



# PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans May 2015

## BETTER REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES FOR ALBANIA



Members of Berat municipal council receive training in the implementation of the new law on public administration. © SDC

Since 2010, the SDC, together with the Council of Europe, has been supporting a programme of decentralisation at the local and regional levels in Albania. Among other things the “Strengthening Local Government Structures” project aims to increase cooperation between municipalities, improve human resources management at the local level and include to a greater extent local governments in national decision-making processes.

Albania has been progressing towards the creation of a democratic and decentralised state since the 1990s. The country became a member of the Council of Europe in 1995 and by signing the European Charter of Local Self-Government it has undertaken to adopt the principle of local self-government. The charter provides for the fundamental responsibilities of municipalities to be defined in the constitution or in legislation. Despite this sound legal basis the new institutions in Albania are still weak, especially at the local and regional levels. Cooperation between municipalities is little developed.

### STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES A KEY OBJECTIVE

Albania was given EU candidate status in June 2014. In line with the requirement for initiating EU membership negotiations, the SDC is supporting Albania in its transition to a decentralised and democratic state. The following project objectives have to be met by the end of 2015:

- 1) Cooperation between municipalities is promoted and governed by law. Personnel management in local administrations is structured more efficiently and transparently. Human resources managers in local administrations receive training from qualified specialists in the implementation of the new law on public administration (“Civil Servant Law”). Municipal services are consequently better oriented to citizens’ needs.
- 2) Establish a consultation procedure and thereby promote exchanges between local governments and the central authorities. In this way the concerns of local communities should be taken more into consideration in decision-making at the national level.
- 3) Enhance the management qualities of young politicians, civil servants and citizens while ensuring adherence to the principles of good governance.
- 4) After the “Territorial and Administrative Reform” reduced the number of municipalities from 373 to 61, the project now aims to improve the capacities of new local governments to act. The decentralisation process in Albania is being driven by progress made in reforms.

---

## **STRONG EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING COMPONENTS**

The SDC provides financial support to the Albanian Academy of Political Studies which is training a total of 120 young politicians and people in positions of responsibility. In addition to future politicians, mayors in office who are interested in developing their human resources management skills are also receiving training. The subject matter covered includes EU law, political communication, strategies for resolving conflicts and the integration of minorities in the political process.

The project also includes training for specialists. These specialists support local governments in finding answers to questions concerning the law on public administration.

Teams of experts advise and support the Ministry of Local Government. Specifically, the project offers the Albanian government technical support in carrying out territorial and administrative reforms.

---

## **FIRST RESULTS**

The legal framework governing cooperation between the municipalities has been strengthened. In 2013, 11 specialists were trained in the promotion of cooperation between municipalities. In addition, substantial progress has been made in developing a strategy paper on governing cooperation between municipalities.

Offers of further training and online helpdesks have raised awareness in Albanian municipalities of the importance of modern human resources management. In 2014, all local governments were informed about the existence of a helpdesk. Furthermore, 19 local government representatives and 82 municipal employees received training in the implementation of the new Civil Servant Law which accelerated its implementation.

The development of a consultation procedure for local governments in national decision-making processes is progressing and is expected to be formally introduced this year (2015).

---

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

SDC activities in Albania:  
[www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/countries/albania.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/countries/albania.html)

## **THE PROJECT IN BRIEF**

### **NAME**

Strengthening Local Government Structures

### **DEPARTMENT**

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

### **THEME**

Democratisation, decentralisation and local governance

### **COUNTRY/REGION**

Albania

### **PARTNERS**

Council of Europe  
Ministry on Local Issues  
Albanian Academy of Political Studies  
Municipalities

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Albania's communist and totalitarian history is the reason for the lack of a democratic culture and decentralised government structures. Local and regional authorities lack authority and transparency, and the population hardly participates in political decision-making.

### **PROJECT OBJECTIVE**

Local democratic structures are strengthened in order to promote a sense of responsibility in local administrations, to whose services the local community has access.

### **TARGET GROUP**

Young politicians  
Public sector employees  
Human resources managers  
Citizens  
Companies  
Village communities

### **PHASE DURATION**

August 2012 – December 2015

### **PHASE BUDGET**

CHF 2,040,000

---

## **CONTACT**

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)  
Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Western Balkans  
Division  
Freiburgstrasse 130  
3003 Bern  
phone: +41 (0)58 462 22 12  
E-Mail: [deza-oza@eda.admin.ch](mailto:deza-oza@eda.admin.ch)  
[www.sdc.admin.ch](http://www.sdc.admin.ch)