



Albanian Decentralization Initiative

Context

Establishment of a sound and stable democratic system in Albania requires a more efficient and accountable governance. It requires a broad involvement of the citizens in the decision making process and implementation of jointly decided development programs. Many of local government leaders in Albania acknowledge the contribution of participation. Many leaders take their position with the best intentions of generating involvement of citizens. In this effort, many local officials find themselves with a shortage of tools for stimulating initial and continuing participation of citizens. The new public administration philosophy and approach aims not just to empower citizens but to do so actively with a variety of tools and methods. URI was engaged in the development and delivery of several trainings for applying tools and techniques on participation, through several components.

The Components

Component 1: Prepare and Deliver the Project Core Courses "Measuring Citizen Feedback and Service Quality. The activities involved preparation of training materials jointly with the Urban Institute and deliver 8 Core Courses in separate locations on Obtaining Citizens Feedback on Service Quality, engaging more than 40 municipalities and communes in Albania. It also include for preparing and delivering one course on the same topic for US Peace Corps (link with the PCV) volunteers in Albania.

Component 2: Deliver Project Core Courses on Calculating Costs and Fees for Public Services - seven courses on Calculating Cost and Fees were delivered in different locations involving at about 40 local government units in Albania.

Component 3: Budgeting Application Program- 10 UI pilot cities were supported to implement performance measurement on the process of planning for service improvement with particular attention on the non-performing well services; provide assistance to help cities develop service improvement action plans by applying citizen participation techniques for



2005 budget process; organize train observer rating for utilities subject of service improvement plans; organize and supervise the implementation of a survey in up to six cities aiming determination how local citizens view the service provided by local governments; and participate and help with organization of relevant workshops.

Component 4: Support on Water System Decentralization Application Program - assist in data analysis of Water Company in Librazhd, Albania to contribute to decentralization of water service and associated properties to local government. Providing technical assistance and support to the water pilot project including: identification and analysis of various options that exist to divide or share as municipalities units prefer the ownership of the property of the existing water and sewer systems so that transfer of property can be completed; analyze key financial issues and budget implications relevant to potential property transfer to local government involved in regard with the pilot system; identify steps to ensure local governments for an continued operation and maintenance of water systems and develop a plan to implement those steps. Assist and participate in workshops relevant to the activity.

Component 5: Implementing Performance Management - The work was not limited only in planning related activities to present performance management but also to design and conduct follow up actions for implementing performance management as applied to the local government budget in Albania. This

activity included preparation, organization and executing a service survey in four local government units, including tabulation and reporting and presenting of survey results as applied with local government efforts to prepare their budget for 2004. Developing better service delivery, ensuring citizens are informed of relevant policy changes, providing them an access point to request information and/or lodge complaints, when necessary, represents a significant challenge that has been met by these municipalities.

MAIN FACTS

PARTNERS:

- ✓ USAID/The Urban Institute (Washington D.C.)

DURATION:

November 2003 - August 2004

BENEFICIARIES:

- ✓ 40 municipalities and communes

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About URI

Since 1999 the Urban Research Institute (URI) has been delivering big results for development projects and programmers carried out throughout Albania. Our core business focuses on community development, local government strengthening, environmental protection, decentralization, and public services. We conduct studies, lobby the government, train local government units, increase public access to information, and connect development partners. URI has worked with donors such as USAID, Swiss Cooperation, the Netherlands Embassy, UNDP, World Bank, EU, SIDA, Open Society/Soros Foundation, etc.