

Lessons Identified – Albania Community Policing Design Project

Executive Summary

Over the period June 2010 – April 2011 ISSAT assisted Sida in supporting the Albanian Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Albanian State Police (ASP) to design a programme to enhance Community Policing in Albania. The following lessons were identified by the team over the course of the engagement.

National Ownership

- Teams should take the role of ‘facilitators’ or ‘translators of needs’, rather than experts or consultants, and steer the process rather than lead it.
- Nominated representatives from national ministries must be selected appropriately if they are to help lead the process. Over and above having the relevant skills (these can be developed during the process), the person(s) must have sufficient time in their schedule to contribute and influence.
- Factor in as many ways as possible to capture and incorporate the views of citizens and recognise that some methods may not be appropriate to all audiences.

Team Composition

- If possible, include representatives from the State and Non-State sectors in the team. In addition to technical knowledge, awareness of process (in general and specific to the local context) is very important.

Methodology

- Terms of Reference (ToRs) for programme design must set out clear parameters and milestones, but at the same time remain flexible to allow the team to develop a process that takes into account how information is being processed, analysed and decided upon, in order to take into account contextual developments.
- Enhance awareness of the local context and culture through engaging an anthropologist during the process.
- Consider the process used to develop the programme as both capacity building and an opportunity to build partnerships.
- Wherever possible, produce documents supporting the design process in the local language in order to allow the national decision-makers to take the lead in selecting options etc. Factor in the need for translation services into the planning and budget.
- The programme document must specify clear results required, and detail supporting activities. Potential implementers are responsible for determining how the activities

would be carried out; hence principles of implementation must be included (e.g. wide participation, national ownership/partnership, monitoring and reporting, etc.).

Operational Guidance Notes

- Laws and regulations on procurement (national or donor) have a strong influence on programme design. Include discussions on this up front in order to identify the relevant parameters. Guidance would be useful on how to approach this.

Transparency and Participation

- Aim for total transparency throughout the process, but be aware that this will increase the time needed and you may need to manage expectations amongst potential local implementers more proactively and limit undue influence.

Timing

- Consider the impact to the schedule and existing commitments of national team members: they may not be given 'time off' to work on the project.
- Nationally owned processes take longer, especially if they involve producing options for national partners to select from. In addition, be realistic in the turnaround time for decisions from Ministries etc. whilst maintaining momentum in the process.

Managing the Political Process

- Lay out roles and expectations with regard to managing the political process early on in the process.
- The politics of local NGOs are as important to consider as State agencies, especially when widening participation in the process outside of traditional partners.

Coordination and Collaboration with Partners

- Proactive sharing of information with other donors and international organisations is key to building cooperation.

Gender Considerations

- Be explicit in planning how to capture views from different groups and do not assume this will be taken into account by those planning the meetings (whether on the team or national partners).

Logistics

- Build up trust with the fixer as an integral member of the team through regular communication from the start.
- Be aware that the fixer does not represent all of society and access to people can be skewed.
- Timely payment of team members for services delivered is vital for developing trust and a professional atmosphere.

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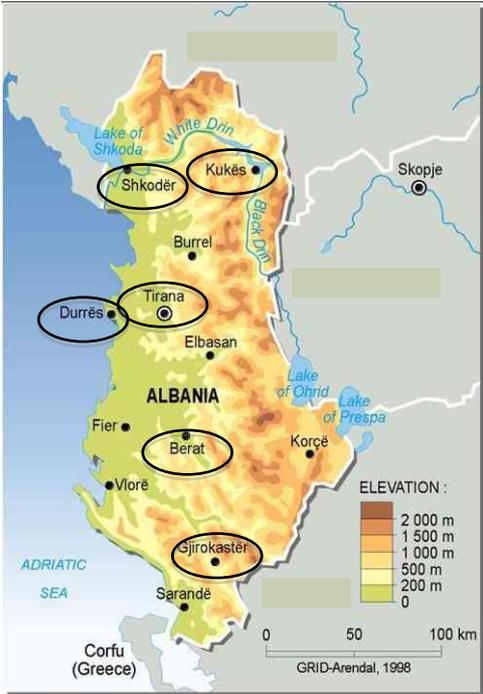
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Introduction

The project was to support the Albanian Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Albanian State Police (ASP) and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to develop a programme that would enhance the implementation of Community Policing in Albania. The initial programme budget was 1.5 million Euros, which later increased to 2.8 million Euros.

The map of Albania to the right highlights the locations visited during the design process.

In the original Terms of Reference (dated 01 June 2011), two mission phases were envisaged, with the project ending in February 2011. In reality, the project was broken down into four phases, with interim activity taking place between field missions. The design was completed at the end of April 2011.



The main team consisted of five persons (one ISSAT core staff (team leader), one DCAF Police division, one ISSAT Roster, one Albanian consultant and one member of the ASP). The team was supported by an Albanian fixer, with further facilitation and translation support as required. In addition, an Albanian Project Leader was appointed by the MoI.

Process, activities and outputs

A broad outline of the process used is shown in the table below, including the activities and outputs from each phase. Locations in Albania are shown on the adjacent map

Phase	Duration	Activities	Major Outputs
Desk Study (Geneva)	Mid July – Mid August 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background research • Briefings by anthropologist • Mission preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Research Paper • SWOT analysis
Phase 1 (Albania)	23-27 August 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one interviews (Tirana and Shkodra) • Snap survey of 112 citizens (Tirana) • Two ASP focus groups (Tirana and Shkodra) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Narrative Report (broad assessment)
Interim Phase	September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of progress to date on 2010 Community Policing Action Plan (CPAP) • Review of previous donor impact • Additional background research • Mission preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note on respective roles: ASP and Municipal Police • Short update on some areas within CPAP • List of key lessons from previous projects
Phase 2 (Albania)	07-15 October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six validation / exploratory workshops (Kukes, Tirana (2), Durres, Gjirokastra, Berat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Narrative Report, including validation / correction of First Report • List of current / potential roles of stakeholders addressing different security concerns
Interim Phase	November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis, additional research and drafting • Meeting with Sida HQ (Stockholm) • Mission preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Options Paper for MoI/ASP (menu of 10 different areas, from which three were chosen)
Phase 3 (Albania)	14-25 February 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three workshops to cover the three broad areas chosen by the MoI / ASP (Design of a Performance Management System, Partnerships (especially Youth & Police), and Domestic Violence) • Collection of Lessons Identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of gaps and activity ideas for each area •
Interim Phase	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Project Proposal Document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Project Proposal Document
Phase 4 (Albania)	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at International Consortium (Coordination mechanism for justice and home affairs support) • High-level meetings to present report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalised Project Proposal Document

Lessons identified

National / Local ownership

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was established between Sida and the MoI for the design project. The team contributed to a draft, which was subsequently adapted by the two signatories. The MoU was written in such a way as to highlight and strengthen the idea of equality between partners and underline that this was first and foremost an Albanian process. However, once written, the MoU did not really play any further role.

The idea of an Albanian Project Leader was formalised within the MoU. The concept was for the MoI to nominate an individual who would be the main link between the team and the ministry (particularly the deputy minister). The mandator undertook initial discussions with the ministry to identify who this would be; however, a name was only given when the issue was raised during the meeting with the Minister during the first mission. The person selected in what may have been a snap decision proved unsuitable (this was due to their existing work commitments rather than related to any personal capacity) and this position did not have the desired effect of enhancing the engagement of the MoI in the process.

Inclusion of national counterparts in the team was vital to ensuring national ownership. Issues related to team composition are covered in the section below.

Ownership beyond the State apparatus was sought through factoring in the public needs, gathered through snap surveys of the population, the inclusion of a very wide range of NGOs in the process and separate focus groups for citizens (including minorities), who did not feel comfortable participating in workshops with relatively high-ranking officials.

Lesson identified: Teams should take the role of ‘facilitators’ or ‘translators of needs’, rather than experts or consultants, and steer the process rather than lead it.

Lesson identified: Nominated representatives from national ministries must be selected appropriately if they are to help lead the process. Over and above having the relevant skills (these can be developed during the process), the person(s) must have sufficient time in their schedule to contribute and influence.

Lesson identified: Factor in as many ways as possible to capture and incorporate the views of citizens and recognise that some methods may not be appropriate to all audiences.

Team composition

The inclusion of a member of the ASP on the team was important for several reasons. Firstly, it ensured that analysis of the ideas proposed during the different workshops and the subsequent design of the programme received a reality check to ensure that the ASP institutional culture and context were taken into account. Secondly, the ASP

representative ensured that key persons within the ASP were kept informed of developments throughout the process, thus maintaining support and enthusiasm for the design project. Thirdly, the ASP representative will now take on a general coordination role between the ASP and the programme implementation team, which means that there will be continuity throughout the process.

The fixer took on the additional role of interpreter between the ASP representative and the rest of the team – both during missions and during the interim planning phases. This was crucial to creating the conditions for the team to benefit fully from the contributions of the ASP representative.

The national consultant brought expertise to the team and her knowledge and networks in the area of local government were invaluable. In addition, the national consultant was able to provide an insight into cultural and contextual issues from outside of the State institutions. This provided a useful balance to other opinions held within the team.

The five-strong team included (between them) two police experts, one local-government expert, two process experts, and three experts on the local context (including civil society, the state apparatus and the donor community).

A huge success factor for the overall mission was that, in addition to the national team members, the team included a member with significant experience of working and living in Albania. One cannot underestimate the importance of this. This facilitated planning, as it allowed the team to get access to key persons and arrange interviews, as well as quickly and easily identify everything from hotels to translators.

Lesson identified: If possible, include representatives from the State and Non-State sectors in the team. In addition to technical knowledge, awareness of process (in general and specific to the local context) is very important.

Methodology

The methodology listed above was developed throughout the process and differed from the requirements of the Terms of Reference (ToRs). Whilst many lessons can be taken forward from this mission and applied to a similar request in the future, it is nonetheless vital to retain flexibility in the ToRs to be able to adjust how information is being processed, analysed and decided upon in order to take into account contextual developments.

The briefings from an anthropologist specialising on Albania were considered to be very worthwhile, as it gave the team a better idea of the cultural setting and helped to shape ideas on suitable methodologies for finding out information on more sensitive subjects (for example inter-agency relationships).

Care was taken to ensure that as many groups as possible were involved in the design project. This was especially important, as it started the process to build relationships and partnerships, which is an integral part of Community Policing. In addition to the relationships, it is advisable to use methodologies that allow participants to gain some benefit from the process. Assessments should not just be considered as extracting

information, but can also provide a capacity-building experience, for example where stakeholders meet, discuss and learn from each other.

Arranging meetings was through a combination of formal and informal approaches. At times formal approaches were needed, although the arrangements had already been made through informal channels. The delay in securing the necessary protocol sometimes caused difficulties and formal request letters from the mandator for line ministries should be produced as standard.

The Programmatic Options paper produced 10 different options for the ASP and the MoI to choose from, all of which had emerged from the interviews, surveys and focus groups in the first mission, and the validation workshops in the second mission. Each area included a rationale for the option, potential supporting activities, pros and cons, and likely budgetary impact. The Programmatic Options Paper was circulated around the International Community actors working in similar fields to ensure that the ideas captured during the process but not taken forward as part of the Sida supported programme, would not be wasted and may be picked up by other donors.

One implication from using a process that identifies a wide range of options for the national authorities to choose from is that the team may not include specific experience in the chosen subjects. The MoI chose the areas of designing a performance management system, youth and partnership and domestic violence as the areas they wished to take forward. Whilst there was some generic experience in the team, the use of topic-specific workshops in the third phase proved critical to identifying relevant activity areas.

All of the workshops were run in Albanian. Translation was used where necessary for the plenary activities, but all the working groups were facilitated by Albanian members of the team (additional support was brought in to allow for this). Time is required to train the extended facilitation team and this should be factored into the mission duration. The ability of the team to absorb the translation requirements made a big impact on the success of the process: Albanian versions of the reports were available 2-3 days after the English versions were finalised. When circulated, the official version of the reports could therefore be Albanian, with the English version provided as an addition. The availability of good translators (and the fact that the mandator representative was also Albanian) also meant that responses by the MoI and ASP could be provided in Albanian. This both speeded up the process and reinforced national ownership.

All reports were circulated through the MoI. However, it was felt that the role of the MoI in circulating information to the different stakeholder groups within the State administration could have been much more proactive. The ASP were much more enthusiastic in sharing their views, but were hampered by protocol as they needed to wait for the official version of the documents to be sent to them by the MoI.

With regard to the follow-on aspects of the design project, care must be taken to prevent potential implementers from influencing the final version of the programme proposal so that it fits with what they can deliver. Turning a demand-driven process into a supply-driven process at the last minute undermines the integrity of design, national ownership and efforts to meet the genuine needs of the population.

The final programme document specified the desired outcomes and impact of the programme, and activities, outputs and outcomes of the component activities. It did not,

however, specify how those activities should be carried out, as it was felt that the eventual chosen implementers needed to develop their own work plans in order to take into account their own particular expertise and to ensure their ownership of their part of programme implementation. Clear guidance was given in the programme document regarding principles of implementation that must be upheld (wide participation, national ownership/partnership, robust monitoring, etc.).

Lesson identified: ToRs for programme design must set out clear parameters and milestones, but at the same time remain flexible to allow the team to develop a process that takes into account how information is being processed, analysed and decided upon, in order to take into account contextual developments.

Lesson identified: Enhance awareness of the local context and culture through engaging an anthropologist during the process.

Lesson identified: Consider the process used to develop the programme as both capacity building and an opportunity to build partnerships.

Lesson identified: Wherever possible, produce documents supporting the design process in the local language in order to allow the national decision-makers to take the lead in selecting options etc. Factor in the need for translation services into the planning and budget.

Lesson identified: The programme document must specify clear results required, and detail supporting activities. Potential implementers are responsible for determining how the activities would be carried out; hence principles of implementation must be included (e.g. wide participation, national ownership/partnership, monitoring and reporting, etc.).

Use of ISSAT Operational Guidance Notes

The Assessment OGNs were very useful during the initial planning phase of the mission. However, it would have been beneficial to have examples of programme design maps that give examples of processes and highlight the topics and subheadings that should be considered when writing a programme document.

During the mission, the team developed a number of useful templates that can be made available for other missions.

The one area that proved problematic in the programme design was procurement. Each mandator and country context will have different regulations and therefore it would be unreasonable for ISSAT to develop knowledge about the separate processes; however, the applicable procurement regulations play a critical role in determining the architecture for programme implementation. This will always be an issue in programme design and therefore it is an area that should be explicitly addressed up front with the mandator to determine how this issue will be dealt with.

Lesson identified: Laws and regulations on procurement (national or donor) have a strong influence on programme design. Include discussions on this up front in

order to identify the relevant parameters. Guidance would be useful on how to approach this.

Transparency and participation

The process was totally transparent from the outset. The first narrative report, which gave an assessment of the situation with regard to Community Policing and included details of the project parameters (total fund, duration, strategic framework, etc.), was circulated widely. This included to the ASP, MoI, other relevant ministries, civil society, and donors and other international actors active in similar fields. Initially, there were several doubts over the viability of a support project in the area of Community Policing, but circulation of the narrative generated internal discussions and underlined the interest in this area. In addition, the feedback allowed the team to revise some initial assumptions and led to the decision to hold six validation workshops across the country. The reaction to comments on the initial report and correction of relevant parts helped to gain credibility and underline national ownership. This level of transparency was a very important element for the success of the mission. It gave legitimacy and credibility to the entire process. Moreover, the mandator was not seen as a 'donor with a secret agenda', which added to the sense of partnership throughout the process.

This openness contributed to widening the Albanian ownership of the design process and initiate momentum and support for the project amongst stakeholders. However, this raised expectations of contracts amongst some potential implementers, who became more proactive in their engagement. In future, this could be mitigated by including a short outline of the process to select implementers, including no-earlier-than timelines and the selection framework.

Lesson identified: Aim for total transparency throughout the process, but be aware that this will increase the time needed and you may need to manage expectations amongst potential local implementers more proactively and limit undue influence.

Timing considerations

Working with national team members requires active planning to ensure that there is no undue impact on the individuals concerned. The ASP representative allocated to the design project retained responsibility for his usual work throughout the process. The team tried to be considerate with his schedule and commitments, although there were periods where a high level of engagement was required. The time needed for everyday work, responding to documents and obtaining the information required to make those responses needs to be factored in to mission timetables. The team found that national counterparts may be reticent to highlight if they are becoming swamped with work or if they have other activities during the mission period, so it was necessary to take a proactive approach to scheduling that used the ASP member's commitments as a starting point.

The considerations on timing are equally relevant for feedback from ministries or senior decision-makers, as one cannot – nor should – expect a working ministry be 100 percent dedicated to any particular donor project. The team managed to get Albanian versions of

the different documents for analysis and comment to the MoI within a relatively short time period; however, on almost every occasion, the team underestimated the time it would take the ministry to respond. Whilst there were some unforeseen influences (such as the severe flooding disaster in the north of the country in January 2011, the death of four protestors during anti-government rallies in February 2011, or the decision by the Minister of Interior to step down and run for mayor of Tirana in the local elections), it is critical to factor in realistic response time as there will always be unknown commitments that will slow down the process. However, this must be carefully balanced with maintaining momentum. For future missions it would be useful for an agreed detailed timeline for feedback to be developed with the MoI that can be followed up by the local embassy (for example when information should be sent out from the ministry to other agencies, when it should be returned and when decisions needed to be made), rather than just selecting a single date for feedback.

The increased response time from the ministry impacted mission preparations. Although planning for each phase of the mission began relatively far in advance, the final decisions on the content and the exact process could only be made once feedback had been received. This meant that planning for the actual deployment was often done at the very last minute. This problem may have been reduced if additional time was factored in.

Overall, none of those involved in the process expected the project to take so long or to include so many deployments. This was in part due to the fact that the findings from each mission and the feedback from the Albanian authorities informed the next steps. The other main factor was that the team did not start the process with pre-conceived ideas of what should be addressed, or what types of assistance would be relevant. The team thus developed options for the MoI to choose from, thus covering a far greater range of topics that would otherwise be the case.

Lesson identified: Consider the impact to the schedule and existing commitments of national team members: they may not be given 'time off' to work on the project.

Lesson identified: Nationally owned processes take longer, especially if they involve producing options for national partners to select from. In addition, be realistic in the turnaround time for decisions from Ministries etc. whilst maintaining momentum in the process.

Managing the political process

Given the strong role that politics plays in Albania, the presence of someone on the team with political knowledge and contacts was very important to assist with managing the political process (for example strong relationships with both government and opposition representatives). Whilst it is clear in the ISSAT strategy that the mandator is responsible for managing the politics of any mandate, the networks and experience of team members should be exploited where appropriate.

As the process developed, the mandator in country played an increasing role in the high level meetings, which was important to establish a strong sense of partnership as the programme design process moved into the phase of selecting implementers (in which ISSAT was not involved). Whilst there were few, if any, problems in the division of roles between the team and the mandator due to level of openness and communication, for

future missions, it would be advisable to be more explicit in laying out roles and expectations with regard to managing the political process early on in the process.

The politics of the local NGO scene proved interesting. Overall, the approach taken to extend participation in the design process was well received, with the exception of those who had previously enjoyed a somewhat privileged position as a supplier of services in this area. This reaction should have been expected by the team and greater care taken to minimise expectations from the outset by both the team and the mandator. An additional suggestion for future missions is to be upfront with NGOs on the rules for procurement for the eventual implementation and emphasise the fact that none of the team members (international or national) have any say in the allocation of contracts.

Lesson identified: Lay out roles and expectations with regard to managing the political process early on in the process.

Lesson identified: The politics of local NGOs are as important to consider as State agencies, especially when widening participation in the process outside of traditional partners.

Coordination and collaboration with partners

The team had very close coordination with the key international actors active in the police sector and related areas. This was, in part, due to previous relationships, but the level of cooperation was enhanced by the timely sharing of information and the level of transparency maintained throughout the process.

Lesson identified: Proactive sharing of information with other donors and international organisations is key to building cooperation.

Gender considerations

Ensuring a balanced representation in the workshops was problematic. In order to mitigate this, the team carried out informal street interviews with women prior to the workshops. It was clear from the responses that the ideas voiced during the workshops were not representative of the views of all society (this exercise was also repeated to ensure general citizen views were taken into account during the validation workshop phase outside of the capital, as although citizens were invited to the workshops, they felt uncomfortable attending an event with senior police officers and therefore did not enter the meeting room). For future missions, the team should be more explicit in the planning phase to take into account how to ensure adequate representation in the various stages of the process.

Lesson identified: Be explicit in planning how to capture views from different groups and do not assume this will be taken into account by those planning the meetings (whether on the team or national partners).

Logistics

The team had an excellent fixer with very extensive networks across the country, and prior experience of working with two of the team. His role, commitment and judgement proved invaluable. It is crucial that a level of trust is built up with the fixer. Whilst it is not always possible to have a prior relationship, regular communication throughout the planning phase is vital. In addition the fixer should be considered as an integral part of the team, rather than an add-on, and therefore understand the purpose of the different meetings s/he is being asked to make: it is highly likely that s/he will be able to identify relevant individuals or groups that may not have emerged during the planning analysis. However, even with the perfect fixer, it is important to remember that s/he does not represent all of society and therefore access to people can be skewed (see below under gender considerations).

The use of mobile phones is prevalent in Albania and local SIM cards are a must. Phone calls from new telephone numbers should be preceded by an SMS to alert the official who is trying to contact them, as otherwise they will tend to ignore the call. Personal email addresses were often more reliable than official ones.

The speed with which ISSAT turned around payments to external members of the team should be praised. This is key to creating a relationship of trust between ISSAT and external consultants or ISSAT roster members and creates a positive impression of professionalism. However, charges for international bank transfers should be absorbed by DCAF as a default.

Lesson identified: Build up trust with the fixer as an integral member of the team through regular communication from the start.

Lesson identified: Be aware that the fixer does not represent all of society and access to people can be skewed.

Lesson identified: Timely payment of team members for services delivered is vital for developing trust and a professional atmosphere.