisational development.
- Relations between the Government and CSOs are generally poor and their development continues to be beset by misunderstandings and institutional snags. Cooperation between government and CSOs is usually conducted in a haphazard and ad hoc process, usually owing more to solicitation from interested CSOs than a desire from the public administration to undertake systematic and open consultation with the public. Consequently, CSO participation in the policy-making process is low and has little impact.
- Public awareness and understanding of civil society is low. Community support for CSOs is weak and there is little public demand to participate in CSO events.

CSO organisational capacities

- Albania’s CSO sector is small and relatively undeveloped. There were no CSOs whatsoever before the collapse of the communist regime in 1990 and the young civil society is still in its emergent and formative phases.
- A great many CSOs are located in Tirana. In general, there is a marked gap in organisational capacities between CSOs in Tirana and those located elsewhere, whether in urban or rural areas. Civil society is under-represented in rural areas.
- The most prominent and best developed CSOs are rights-based organisations providing training, education, and advocacy in fields such as human rights, women’s rights and gender issues, youth, and minority rights.
- Typically, Albanian CSOs are small, financially unstable organisations, with insufficient resources to support a full professional staff.
- The sector is poorly integrated and represented, with no sector-wide forum or network coordinating CSO efforts.
- In essence, Albanian civil society continues to be most active, and probably most effective, in providing social services to the community. Advocacy activities are often carried out in tandem with service provision and many CSOs have low levels of specialisation.
- Achieving financial sustainability, by means of improved fundraising skills, and improved financial planning and management and understanding of financial regulations, is identified by CSOs as their overriding capacity-building priority. However, CSO capacity-building needs also include: project proposal writing, project cycle management, advocacy and lobbying, human resource management, strategic planning, leadership, CSO networking and cooperation.
- Strategic thinking in the Albanian civic sector remains poorly developed, and very few CSOs have developed and implement coherent long-term plans. The sector is heavily dependent on short-term project funding from international donors and “mission creep” among CSOs seeking simply to maximise immediate chances of survival is common.
- Networking among CSOs is weak. Very few sustainable networks exist and many are operationally weak and donor-driven.
- The sector is financially under-resourced and most CSOs have insufficient funds for a meaningful programme of work. Basic fundraising skills are applied overwhelmingly to locate scarce international project funding at the expense of longer-term strategic development of domestic sources of finance.

4.3 Recommendations for the regional project work plan

- Facilitate and organise exchange visits for CSOs in the region in order to get acquainted with each other and share experiences particularly in the areas of fundraising and revenue generations, cooperation with public institutions, advocacy and lobbying for social changes, successful absorbing of EU Grants, etc.

- Facilitate and organise partnership events for CSOs benefiting from IPA Cross-Border Programs between Albania and FYR of Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro and Albania and Kosovo. This event will assist Albanian CSOs meet the mandatory requirement for IPA CBC grants of applying jointly with a partner organisation from the cross-border area.
- Organise and stimulate a regional dialogue between CSOs benefiting from the TACSO Project in order to discuss common problems and concerns, share experiences and best practices.
- Facilitate the regional networking and partnership between active CSOs operating in the region and plan future joint activities and projects.
- Jointly organise capacity building activities to CSOs working at the regional level through a series of regional trainings on EU Fundraising, Organisational Development, Advocacy and Lobbying, Public participation, etc.

4.4 Recommendations for country specific work plan

Civil society environment

- Collaborate with other active Albanian CSOs for the improvement of the legal regulatory Framework for the NGO sector, as well as building and strengthening of relations between NGOs and Government Institutions and building mechanisms for cross-sector cooperation, public participation and improved access to information.
- Collaborate and assist the Agency for Supporting Civil Society (ASCS) in strengthening the capacity of its board members and technical staff and intensifying the dialogue among CSOs and the government.
- Coordinate with the EU-funded project “Strengthening the Civil Society and Democratic Structures in Albania” for drafting the final version and implementing of COS Chart.
- Organise workshops and seminars at local level with local government on strengthening the dialogue between CSOs and local government.
- Develop a comprehensive database of CSOs working in Albania, building upon existing databases managed by regional CSOs in Northern, Central and Southern Albanian and others. This Project database will be continually updated during the course of the project. The database should be structured as a compendium of all CSOs operating in 12 administrative regions of Albania and should contain specific data for each of them.

CSO organisational capacities

- Conduct training activities for CSOs in 12 regions of Albania on “Application Procedures for EC Grants” as well as “Project Implementation, monitoring and reporting”.
- Organise 3 training activities in three different regions of Albania benefiting from IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program about the Application Procedures for IPA CBC Grants.
- Provide coaching sessions on completing the Log frame Matrix and drafting project-proposals, as well as the budget to the interested CSOs applying for thematic grants to EC

Delegation in Tirana during the course of the project.

- Identify and establish contacts with training and technical assistance service providers operating in Albania and those in the Western Balkan and Turkey.
- Provide TA and consultancy services to the potential applicants of the Cross Border Areas applying for grants from IPA CBC Program.
- Develop in conjunction with the Regional office the national Project web-site through which information will be provided on EU policies, EC funding opportunities and projects, networking with regional and EU based NGOs, training activities available in the region, contact details of possible partners, donor information, etc.

Annex 1 Acronyms and abbreviations used in the text

ADRF	Albanian Disability Rights Foundation
ACAC	Albanian Coalition Against Corruption
ACER	Albanian Centre for Economic Research
ACIT	Albanian Centre for International Trade
AIS	Albanian Institute for International Studies
ANTTARC	Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Centre
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction Development and Stabilisation
CIDA	Canadian Agency for International Development
CPC	Consumer Protection Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EC	European Commission
ECAS	European Citizens Action Service
EPD	EuroPartners Development
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HDPC,	Human Development Promotion Centre
ICS	Institute for Contemporary studies (<i>alb.</i> ISB)
IDM	Institute for Democracy and Mediation
IDRA	Institute for Development Research and Alternatives
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPLS	Institute for Policy and Legal Studies
MIPD	Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document
NACSS	Albanian National Centre for Social Studies
NSSD	National Strategy for Social and Economic Development
NOSA	Network for the Open Society of Albania
OSFA	Open Society Foundation Albania
PPFI	Public Private Finance Institute
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
SIDA	Swedish Agency for International Development
SIPU	Swedish Institute for Public Administration
TACSO	Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAT	Value-Added Tax

Annex 2 Research methodology

Research towards this Needs Assessment was carried out by the TACSO Albania country project team during September 2009. In order to obtain a general overview of civil society in Albania and also to provide contextual material, the team started by undertaking a desk study of all relevant information, including previous civil society and capacity assessments by Albanian and international CSOs and research houses, situational analyses, reports and studies on civil society prepared by donor organisations, evaluations of major civil society-run development programmes, and government regulations concerning civil society, as well as any relevant government policy documents.

The desk study was followed by a series of consultations with a total of 31 CSOs and a further nine individual semi-structured interviews with government officials and donor representatives.⁹ Findings of the desk study were used to inform and facilitate these meetings with stakeholders.

Interviews with CSOs made use of a pre-prepared questionnaire which was used to access basic information about the characteristics and capacities of CSOs and civil society more generally, before broadening and deepening enquiries through a process of less structured discussion. Questions in the questionnaire included those relating to the status of organisation, the CSOs field of operation, geographical area of operation, and organisational capacities and areas to be addressed for further organisational development.

CSOs were selected for consultation upon the following criteria:

- a) *Representation of different geographical areas of operations of CSOs in the country:* CSO interviews were carried out in nine of Albania's 12 administrative regions.
- b) *Sector of CSOs operation:* As a majority of CSOs in Albania are working in the fields of human rights, gender balance, environmental protection, children's education, youth, health care and the provision of social services, care was taken to include CSOs from these sectors in the assessment process.
- c) *Representation of CSOs according to their registration status:* According to the law, CSOs in Albania are registered as one of three organizational forms - associations, foundations and centres. The research sample therefore covered all three types of CSO organisational structure.
- d) *Inclusion of active CSOs.* Care was taken to only include CSOs which could be verified as being active. Consequently the research sample is biased slightly to more mature and well-established organisations.

⁹ A full list of people consulted is given below in Annex 4

Annex 3 Fields of activity of Albanian CSOs

Table 1. Classification of CSOs in 2006 mapping by area of activity

CSO main area of activity	No. of CSOs
Social services	105
Business	64
Environment	50
Women	49
Art, culture and sport	48
CBOs	39
Youth	26
Roma	25
Civil Education	25
Human Rights	19
Democracy	17
Children	16
Education	5
TOTAL	501

Source. UNDP 2006

The sample for the above survey was adjusted to give weight to CSO activity outside of the main urban areas, by limiting representation from Tirana and Shkodra to 60 organisations.

Table 2. Classification of CSOs in 2006 mapping by multiple fields of area of activity

CSO area of activity	No. of CSOs	% of sample
Human rights	79	60
Youth	76	58
Democracy	72	55
Social services	63	48
Women	60	46
Environment	42	32
Economic growth	38	29
Education	33	25
Health	33	25
Children	16	12
Agriculture	12	9
Infrastructure	8	6
TOTAL	131	100%

Source. Partners Albania 2005

In this survey, responding CSOs on average selected over four fields of activity or priority target group.

Annex 4 List of persons consulted

Tirana

<i>Name of organisation</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
"REC Albania"	Mihallaq Qirjo	Country Director	+355 42232928
"Useful to Albanian Women"	Sevim Arbana	Executive Director	+355 692094622
"Reflections"	Monika Kocaqi	Executive Director	+355 682049340
"YWCA of Albania"	Donika Godaj	Executive Director	+355 692062051
"Albanian Human Rights" Centre	Kozara Kati	Executive Director	+355 682023881
"Albanian Epidemiological" Association	Gentiana Qirjako	Executive Director	+355 684099537
Albanian Association of Tourism	Kliton Gerxhani	Executive Director	+355 692081118

Durres

<i>Name of organisation</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
Association of women with social problems	Bajana Cevoli	Executive Director	+355 692103315
Council of Youth Association	Armela Bejko	Executive Director	+355 692103315

Kukes

<i>Name of organisation</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
"Counselling centre of women and social services"	Vera Istrefaj	Executive Director	+355 692244911
"Alb- Aid Association"	Jonuz Kola	Executive Director	+ 355 692070905
"Youth free initiative"	Lavderim Shehu	Executive Director	+355 682095148

Korce

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"Family Healthcare" Association	Irena Laska	Executive Director	+355 692257953
"Tabita Foundation"	Edison Rezhda	Executive Director	+355694023245
"Me the Woman"	Afroviti Gusho	Chairperson	+355 83 25104
"Intellectual Woman"	Shpresa Blaceri	Chairperson	+355 692402234

Shkoder

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“Useful to women”, Puke	Bukurie Imeri	Chairperson	+355682448263
“Hope for the future”	Pranvera Marku	Chairperson	+355 692813575
“Rural areas network”	Fredi Haxhari	Chairperson	+355682033233

Elbasan

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“To the benefit of Albanian woman” (Elbasan Branch)	Bukuroshe Bleta	President	+355 54 57582
“Other Vision”	Arjan Cala	President	+355 54 53397
“Woman Forum”	Shpresa Banja	President	+355 682218459
“Aurora”	Pellumb Gjini	Executive Director	+355 692793910

Fier

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Vlore

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Diber

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DSDC (Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination), Council of Ministers,	Oriana Arapi	Coordinator	+355 68 20 54338
Ministry of Integration	Greta Rakaj	Head of Regional Cooperation Unit	+355 682080285
Members of Working Group establishing the Agency of Civil Society	Valdet Sala	Team leader	+355 682023361
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	Migena Rexhi	Head of the Youth Department	+355 682057244

Donor organisations

<i>Name of organisation</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
"REC Albania"	Mihallaq Qirjo	Country Director	+355 42232928
GTZ	Valdet Sala	GOPA Project	+355 682023361
SOROS Foundation	Andi Dobrush	Director	+355 2234621
USAID	Suzana Cullufi,	Manager for the Local Governance project,	+355684030187
Council of Europe Albania	Olsi Dekovi	Director of Information Office & Director of School of Political Studies	+355682053689

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Web resources:

Albanian Ministry for European Integration

<http://www.mie.gov.al/>

Delegation of the EC to Albania

<http://www.delalb.ec.europa.eu/>

European Movement in Albania

<http://em-al.org>

International Centre for Non-Profit Law

<http://wwwl.icnl.org>

OSFA / NOSA

<http://www.soros.al/>

Partners-Albania

<http://partnesalbania.org>

Mjaft

<http://www.mjaft.org>

ANTTARC

<http://www.anttarc.org/>