

RDP Northern Albania Final Evaluation



ÖIR-Werkstattgespräch
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RDP at one glance

- ▶ **Title:** “Regional Development Programme (RDP) Northern Albania”
- ▶ **Donors:** ADA (lead donor – 67%) & SDC (33%)
- ▶ **Implementing consortium:** ÖAR Regionalberatung GmbH, Helvetas-Intercooperation, Co-PLAN
- ▶ **RDP team:** TL, DTL, Snr Progr. Officer, 2 Progr. Officers, Admin/Acc. Officer, international + local ST experts
- ▶ **Budget:**
 - €2.0 m RDP Fund
 - €1.3 m experts fees and travel expenses
 - €0.7 m other project costs
- ▶ **Duration:**
 - Started: 31/1/2011
 - Inception/pre-implementation period ended: 31/12/2011
 - Effective implementation started: 1/1/2012
 - Due to be completed by: 31/12/2014

Aim and Activities of the RDP

- ▶ “RDP significantly contributes to equitable social and economic development in Shkodër and Lezhë regions”. Its specific objective (project purpose) is that “Equal access of citizens to quality public services and economic opportunities in the Qark of Lezhë and Shkodër, in particular in disadvantaged areas, is improved through strengthened Qark”
- ▶ regional development projects: “flagship projects” under Window 1; projects based on sub-regional partnerships under Window 2; and, projects supporting civil society under Window 3

Main findings

- ▶ Accomplishments have been assessed in terms of **outputs** (activities carried out, papers delivered, etc)
- ▶ It is essential to see if they result in **outcomes** (impacts etc) vis-à-vis different objectives (general/cross-cutting)
- ▶ Factors influencing the translation of outputs to outcomes include the “**internal environment**” (discussed under management and steering) and “**external environment**” of RDP. The latter includes factors such as:
 - “The Albanian reality” (= highly centralised state & a long period of indecision on a Revision of Decentralisation Strategy)
 - Qarks with a vague role and limited financial resources, squeezed between a powerful centre and progressively stronger LGUs
 - No established domestic regional development policies; and no priority attached to RD by the EU
- ▶ **Long term** nature of outcomes and longer timescales for RDP-type interventions; sustainability challenge

Contextual factors promoting and hindering the effective implementation of the RDP fund

Summary findings

The implementation of projects worked as an “elk test” for the rules in force in the Albanian context.

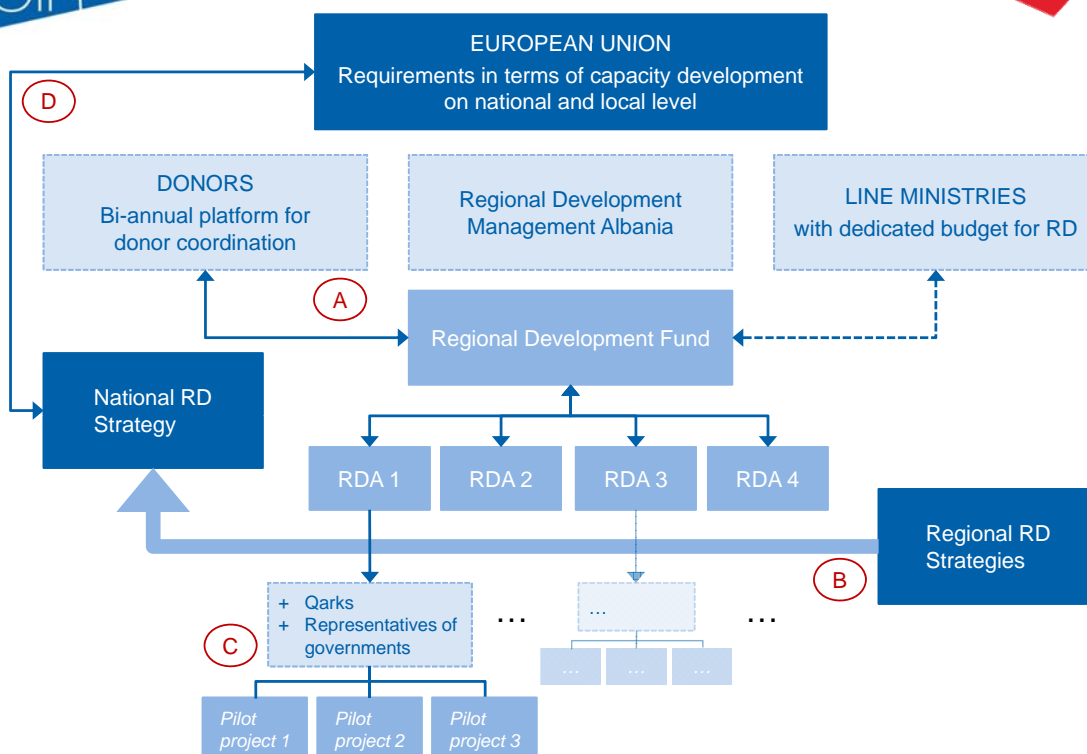
- ▶ **Procurement law.**
- ▶ **Regulations for the reimbursement of VAT**
- ▶ **Territorial reform and the risk of capacity losses**

The conformity with EU requirements

- ▶ has seen a decisive development with the granting of EU candidate status in June 2014 and the adoption of EUSAIR in October of the same year. Together with Croatia, Albania will be responsible for the coordination of the priority area “Sustainable Tourism”. The EC progress report for Albania from October makes the following suggestions for reform in the area of Regional development:
 - Further steps need to be **taken to secure Multi-annual sector programming and co-financing capacity** for EU projects at national and local level. Further administrative capacity is needed for indirect management of IPA at local and national level.
 - Institutional capacities in line ministries, especially for what regards **monitoring and evaluation** needs to be improved.
 - **Programming capacity** needs to improve, by creating a mature project pipeline on the national level as the capacities to formulate mature projects on the local level

Current policy developments in Albania, development of the Administrative and Territorial Reform (ART)

- ▶ The creation of functional regions on the basis of economic, natural and economic ties: creation 4 to 6 development regions (North; South; Central-Tirana; West); respect for existing Qark boundaries, with approximately 3 Qarks per newly created region.
- ▶ **Setting up institutions & mechanisms for the governance of the intermediate level:** The creation of a Regional Management on the national level, whose main instrument Regional Development Fund. Creation of a Regional Development Agency (RDA) in every region; responsible for developing a regional development strategy and the oversight and management of three pilot projects; composed of representatives of the Qarks and Local Government.
- ▶ **Coordination of strategic processes for Regional Development:** A “bottom up” process for the creation of a national strategy for regional development, starting in September 2015; bi-annual meetings of Donor platform to coordinate donor activities towards RD in Albania.



Priorities for future donor interventions

- (1) Continue capacity building through **sub-regional partnerships** based on a sound understanding of capacities and future competences, to determine absorption capacities – on regional level (**newly created RDAs, Qarks**) + national level.
- (2) Support regions to formulate **their own plan of activities for RD** that could be financed by donor interventions in the future
- (3) Working together with Regional Development Fund (RDF) on **budget, with conditionality**. Projects need to be driven by public actors and work on system
- (4) More efforts need to be given in developing flexible instruments. Promotion of impact results need to be promoted in a better way.

Sustainable outcomes/RDP legacy

- ▶ **On-going process** of multi-sector regional partnership
- ▶ Qarks with capacity (knowledge, organisation, processes) to coordinate **on-going process** of national/regional + regional/local strategies
- ▶ Functioning RDA **model**, with project development and other capacities
- ▶ Functioning regional-level development fund **model**
- ▶ **On-going** national dialogue process forum on regional development and regionalisation