

Phase 2 of the Mol / Sida Programme Design process to support Community Policing in Albania

Narrative Report Draft as of 2010-11-03

Introduction

During Phase 2 of the Mol / Sida Programme Design process to support Community Policing in Albania, the joint team carried out a second in-country mission over the period 09-15 October 2010. The purpose of the mission was to validate the findings of the Phase 1 report, identify possible programmatic areas, and build a shared understanding of Community Policing among different stakeholder groups. This narrative report covers the activities undertaken by the team members, as well as the principal findings. It also provides a summary of the next steps and decision points.

Activities

During the nine-day in-country mission, the team undertook six workshops across Albania, as well as additional focus groups, high-level meetings and additional interviews. Two of the workshops focused on specific groups, namely the Civil Society workshop and the Albanian State Police (ASP) workshop in Tirana, whereas the remaining four workshops in Berat, Durres, Gjirokastra and Kukës brought together representatives from the ASP, Municipal Police, Prefects, Heads of Municipalities and Communes, civil society organisations, directorates of education and health, international organisations as well as individuals from the various communities.. The workshops were all run on the same overall framework, although this was adapted in later workshops to allow more time for in-depth group work. The methodology is covered below.

The team met with a number of individuals who were not available during the Phase 1 deployment. These included the Minister for Public Works, the Deputy Minister of Interior (Public Order), the General Director of the Albanian State Police, the recently appointed Director of Public Order in the ASP, representatives of the Socialist Party (Opposition) and the former Security Advisor to the President¹.

The Mol appointed a new Albanian Project Leader, who took on an active role in managing the programme design process. In addition, the MoU between the Mol and Sida was signed.

Workshop methodology

The team began by introducing the potential Mol/Sida Community Policing project, as well as providing a reminder of the elements of Community Policing. This was followed by examples of Community Policing in Albania and Slovenia². A summary of the findings from the August report was then given, focusing on main security of citizens and challenges identified to implementing Community Policing. Workshop participants were asked to validate or correct the findings, as well as highlighting any issues that had not been included. Details are included under the next heading. The final element of the workshops involved group discussions. Three groups were created in order to discuss a total of six separate issues:

- Group 1: a) Road Safety, and b) Trust Building;
- Group 2: a) Issues affecting public order, and b) Accountability and Communication;

¹ The list of persons consulted or involved in the workshops will be provided in an additional annex once finalised.

² The Slovenia example was later dropped to allow more time in the discussion groups.

- Group 3: a) Domestic violence, and b) the roles of the ASP and the Municipal Police.

The groups were asked to analyse the current roles of different actors with respect to their issue, followed by proposing suggestions of what those different actors could do to enhance efforts to tackle their issue. The list of ideas generated from all of the workshops is attached at Annex A. Participants were also given the opportunity to complete a confidential survey after the workshop in order for the team to capture any information that participants did not have the opportunity to provide during the workshops.

The Mol participated in the general workshops in Kukes and Durrës, whereas Sida participated in the ASP workshop in Tirana.

There was media interest at the Kukes, Gjirokastrë and Berat workshops and the ASP member of the team provided interviews for local newspapers and television. A fact sheet was provided to all journalists listing the background to the project, the process to design the Community Policing programme and the contact point at the Mol for further information.

Although ordinary citizens were invited to the workshops, many of those contacted felt uncomfortable in participating³; hence separate focus groups were held in Berat and Gjirokastrë to capture their views. Participants included students, retirees, SME businessmen and representatives from minorities (Roma, Vlach and Greek). In addition to this, the team carried out short interviews with women in Berat and Gjirokastrë to ensure that their voices and suggestions were heard.

Findings

The meetings confirmed a number of points from the August report and there were some areas that were challenged. The main findings from the in country mission are listed below:

- Effectiveness of Community Policing: The level of general understanding regarding the basics of Community Policing was relatively high throughout all of the workshops, which is indicative of the work that has been carried out to date by the ASP and supporting agencies. This countered the view heard during the August mission that many rank-and-file officers had not heard of Community Policing, and provides a solid base on which to move forward. However, there was consensus on the fact that implementation of the concept was “not functioning as well as it could” and the relationships should be better institutionalised, in particular regarding the police and communities. The main factors cited for these shortfalls included poor communication (including the impact of the media and general awareness of the activities of the police), the lack of frameworks for cooperation, and confusion over the roles of the ASP and the Municipal Police. The issue of Community Policing being tainted by the historical legacy of Communism was also confirmed.
- Trust: The issue of low levels of trust between the communities and the police was highlighted in all workshops, and it was rated as a major concern by civil society. Of particular note was the extent to which trust appeared to be lacking amongst the minorities interviewed. Various interviews with women in Gjirokastra and Berat revealed that almost all had not heard of the community policing term. Many of them expressed serious concern over the levels of professionalisation. They noted that some, but not all, police officers for

³ This was apparently due to the reluctance to provide views in an environment that included a considerable number of high-ranking officials (for example, the prefect, the mayor and the regional director of police), as well as the proportion of police officers. The team believes this to be illustrative of the mistrust between ordinary citizens and the police, which was identified as a concern in the August report.

example, favour some individuals in the community over others. Such cases result in the police looking away when these individuals commit an offence.

- Security issues: Although there were some discrepancies across the different areas of Albania, there was consensus over the main safety/security concern, which was road safety. Burglary and public order crimes were viewed as prevalent for the Tirana police, Kukes and Gjirokastrë, whereas civil society did not see this as an issue at all. Domestic violence gave several polarised responses, suggesting that those working on the issue are very well informed and rate it as a real concern, whereas others may not have encountered it as a problem. This may be due to the fact that domestic violence is often still considered a taboo subject and therefore very under-reported. Nonetheless, the dedicated unit within the ASP appears committed. Other safety/security issues were highlighted that were not in the original report. These included crimes by minors, drug dealing/usage and illegal constructions. In addition, there were region-specific issues highlighted, including suicides (Gjirokastrë only), SALW⁴ (Kukes and Gjirokastrë) and the security of cultural monuments (Gjirokastrë)⁵.
- Politicisation and professionalism: The majority of the workshops highlighted that the issue of politicisation in the police was not as high as had been previously believed. Whilst some rotations occur, these are more likely to be at a director level and be part of the overall management of resources in the ASP. The rank-and-file do not tend to be changed. One possible reason for this discrepancy is that the prevailing impression of the police does not take into account progress made since the introduction of the 2007 Law on State Police, which makes political rotations much more difficult. This reinforces the analysis made in the August report that the ASP is not adept at monitoring its progress and ‘telling the story’ of its successes. Notwithstanding this overarching improvement, there were several examples offered of arbitrary behaviour by the ASP when choosing whether to award fines, which was considered to be ‘political behaviour’. This aspect links to an issue raised by several non-police participants. It was felt that the police needed to do more in some areas to raise the level of professionalism in dealing with the general public, and reinforce the concept of service delivery. The Municipal Police were much more likely to be seen as ‘politically motivated’ or ‘politicised’, mainly due to their intrinsic link to the elected mayors.
- Understanding of different roles: Although the majority of workshop participants understood the broad ideas behind Community Policing, there was still confusion over the respective roles of different stakeholder groups. This was particularly strong in the case of reconciling the respective roles of the ASP and the Municipal Police. The issue of how to reinforce the role of local government vis-à-vis the police was raised on several occasions, and the team is aware of the current debates over either a Partnership Law or some other mechanism of cooperation. Further details will be needed on this in order to ensure that the issue is taken into account during the programme design.
- Commitment towards Community Policing: The levels of commitment towards Community Policing reflect the impressions gained during the August in country mission. The ASP was viewed as having a high/medium commitment; local government were viewed as having a medium commitment; civil society and citizens were viewed as having a low/medium commitment. This reinforces the findings from August regarding the challenges of mistrust by citizens and highlights the fact that additional work will be needed to identify the right

⁴ Small Arms and Light Weapons.

⁵ This refers in particular to the theft of religious artefacts.

incentives to ensure that citizens engage. The post-workshop surveys revealed that a number of participants seemed very interested in working on Community Policing issues.

- Police capacity: While the ASP has adopted community policing as the main philosophy to guide all its work – adopting this philosophy at the grass-roots level in their everyday interaction with citizens remains somewhat of a challenge. The team found that there were many good examples of individual ASP officers reaching out to the community. These included police officers regularly liaising with schools, the publication of newsletters to the communities and open days. Whilst the ASP can report on specific accomplishments, they cannot report on the whole strategy, which limits their capacity to identify strategic priorities.

Whilst the Community Policing Action Plan serves as an ambitious and detailed strategy guiding the ASP in this area of work, the team found that it was difficult to assess at this time the exact capacity needs of the ASP to assist them in implementing their Action Plan. This is partly due to the fact that there appears to be no comprehensive mechanism for tracking progress in this area or identifying the reasons for delays. Work was undertaken by the team during the interim period between Phases 1 and 2 to determine the state of the Action Plan. Although some information was obtained, it highlighted the challenges to fully assessing the extent to which elements in the Action Plan have been achieved and what is needed to move forward. Moreover, the ASP does not have a ready formed list of requests for assistance in building their internal capacity⁶. This highlights the need to build flexibility into the programme so that elements to address capacity gaps can be added as and when they are identified.

Next steps and decision points

Following two in-country missions, supported by additional research carried out in the interim period, the team has developed a good sense of areas for possible support. The following list provides an overview of the steps recommended for the remainder of Phase 2 and throughout Phase 3. Suggested decision points have been added in bold.

- Circulation of ideas generated in the workshops: Annex A provides a compilation of all the ideas generated in the six workshops. Each of the six issues considered (road safety, public order, domestic violence, relationships between the ASP and the Municipal Police, trust-building and accountability/communication) were viewed from the perspective of the potential roles of different stakeholder groups. There were many ideas provided, some of which may form part of the eventual Mol/Sida programme. However, there are also many that the different actors (e.g. the ASP) may wish to take forward already, or incorporate into any development of strategies or action plans outside of the Mol/Sida programme. **It is strongly advised that the table is circulated to the workshop participants⁷, preferably by the Mol.**
- Development of a programmatic options paper: There are many areas that have been identified over the two phases that could benefit from external support; however, it is vital that the aspects to be developed into specific projects reflect the priorities of the Mol, as well as aligning with the strategic commitments of both the Mol and Sida. **The team will**

⁶ However during the August mission, the ASP Planning Unit underlined the potential benefits of introducing a performance management system, which would enhance their ability to deliver overall.

⁷ This could be by using the same email list that was used to email participants after the workshops to thank them for their contributions

produce a 'menu' of programme options from which the MoI and Sida should select the aspects they wish to take further. This process should be completed by 10th December in order to allow time to plan the in-country deployment in Phase 3.

- Planning the programme design: The exact process to design the details of the projects selected will depend on their focus. **Once the team has received the priorities from the MoI/Sida they will produce an update document that details the process to produce the programme document.** Inputs will be requested from the MoI and the DSDC⁸ in the Council of Ministers to ensure that the eventual programme aligns with the relevant Albanian strategies and the M&E aspects support and/or are fed by existing monitoring mechanisms. **The ASP, through their team member, will be requested to ensure that the team is aware of the on-going process to revise the Albanian Community Policing Action Plan.**
- Phase 3 deployment: Given the planning and the extent of commitments required in the next phase, the number of actors that may be required to provide inputs of various sorts, and the existing commitments of the key Albanian stakeholders in the upcoming months, the in-country deployment will now take place in January 2011. **The team will ensure that the MoI and Sida remain informed about the planning process. The team will also continue to liaise with other internationals providing support in Community Policing and related areas** in order to ensure that the eventual programme provides added value to the support already being delivered.

⁸ Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination