

donordialogue

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Photo: Minister of Finance Ridvan Bode and the World Bank Country Representative Camille Nuamah signing the Grant Agreement for the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) (Photo: World Bank Albania)

Signature of the IPS Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF)

On 17 January 2008, the Government and the World Bank (WB) signed the Grant Agreement for the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) on Capacity building support to implement the Integrated Planning System (IPS). The MDTF has a current total value of 5.14 million Euros and has been co-financed by: the UK Government through DfID (2,21 million Euros), the Government of the Netherlands, (1 million Euros), the European Commission (1 million Euros), the Austrian Development Corporation, (500,000 Euros), the Government of Sweden through Sida,

(430,000 Euros). Two other donors will be contributing in the coming months: the Government of Italy (272,000 Euros) and the Government of Switzerland (440,000 Euros). So the total amount of the MDTF will be: 5.85 million Euros. The programme will be implemented over a period of three years. The United Nations Development Programme has financed, with support from a number of other development partners, the preliminary work for the creation of the Trust Fund, through an IPS Immediate Needs Programme to the value of approximately 1 million USD.

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Integrated Planning System Immediate Phase (IPS)

Meeting of the IPS Support Group (IPS SG)

On 24 January 2008, the IPS Support Group held its sixth meeting to review preparations for launching the IPS Multi-Donor Trust Fund. The 7+ million USD Trust Fund was approved by the Council of Ministers on 29 December 2007 and formally signed by the World Bank (WB) and Minister of Finance on 17 January 2008. The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Finance, Sherefedin Shehu and the Acting Director, Department of Strategy and Donor Co-ordination, Valbona Kuko. The meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of European Integration, Albert Gajo, Director of Department of Public Administration, Blerta Selenica and representatives from donor members including Austria, the European Commission, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UK/DfID, UNDP and the WB. The Acting Director of DSDC gave an overview of IPS progress in 2007, challenges for 2008 and the status of Trust Fund preparations. Arben Rama, UNDP, reviewed the results of the IPS Immediate Needs programme co-funded by the Dutch Government and UNDP, which has provided IPS support pending approval of the Trust Fund. Greta Minxhozi updated members on the financial and administrative arrangements between contributing donors and the WB and identified the next steps required to activate the Fund, including identifying the initial priorities and preparation of Terms of Reference. The IPS Support Group will meet quarterly.



Photo: Minister of European Integration Bregu and the Head of the European Commission Delegation to Albania, Ambassador Lohan signing the Financing Agreement (Photo: European Commission Delegation to Albania)

Albanian Government and European Commission sign 2007 IPA National Programme

On 22 January 2008, the Minister of European Integration, Majlinda Bregu and the Head of the European Commission Delegation to Albania, Ambassador Helmuth Lohan signed the Financing Agreement between the Government and the European Commission for the implementation of assistance under the Instrument for Pre accession Assistance (IPA) 2007 National Programme. The allocation for Albania under the IPA 2007 National Programme is 49.3 million Euros. The financing agreement provides a list of project proposals to be financed by EU assistance. These projects have been identified and approved by the Government and have the overall objective to assist Albania to integrate into the European Union.

The total IPA allocation for Albania for 2007 is 61 million Euros. As a potential candidate country, Albania will benefit from two IPA components: 1) transition assistance and institution building in the amount of 54.3 million Euros and 2)

cross-border co-operation in the amount of 6.7 million Euros. The 49.3 million Euros Financing Agreement is part of the component for "transition assistance and institution building". The remaining 5 million Euros under this component are allocated for the participation of Albania in multi-beneficiary programmes such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus.

The 2007 IPA 2007 National Programme budget will finance projects for improvement of water supply and sewerage systems (24 million Euros), support to the penitentiary system (10 million Euros), support to the police (PAMECA III - 5.5 million Euros), as well as support to SMEs (3.4 million Euros), and the General Directorate of Taxation (2.5 million Euros). In addition, IPA 2007 will provide assistance for the alignment of Albanian statistics with EU standards (2.85 million Euros) and for the strengthening of capacities of the Albanian authorities to manage EU assistance in a decentralised manner (1 million Euros).

Sector Related Activities

Anti-Corruption

OSCE Presence assists High Inspectorate for Declaration and Auditing of Assets (HIDAA) train local officials

On 24 January 2008, the High Inspectorate for Declaration and Auditing of Assets (HIDAA) and the Institute of Training of Public Administration (ITAP), supported by the OSCE Presence held a certificate awarding ceremony with local government officials in the framework of implementation of the law on Conflict of Interest Prevention. In 2007, the OSCE Presence assisted HIDAA in training local officials on Conflict of Interest Prevention Cases, as part of the support to Government to the fight against corruption. The Head of the OSCE Presence, Ambassador R. Bosch, Head of the High Inspectorate for Declaration and Auditing of Assets, F. Laskaj and Deputy Minister of Interior F. Poni addressed the event. "The OSCE Presence views this work as important support to the Government in its effort to improve governance, and fight corruption and organised crime," said Ambassador Bosch during the ceremony. "Promoting Good Governance principles and Anti Corruption measures,

in partnership with local stakeholders, are key priorities for us, stated explicitly in the mandate."

UNODC

On the occasion of the International Day against Corruption on 9 December 2007, the UNODC Project Office, with the Union of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania began a public awareness campaign under the slogan "Your NO Counts". The campaign consisted of a radio spot broadcast on Top Albania Radio. The Project Office facilitated an interview of the Head of the Union on Top Channel. In his interview the Head of the Union focused on the difficulties that business community faces while dealing with public administration and why everyone pay with corruption.

EU Supports The Fight Against Organized Crime

The European Union made available 950,000 Euros for a new project to support efforts in the fight against organised crime.

Photo: General Inspectorate of HIDAA, F. Laskaj, Head of OSCE Presence, R. Bosch and Deputy Minister of Interior F. Poni addressing local authorities after a training on conflict of interest prevention cases. (Photo/OSCE Fabiola Haxhillari)



Sector Working Groups Meetings

Technical donor meeting on Environment, Natural Resources and Rural Development

On 18 January 2008, the WB hosted a meeting of the Sector Working Group on Environment, Natural Resources and Rural Development. The meeting had the participation of the Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Taulant Bino, representatives from the MoEFWA, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumers' Protection, the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication, and from the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination, as well as donor representatives from the WB, the Netherlands, Swedish Embassy, UNDP, USAID, the OSCE Presence, KfW, GTZ, Swiss Cooperation Office, Austrian Development Agency, Spanish Cooperation and SNV. The Government representatives reported on the work done by the respective Ministries to implement the new sector strategies adopted by the Government and presented the main priorities set by them. Donor representatives briefed the meeting on their support programmes to environment, agriculture and rural development and confirmed their continued interest in these areas. The meeting had also discussions on the scope of the Thematic Working Group, and the future meetings of the group.

Sector Working Groups Meetings

Meeting of the Sector Working Group on gender Equality and Domestic Violence

On 24 January 2008 OSCE Presence in Albania jointly with the UNIFEM and UNDP supported the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) in organising the Donor Coordination Meeting on Gender Equality. The overall goal of the meeting, held at OSCE premises, was to present to donors and international partners the GoA 2008 priorities under the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Eradication of Domestic Violence 2007-2010 (NSGE-DV). For the first time donor's meeting was chaired by MoLSAEO, with the Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ms. Marjeta Zace, presiding. In her presentation, Ms. Zace stressed that for 2008, priority would be given to institutional strengthening in support of NSGE-DV implementation; revision, adoption and implementation of relevant legislation; raising awareness about women's participation in decision-making; economic empowerment of women and increased opportunities for employment; vulnerable girls and women increasing access in the qualitative social services and improved legal and administrative protection and support for victims of domestic violence. The Ministry presented a Donor Coordination Matrix which aims to document the types of related activities being supported by donors, with a view to increasing a coordinated implementation of the NSG-DV. Donors participating acknowledged the MoLSAEO implementation efforts and agreed to utilize such matrix as starting point for better coordination in 2008. It was agreed that on behalf of the MoLSAEO, UNIFEM would be the information focal point for the Donor Coordination Group.

The project was officially launched on the 15 January 2008 at a ceremony at the British Embassy ceremony attended by the Head of Delegation of the European Commission. It will be implemented through a twinning arrangement between the United Kingdom Home Office and the Albanian Ministry of Interior. It will help the Ministry set up a comprehensive strategy, coupled with a training and development programme, for the fight against organised crime and to boost international co-operation in this field. Assistance will include developing covert policing capacity, evidence gathering and use of specialist equipment. As part of the partnership, long, medium and short-term experts from Member States are seconded to the beneficiary country administration. The main long-term expert from the United Kingdom will be hosted in the Albanian State Police premises for up to 24 months to help with the preparation and the implementation of training and other support activities intended to support the fight against organised crime.

USAID, Albanian Government, and Albanian Judicial Authorities signal commitment to judicial reform in executing a Memorandum of Understanding

The Albanian government through the Ministry of Justice, the High Council of Justice, and national judicial authorities, signed a Memorandum of Understanding

with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) on 28 January 2008. The Memorandum commits each party to improve the quality of justice in Albania and to earn the public trust and confidence in the courts and other public institutions. USAID launched its three-year, \$3.9 million Rule of Law in Albania Program. Our goal is to promote better functioning oversight institutions and more accountable courts. The program has three components: (1) Accountable Courts, (2) Institutional Oversight & Audit, and (3) Civic Monitoring & Engagement. This Memorandum of Understanding among USAID and key judicial authorities provides the framework in which the program will work.

New 10 City Governance Programme to Boost Economic Development in Albania

At a ceremony held on 23 January 2008 in Tirana, USAID and Mayors of 10 municipalities signed Memoranda of Understanding to launch USAID's new four-year, 7.3 million USD Local Governance Programme in Albania (LGPA). This project offers new and innovative techniques for cities to attract direct private investment,

Photo: USAID Mission Director, Edward T. Landau, Minister of Justice, Enkelejd Alibeaj, Vice-Chairman of the High Council of Justice, Kreshnik Spahiu, Chief Justice, Thimjo Kondi, and the Executive Director of the Judicial Budget Office, Luljeta Laze, signed Memoranda of Understanding to support more accountable, transparent, and efficient courts. U.S. Ambassador John L. Wither, II witnessed the signing and delivered the keynote speech at the ceremony (Photo: USAID Albania).



pay for large-scale public infrastructure projects, and improve the quality of the municipal services delivered. A new local borrowing law will allow cities to diversify and expand their financial resources for upgrading infrastructure and providing quality services. Businesses, private sector associations, not-for profit organizations, and citizens will help plan and implement projects. Municipal Economic Growth Committee will develop strategic visions for their cities and prioritize immediate actions, such as the improvement of public services, tax collection procedures, and asset management systems and identify and attract potential investors.

Health

The Italian Minister of Health visits Albania

On 19 November 2008, the Italian Minister of Health, Mrs. Livia Turco, visited Albania to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Albanian Minister of Health, Nard Ndoka. Both attended the inauguration of a Unit for Studies and Technical Assistance in the Ministry of Health, created with Italian Government financial support, aimed at providing assistance and expertise to the Ministry of Health in promoting researches and studies on health information systems,



Photo: USAID Mission Director, Edward T. Landau, together with the Mayors of Fier, Fushë Kruja, Gramsh, Himara, Kukës, Korçë, Lezhë, Librazhd, Pogradec, and Shkodra signed Memoranda of Understanding on Local Governance and Economic Development (Photo: USAID Albania).

data analysis and alignment to EU standards. Mrs. Turco also met with officials of Italian local authorities and NGOs operating in Albania.

Multi-Donor Partnerships Leverage USAID Funds to Support Albania's Health Sector

One expanded and two new projects are getting underway this month in USAID Albania's health program. The first activity

cooperates with UN Agencies and WHO to support the Governments efforts to respond to Avian and Human Influenza. USAID Albania awarded an additional 500,000 USD focusing on streamlined responses to potential outbreaks and strengthening Albania's emergency medical services. The first new 980,000 USD activity improves reproductive health for men and women and partners with Save the Children and IMA World Health to support quality maternal and child health at the primary health care level. The second new one provides assistance to the Government for conducting the first Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). The DHS will provide valuable information to assist policy makers and program managers to measure major health and demographic indicators and compare Albania with other countries.

USAID, UN, and WHO Hold Workshop on Avian Influenza (AI)

The World Health Organization/Bureau for Europe and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization/Rome conducted a regional workshop on avian influenza on 30 January



Photo: - The Albanian Minister of Health, Mr. Ndoka, and the Italian homologue, Mrs. Turco, inaugurate the Unit for Studies and Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Health. (Photo: Italian Development Co-operation)

Education

Students in Laç inaugurate computer lab

Students in Laç inaugurate computer lab: On 18 January 2008 hundreds of students from AT Shtjefen Gjecovi school in Lac inaugurated their new computer lab, along with the Prime Minister. This marked the completion of an important stage of the e-Schools programme, providing all public high schools with modern computer labs - 379 computer labs have been installed in schools across the country; 190,000 students will have Internet access thanks to the new computer labs. UNDP provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Science to implement the Government's e-Schools programme, and to a framework for public and private donor support.

On 12 December 2007, the inauguration of the first class of the Albanian Centre for Restoration was held in Tirana in the presence of the Italian Deputy Ambassador, Francesco de Luigi and of the Director of the Department for Tourism and Works of Art of the Albanian Ministry of Culture, Iris Pojani. The opening was part of the project Capacity Building for Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Albania, implemented by UNESCO thanks to an Italian contribution amounting to 1.25 Million Euros. Classes, which include courses in restoration of mosaics, stucco-works, stone and wood, are attended by 20 students.



Photo: Representatives of the Italian Cooperation for Development and Tirana Municipality attend the inauguration of the Centre 'Primavera', run by the Italian NGO CICA and providing assistance to people affected by disabilities. (Photo: Italian Development Co-operation)

2008. USAID Mission Director, Edward T. Landau, Mr. Ndoc Fasllia, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Head of AI Task Force, Mr. Arben Ivanaj, Deputy Minister of Health, addressed workshop participants. The two-day workshop utilized integrated desktop simulation exercises for avian and pandemic influenza in animal and human populations. This is the 2nd national simulation exercise on avian influenza under the global initiative of WHO and FAO, supported by USAID. The first was conducted in March 2007 in Yerevan, Armenia and a follow-up workshop was held in November 2007.

On 3 December 2007, the Socio-Educative Centre 'Primavera' was inaugurated in Tirana, in the framework of an Italy-funded project (circa 500.000 Euros)

implemented by the Italian NGO Comunità Internazionale di Capodarco (CICA). The initiative's aim is to provide assistance to children and people affected by mental or physical diseases, by fostering the quality of services provided in the Centre (physiotherapy, gym, speech therapy, family assistance and counselling). By the end of this 3-year project, the Centre will be equipped for providing daily assistance for up to 50 disabled children, as well as for taking care of further 450 disabled people outside the Centre. The Italy-funded Unit of Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Health has offered the required logistic and co-ordination assistance and the first meeting for starting this network was held in December 2007.



Photo: Italian contribution to CICA aims to foster the capacity and improve services provided by Tirana 'Primavera' Centre, assisting children and people affected by physical and mental disease. (Photo: Italian Development Co-operation)

Energy, Water and Agriculture Sectors:

Switzerland signs Agreements with the Government to Support Water Supply in Shkodra, Sustainable Agriculture and Dam Safety

Agriculture: Switzerland is strongly supporting the development of the private sector with a focus on improving access to markets and services. The project on Sustainable Agriculture Support in Albania (SASA) with a total amount of 2.1 million CHF supports the production of organic products such as fruits, vegetables, olive oil and wine. The Project will provide research and technical advice to farmers interested in bio production through the Bio-Adria Association. A particular focus is laid on inspection and certification in order to have high quality, labelled products through the Albinspekt body. This contributes to improve the competitiveness of agricultural organic products in national and international markets. As a result of this project, farmers export bio products to Switzerland. Switzerland has mandated the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL to implement this project. Switzerland aims at contributing to improve the economic situation of the rural population through a sustainable use of natural resources.

Energy: Switzerland is funding the

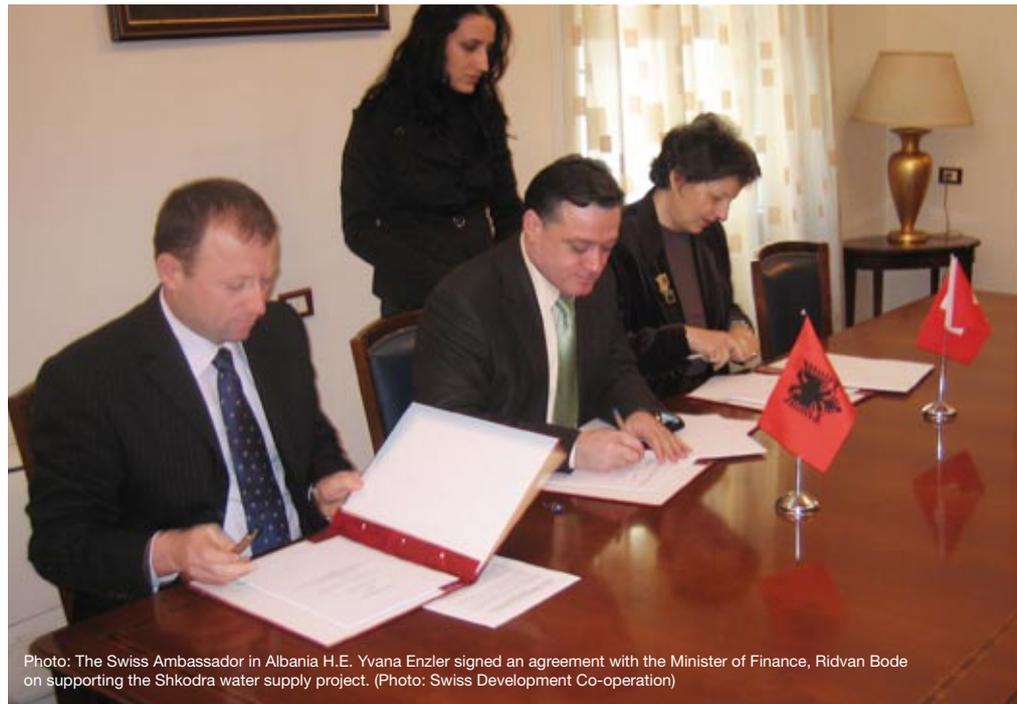


Photo: The Swiss Ambassador in Albania H.E. Yvana Enzler signed an agreement with the Minister of Finance, Ridvan Bode on supporting the Shkodra water supply project. (Photo: Swiss Development Co-operation)

elaboration of a Feasibility Study to realize a comprehensive Dam Safety Programme for Investments at the Drin and Mat River Cascades with a non-reimbursable contribution of around 1 million Euros. The Programme, which will be funded by KESH, different International Financing Institutions and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, aims to protect the 300,000 people who are living downstream of the dams.

Water: Switzerland is funding a project

on Water Supply and Environmental Lake Protection Shkodra, with a non-reimbursable contribution of around 6 million Euros in order to rehabilitate the water supply project in Shkodra. The aim is to improve the living conditions of the population and framework conditions for the local economy. Switzerland, the Austrian Development Corporation and German Credit Bank for Reconstruction KfW are co-funding to the value of 15.4 million Euros and 0.5 million Euros is supplied from the Albanian state budget.



Photo: The Swiss Ambassador in Albania H.E. Yvana Enzler signed an agreement with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection Jemin Gjana on supporting the Sustainable Agriculture in Albania. (Photo: Swiss Development Co-operation)



Photo: This summer USAID's EDEM program assisted watermelon farmers and consolidators export 362 tons of Albanian watermelons to Serbia, Greece, Germany and Croatia. (Photo: USAID Albania)

Agriculture

USAID Programme, Albanian Farmers Export 100 Tons of Fruits and Vegetables to Regional Markets: Over the last year, the Enterprise Development and Export Market Services (EDEM) project facilitated several activities in the fresh fruit and vegetables industry. In the month of December alone, Bruka Seedling of Divjaka and AgroKoni of Tiranë, exported almost 100 tons of fresh fruit and vegetable, worth 30,000 Euros, to Serbian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, and Croatian markets. Through the EDEM, USAID is bridging the information gap between international buyers and Albanian consolidators to increase the number and level of Albanian exports.

Energy

An expert from the Italian Cooperation will be providing assistance to the Project Management Unit (PMU) in the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy, in finalizing the tender of the Line 400kv Elbasan-Tirana until 31 January 2008. In order to better manage the implementation of Italy-funded programmes in the energy sector, in November 2007, a Steering Committee was established, composed of

both Italian and Albanian representatives. The first meeting was held at the presence of Minister Gene Ruli and of the Italian Ambassador, Saba d'Elia. In December 2007, a second meeting took place and further meetings are expected in early 2008.



Photo: The first meeting of the Italo-Albanian Steering Committee established to co-ordinate the implementation of Italy-funded programmes in the energy sector. (Photo: Italian Development Co-operation)

More potable water for Kavaja

Another important project has been added in the map of projects realized by the German Government in co-operation with KfW. On 18 December 2007, the waterworks for the production of hygienic clean water from the Manskuri reservoir, for the water supply of Golem (Kavaja) and the corresponding tourist zone, was inaugurated in the presence of the Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, the Minister of Public Works Transport and Telecommunication Sokol Olldashi, the Chargé d'Affaires of the German Embassy in Tirana, Mr Jan Rudolph, the Mayor and other local government representatives. The quantity of potable water, which Kavaja disposed from Harizaj (a previous project by the German Government carried out by KfW), and finally the production of water from the Manskuri reservoir are now sufficient for a normal provision with hygienic clean water, the elimination of sanitary danger and the reduction of waste. The financial contribution by the German Government through KfW amounts to 3.75 Million Euros.

Public Works, Transportation and Telecommunication

On 19 December 2007, Minister of Public Works, Transport and

Telecommunications, Sokol Olldashi, and representative of the Italian contractor signed a 1.9 million Euros contract for the primary urbanization works in the area of Lapraka (Tirana). This initiative took place in the framework of the Italy-funded programme 'Suburbs of Tirana', aimed at improving living conditions in the area through the rehabilitation of the main social infrastructures.

On 16 November 2007, the inauguration of the works for rehabilitating Sharra Solid Waste Disposal took place, at the presence of Minister of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications, Sokol Olldashi, the Minister of the Environment, Lufter Xhuveli and the Italian Ambassador, Saba d'Elia. A representative of the Municipality of Tirana - the project beneficiary - also attended the ceremony. The programme, amounting to 6 million Euros, aims at reducing the health and environmental risks related to non-appropriate management of the site, through the rehabilitation and widening of the disposal.



Photo: The Italian Ambassador, Saba d'Elia, and the Albanian Minister of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications, Sokol Olldashi, inaugurate the opening of works to rehabilitate Sharra solid waste disposal. Italy provides 6 million Euros funding to widen and rehabilitate Sharra solid waste disposal. Works were inaugurated in November 2007. (Photo: Italian Development Co-operation)

Telecom Regulatory Development Programme in Albania

Following a request from the Government of Albania, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will soon launch a major technical assistance project in the electronic communications sector. This project, supported by the European Commission Tirana Delegation, will assist the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications, and the Telecommunications Regulatory Entity to harmonise the policy, legal and regulatory framework for electronic communications in line with the Stabilisation Agreement. The project will provide expert training, advisory, capacity building and practical implementation assistance to both the Ministry and the Regulatory Entity and is expected to last up to 24 months. The EBRD is currently finalising the consultant selection process and envisages project launch in March 2008. To know more about Business Advisory Services (BAS) please click here.

Government and Civil Society

On 17 December 2007, the conference 'Diplomacy in Europe and in the Balkans' took place in Tirana to present the outcomes of comparative research on high-level training programmes implemented in Europe and addressed to the personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The event set the closure of an Italy-funded initiative (more than 250.000 Euros) aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of Albanian diplomacy. The conference was introduced by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edith Harxhi and the Italian Deputy Ambassador, Francesco de Luigi.

Support to NGOs

In the period November-December 2007, the General Directorate for Development Co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/DGCS) approved the funding of four new initiatives, promoted by Italian NGOs operating in Northern Albania. These projects stem from a study, elaborated by the associations

themselves in co-operation with local authorities, to improve living conditions according to the NSDI sector strategies. The total contribution to these initiatives amounts to circa 3.3 million Euros. Seven other NGOs have formulated new project proposals for initiatives in Northern Albania, to be submitted to the Italian Cooperation for Development for approval. Due to the high number of NGOs interested, in the period 14 to 18 January 2008, an Italian Co-operation for Development Mission visited Albania to facilitate and accelerate the process for the final evaluation and approval of these initiatives. On 16 December 2007, an exhibition of hand-crafts and traditional Albanian goods produced by local producer associations and cooperatives within the project implemented by Italian and Albanian NGOs, took place in Tirana. The Italian Development Cooperation Office in Tirana offered logistical support to the event.

In-Country Missions

A WB Identification Mission for the Proposed Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Project (DRMAP) visited from 28 January to 1 February 2008 to discuss with the Government the scope and components of the DRMAP project, to identify key agencies to be involved and agree on the next steps in the proposed project preparation.

The WB had an Inspection Panel Visit from 15 to 25 January 2008 relating to projects on: The Integrated Coastal Zone and Management Clean-up Project and the project on Power Sector Generation and Restructuring. The aim was to address the concerns of people affected by Bank-supported projects and to ensure that the WB adheres to its policies and procedures.

A WB Technical Supervision Mission for the Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-up Project (IZMP) took place from 14 to 23 January 2008. It reviewed the project components, focusing on progress relating to the preparations for the public consultation activities for the Draft Southern Coastal Development Plan and Draft Coastal Regulations; progress towards the finalization of the plan and regulations and subsequent government approval; and the formulation of options for land policy.

A WB Mission for the Competitiveness and Investment Climate Assessment (ICA) and Business Environment Reform and Institutional Strengthening (BERIS) took place from 7 to 18 January 2008. In the context of the Competitiveness and Investment Climate Assessment (ICA) the Missions aim was to conduct enterprise case studies and to participate in a workshop to present the preliminary findings of the estimation of OECD indicators of product market regulation for Albania. Regarding BERIS project, the objective was to provide TA to Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy on the inspections component of the project.

A WB Supervision Mission for the Social Service Delivery Project, visited the country from 8 to 15 January 2008 to monitor and assess the necessary actions to

be taken, aiming at ensuring achievement of project's aims and completion of all activities within project.

A WB Scoping Mission for Albania Mining Sector took place from 8 to 10 January 2008 to support an analysis of the investment climate in the domestic mining sector. To guide policy and actions to improve the investment climate, a short report will summarize current sector activity; the overall performance, the strengths and weaknesses of the fiscal, legal and regulatory framework in attracting foreign investment.

A WB Follow-up Mission for the Proposed Second Policy Operation (DPO2), and Country Economic Memorandum took place from 7 to 25 January 2008. It was a follow up of the Mission during December 2007. Meetings with key representatives from private sector and the donor community were organized.

A WB Mission for the Technical Assistance to the Bank of Albania on Microfinance visited country from 20 January to 2 February 2008. The aim is to assess the Albanian microfinance sector by assessing the status of the microfinance sector (including the Savings and Credit Associations - SCAs), the microfinance institutions (MFIs) and other any similar entities; to assess the adequacy of the current legal and regulatory framework applicable to the sector; to discuss strengths and weaknesses being faced with the representatives of SCAs, MFIs, non-bank financial institutions, and the banks which are involved in micro lending.

A WB Mission for the Health System Modernization Project, Supervision Mission, Development Policy Operation, Preparation (DPO) took place from 22 to 29 January 2008. It focused on the health project progress as well as to issues such as the Integrated Health Information System development and the Contracting and Payment Methods activity. The team will also follow up on DPO core conditions by assisting the Ministry of Health and Health Insurance Institute in addressing major policy issues.

Two Missions with the UNDOC

Mr. Ted Leggett from UNODC Research and Analysis Unit visited Albania on 26 till 28 November 2007 in an effort to take further the Balkan Study on "Organized Crime and Affected Countries". His agenda, prepared by UNODC Project Office involved meetings with senior Albanian authorities, international police missions and experts in this sector. On 2 to 7 December 2007, Ms. Carla Ciavarella, the UNODC Regional Programme Coordinator visited Tirana to participate in the Stability Pact Working Table Meeting and to enhance UNODC fund raising efforts for the AC and AHT projects. Ms. Ciavarella met with senior Government officials including the Prime Minister, Sali Berisha and various Ambassadors and Heads of Agencies.

Missions with the Italian Cooperation

From 30 November to 20 December 2007, an Italian expert from the General Directorate for Development Co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/DGCS) assisted the Ministry of Economy and Trade and Energy in defining the steps to implement the Italian fund in favour of Albanian SME.

In November 2007, a mission from the MAE/DGCS was organized to co-operate with the Municipality of Tirana in preparing a programme to rehabilitate Skenderbej Square and Mother Teresa Square. Based on its outcomes, in December 2008, a second mission took place to assist the Municipality in the preparation of the documents required to launch the international tender for the new planning. Further missions are envisaged in early 2008.

A mission has been renewed and is going to stay in Albania until mid-February to provide assistance to the Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications in the framework of Italy-funded programmes in the Transport sector.

donor*dialogue*

As of 1 October 2007, the World Bank took over from the OSCE Presence as the Chair of the DTS Secretariat.

Any comments regarding Donor Dialogue (both positive and negative) are strongly encouraged – and we promise to print all such comments received!

Want to contribute?

If you would like to contribute, send your text to the Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS) Office (nevila.como@aidharmonisation.org.al) by the 1st of every month. An ideal word count for submissions is around 100 words.

Frequency

Each edition will be sent to you on the 15th of every month.

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