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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Evaluation of Results of Sweden's Development Cooperation Strategy Albania

Final Report

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAC	Association of Albanian Communes
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation (Austrian Government Development Agency)
CHWB	Cultural Heritage Without Borders
CNVP	Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DSDC	Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
Framework Organisations	Refers to the three Swedish NGOs selected to provide Swedish support through their own selection and grant-making approaches. The three are Kvinna till Kvinna, Olof Palme International Center and Civil Rights Defenders.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – German federal enterprise that supports the German Government in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.
GoA	Government of Albania
GTD	General Tax Directorate
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
INRE	Improved Natural Resources and Environment Project
INSTAT	Albania's Institute of Statistics
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPRO	Immovable Property Registration Office
IPS	Integrated Planning System
KtK	Kvinna till Kvinna
LAMP	Land Administration and Management Project
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MoEFWA	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration
MFA	Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
NES	National Employment Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NFPUA	National Forestry and Pasture Users Association
NRDP/INRE	Natural Resources Development Project Precursor to the Improved Natural Resources and Environment Project
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
OPIC	Olof Palme International Center
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PGD	Policy for Global Development
REC	Regional Environment Centre
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SEK	Swedish Krona
SKL	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SNV/ CNVP	Netherlands Development Organisation. Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation (SNV's Albanian partner).
SWAps	Sector Wide Approaches
Strategy	Sweden's Country Strategy For Albania
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

Preface

This evaluation of the Results of Sweden's Development Cooperation Strategy Albania was commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Tirana, Albania, through Sida's framework agreement for reviews and evaluations with Indevelop.

Indevelop carried out the evaluation between December 2012 and February 2013. Anna Liljelund Hedqvist was the Project Manager with overall responsibility for managing implementation and the process of the evaluation; quality assurance of the methodology and reports was provided by Kevin Kelpin.

The independent evaluation team included the following key members:

- Ian Christoplos, Team Leader and Project Director at Indevelop for Sida's framework agreement for reviews and evaluations
- Annika Nilsson, Evaluator, is a member of Indevelop's Core Team of professional evaluators
- Jim Newkirk, Evaluator, a Balkans-based project manager and evaluator with extensive experience with Sida-supported initiatives.
- Sabina Ymeri, National Evaluator

This report has incorporated feedback from Sida and the Embassy of Sweden in Tirana on the draft report.

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this evaluation of the results of Sweden's development cooperation strategy in Albania is two-fold: to evaluate the effectiveness, cost efficiency and aspects of relevance and sustainability and to provide recommendations that will primarily be addressed to Sweden's future cooperation. The evaluation assessed Swedish support to Albania for the period 2009-2012 (from the cooperation strategy period of 2009-2013), based on an analysis of 21 funded initiatives from this period.

The evaluation was largely based on a modified outcome harvesting approach, including six steps:

- Design – Comparing intended outcomes and what was actually achieved, drawing on perspectives from stakeholders and non-stakeholder experts.
- Document review - A desk study of existing documentation, which contributed to a matrix of planned and achieved results.
- Engagement with change agents - Workshops for each of Sweden's focus sectors to assess the relevance of the outcome statements from the Country Strategy, the extent of achievements in relation to these outcomes, outcomes achieved beyond, or different to, those intended and the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to Swedish support.
- Substantiation – Discussion with informed experts regarding the relevance of the outcome statements, including their potential contribution in relation to the priorities and trends in Albanian development more generally.
- Analysis and interpretation – Triangulations and assessment of the theories of change, sphere of influence and emerging niche and comparative advantages for Swedish development cooperation.
- Utilisation – Close engagement with Sweden's country team for Albania to ensure that findings feed into the decisions that will be made related to the future Strategy.

The assessment was undertaken at the strategy level, i.e., of programmatic outcomes within overall sectors, but out of necessity, the programme perspective must be seen through specific projects. The assignment was seen to use the projects to inform analysis with regard to overall outputs and outcomes, as well as the effectiveness and relevance (particularly) of the programming in relation to the Strategy. As a result, the scope and quality of the generalisations made reflect the range and comparability of the interventions that were selected for analysis.

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance

- The Strategy is clearly relevant but the overall portfolio lacks a sufficiently focused approach.
- The principles of accountability and transparency are visible in the initiatives targeting the Government; the principles of participation and non-discrimination are not.
- Capacity development for public administration reform is highly relevant for Albanian development. However, the current focus at the technical level has meant that major challenges related to management and in organisational development have not yet been addressed.
- The work of the framework organisations and their Albanian CSO partners is a core element of the Swedish programme in Albania, with high relevance and relatively strong effectiveness. The relevance could have been further enhanced if the support was provided as part of a visible and deliberate strategy to strengthen civil society both in its own right and as a means and if synergies with other components of the portfolio were sought.
- While the alignment of democratic governance and human rights sector objectives and the portfolio is relatively clear, links between initiatives and objectives in natural resources and the environment are either indirect or relatively modest.
- Forestry remains a relevant focus for Swedish support, particularly in the context of renewable sources of energy, local governance and the interaction of civil society and institutions.
- Support to property registration and other initiatives in the natural resource and environment portfolio are relevant in relation to Albanian needs; particularly as related to land use issues, but their relevance in relation to the objectives in the Strategy is less apparent.

Effectiveness

- There has been demonstrated growth in government ownership of project change processes and the management of funds, including:
 - The Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC) has increased its influence over strategic directions and donors.
 - A common donor platform for capacity development has been created.
 - Donor strategies are better aligned with Albania's strategic planning processes. Alignment of donor financing procedures with Albanian budgetary processes remains a challenge. The Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) initiative undertaken under by the DSDC leadership will help harmonise the planning and budgetary processes of both the Government of Albania (GoA) and development partners.
 - Capacity development in policy formulation is appreciated by the Government.
- Public institutions at national and local levels have developed a strong level of ownership for new legislation and policies in relation to gender equality. The

promotion of gender equality is visible in five of the public administration programmes (though less so in the support to property registration).

- Integrated Planning System (IPS) has enabled effective linking of planning, policy and mid-term budgeting, together with external assistance and a sectoral approach.
- Albania Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) capacities have been strengthened, with notable results in the quality of surveys and censuses undertaken.
- A General Tax Directorate (GTD) strategic plan for 2012-2015 has been developed; customer services can be expected to be enhanced and industry control systems improved; taxation statistics are better aligned with EU requirements.
- Digitalisation of the National Employment Service (NES) jobseeker system is almost complete and is expected to make the job market more transparent, and reduce the risk of corruption as well as improving job market statistics and analysis.
- Improvements have been made within the Association of Albanian Communes' (AAC's) strategic focus and capacity.
- Framework Organisations have all contributed to a conducive legal/policy environment, and support to CSOs that give voice to poor and/or marginalised women and men.
- Exchanges at the national level have improved the quality and level of NGO engagement.
- CSO organisational capacities, particularly for advocacy and lobbying, have been improved; this is exemplified by the adoption of the anti-discrimination law and the inclusion of domestic violence in the Albanian Penal Code.
- There has been some improvement in human rights practices within the police as a result of the Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) supported initiatives on legal aid and non-discrimination (e.g. gender based violence, Roma, disability and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights). The recent Community Policing programme is yet to demonstrate such changes.
- Forestry management plans have been developed with 250 Forest User Groups, and include specific efforts to include women.
- A national organisation of forest and pasture user associations has been created, with commune, regional and national apex structures.
- There has been a rapid increase of property registration due to the creation of a computerised property registration system by the Immoveable Property Registration Office (IPRO).
- Cultural Heritage Without Borders (CHWB) has contributed to national and regional capacities to promote the right to one's cultural heritage and the strengthening of mutual respect.

The work of the country team

- The country team is relatively well equipped to address the tasks and directions of the coming strategy period, but there are structural aspects of the Strategy and its implementation that create challenges for the country team in

Albania and Stockholm; particularly the breadth, and in some respects the fragmented nature of stated priorities/objectives within the Strategy.

- The ability of Swedish support to have impact has been limited as a result of the wide range of initiatives being funded.
- The portfolio is not structured to feed into a clear and manageable strategy/theory of change or to focus on the areas and initiatives of cooperation.
- The uncertain pace of EU approximation in the future will mean that the degree to which the emphasis of Albanian cooperation shifts to Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) modalities will be difficult to predict; which in turn suggests that Sweden needs a strategy with room for manoeuvre, to maintain a clear, complementary role.

KEY SUMMARISED RECOMMENDATIONS

- Within Sweden's strategic directions, linkages with the EU/IPA agenda, and strategic priorities based on Swedish comparative advantages, are critical. While coordination with other donor nations will remain important, the critical focus will be on close dialogue and linkages with DSDC and the EU.
- High priority should be given to developing strategic partnerships with agencies that have shown a capacity to effectively address the micro-macro/national-local gap to ensure that public administration reforms and reform in the natural resource and environment sector lead to more visible benefits for Albanians.
- Albanian institutions should play an increasing role in directly managing chosen initiatives.
- The process of developing the new Strategy should take a critical look at where Swedish priorities and Albanian capacities overlap.
- It is important to ensure that the Swedish portfolio is proactive in areas where the EU is relatively weak – including a focus on equitable development, gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability.
- Sweden's core strengths in enhancing transparent and efficient public services, supporting an evidence base for public policy, supporting civil society watchdog functions and introducing a stronger gender perspective and voice for the most marginalised groups; and these should remain at the core of the future Strategy.
- Support in the natural resource management sector should reflect and address the dangers that control over resources may be usurped by powerful actors and undermine equitable and sustainable development.
- Support to the forestry sector should continue within an objective relating to sustainable natural resource management and rural development (rather than as primarily contributing to renewable energy).
- An appropriate Swedish niche in natural resource management and the environment would be in initiatives for promoting equitable resource access, management and control.
- Sweden should maintain a focus on activities in democratic governance, human rights, natural resources and the environment.

- The strategic focus should be informed by a more proactive approach to assessing outcomes, including a critical analysis of the underlying theories of change across the portfolio, regarding investments in public administration reform and enhanced services.
- A more well-developed results matrix is needed to provide a coherent link between funded activities, outputs and outcomes and the intended overall objectives of the new Strategy.
- A stakeholder mapping should be undertaken to select the most effective partners and modalities within all selected results areas.
- The future strategy should make the development of a vibrant Albanian civil society a specific objective in its own right.
- The country team should develop a stronger knowledge base to ensure that the needs of marginalised groups and threats to their rights and livelihoods are made more apparent in programming.

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 CONTEXT IN RELATION TO ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

1.1.1 EU approximation

Albania has made great strides in its efforts to make the transition from a closed economy to a consolidated democracy with a functioning market economy. The prospect of European integration has been one of the driving forces for the country's democratisation processes and the implementation of domestic reforms. The Government's first priority, as set out in the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) is the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) under European Integration, which was signed in 2006 and came into effect in April 2009. The SAA defines the main obligations that Albania needs to fulfil in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership, in three main areas: i) Democracy and Rule of Law, including human rights and rights of minorities; ii) a functioning market economy, as well as iii) the gradual approximation of domestic legislation with the EU *acquis*, including the establishment and consolidation of administrative and institutional structures that guarantee its implementation.

1.1.2 Economic development

Albania experienced sustainable rates of economic growth, at an average rate of 5% annually, outperforming other Western Balkans economies in the 2005 – 2009 period. However, the onset of the Eurozone crisis took a toll on the local economy, and caused a serious slowdown in economic growth. Despite these developments, Albania has so far succeeded in maintaining growth, but macroeconomic imbalances persist, while domestic demand and investments have shrunk. Its openness to markets has encouraged private sector initiatives, although growth in the economy has mainly taken place through internal engines of construction and services. Expansion and sustainability of the economy over the longer term will depend on the growth of export industries, competitive import businesses and sound business practices and fiscal policies.

For the first time, Albania moved into the group of countries with a high human development index in 2007, as reported by the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Global Human Development Report 2007, and also moved into the group of middle income countries with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita at the level of 3,358 EUR in 2011 (population count of 2,8 million, based on the 2011 census). Income disparities are significant between Tirana and other urban centres and more remote areas, although they are gradually declining. Reforms have tackled all sectors of the economy, and aim to improve the quality of public spending, as well as basic services such as education, health and social care, insurance and other

protection systems. Unemployment rates soared in the first years of transition, reaching a peak of 23% in 1999. Unemployment has gradually reduced since 1999; however it remains relatively high, and is officially at 13.3% (presumably significantly higher) in 2012.

The strategic directions for economic development are based on the EU requirements to support a competitive economy, through the balance and sustainable use of resources. Priority is given to further development of the country's infrastructure in order to increase access to markets as well as social and territorial cohesion. Furthermore, the Government has committed to the creation of a favourable business climate, through the removal of administrative barriers, the facilitation of market entry and the promotion of foreign investments. However, the business climate still remains weak, and is undermined by a series of structural problems, including property rights, weak law enforcement as well as poor basic infrastructure.

1.1.3 Natural resource management and environmental change

The country's policy on environment issues is set out in the crosscutting environment strategy as well as other sectoral strategies within the NSDI, which define a series of strategic priorities for preserving the environment, the sustainable use of natural resources, the prevention of environmental contamination and degradation as well as the promotion of environmental protection. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Management is the institutional body in charge of environmental policy and its implementation, however inter-institutional coordination with other sectors at the national and local level is poor. Furthermore, environmental monitoring is weak and does not provide reliable data.

A number of environmental issues have become pressing concerns in the recent years and remain inadequately addressed; including air pollution; water quality; waste management; etc. Albania has made progress in the adoption of nature protection legislation; however the implementation, and especially the management, of protected areas need considerable improvement.

Governance in the sector remains weak; and the level of funding dedicated is rather low. Suggestions to establish a dedicated environmental fund have so far not been endorsed by the Government. Administrative capacities in the sector remain weak at all levels, in particular for the monitoring structures as well as at the local level, where the necessary resources to fulfil legal responsibilities are often lacking.

However, the Albanian government reports its determination to strengthen governance in the sector. The forthcoming Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) II programme will support the Government of Albania's (GoA) initiative to establish a Sector Wide Approach in Environment. This approach is in full coherence with the Integrated Planning System (IPS). It is intended to enable better governance, cooperation and harmonisation of efforts in the sector, as well as improving funding modalities and alignment with government structures.

1.1.4 Political and institutional reform (national and local)

Albania has made considerable progress in the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law; however further efforts are necessary in order to ensure the effectiveness and stability of democratic and accountable governance systems. In particular, although the public administration and civil service legal and administrative frameworks are generally in line with EU standards, concerns remain over perceived politicisation of the administration and the public service. The public service is also marked by relatively high staff turnover levels. Corruption remains prevalent in several areas, in particular in the judiciary system as well as the property rights sector.

1.2 CONTEXT IN RELATION TO SWEDEN'S NICHE IN ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 Timeframe for current strategy and plans for next

The current Development Cooperation Strategy with Albania is valid for the period 2009 – 2013. The strategy was programmed to end in 2012, but has been extended for one more year. The annual contribution budget for the Strategy is 80 MSEK.¹ In March 2009, Albania and Sweden signed a bilateral agreement describing the scope and objectives of cooperation between the two countries. The overall objective is to support a stronger democratic state, sustainable development in the long run and improved opportunities for achieving EU membership. In this context, Swedish support has focused on two sectors: a) democratic governance and human rights and b) natural resources and environment.

1.2.2 The current strategy in a changed context

The Swedish government commissioned Sida to begin preparations for a new cooperation strategy for the whole of the Western Balkans for the period beyond December 2013. This regional strategy is in preparation, but as the assignment (to start drafting input) was only released as this evaluation was being finalised, it has not informed the work of this evaluation. The Swedish government has indicated its intention to continue its development cooperation with Albania throughout the period 2014 – 2020, and to formulate its strategic directions in development cooperation within this longer timeframe. The timeframe is congruent with the upcoming EU/IPA timeframe for assistance to Albania, which will provide a useful and strategic framework for internal Swedish discussions and for discussions with the Government of Albania,

¹ The Strategy indicated a level of 90 MSEK, but with budget constraints in 2009 (with the financial crisis the Swedish economy weakened and the allocation for development cooperation was reduced), a level of 80 MSEK was decided and has then been kept for the strategy period. This level was also seen as appropriate for absorption reasons,

in terms of their priorities and sense of strategic direction, and the most effective form and content of Swedish cooperation. It is also relevant at a time when the number of bilateral donors with a longer-term commitment to cooperation with Albania is decreasing, while the role and impact of EU assistance grows. As one of the few remaining EU member bilateral donors, Sweden is well-placed to complement the directions and assistance of the EU (with a likely more specific focus on EU approximation in the coming Strategy), as well as to continue its focus on areas where EU engagement may be limited, such as civil society development, gender and equity.

1.2.3 Priorities for Sida and the Embassy

Within this wider context, Sida and the Embassy are particularly concerned with understanding the perceptions of the wider community regarding the focus, relevance and effectiveness of the initiatives they support, and to gain a wider perspective about what Sweden's future focus should be. In considering this future focus, it is necessary to assess and evaluate the strategic trajectory of its portfolio, and its potential for impact, with a view to changing or strengthening different aspects of the Strategy or the portfolio, as indicated through the assessment.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Within this context, and per the Terms of Reference (ToR), the purpose of the assignment was two-fold:

- To evaluate the effectiveness, cost efficiency and aspects of relevance and sustainability related to a forward-looking perspective of future Swedish cooperation.
- To provide recommendations that are primarily addressed to Sweden's future cooperation.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation assessed Swedish support to Albania for the period 2009 – 2012. While the specific focus was on this period, the portfolio of assessed projects includes initiatives from prior to 2009 as well as initiatives that are funded beyond 2012. Some assessed initiatives include more than a single agreement for an organisation/programme – these have been treated as single programmes, as they are continuations of longer-term support. Some initiatives are relatively new, and have been looked at more from the perspective of the 'strategic trajectory' of the programme, rather than in terms of results. No regional programmes were assessed, with the partial exception of Cultural Heritage Without Borders (CHWB), which has national and regional activities. The evaluation looked at 11 initiatives from the Democratic Governance and Human Rights sector and 5 initiatives from the Natural Resources and Environment sector (selected by the Embassy).

The following list details the initiatives assessed as part of the evaluation, within the relevant sectoral focus:

Initiative Name	Size Of Support (SEK)
Democratic Governance And Human Rights	
Direct support INSTAT (2010-2014)	13,870,400
Statistics INSTAT (2010-2014)	23,318,000
DAAC phase out (2009-2013).	15,250,629
OSCE ALB (2009-2012).	4,330,378
OPIC (2012-2015)	14,530,000
OPIC (2008-2011)	17,280,000
Cultural Heritage Without Borders (2012-2014)	7,100,000
Cultural Heritage Without Borders (2008-2012)	7,614,910
KtK (2012-2014)	15,000,000
KtK (2008-2011)	19,211,000
CRD (2012-2015)	18,000,000
SHC (CRD) (2008-2011)	14,400,000
Tax admin phase II (2008-2012).	11,994,865
IPS ALB (2007-2012).	8,000,000
Support to the Albanian Nat Employment Service, NES (2011-2014).	7,741,000
Support to Community Policing (2012-2016).	25,173,380
Natural Resources And The Environment	
Strategic adviser on solid waste (2011-2013).	4,300,000
SNV Forestry Albania (2010-2013).	28,200,000
Improved Natural Resources and Environment (2011-2013).	21,728,000
Land Management (2006-2013).	40,000,000
Twinning IPRO – Lantmäteriet (2008-2012).	5,260,000

2 Approach and Methodology

2.1 APPROACH

The evaluation had four components.

2.1.1 Inception

The inception phase focused on elaborating the scope and feasibility of the evaluation, methodology, including a detailed description of the methodological choices, design of the analysis, data collection methods and instruments and evaluation work plan. The inception period and report included an analysis of the relevance and evaluability of the evaluation questions. The inception report included the evaluation time plan and division of labour. The inception phase ended with an inception meeting between the evaluation team and the Embassy, via video conference/telephone. The issues and proposals put forth in the inception report were discussed. Subsequently they were amended through a process of an e-mail dialogue. The inception report and subsequent discussions and agreements are appended to this report.

2.1.2 Desk Study

The evaluation team assessed a broad range of available secondary data, including an analysis of relevant studies, existing reports, evaluations and other relevant documents. Of particular relevance was the Country Strategy 2009 – 2013, which provided the context for Sweden's current support as well as the detailed description of intended outcomes, which framed the work of the evaluation team. The desk study and subsequent fieldwork were focused on a set of interventions that were chosen by the country team and specified in the ToR. It should be noted that support to the UN was not included.

2.1.3 Fieldwork

Primary data was collected using empirical methods through interviews and focus group meetings with relevant stakeholders and informed experts, including implementing partners (consulting firms, government institutions and CSOs), beneficiaries and other donors. The Embassy informed stakeholders about the evaluation, and provided the evaluation team with project and other stakeholder contact details. The evaluation team held four focus group meetings – two with stakeholders (one per sec-

tor) and two with informed experts from the two sectors. A further two focus group meetings were held with partners of Swedish Framework Organisations Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) and Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK).² The team identified these actors independently, as well as receiving recommendations from the Embassy. Given the range of issues to be covered a truly ‘representative’ sample of experts could not be identified and no attempt is made in the evaluation to quantify the data received from these informants. The Embassy provided a letter of invitation to all potential interviewees and participants in focus group meetings. As well as the focus group meetings, interviews were held with all relevant Embassy personnel, Sida personnel (via Skype), some further non-stakeholder experts and a wide range of stakeholders. Interviews and focus group meetings involved a total of 65 people from 35 organisations, including government partners, implementers, CSO partners, external experts and Sida and Embassy personnel. A complete list of focus group participation and interviewees is annexed to this report.

2.1.4 Analysis and Reporting

This report represents the analysis of the evaluation team of the information, inputs and feedback from the primary and secondary sources described above. This analysis is intended to be of relevance to Sida, the Embassy and partners, and includes reflections and conclusions on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of Swedish development cooperation with Albania, as well as a number of lessons learned and recommendations.

2.2 METHODS AND THEIR DESCRIPTION

The evaluation was largely based on an outcome harvesting approach³ that was modified to a certain extent to take the objectives of the evaluation and timing and resource limitations into account. The approach included the following steps – following an adaptation of the outcome harvesting methodology:

- The outcome harvesting approach was designed during project inception. The design focused on understanding perceptions of intended outcomes and what

² A number of Swedish humanitarian and human rights-based organisations were involved in the Western Balkans after the war, with Sida support. At the end of the 1990s, Sida saw the need for a more long-term civil society capacity-building program, focussing on peace-building, reconciliation, democracy and human rights. An invitation was sent to all potential Swedish NGOs to be part of a regional program. Three organisations, Kvinna till Kvinna, Civil Rights Defenders (then Swedish Helsinki Committee) and Olof Palme International Centre, were already involved in the region and answered Sida’s call. Sida decided to enter into three-year framework agreements with them, meaning support to their *programmes* rather than project-by-project support. The framework agreement outlines the conditions of Sida support in terms of capacity, cooperation and overall aims. The conditions were revised after an evaluation of the modalities in 2010.

³ See 2012. Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt. *Outcome Harvesting*, Ford Foundation.

was actually achieved, and how to draw on perspectives in these areas from stakeholders and non-stakeholder experts.

- A desk study was undertaken of documentation provided to the evaluation team. The desk study included all documentation available on each project within the country portfolio. Documentation was limited in some projects, particularly in relation to reporting on outcome level results, which impacted initial outcome descriptions. The evaluation team took, as its point of departure, the outcome statements in the Country Strategy, although with a further refinements from the documentation. A matrix of results was developed, and is attached at Appendix 3.
- Two workshops (focus group meetings) were held for each of Sweden's focus sectors.
 - The workshops addressed the formulation of outcome descriptors with stakeholders – assessing the accuracy of the outcome statements from the Country Strategy, the extent of achievements in relation to these outcomes, outcomes achieved beyond, or different to those intended, and the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to Swedish support, or to what extent the Swedish support has contributed to these achievements.
 - As part of the substantiation process, informed experts discussed the relevance of the outcome statements, including their potential contribution in relation to the priorities and trends in Albanian development more generally. Where informed experts were aware of the details of Swedish support, they were encouraged to also assess the achievements and contributions of these projects, with particular attention paid to ownership and sustainability.
 - Through these processes, the workshops were used to understand the theory of change by which Swedish support contributed to, or was intended to contribute to, intended outcomes, taking into account Sweden's changing sphere of influence as the context of development cooperation has changed.
- The findings of these focus group meetings were used to develop a deeper understanding of results in relation to the questions posed in the Terms of Reference for the assignment (appended to this report).
- The findings of the focus group meetings were then substantiated through a limited number of individual interviews, with implementers, institutional partners, CSO partners/stakeholders and external experts. Interviews primarily focused on projects selected by the Embassy for deeper analysis.
- The evaluation team further analysed the material from the focus group meetings and interviews against the matrix of results. This report represents this analysis and interpretation.

2.2.1 Efficiency

The evaluation team held extensive discussions with the Embassy during the inception period, and after submission of the inception report, on the intent and intended content/structure of the analysis of efficiency/cost efficiency. The Embassy's focus

was on ‘modalities’ of delivery, and the relative (cost) efficiency of these modalities. The evaluation team was concerned with its ability to assess these efficiencies effectively, and to the benefit of the Embassy, within the constraints of the evaluation. Specifically, as no framework for assessment of cost efficiencies *within* any initiatives had been established, assessing *across* initiatives was not possible. Further, the available detail on costs could not be guaranteed. Finally, a detailed assessment of cost efficiency, even where data is available, is both time-consuming and requires specific expertise – neither of which were present within the evaluation team. Following discussions, it was agreed that the team would undertake to focus on three aspects of efficiency, in relation to the three funding modalities selected by the Embassy (1. Direct financing - proposed National Employment Service (NES) programme; 2. Support through a multilateral organisation-Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP); 3. Co-financing with other donors- Support to Integrated Planning System). The three aspects were:

- To review partner and modality selection in relation to the purpose of the funded initiative. How rigorous are these assessments? Are different options compared and valued? Are transaction costs discussed against the added value of the intermediaries? Are strategic alliances sought? Is there a set of criteria that is used for assessments?
- To undertake a qualitative assessment of the perceptions of Albanian partners regarding the quality/value of services they receive and the extent to which they recognise this as being related to the nature of the support modality. A matrix for semi-structured analysis was developed for assessing qualities such as understanding of client needs, responsiveness to changing conditions, achievement of results, added value in terms of future strategic alliances, etc.
- To compare, in a quantifiable but very approximate manner, the level of outputs achieved in relation to the overall budget of each of the three initiatives. This work was understood to be dependent on the quality of documentation provided.

The evaluation team, in its discussions with the Embassy, expressed the view that the work on the first two points was likely to be of more value and use to the Embassy, based on the quality of documentation and the timeframe and structure of the evaluation. The team undertook this work, although the ‘matrix for semi-structured analysis’ has evolved in directions that are somewhat beyond what was anticipated, and, in particular, it is noted that it looks at a range and description of ‘modalities’ that is wider than the three that were anticipated. As agreed, the matrix was discussed with the Embassy as part of the work of the evaluation team in the field. The matrix, incorporating feedback from the Embassy and further analysis by the evaluation team, is discussed in detail below (Section 4.1.5).

2.2.2 Support to the Country Team (including staff at Sida and the Embassy)

The evaluation team discussed their overall role in and management capacities related to the modalities with the Embassy team, especially in terms of capacities to the two perspectives governing Swedish development cooperation in the two sectors and in terms of a results-based framework for the planning and monitoring of the country strategy.

According to the Policy for Global Development (PGD)⁴ adopted by the Swedish Parliament in 2003, two fundamental perspectives shall guide Sweden's development policy and all development cooperation initiatives.

The ***perspective of poor people*** on development means that the starting-point for poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and sustainable global development shall be the needs, circumstances, interests and priorities of poor women, men and children.

The ***human rights perspective*** or ***human rights-based approach- (HRBA)*** takes its starting point in the values and principles underpinning the UN human rights conventions. Four specific principles are chosen in the PGD for the practical transformation of democracy and the normative value system constituted by human rights:

- Non-discrimination/equality in dignity and rights.
- Participation.
- Openness and transparency.
- Accountability.

The two perspectives complement and support each other and partially overlap. Sida has therefore chosen to work with the four principles as a starting point for both the human rights-based approach and the perspectives of the poor. The principles constitute a basis for analysis and assessment and a common basis for dialogue, cooperation and follow-up.⁵ The practical application of a human rights-based approach entails:

- Influencing or developing capacity of those who have power and formal obligations to promote, fulfil and protect human rights (***duty bearers***);
- Empowering people (***rights holders***), particularly the powerless (with hope, assertiveness, knowledge, skills, tools, communication channels, legal mechanisms etc.) to enable them to address their situation and claim their rights individually⁶ and collectively.

Many donors have developed methods and guidelines for the practical application of HRBA. In Sweden the interpretation of a HRBA has been elaborated in the Swedish Policy for Democratic Development and Human Rights 2010-2014 (page 11-13 and 28-29).⁷ The United Nations has established a website called the 'Practitioners Portal

⁴ <http://www.government.se/sb/d/574/a/37242>

⁵ Sida, POM Working Paper 2006:4, Aide-mémoire on the two perspectives, pp. 4 and 8–10 and Results for Justice and Development, 2011

⁶ Swedish Government Offices, Change for Freedom, Policy for democratic development and human rights in Swedish development cooperation, 2010–2014, 2010, pp. 11–13

⁷ <http://www.government.se/sb/d/574/a/143233>

on HRBA',⁸ which brings together a number of HRBA projects from different countries and sectors, with the aim of mainstreaming information and understanding about HRBA.

The team worked in cognisance of the fact that these two perspectives are stressed less (i.e., they are to be 'considered' rather than being guiding principles) in reform cooperation in Eastern Europe than in development cooperation elsewhere. In the report the evaluation team elaborates the reasons for this relatively strong focus on the two perspectives in the Albanian context.

The evaluation team worked in a participatory manner with Embassy staff, with a view to use these findings as a template for considering relevant and realistic recommendations for how the Embassy and Sida should proceed in providing input to the planning of future Swedish development cooperation.

2.3 METHODS FOR COUNTRY STRATEGY REVIEWS

During 2012 Indevelop was commissioned to undertake six country and regional strategy reviews. None had been commissioned during the preceding years. The high level of interest in these reviews, coupled with the somewhat ambiguous scope and very limited resources allocated for most of these reviews, indicate the importance of developing an appropriate methodology. This evaluation has tested the use of an adapted outcome harvesting method, combined with a participatory analysis of the efficiency of modalities and has concluded that this is an effective way to stimulate a utilisation-focused process of critical reflection on outcomes in a country strategy. Indevelop is in the process of adapting similar methods in three other country strategy reviews.

One implication of this approach is that to fully apply an outcome harvesting approach, a relatively higher level of resources and a somewhat longer time period will be required, particularly to strengthen the validation aspect and the utility of the approach. Both of these components were limited to a certain degree within the current assignment (see 2.4, Limitations). As the use and importance of country and regional reviews grows, strengthening these processes will add value to both analysis and utility, in particular in assisting country teams in their learning processes. One particular aspect of this utilisation/learning is to ensure that the process continues beyond submission of an evaluation report – to include a facilitation process with country teams,

⁸ <http://hrbaportal.org/>

wherein the evaluation team works through change, and future directions based on the outcomes of the process.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

Aspects of data availability were a critical issue for the assessment of results – particularly in relation to some projects. Outcome harvesting draws out the outcomes described in existing documentation and verifies this by exploring the perspectives of different stakeholders and informed stakeholders. This approach was partly chosen due to the breadth of initiatives to be assessed and partly due to the short timeframe of the evaluation. The team did not have the time or other resources to gather additional data from specific projects, or to rigorously verify the claims made in project/programme documents, or the perceptions presented by informants in workshops and interviews. Some project documentation was limited in quantity and/or quality – particularly in terms of a detailed narrative assessment of results against plans. While some programmes, such as the Netherlands Development Organisation/Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation (SNV/CNVP) forestry work and the framework organisations, have extensive and quality reporting, documentation on almost all the other initiatives was limited. Furthermore, some implementing agencies report with a heavy activity emphasis, rather than from the perspective of results analysis against plans. Of particular note, the theories of change by which benefits were intended to reach the population, within which the projects were designed, were often poorly delineated and were not critically analysed in the course of implementation.

The assessment was undertaken at the Strategy level, i.e., of programmatic outcomes within overall sectors, but out of necessity, the programme perspective must be seen through specific projects. The assignment was not seen to look at the specific projects, but to use the projects to inform the analysis with regard to overall outputs and outcomes, as well as the effectiveness and relevance (particularly) of the programming in relation to the Strategy. As a result, the scope and quality of the generalisations reflect the range and comparability of the interventions that were selected for analysis.

The analysis drew heavily on qualitative approaches – interviews with project and programme personnel and external stakeholders, as well as the desk study of reports and reviews. While this enabled an overall judgement of the contributions of the various programmes/projects, it limited the level of confidence that can be attributed to the collected data, and the associated analysis. Findings are indicative of the views expressed by stakeholders and informed experts, and the claims made in available documentation, but are not supported by data that could have been collected through a more rigorous process entered into over a longer period. This is particularly relevant to the extent to which claims can be verified/cross-checked. The credibility of some findings will unavoidably be limited, given the number of projects being reviewed in the available time, and the inability to gather data through field visits to the many and diverse projects included in the assignment. This limited the depth of enquiry that could be made on any given project, the number of people with whom the evaluation team could speak and the possible amount of cross-checking.

3 Findings

3.1 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The overarching Albanian objective⁹ for this sector is: Openness and thorough reforms in pursuit of European standards and enhanced democracy, and the protection of human rights and freedoms.

Swedish objectives for this sector are:

- Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.
- Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.
- To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and is subject to civilian monitoring.
- Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.

Each of these objectives is discussed below, initially in terms of relevance and then in terms of effectiveness.

3.1.1 Relevance of current strategic objectives (for Albania and for Swedish development cooperation)

There are a number of questions related to relevance that are not specifically about a particular objective, but relate to all objectives, or are not felt to be included in any of the objectives.

- The evaluation team asked informants ‘why did Sida choose the funded components of the portfolio? Was the selection based on a situation analysis, or stakeholder analysis, or both?’ It was apparent that most informants, including

⁹ The use of the term ‘objective’ in the Strategy, and the use of terms ‘objectives’ and ‘outcomes’ in relation to the Strategy, is indicative of one area where work is required with the country team, as well as with partners/implementers, in the formulation of the Strategy, the results matrix and project documentation. Work is needed to develop an ‘outcome-focused’ way of thinking and of formulation of strategies and plans. Throughout this document the word ‘objective’ has been used, in line with the language of the Country Strategy document.

some Embassy staff, were unaware of the ways in which Sweden has tried to ensure relevance. The Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC) expressed the view that through Programme Review meetings both monitoring of existing initiatives and identification of future relevant needs were addressed to ensure programme directions were in line with priorities. The relevance of the Strategy was confirmed by all stakeholders and experts.

- Embassy staff are concerned that their efforts are, and will continue to be, dissipated in attempting to address all relevant needs (within the strategic framework). This is a relevant concern and is assessed further in discussions of efficiency.
- Explicit relevance in relation to the two Swedish core development cooperation perspectives of human rights and the perspectives of the poor are not readily apparent. This may reflect the fact that EU accession has been the overriding objective (as in other reform cooperation countries in Eastern Europe) and improvements in human rights and economic development have been implied, but are not explicit.
 - Regarding human rights, despite this lack of a strong mandate to work with a HRBA, there are some examples in the work on women's rights where both duty bearers and rights holders have been targeted/supported to reach results. Although the principles of accountability and transparency are visible in the initiatives targeting the Government, the principles of participation and non-discrimination are not. These principles seem to only be applied in some CSO initiatives.
 - Regarding the perspectives of the poor, the Strategy does make explicit reference to equitable development and interviewees noted the importance of addressing marginalisation, particularly due to the trends toward what is perceived to be non-inclusive development in Albania. On a number of occasions informants asked why there were no indicators related to marginalised groups in the Strategy.
- The evaluation team found that the work and impact of the framework organisations and their Albanian CSO partners is highly relevant but it could be more deliberately and strategically used by Sida in its portfolio. The wide range of activities, outputs and outcomes (summarised below and in the Outcome Matrix), are difficult to discern in the strategic framework, where the objectives specifically mention only 'improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort' and 'increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres'. Framework organisation and framework organisation partner involvement is much wider than is stated or implied in these two objective statements. Furthermore, the Strategy is not sufficiently strong in its directions for the framework organisations – i.e., there is no real strategic direction provided to the framework organisations for their work. It is well understood by the evaluation team that the framework organisations and their partners have an independent role, and are responsible for the design and delivery of their programmes. It is also understood that programmes are approved by the Embassy following close dialogue with the framework organisations. However, it

is the view of the evaluation team that the strategic link between the Strategy and the framework organisations is not apparent. In formulation of the new country strategy, there is opportunity to make civil society support a more visible and deliberate part of the strategy, both in terms of strengthen civil society in its own right and as a means to achieve other objectives.

- The relevance of Cultural Heritage without Borders is not obviously apparent in the Strategy, although one can discern an indirect relation to the Strategy.

Objective 1 - Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.

There is strong confirmation across stakeholders and experts of the relevance of the intent and activities of initiatives in this area. The focus on efficiency and transparency is seen as critical in Albania's developmental processes, specifically in relation to its EU accession aims and more generally, as a necessary democratisation process, although it is noted here that an overall objective of EU accession is somewhat understated in the Strategy – while the 'direction of cooperation' is on 'improved opportunities for European membership, objectives focus on 'European standards and enhanced democracy', i.e. not specifically on accession processes.

This objective is also seen to be relevant as the foundation for an HRBA.

Capacity development in relation to skills and knowledge for public administration reform was seen as highly relevant for Albanian development. It was however noted that support is currently focused on the development of technical human capacities and skills, whereas many of the challenges to reform lie at the management level and in organisational development, particularly in planning, strategy development and in human resource management. In an exception to this finding, interviewees noted that the work with statistics was relevant in establishing an evidence base for the formulation of policies and strategies.

Furthermore, the ultimate 'killing factor' in relation to ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of current initiatives lies in the poor enabling institutional environment in the Albanian public service today. Sweden may not be able to profoundly influence factors such as politicisation and the inability to retain qualified staff, but some interviewees questioned the relevance of selected initiatives in light of these external risks.

Some stakeholders and experts questioned the relevance of the strong focus of much of these programmes on the level of public agencies in Tirana. They argued for a greater emphasis on the local level, with communes, regions or other institutions, both to ensure that outcomes are achieved at the level of rights holders and to ensure that Sweden is not perceived as 'spending all its money on the government in Tirana'. Concerns were noted regarding the implications and hazards related to the local government roll out of new systems developed with Swedish support.

Objective 2 - Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.

Improved opportunities (and ways) for citizens to influence and participate in reform processes are deemed by interviewees as a relevant objective of Swedish support, and a necessary component of Albania's developmental processes. Of specific relevance is the involvement and impact of civil society organisations on governance and administrative processes, including legislation, strategies and action plans that impact on human rights, gender, transparency and other processes that enable more effective democratic governance. Many interviewees mentioned the importance of advocacy, but some note that greater attention is needed to direct accountability mechanisms, including a specific focus on monitoring and watchdog roles.

Some of those interviewed were concerned that this objective fails to highlight the importance of civil society as a precondition for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence reforms and EU accession. This omission would perhaps have been appropriate if CSOs were perceived as only being 'implementing partners', since the country team should have options to choose the most relevant partner for a given task. This omission can be deemed inappropriate, however, if the development of a vibrant Albanian civil society is seen as being a precondition for sustainable results in relation to this sectoral objective. This is particularly important in relation to civil society's role in relation to equitable development (even though the CSOs interviewed freely acknowledged that their own poverty focus thus far had not been strong).

A recent study¹⁰ of Sweden's CSO support modalities found that in Albania, funding to and through CSOs has risen from around 17% in 2007 to around 34% of total Swedish funding in 2011. The funding is usually given to CSOs as implementers of a specific project in order to deliver a service, a training programme or an advocacy effort. Almost no funding was given with the intention of strengthening CSOs *per se* (core support or organisational support) in their role as voices of poor and marginalised groups – although there are examples where partners of Framework Organisations have received such support (increasingly in the past years). Per current guiding principles, the use of framework organisations leaves the responsibility of the design of programmes largely to these organisations, although there is a very close dialogue between these organisations and Sida/Embassy before programmes are approved.

¹⁰ Civil Society Support Models at Sida HQ and Embassies, to be published in March 2013, Annika Nilsson, Annika Holmberg, Pontus Modeér Mari Brekke Mogen

This objective provides the only specific mention of Albania's EU accession efforts, which the evaluation team has noted with surprise. It is understood that Albania (and the Embassy) see EU accession as a means to greater democratic governance, but the evaluation team has noted that a greater and more crosscutting emphasis is given to this, and to accession processes themselves as tools for reform, with Swedish development cooperation elsewhere in the region. Some of those interviewed stressed that 'EU cannot do everything' and that the Swedish portfolio as a whole has been well positioned to support and complement the activities of others in relation to the accession process, and in particular to provide gentle pressure in areas where the EU is relatively weak, such as the crosscutting areas of human rights, gender and environmental sustainability.

Objective 3 - To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.

Within Objective 1 – Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration, the relevance of a programme on the police system can be seen. As framed, however, the objective 3 is not understood to contribute in an appropriate manner to the intended outcomes of the Strategy, and is generally perceived (by the evaluation team and many interviewees) as somewhat of an outlier in relation to the rest of the Strategy. It is not clear why a separate objective is needed for this activity. A specific and relevant comment was, 'why is the focus on the Police and not, say, on Rule of Law and the justice system?' It has been noted that the framing of this objective reflects the priorities of the Swedish Government, but Albanian actors find this confusing given the fact that other objectives are perceived to be much more the result of a direct dialogue between the Embassy and Albanian stakeholders.

Objective 4 - Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.

This objective is deemed by all interviewees as a relevant objective of Swedish support, and a necessary component of Albania's development processes. The evaluation team notes a high degree of engagement and ownership for this objective, both in the specific activities funded and in general mainstreaming efforts. However, the evaluation team finds that the portfolio and the Strategy itself tend to miss a further relevant emphasis on gender equality in general. Interviewees pointed out that it is unclear why the focus was specifically on the participation of women in governance, rather than a more generic focus on gender equality as a core aspect of equity and an HRBA. Swedish support to gender equality in Albania goes far beyond 'increased participation of women in political and administrative spheres', but the Strategy does not currently reflect the breadth of activities or achievements. It is noted that where implementers/partners have focused specifically on gender equality, a rights-based approach to strategies to attain outputs/outcomes in these areas are more readily visible.

It is also unclear to many of those interviewed why gender has been made an explicit objective, whereas there is no explicit emphasis here or in other outcome areas regarding human rights and the poor. The evaluation team recognises that this reflects the extent to which these issues are prioritised in Swedish government reform cooperation in Eastern Europe; but it is still important to note that those interviewed who are aware of Sweden's broader commitments to human rights and poverty find this perplexing.

3.1.2 Effectiveness in relation to outcome objectives

A detailed Outcome Matrix for both sectors is found at Appendix 3.

Objective 1 - Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.

Specific reference here is made to Swedish support to the Institute of Statistics (IN-STAT), the Albanian Association of Communes (AAC), the General Tax Directorate (GTD), the National Employment Service and the Integrated Planning System initiatives.

The Swedish commitment to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda through IPS has been effective in influencing the relationships between government and donors. The Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination has increased its influence over strategic directions and donor relationships. Sweden (together with Swiss Development Cooperation) has led in efforts to create a common donor platform for support to government capacity development, which is linked to government priorities. IPS has also become 'an entry point' for wider support to public sector reform – it links planning, policy and mid-term budgeting, together with external assistance and a sectoral approach. The alignment of donor strategies with Albania's mid-term budget programming is a critical component of the IPS. It is the development of capacity, particularly in policy formulation, which is noted by Government as the key outcome of the IPS – it increases 'the development of capacity further down in line ministries'.

A range of long-term technical support has been provided to INSTAT, that is all focused on overall development of INSTAT's human resource and organisational capacity. In recent years it has included a management development component, as well as technical assistance, but interviewees stated that this newer component is neither as effective as the specific technical support nor is INSTAT ownership (at leadership level) equally strong. As a result, a shift to focus on middle, rather than senior, management has been made. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of this shift in focus

given the weak ownership for organisational reforms at higher levels. Outputs to which Sweden has contributed include the 2011 census, price and business statistics and, more recently, on agricultural statistics.¹¹ Direct Swedish financial support to INSTAT to change approaches to the use of information technology has contributed to ownership indicated a willingness to be flexible as well as demonstrating a commitment to national priorities and national control of the funds. This direct support appears to have been handled effectively and efficiently by INSTAT, although the evaluation did not look at these aspects in significant detail.

Support to the GTD included technical assistance for the development of their strategic plan (2012-2015), which emphasised improvements to customer service approaches and practice in the organisation. Customer service changes included provisions for modern systems based on the Swedish model of service delivery, including an openness, convenience and timeliness of servicing in tax offices, as well as improvements in response times. Tax agents are developing new ways of working ‘quickly and to the point’. This approach was piloted as part of the Swedish assistance, and will be expanded later to all regional offices. Specific improvements were also made in control systems, initially in three key industries with plans for expansion to more industries over the coming years. A specific focus has been on linking taxation statistics to EU standards in this area, and all GTD products are in line with EU requirements. The evaluation team judges these initiatives to have been effective but, as the Swedish support has not extended to a broader roll out, there appear to be no plans to assess the ultimate outcomes of these investments in relation to improved services reaching citizens.

Direct support to the NES for hardware and the development of software for the complete digitalisation of the employment service is close to completion. With Swedish support, all aspects of job seeking (both for potential employees and potential employers) will be managed online: transparent and visible, with much clearer and more developed processes for linking job seekers with providers. The system is expected to have significant benefits for both job seekers and employers, as each will save time and energy in finding each other. Further, the Government will benefit at a policy level through improved statistics on the job market, which is a component of the new system. This includes a number of ways for the data to be disaggregated. Here again, Swedish support to developing systems shows good effectiveness at the activity/output level, but it is unclear if/how the country team will be able to assess the

¹¹ Business Price Index, Producer Price Index, Consumer Price Index, Construction Cost Index, Production Cost Index, Business Register, Short-term Statistics, Structured Business Survey, ICT Survey, Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Census Of Agricultural Holdings.

extent to which the expected outcomes among different groups of job seekers and employers actually materialise.

Sweden supported the establishment and capacity development of the AAC as an organisation of duty bearers. Sweden also supported citizen participation and organisation (rights holders) in selected communes. The aim was to enhance effectiveness of service delivery, transparency, accountability and public participation in the communes by offering tools and training. Support to the AAC has provided some outputs in terms of organisational development of the AAC itself and in the development of its strategic focus and capacities (and their influence on its member organisations). While strengthening the capacity of local government is vitally important (provision of a national voice for local government institutions and some contributions to/impact on legislation and policy), the project does not appear to have delivered its intended outcomes and the evaluation team does not discern that the AAC has a strategy or trajectory by which it could become a self-sustaining organisation that is owned by paying members.¹² The evaluation did not look in detail at the project so as to draw broader conclusions, but it appears to be an illustration of the challenge of identifying structures that can bridge the national-local divide.

These five public administration reform programmes have been instrumental in promoting gender equality at all levels. In relation to human rights, despite the lack of explicit strategies to this regard, the programmes have components that contribute to increased transparency and participation beyond the Government, and government counterparts are learning how to work in a more open manner. Examples include:

- The NES programme has applied a form of a HRBA, developed in consultation with unions (rights holders), employer organisations and gender NGOs (although it did not involve other marginalised groups). It has made the labour market more transparent, as the information is available online and is visible to any interested party. This has the potential to reduce the politicisation of the job market. One KtK-supported partner checks job vacancy announcements to ensure non-discrimination, within the legislative framework that forbids advertisements specifying gender, age, etc.
- The GTD project has a focus on gender – specifically a gender policy within the GTD. The policy was developed, but has not yet been implemented. According to one GTD representative, the ‘gender component is a little difficult to understand at times – it is a new concept. It is a question of mentality. For instance, we would like to see female operators in the tax audit department –

¹² Per field interview with the AAC: Only some 12% of Member Communes make their annual membership payments, regularly leaving the AAC with a significant funding shortfall (last year’s membership income was some \$30,000, against a budget of some \$100,000.)

the percentage of males is overwhelming because of the mentality that only men can do that job.’

- The AAC initiative contributed to a national focus on women’s participation in local governance. The establishment of a quota for female participation in communal councils led to measurable improvement in the participation of women in local governance structures, although the quota and the level of participation appear to currently be under some threat.
- Knowledge of the socioeconomic and educational realities of the population is key to proper planning. INSTAT undertook a time use survey that contributes to such knowledge. However, the significance of disaggregating statistics according to gender, disability and ethnicity does not come through in project reporting, nor does the use of disaggregated statistics in monitoring outcomes for particular marginalised groups. The importance of dialogue with relevant sections of civil society (users of statistics) in relation to future directions is not visible in discussions or reporting.

Interviewees noted the effectiveness of international exchanges in providing for growth in the knowledge of effective approaches. National networking has increased the quality and level of engagement of the work done by partners, as each develops a better understanding of colleague organisations and is better able to provide appropriate kinds of support and encouragement.

There has been an increase in exchanges between civil society organisations and both local and central government institutions and agencies – exchanges that increase the knowledge of government and the potential for impact by civil society. As a result of this, for example, KtK’s partners have built their capacity in lobbying and advocacy, with direct changes in their influence, particularly in relation to legislation, strategies and activities related to human trafficking, domestic violence, gender equality and the economic empowerment of women.

Objective 2 - Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.

Specific reference here is made to Swedish support to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s (OSCE) Women in Governance project, the Cultural Heritage without Borders initiatives and the work of the framework organisations, Olof Palme International Center (OPIC), Kvinna till Kvinna and Civil Rights Defenders. Although the awareness on human rights in Albania is still low and some practices continue to violate the EU conventions (<http://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/sv/country-reports/human-rights-in-albania/>), progress regarding citizens’ influence/empowerment has been noted. Some of this can be related to the Swedish support.

CRD has contributed to improvements in three areas: accessibility of free legal aid; fight against discrimination and freedom of expression and capacity o/f independent media. Support from CRD to partners and processes contributed to the adoption of

the anti-discrimination law in 2010 and the law on free legal aid in 2009. Through CRD support, a legal clinic has been established, and free legal aid has been provided to those in need of assistance, especially victims of domestic violence, Roma persons and persons with disabilities. In a related endeavour, CRD partners monitor detention centres, and provide legal and other assistance to detainees, and particularly focus on protecting the rights of those in custody.

Recently, CRD assistance to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community resulted in the establishment of a LGBT Centre. This Centre has provided training to the police, thus contributing to improved human rights practices. The centre has also influenced the development of a government plan of action on LGBT rights. All in all, CRD has contributed to increased capacity of rights holders (such as LGBT, Roma and disability organisations and individuals) to claim rights and of duty bearers (such as police, detention centres and parliamentarians) to respect and fulfil rights.

KtK's work focuses on rights holders, although their partners work directly and indirectly with duty bearers. KtK has improved the capacity of its partner organisations, particularly in the areas of advocacy and lobbying for legislative change. Increased technical skills within partners, and increased cooperation with courts, municipalities and the employment service, are all visible components of the improved referral service at the local level for victims of domestic violence. For the first time domestic violence was included in the Penal Code of Albania (2007) and this is also results of strong lobbying and advocacy work by KtK partners and other organisations in the country. Furthermore, following lobbying with the Ministerial Council, the Government has provided assistance to women who have been victims of trafficking, as well as for the shelters which support victims of domestic violence and trafficking. KtK partners have been trained and are better prepared to engage in lobbying with the Government, and engage in extensive lobbying on human trafficking. Government now knows about the issue and is undertaking measures to combat it. KtK partners provide rehabilitation and employment support to victims of trafficking, and are working with the private sector to find employment for victims of domestic violence. KtK partners also have a programme for men – violators and potential violators – working to assist their own understanding/development. One KtK partner developed a gender toolkit for students and teachers, which has become a popular gender equality resource in schools. There is a visible trend for KtK partners (through their work with KtK or other donors/organisations) to influence the EU Report on Albania, with specific reference in the past two years to the Report's comments on human trafficking. KtK partners mention the development of their own understanding of human rights, and point specifically to their recently established contacts/ trainings with LGBT organisations.

The deliberate targeting of both duty bearers and rights holders is clearly visible in the OPIC programme. The OPIC programme has a significant process focus, where clear results are not readily defined/described. OPIC focuses on increasing civic activism, especially in mobilising activism in young people and women in their interac-

tion with public officials – thereby influencing policies and decision-making. The focus is on the mobilisation, rather than on the influence of policies and decision-making, although OPIC and its partners have developed practices and mechanisms of communication with public officials, including the establishment of a public hearing practice and participatory budgeting approaches in some communes. OPIC recognises the need for stronger mechanisms, in the structural sense – mechanisms such as MoUs with communes, and further emphasis is required in this area.

CHWB works to defend the right to one's cultural heritage. This includes both a perspective on such heritage at the national level and also in the effective work it does to strengthen mutual respect for different cultures by linking European perspectives on the maintenance of cultural heritage with local practice, strategies and legislation. It appears that the results in terms of raised awareness of the importance of cultural heritage have been significant, as the work of the organisation has a relatively high profile. Their impact on legislative systems has been limited; but it appears that attitudinal changes have been greater. The influence of the Albanian office on the region as a whole has been modest, but has had an appropriate focus.

Objective 3 - To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.

This objective naturally refers primarily to the Support to Community Policing Project, with some reference as well to framework organisation initiatives. Swedish support in this area will, through the grants programme of the Project, have some moderate impacts on the relationship between the police and the community, and may provide some influence more widely in the justice sector. The Community Policing Project has just completed its inception phase, with some baseline studies having been completed. It is not yet possible to comment on its effectiveness.

Objective 4 - Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.

Swedish support was provided to the OSCE's Women in Governance project, and is currently supporting the UN programme in Albania and the work of the three key framework organisations: OPIC, KtK and CRD. Sweden has deliberately worked on influencing and supporting both duty bearers (in government) and rights holders (in civil society). Through Swedish-funded initiatives, public institutions at national and local levels have been targeted to adopt and implement legislation and policies, including a national strategy on gender equality, quotas in political bodies and gender based violence.

As well as the specific focus and work of the Women in Governance project, partners of KtK and OPIC have been involved in lobbying and advocacy efforts on behalf of the quota for women on electoral lists. While much work is required to make the quota system workable, it is in place, which is an important step. There have been shifts in candidate lists, but this has not been converted into women in Parliament (the

most recent election included 30% women on candidate lists, but only 12.6% women in elected positions). The Women in Governance project involved Roma and Egyptian women, including three candidates for office. None were successful in being elected. The project also involved women with disabilities, and there was a discussion on a quota for persons with disabilities, but this discussion did not result in any specific initiative in this area.

Through OPIC and KtK, support has been given to capacity development of local women's organisations, in order for them to interact with the local government authorities, empower them to set up services, to challenge norms and practices, monitor implementation of the national strategy and become political candidates.

Some women's organisations have been able to include Roma women and women with disabilities, although the reports are silent regarding the outcomes for these groups. The focus is mainly on those who are already active and empowered, to try to get them into politics or to become leaders. There is no specific focus on the most marginalised.

Sweden also promotes mainstreaming gender equality in other sector programmes. One Embassy staff member stated that 'While the focus on gender is clear, and significant, this focus is not so clear in terms of the poor, or for other marginalised groups. Property work is clearly focused in human rights - not just the project, but the Immovable Property Registration Office's (IPRO) continuous cooperation in sector meetings and in discussions on policy matters. This makes this the biggest area of human rights activity that Sweden supports.' As will be noted below, the extent to which assumptions about the positive impacts of these other initiatives have been realised does not appear to have been verified.

3.1.3 Overall outcomes and theories of change

The evaluation team's overall conclusion is that the democratic governance and human rights portfolio as a whole has focused primarily on developing skills and structures, but as yet can show less effectiveness in terms of implementation. This is primarily the case in relation to support to public administration reform and is primarily due to the fact that the reviewed projects are just starting to enter the implementation phase. Some projects are only focused on the production of outputs, and do not envisage close engagement or follow-up after these outputs have been produced, as the projects will have ended by then. This constitutes a limitation in the Swedish portfolio, as the basic theory of change regarding how these outputs will result in changes in the performance of these institutions often remains untested. Assumptions are made regarding how a given system will improve equity, transparency or access, but there is little evidence of outcomes and no apparent strategy to collect evidence of ex post outcomes after project completion.

Civil society capacity development efforts show somewhat more evidence of effectiveness in terms of strengthening the capacity of local organisations to advocate for change, participate in dialogue and deliver services, and in terms of influencing gov-

ernment laws, policies and practices. The Swedish-supported framework organisations (OPIC, CRD, KtK) have all contributed in these areas, to varying degrees. They have collected some evidence of the improved capacity of partners and their influence on the conditions of intended target groups, but even here, the evidence base is too limited to draw verifiable conclusions.

3.1.4 Sustainability and ownership

The Government of Albania recognises that it is not enough that technical assistance is provided – they see the key as their own ownership of processes and management of funds – and building capacity for this. Their descriptions of desired outcomes indicate that capacity development is what they expect from donor programmes, and note that Swedish support to Government systems has been effective in sustainably enhancing these capacities. The DSDC points to the work that they have done on developing sectoral approaches, and on requiring donor assistance to be in line with Government priorities, and note that Sweden has been a leader in this, ‘not just a player’. The DSDC view is that their priorities determine the direction of discussions/negotiations with donors (‘now our priorities are able to focus donors and their priorities’), which is indicative of the Government view of their greater influence on donor directions and priorities.

The main weak points in achieving sustainable outcomes, noted by various interviewees, have been three-fold. The first is the politicisation and the danger that personnel may be replaced after elections. The second is the high level of rotation of staff within the public service. The third is that, in some of the supported institutions, ownership is stronger at mid-level and among technical staff than it is at the senior level, which creates obvious risks that reforms may not be firmly anchored in the chosen institutions. Related to the latter, in some of the supported institutions, ownership has been highly erratic. This has been more of a problem in the natural resource and environment portfolio, as will be discussed below.

Ownership within Albanian civil society for the capacity development processes supported through the framework organisations, and directly, has clearly been high. This bodes well for future sustainability, although the lack of alternative financing sources, apart from bilateral assistance, is of course a major concern.

3.1.5 Perceived gaps, anomalies and divergence from the strategy

As a whole the democratic governance and human rights portfolio is well aligned with the sectoral objectives. The evaluation team notes no major divergence from the Strategy, and none was noted by the interviewees.

There is no explicit place in the Strategy for the work and intent of the CHWB initiative. CHWB can contribute to specific outcomes in relation to the right to culture, and given the fact Albania was not part of the Balkan conflict, CHWB reports that they have been able to act as a neutral actor within the region. This role could be exploited in the development of a vibrant, regional civil society, particularly in terms of culture and peace. These values are of implicit value in relation to the Strategy.

As developed, the Strategy (and its outcome objectives) misses an appropriate emphasis on the development of Albanian civil society as an end in itself. Strong CSOs are of key importance to a democratic governance system. CSOs with appropriate capacity can promote and monitor change in any sector. CSOs have a value in their own right, but Albanian country programme reports do not present results in terms of enhanced CSO capacity *per se*. There is also a lack of relevant indicators that reflect outcomes in relation to a vibrant civil society.

3.2 NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

The overarching Albanian objective in this sector is to: Create conditions for long-term sustainable growth by preserving and protecting Albania's natural resources from destruction and exploitation and by promoting environmental values.

Specific Swedish objectives for this sector are:

- Reduced vulnerability in the energy sector and efficient use of renewable sources of energy.
- Increased Albanian administrative capacity at national and local level for dealing with natural resource issues sustainably in the long term.
- Increased and improved interaction between civil society and the state on environment and climate issues.
- Increased capacity for the sustainable use of the country's water resources.

Each of these objectives is discussed below, initially in terms of relevance and then in terms of effectiveness.

3.2.1 Relevance of current strategic objectives (for Albania and for Swedish development cooperation)

The Albanian government sees Swedish support in the environmental sector as having been most effective in the establishment of good practice and as a framework for enhanced efficiency of government in the environmental sector (with this sector seen in a very broad sense, as will be discussed below). In this, the Government, specifically DSDC, sees the environment sector initiatives as crosscutting. From the perspective of experts in environment and natural resources, the relevance of the stated objectives to Albanian development is virtually self-evident. There are, however, several concerns related to Swedish involvement across this range of priorities/objectives. Whereas the alignment of the democratic governance and human rights portfolio with sector outcome objectives is comparatively clear, the links between activities and objectives in natural resources and the environment are relatively indirect; i.e., a plausible chain of attribution can be surmised upon deeper reflection, but most interviewees stated that it was not self-evident. However, there may be more direct plausible attribution in newer projects that the evaluation team did not analyse, e.g., in hydropower or irrigation initiatives.

Of primary concern is the potentially vast scope of the priority areas, and the limited capacity to achieve impact if the approach is poorly focused. In water alone, for example, there are needs for massive investment in infrastructure, potentially dire risks of powerful actors ‘grabbing’ resources and displacing or dispossessing poor communities, serious deficiencies in relation to legislative frameworks and exciting opportunities to develop local water resource user institutions. An appropriate niche for Sweden in relation to the problems and also in relation the other development cooperation actors, is not entirely self-evident, but can be presumed to be limited in scope. As one external expert said, ‘Sweden is not the EC in Albania.’

Finally, the evaluation team looked at one initiative on support to the Office of the Prime Minister in considering strategies related to solid waste management. This effort failed at an early stage. Given the scale of the solid waste problem in Albania and the need for massive investments, it is another example of an area of intervention that is highly relevant in relation to needs, but where a relevant niche for Sweden is not equally apparent. The cautious and modest first steps in exploring and engaging with the Government on this issue were appropriate, but it is not self-evident where this would have fit into the overall strategy or what the next steps for Sweden might have been if this first initiative had proven successful.

Objective 1 - Reduced vulnerability in the energy sector and efficient use of renewable sources of energy.

The specific relevance of Swedish support in relation to the energy sector is clear, given the reliance of Albania on hydropower and the prevailing scenarios regarding future needs. The question is again whether Sweden has identified a relevant niche in relation to these massive future challenges. Swedish funding is currently focused on forestry as a way of providing efficient and renewable sources of energy. The evaluation team finds that this is a relevant focus for Swedish support, particularly in light of expert feedback on the energy sector. The strategic objective and intended outcome statements would, however, be more relevant if the focus were to shift to sustainable natural resource management and rural development (with synergies with democratic governance in relation to strengthening local government and the interaction of civil society and public institutions). The close linkage with sustainable resource use (Objective 2) is apparent, and there is the need for a discussion as to whether or not Sweden’s priority is in renewable energy or sustainable resource use, or indeed whether or not this is a single objective.

Albania has a Renewable Energy Plan, which sets targets for the use of renewable energy sources – it is naturally important to build programmes within this framework. However, there is no operationalised environment strategy, and an apparent lack of political will to move towards more concerted action. This apparent lack of will is also visible in funding for, and the influence of, the Ministry of the Environment, which lacks the finances and human resources for increasing activities and impact. Furthermore, the energy sector is largely the domain of the private sector, and scope

for engagement in relation to private sector investments is limited and carries very high levels of risk (discussed further below).

Objective 2 - Increased Albanian administrative capacity at national and local level for dealing with natural resource issues sustainably in the long term.

Significant issues exist at the national and local levels with regards to natural resource issues and sustainable development. It is a critical area for Albania's development, and an appropriate and relevant area for Swedish support. Three supported initiatives are specifically relevant to this objective:

- The World Bank and SNV/CNVP work being done in the forestry sector, which focuses on renewable energy, sustainable resource use, local management systems and capacity building and the dialogue between civil society, the private sector and local government.
- The support provided to property registration.
- Support provided to land administration processes.

The experience of these specific projects suggests that relevance is related to the influence of these efforts in relation to land use planning and the use of spatial planning systems, particularly their use at the local level. There is significant abuse – due to a lack of knowledge and transparency – in the application of local planning laws and policies. Local government lacks both the capacity and the financing to undertake the strategic environmental and land use planning that is needed, while also lacking the strategic, integrated and long-term perspective required in this area. Since 1991, Albania has experienced severe problems of resource grabbing (particularly in relation to forest resources), and the enhancement of capacities to withstand such pressures is an extremely relevant priority. This relates to the gap that exists between laws (development of legislation, strategies, action plans and implementation plans) and their actual implementation/enforcement. A challenge in assessing the relevance of support to administrative capacity is that this can easily become a technocratic task, which fails to reflect the principles of accountability, transparency, participation and non-discrimination. It is recognised, as noted earlier, that addressing these issues is not required in Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe. However, given the risks of potential abuses of access rights within a politically charged implementation of ostensibly positive administrative reforms, it would appear that human rights perspectives would also be related to the development of a commitment to the rule of law and inclusive development in relation to natural resource management. At a minimum a 'do no harm' perspective would seem essential.

Objective 3 - Increased and improved interaction between civil society and the state on environment and climate issues.

Interaction between civil society and the state, including local government, on environment and climate matters is seen as not only relevant but of significant importance to Albania's future directions. Experts and partners all agree that for a variety of reasons, civil society plays a weak role in advocacy and monitoring (a watchdog role) in matters related to the environment and climate. The development of forest associa-

tions shows that this is possible. But they are the only major example in the Swedish portfolio of a strong role by civil society in relation to natural resource management. In societies with limited public participation and a weak CSO sector, issues around the local environment can be effective points of departure for increased interaction. Based on the ‘right to information’, many movements have started to locally monitor government and private companies and insist in a say on land use planning. While ‘democracy and human rights’ are seen as rather abstract and often impossible to influence, concrete problems in the neighbourhood often draw more interest and engagement, including those related to forests, roads, pollution, etc.

At the central government level, issues of limited awareness (particularly in relation to climate change) as well as weak capacities, impact the effectiveness of environmental management. While the forestry work supported by Sweden is seen as an important initiative, there is a strong view that the support is too narrow to deal with the national-local linkages that are needed. The evaluation team judges that only working on forests is too narrow, but is also aware that any expansion of support should be done in a way that reflects the limited scale of Swedish support in relation to huge national challenges.

Objective 4 - Increased capacity for the sustainable use of the country’s water resources.

Improved and equitable water resource management is essential for Albania’s future development. In Europe, Albania ranks second to Norway in the quantity of fresh water resources; it is an abundance that creates problems in itself, as there is an apparent lack of interest in integrated river basin management. Water was of interest to Sweden at the time the Strategy was being developed because of Albania’s dependence on hydropower and its impact on agriculture, combined with scenarios predicting deterioration in the production of existing infrastructure. The links between disaster risk reduction/climate change adaption and water resource management have also fuelled this strategic interest, particularly among other actors in Albanian development (e.g., the World Bank). Water management remains a priority, and Sweden is supporting a World Bank initiative in this area (this new project is not included in this evaluation), but the evaluation team has had difficulty discerning a consensus regarding what would be a relevant and strategic role for Sweden in this regard. It would appear that some engagement in improving institutional structure and local capacities to manage water resources, and act as a watchdog in relation to infrastructural investments would fit within Sweden’s portfolio, but a clear vision in this regard has not emerged within the period of the current Strategy, presumably due to the fact that water investments have come online rather late in the process.

3.2.2 Effectiveness in relation to outcome objectives

Objective 1 - Reduced vulnerability in the energy sector and efficient use of renewable sources of energy.

There are no specific initiatives related to renewable energy beyond the work in the forestry sector, which is discussed as part of Objective 2, given its primary focus.

Objective 2 - Increased Albanian administrative capacity at national and local level for dealing with natural resource issues sustainably in the long term.

Sweden has been supporting forestry management in Albania for many years, developing capacity in local forest users' associations with regional unions and a national apex institution, the National Forestry and Pasture User Association (NFPUA) in combination with efforts to establish a transparent legislative and policy framework for land ownership and land use. Through this work a number of important results have been achieved, and important directions have been established for the future. Community forestry efforts are reported to have yielded considerable results in terms of the organisational capacities noted above and also in improved management of forests and pastures. Post-1991 forest and pasture management practices had, until these interventions, created a vicious cycle of severe degradation. As part of this programme, Forest User Groups were established and, together with other stakeholders, (the Commune and the Forest Service) forestry management plans were developed with 250 Forest User Groups. Furthermore, capacity was developed within these groups on the functioning of such a group, and in community forest management practices.

The results of the capacity development processes of the users seem considerable, and the developments of the communal forest management plans are recognised as highly participatory. However, women and marginalised groups are still not well represented in the users associations. There are special efforts to include women, which have yielded some success. The Roma population are discriminated against and excluded because they are not registered as citizens. The non-discrimination law therefore does not seem to be applicable to them. No deliberate poverty focus has been taken, but some Forest User Groups have taken the needs of the poorest into account by allowing them to keep their goats to maintain their livelihoods, as an exception to a ban imposed to reduce degradation. There is an assumption that the poor are targeted by default when dealing with forestry, since the better-off members of the community rely on different livelihoods.

There is a linkage between the forestry programme and the World Bank initiatives on resource development (the NRDP - Natural Resources Development Project and the current INRE – Improved Natural Resources and Environment Project) and the property registry initiatives, in terms of their impact (and potential for impact) on local land use and natural resource management. There appear to be de facto synergies regarding land use management, even though these different initiatives are not explicitly designed with this in mind.

The computerised system established through the Immovable Property Rights Office project has the potential to significantly improve the local management of property, and to improve the services provided to customers. At the policy/management level,

improved quality and the up-to-date nature of data is expected to assist local and national institutions and decision-makers in making decisions based on knowledge and data, rather than semi-informed guesses. For customers, the consistency of operation in offices, coupled with improved responsiveness and quality of information is expected to provide a more user-friendly process. These assumptions of potential benefits have not been tested through either monitoring or disaggregated outcome analyses.

The work has been slow due to very weak initial ownership, a factor that was reversed when the Prime Minister gave instructions to give priority to the project. Responsibility has been outsourced to contractors without proper monitoring of the quality of data and transparency of processes for getting access to land. Legislation and policy frameworks regarding land ownership and land use exist, but are still to be adopted, leaving room for uncertainty of the legality of records, as they are based on the existing, manual system, which is subject to corruption. Conflicting rights from different pieces of legislation add complexity. The rights holder organisations (farmers and forest users' organisations) have not been engaged to monitor these processes; and the focus on duty bearers in programmes and dialogue remains weak. Recommendations related to gender equality were generated and discussed in various fora since the initiation of IPRO support from the World Bank executed Land Administration and Management Project, but were not addressed in a systematic manner, despite Sida recommendations. Property registration has been and is a contentious area in Albania and the World Bank considered closing the program because of low performance in a number of areas, not solely gender.

A last set of constructive relevant gender recommendations was developed by the World Bank's own consultant by summarising recommendations produced, among others, by the Sida-funded UN women project, but the World Bank reports that, as this is late in the project, they are unlikely to be implemented.

Objective 3 - Increased and improved interaction between civil society and the state on environment and climate issues.

Sweden's portfolio of assistance assessed within this review does not include a significant component that focuses on the interaction between civil society and government. There is a Regional Environment Centre project being funded (since 2012). The project was funded primarily on the basis of an assessment that initiatives addressing the interaction between civil society and government in this sector were weak. The only assessed initiative specifically related to this objective is the forestry programme – and specifically, the work of the NFPUA and the local Forestry User Associations and their interaction with local government and local institutions. As a result of the forestry management planning process there has been a huge change in the mentality in institutions in relation to forest management. Originally, the forest service and the Ministry saw the plans as important for better data flow to the central level. Indeed, SNV/CNVP did not see the plans as a critical component of the programme either. But, this changed as they evolved into a much more participatory process for development that included data, intents and strategies that were useful to, and understand-

able for, a farmer. As forest covers almost half of Albania, with communal forestry incorporating 50% of this, these state – civil society interactions have constituted an important result.

The creation of legal frameworks for these institutional relationships is critical, but progress has been slow in this area and the legal role of the forest user associations is not defined.

Objective 4 - Increased capacity for the sustainable use of the country's water resources.

Sweden has agreed to support the World Bank's Water Resources and Irrigation Project; but it is a recent initiative, and is not a part of this evaluation. The Water Resources and Irrigation Project is programmed for 2012 – 2016, with a total budget allocation of 35 MSEK. There are no other initiatives which impact on this objective.

3.2.3 Overall outcomes and theories of change

Overall, when looking at the sectoral outcome objectives and the content of the portfolio, it becomes apparent that there has been a de facto shift of primary focus from energy and water to land use, including property registration and legal issues. The evaluation team cannot assess the reasons for this shift, but can conclude that the current portfolio is appropriate and reflects areas of action that may be more appropriate to the Swedish profile regarding democratic governance and public administration reform. In effect, the shift that has occurred from direct to implicit links to the Strategy can be seen as actually constituting an alignment with genuine opportunities, demands from Albanian stakeholders and the overall Swedish development cooperation profile.

The evaluation team perceives significant potential outcome synergies, some of which have probably been realised, but also notes that the natural resource and environment portfolio is fragmented. As such the portfolio does not reach the full range of synergies that could have been found if, for example, the Strategy had an explicit focus on enhanced land use.

Finally, with the exception of forestry initiatives, the other support is built on theories of change related to the benefits of, e.g., property registration. As with much of the programming in the democratic governance and human rights portfolio, these theories have not been empirically tested. Given the high levels of internal and external risks involved in dealing with these lucrative resource issues, it seems imperative that these assumptions are analysed.

3.2.4 Sustainability and ownership

There is broadly held view among interviewees that Sweden has chosen to focus on a strategy that relies on collaboration with a Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (MoEFWA) that is inherently weak considering its cross sectoral mandate to coordinate all line Ministries. With regard to Ministry of Justice ul-

timately responsible for the World Bank support to the IPRO their involvement were rather low in the initial phase of the LAMP. The IPRO experience, for example, demonstrated both high and low extremes of ownership. Even if the situation is positive now, a continued high level of ownership should not be taken for granted.

Local level ownership, once established, seems to be of a much more stable nature. A comparison between the AAC and the SNV/CNVP programmes demonstrates an interesting contrast. As is discussed above, the AAC has not been able to transfer its work and advocacy into financial support from member communes, and there is some doubt as to whether or not it can be a self-sustaining organisation moving forward. In contrast, the work being done in forest management has strong and demonstrated support and commitment at the commune level. This commitment and support has come about in conjunction with growth in the human capacity of the forest user associations that function in the communes. The evaluation did not look in detail at the two projects and their approaches, and lessons could perhaps be learned from looking more closely at the two approaches and the reasons for successes and failures.

Sweden's financial support for technical input in relation to solid waste is another example of erratic ownership. There were initial signs of proactive engagement from the Prime Minister's office. The Albanian partner was displeased with the work of the consultant and dismissed him, but has not presented a plausible explanation of what they actually want to achieve with Swedish support. The Government of Albania thus demonstrated a degree of leadership, but diffuse ownership.

Finally, in solid waste, energy and water, given the vast scale of investment needed, sustainability and ownership are inevitably related to the identification of a niche where Sweden can make a significant impact. As the evaluation did not assess initiatives in these areas that had progressed very far, the team cannot draw firm conclusions. However, the evaluators can conclude that this is an aspect of the natural resource and environment portfolio that deserves considerable analysis in relation to the potential for generating ownership and ensuring a critical mass for sustainability.

3.2.5 Perceived gaps and divergence from the strategy

There is little focus on Objectives 1, 3 and 4 (apart from the REC project which is not a part of this evaluation) and water resources, although there is an aspect of the forestry project that relates to Objectives 1 and 3. The evaluation team is of the view that this partially reflects the large and complex nature of the Strategy, and the related inability to select appropriate initiatives and determine an appropriate scope for Sweden's efforts. While these objectives are *relevant*, it is not necessarily appropriate to pursue initiatives in all areas – as is discussed elsewhere in this report.

To return to the example of support to solid waste management, even if this support had been successful, it is unclear where it would have led in relation to Swedish-Albanian cooperation (given the massive infrastructural investments that would have been required). It exemplifies the problem of taking on small initiatives that do not clearly fit within the Strategy nor relate to the overall Swedish profile. For example,

the initiative did not have a strategic approach to multi-stakeholder engagement that would have been in harmony with Objective 3. It may have been better positioned (and possibly more successful) were it to have focused on the relationship between civil society and public institutions concerned with solid waste, or if it had focused on approaches to, and work with, citizens/consumers.

3.3 DONOR COORDINATION AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

Swedish support is a particularly good example of how donor assistance can be applied within the priority framework of the host country, and with a focus on national ownership and national/donor coordination. Assistance is provided with the specific intent of addressing national priorities, and with a high level of focus on effective coordination with the Government of Albania, the EU and other donors. This focus contributes positively in terms of the relevance, effectiveness and potential for impact of Swedish contributions. Sweden is recognised among partners, and within the donor community, as a particularly good example of possessing an effective approach to harmonisation and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. There will be shifts in focus in the coming period, with a greater emphasis on the role and importance of EU/IPA frameworks, and how Albania can take advantage of these priorities. Sida's/Sweden's effectiveness will depend, to a certain extent, on its ability to position itself strategically within the EU's framework.

4 Management Of The Country Strategy

4.1 STRENGTHS AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM

The evaluation team is of the view that the country team is relatively well equipped to address the tasks and directions of the coming strategy period. While it is clear that there are constraints in terms of staffing (numbers), these constraints need to be seen as the starting point of discussions on planning, and of implementation strategies, given that there is a limited likelihood of any change in staffing allocations.¹³ The critical questions are then related to how the country team (in Tirana and in Stockholm) manages its cooperation programme and itself in order to be most effective.

There are structural aspects of the Strategy and its implementation that create challenges for the country team in Albania and Stockholm. The first is the breadth, and in some respects fragmented nature of stated priorities/objectives within the Strategy, which tend to dissipate the efforts and outcomes of all players – or which has dissipated the efforts of the Embassy and Sida as it developed its portfolio. Looking forward, it will be important for the country team to focus its support in the context of Sweden's results areas. Operationalising Sweden's strategy for Albania (and the Western Balkans) will be a critical process over the coming years.

Discussions throughout this report have indicated where the evaluation team sees the most critical aspects of this management programme. They can be summarised as the need to carefully construct the portfolio against a clearly defined and structured Strategy/theory of change and to focus on the areas and initiatives of cooperation. (This is a well-noted comment from the country team itself, and its concerns about having its efforts dissipated.) The view of the evaluation team is that the key issue the country team faces is this clear definition of its cooperation strategy within the framework of Sweden's overall strategic intentions in the Western Balkans (the so-called input values and results areas). The country team is well positioned in terms of the timing of this evaluation and the upcoming work on Swedish cooperation with Albania through 2020. The development of a coherent and focused portfolio in support of strategic directions is critical, and the Embassy should be open to seeking external assistance

¹³ Feedback from a field interview.

with this process. There needs to be a tight linkage between Swedish determined results areas, Albanian priorities for Sida/the Embassy and the intents and activities of partners and implementing agencies. This tight linkage – which will be most noticeable in the correlation of funded initiatives and the described theory of change – will be the most important tool for the country team in managing for results.

The ability of Swedish support to have an impact has been limited as a result of the wide range of initiatives being funded. While the evaluation team understands that the Community Policing Project (and the policing objective) was a priority of the Swedish Government, this is an example of the wide range of funded initiatives. Work with the police is important to the structural reform needed in Albania, and to Albania's EU aspirations. However, increasing Swedish support in this sub-sector – and particularly without a capacity for concerted engagement from the country team – has been difficult as there are no apparent synergies with the wider portfolio. Such synergies could perhaps have been found if this objective had been pursued within a more overarching approach to promoting the rule of law. The initiative regarding solid waste is another example of an area that is relevant, but where it is not clear how it would have fit within a focused strategy. The country team hopes that finding effective modalities and intermediary partners will simplify the management of such outlying issues, but the evaluation team questions whether this is sufficient when dealing with an unwieldy set of issues. A two-pronged approach of narrowing the issues being addressed and more selective choice would seem more appropriate. Indeed, with a more focused portfolio it may be more self-evident how to build on the relative strengths of different partners.

The evaluation team recognises that this is not just an issue for the development cooperation staff, but will require dialogue with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Stockholm as well. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to analyse how this could best be undertaken.

4.1.1 The Two Perspectives

The two perspectives (human rights-based approaches and the perspectives of the poor) are visible in the country portfolio, but are not central to the thinking and actions of some of the partners/implementers. The two perspectives are only expected to be 'considered' in reform cooperation in Eastern Europe, whereas they are more central in other areas of Sweden's development cooperation. The country team has made attempts to work within a rights perspective, and to see from the perspective of the poor where possible. Where partners/implementers make a serious effort to address gender equality, these efforts pay off in outputs and outcomes, and in an appreciation by the partner/implementer of the intent and results of this focus.

With the exception of some framework organisation initiatives, there is considerably less attention paid to marginalisation. There is almost no specific focus on the poor. The evaluation team recognises that poverty alleviation as a whole may not be a major priority for Swedish reform cooperation in Eastern Europe, but the issue of mar-

ginalisation would nonetheless seem relevant given that interventions are expected to contribute to the ‘equitable development’ called for in the Strategy.

As such, a human rights-based approach can be seen as being applied to gender issues, but not in a broader sense. Furthermore, it appears that even gender is addressed more concertedly in the democratic governance and human right portfolio than in the natural resource and environment sector. It is recognised that the political directives from the MFA are unlikely to change in this regard, but the evaluators note that Sweden, not the least due to its role as one of very few EU member development cooperation agencies working in Albania, would seem to have an important role in highlighting the opportunities and the risks to equitable development in Albania’s current development trajectory throughout the portfolio, even if overall poverty alleviation is not in focus.

4.1.2 Channels and Modalities of Support

A critical concern for the country team is their capacity to address the priorities of the Strategy, while also addressing the administrative requirements of programme management from both local and headquarters perspectives. The country team has a well-developed understanding of Albania’s development priorities, and where Swedish priorities intersect. There is a strong willingness and capacity to fund a portfolio of initiatives at this intersection. It is clear that they see the Strategy to be a living, albeit sometimes challenging, set of priorities. The evaluation team was impressed with the detailed knowledge of the team, and of their clear intent to have a portfolio of funded initiatives that deliver appropriate outcomes. Discussions about, and the use of, a range of funding channels and modalities¹⁴ is one example of this intent – as the country team has sought to find and use different methods of support to achieve outcomes.

The evaluation team has had an opportunity to observe and analyse the following channels/modalities:

- Direct funding to Albanian governmental institutions.
- Technical support to Albanian governmental institutions provided by Swedish public agencies.
- Technical support to Albanian governmental institutions provided by international technical consultants.

¹⁴ Channels (who to finance) and modalities (how to finance) are in principle two different aspects of the decisions that need to be made. The evaluation team has noted that in practice, however, these choices are inevitably conflated as certain partners (channels) are almost inevitably the most likely candidates for applying a chosen modality. The evaluation team therefore does not differentiate between these issues as they are so closely intertwined in practice and such a differentiation would lead to a highly theoretical and speculative analysis.

- Support, primarily to government partners, channelled through World Bank trust funds.
- Support, to Albanian CSO partners and local government, channelled through Swedish Framework Organisations.
- Support to Albanian CSO partners and local government through international partners (SNV) leading into a transition to supporting Albanian partners (CVNP).
- Support directly to Albanian CSO partners.
- Support to Albanian government, political institutions and CSO channelled through international organisations (OSCE, UN).

To provide a somewhat simpler overview, these channels/modalities have been summarised in 10 categories, at section 4.1.5 below.

Matching the right channel/modality with the right initiative is more important than the inherent strengths and weaknesses of a particular channel/modality itself. As such, it would be inappropriate in this review to generalise about channels/modalities being inherently good or bad. For example, a World Bank trust fund may be highly effective for engaging in support to aid effectiveness (as with IPS) given the nature of the tasks, but may not provide equal, unique added value in relation to community level activities. Some initiatives require a partner that can engage in very high-level political dialogue (together with the Embassy), whereas others may require capacity to mobilise Albanian civil society to themselves put pressure on the leadership. Others may require the ability to engage with parliamentarians or local governments.

Appropriate levels of management of the inputs are of course required, irrespective of the channel/modality. Oversight/management/supervision from the Embassy is required at some level. What that level is varies from case to case and from implementer to implementer. Experience suggests that, for example, the provision of funds to the World Bank, or the UN, does not mean that the contribution can be forgotten about – the efficiency and effectiveness of these multilaterals, in delivering outcomes against a set of Swedish objectives, must still be monitored, and managed where appropriate. In some cases even a strong partner, such as the World Bank, may require joint political engagement with the Embassy to overcome political inertia. Sweden's position as one of the most important bilateral donors that is also a EU member state gives Sweden a unique and strong position in joined up efforts with other actors to promote reforms.

Technical support from Swedish public agencies to their Albanian counterparts also provides a relevant example of an effective channel/modality where scale and scope are appropriately defined. This is particularly true where the support is of a technical nature, and more so where it is focused on the requirements of the EU accession process. Swedish public agencies are appreciated and trusted among their Albanian counterparts for their up-to-date and EU-adapted knowledge and systems, and the relevance therefore of their support to Albanian accession processes. This is coupled with a sense of collegiality and mutual understanding that is not found where the

technical support is provided by a private consulting firm. This is not to say that support from consulting firms is inappropriate – indeed it is both appropriate and welcomed, subject to the type of input required. What is most important and effective in this channel/modality is the peer relationship, and how it can make an efficient contribution to effective outcomes.

Support through multilaterals is appropriate most particularly in circumstances where broader policy reform and a joined-up Swedish – UN/World Bank effort is required in dialogue with the government. These channels/modalities are also appropriate where Swedish support can add value to a multilateral initiative, for example where the Swedish value base and Swedish policies can require a certain focus because of the support. The so-called ‘soft earmarks’ that push for a focus on gender equality initiatives in the Support to the UN Programme is an example of this type of value addition. In the future it is likely that Sweden will play a similar role in coordination with the EU as their support to the accession process comes to take a more central role in development cooperation.

4.1.3 Matching of channels/modalities with programming scale and scope

It is critical to match a particular channel/modality with the scale and scope of the programme. The work of the Framework Organisations provides an appropriate example here. It would be simply impossible for the Embassy to provide the type of servicing and developmental support to Albanian CSOs that is provided by the Framework Organisations. Moreover, the range of initiatives that are funded is far beyond what would be possible through, for example, a grants programme run through the Embassy.

It is perhaps self-evident that support through channels/modalities specialised in CSO development is more effective at reaching local levels and specific relations between a watchdog function and the agency ‘being watched’. World Bank or multi-donor initiatives may be more effective at fostering commitments to reform from national government.

Although the evaluation team did not have an opportunity to look closely at UN efforts or bilateral programmes focused on local services, it would seem that these structures may bridge these national – local gaps. For example, in their rural development programming, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is working with the roll out of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development, providing rural development grants, by giving institutional support to the Paying Agency at national level and strengthening organisations providing advice to applicants at local level. As part of the EU accession process there are a range of institutional change processes that may need to be initiated in Tirana, but whereby citizens throughout the country will need to be informed and engaged. The ‘last mile’ of rolling out these new systems and structures is often the weakest, and the Embassy could look critically at the institutions present at the ‘last mile’ (e.g., local government, resource user associations, farmer organisations, extension services, etc.) to see where impact can better be assured through a broader perspective on both public administra-

tion reform and pluralistic service provision. As will be noted below, this evaluation considers the need to bridge this gap of utmost importance to obtain a more strategic stance, and this should be considered when matching modalities.

4.1.4 How different channels/modalities ‘keep the Embassy in the loop’

In discussions with the Embassy, it became apparent that there is a need to choose modalities that can contribute to ‘keeping them in the loop’. This does not mean that these partners need to formally report to the Embassy if, for example, they are under direct contract to an Albanian institution, but rather that it is important that these partners can maintain a vibrant and frank dialogue with the Embassy, even between formal reporting periods.

The evaluation team has observed that working with Swedish public agencies is an effective and appropriate way for the Embassy to ‘keep in the loop’ regarding the specifics of the projects in which they are engaged through informal dialogue. These agencies may not be ideal for taking up overarching strategic issues given their relatively technical roles, but they can provide an inside view of project progress and institutional ownership.

On a different level, it is important that the Embassy has channels of communication that provide a strategic overview. The evaluation team notes that the Embassy makes very little use of regular monitoring consultants. Such consultants, if the same individuals are maintained from year-to-year, could provide a broader overview. This is particularly important given the somewhat fragmented nature of the portfolio, especially in relation to natural resources and the environment.

4.1.5 Summary Matrix on Channels/Modalities

The follow matrix provides some admittedly rough generalisations which are not intended as being the ‘last word’ regarding different channels/modalities but hopefully provides a tool by which these can be compared in a relatively structured manner.

	Support to/through the WB	Direct Support To Albanian Institutions	Support To/Through Framework Organisations	Support Through Swedish Public Agencies to Albanian Institutions	Support Procured Through Tenders – e.g. Consultant Firms	Support Through The UN Programme
Leveraging policy and institutional reform anchored in national ownership	Stronger at the political level – pushing the agenda	Reflect the Aid Effectiveness Agenda. Strong on ownership	Able to push on specific aspects of reform. Advocacy and lobbying focus	No clear examples of overall strategic reform despite strong ownership	Implementation focus more than agenda focus; delivery more than reform	Yes, but the evaluation team was unable to assess the quality of engagement
Moving from policy/strategic planning towards implementation	Stronger at the political level – pushing the agenda	Yes, but some perceived tendencies for support to ‘get stuck in Tirana’	Not a focus	Particularly regarding technical areas	As required within the implementation framework	Yes, but the evaluation team was unable to assess the quality of engagement
Linking national and local development	Not a strong component	Not a focus, see above	Subject to focus area this can be a strong aspect	Subject to focus area this can be a strong aspect	Subject to implementation framework this can be a strong aspect	Subject to specific focus area
Reflecting the value base and policies of Swedish development cooperation	No, but can be a structure wherein Swedish policy priorities can modestly influence a broader policy agenda	No	Yes, very much so	On a technical level yes, some agencies are developing capacities related to Swedish policies while others very weak	Depends on the quality of procurement and monitoring	No, but can be a structure wherein Swedish policy priorities can modestly influence a broader policy agenda
Overall value for money	Better with infrastructure than structural reform	Some manageable risks, but good, particularly if assisted structurally; requires more inputs/oversight from the Embassy	Delivery is good, responsiveness is good and planning and reporting, particularly to understand results, is improving	Good, even ‘inexpensive’	Good – can be expensive but generally deliver outcomes; reporting is generally of much higher quality	Difficult to generalise
Understanding of client needs	Better at higher levels of governance, or in the global relations	Obviously strong, but politicisation may override attention to the needs of the ultimate clients	Excellent, particularly local partners and their role in local issues/reforms; able to provide quality analysis of their areas of focus	Excellent, technically, good peer support; not so strong on providing personnel that understand the parameters of international cooperation	Good, and generally able to respond effectively as engage relevant personnel; able to provide quality analysis in their project area.	Good, with documented analyses of the country context

	Support to/through the WB	Direct Support To Albanian Institutions	Support To/Through Framework Organisations	Support Through Swedish Public Agencies to Albanian Institutions	Support Procured Through Tenders – e.g. Consultant Firms	Support Through The UN Programme
Timeliness/efficiency of delivery of activities/outputs	Not the strongest aspect, particularly timeliness	Subject to risks, particularly in procurement where systems can be outside agency control	Focus is on a long term relationship, so can say outputs/outcomes excellent but difficult to comment on timeliness	Good	Excellent generally, and with a quality of outcome not often seen in 'larger' projects and some other modalities	Difficult to generalise
Responsiveness to changing conditions	Not the strongest aspect given the rigid control systems	An area of risk, related to the ability to respond effectively given bureaucratic/political constraints	Good, generally, but not modality related	Seems good	Good	Difficult to generalise
Achievement of results and results reporting	Swedish support can 'slot in' to a big machinery, but it can also get lost – issues with attribution of results to Swedish support	Difficult to generalise; results reporting likely to be very weak	Good	Good at activity/output level; less so regarding outcomes	Excellent generally; able to report effectively on outcomes/results	Difficult to generalise
Added value in strategic alliances	Good, particularly at higher levels of governance; but Swedish involvement may not be emphasised/acknowledged.	Depends on the nature of the agency being supported	Good	Good – a strong positive for this modality	May not constitute a strategic alliance but may be able to broker these effectively	Good

4.2 THE RESULTS MATRIX AS A TOOL TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The results matrix has been analysed in terms of its structure and its assistance in the management of the cooperation programme. The evaluation team understands that the matrix was developed some time previously, and is not being used as a management tool. The discussion below is intended as a reflection on the existing document in a way that will assist in the formulation of a results matrix for the coming strategy period.

The matrix was not formulated in a way that provided assistance to the country team to select initiatives for support, to monitor the implementation of initiatives or to evaluate initiatives against objectives. Within the Strategy document, a logic can be found in which a theory of change is implied, but it is largely structured against outcome statements that are more impact oriented and output statements that are more outcome oriented.

As an example, the theory of change in the matrix for the *democracy and human rights sector* can be paraphrased as follows: ‘if the Albanian administration is more efficient, open and transparent, and citizens are more able to take part in and influence the reform process, and civil society has greater access to a secure and efficient police system, and women are more involved in politics and national/local administration, *then*, the government of Albania will show an openness and thoroughness of reforms in pursuit of European standards and enhanced democracy and the protection of human rights and freedoms.’ The logic, however, does not follow at the output level, as described in greater detail in the results framework. The three ‘output goals’ as stated are:

- An efficient land and property authority in place.
- Increased capacities of civil society organisations in Albania (ability to mobilise trust, support, resource, ability to build relationships and alliances and ability to interact constructively and influence the authorities.
- Albanian statistics are in line with the EU and Eurostat standards.

As an effective tool for results-based management, the new country strategy would re-work the result’s matrix so that there is a clear ‘downward’ logic between the indicated Swedish Results Areas (as they are determined for Albania), outcome statements and outputs (stated as ‘services or products’) and funded activities. This would then facilitate a much more straightforward ‘upward’ monitoring of funded initiatives and their contributions to these results. Given the practical nature of ‘outputs’, there will likely be one or more specific outputs per funded initiative, each of which should, logically, contribute to the higher-level goals of the new country strategy. The country team will benefit greatly, in its programme management and in the monitoring and evaluation of results, from developing such a results matrix. The country team is in a good position now, given the timing of current planning processes, to give strong consideration of the programmatic logic, the theory of change for the cooperation programme. Developing a well-structured results matrix would assist the country team in both monitoring the work of partners and assessing the results of the programme. This in turn will assist the country team in modifying the programme as necessary over the coming years in order to achieve intended outcomes.

5 Conclusions

5.1 ADAPTATION TO EMERGING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

The partial departures from the initial sectoral priorities in the Strategy indicate a readiness to adapt to emerging needs and priorities. Particularly in the natural resources and environment sector, the portfolio today indirectly reflects initial priorities as efforts have shifted to areas where needs and potential ownership have been greater. Informants consistently state that Sweden has retained an ability to ‘punch above its weight’ and maintain significant influence despite modest aid flows due to its flexibility in addressing emerging needs and opportunities.

The flip side of this is that flexibility has contributed to a certain fragmentation in the portfolio (particularly in natural resources and the environment) and perhaps duplication as well (gender initiatives) when partners are given too much space to develop their programmes independently. This is discussed further below.

The phasing out of many countries’ bilateral support to Albania has meant that a degree of flexibility has proven important in (re)situating Swedish support. As the gaps become greater, this will imply the need for greater attention in choosing which emerging needs should be addressed.

The uncertain pace of EU approximation in the future will also mean that the degree to which the emphasis of Albanian cooperation modalities shifts to IPA modalities will be difficult to predict, which in turn suggests that Sweden will continue to need a strategy that provides room for manoeuvre.

Lesson learnt: Flexibility is essential, but greater attention is needed to address potential pitfalls and maintain a strategic and well-coordinated focus.

5.2 THE STRATEGY AND THE TWO PERSPECTIVES

Although there are elements of a HRBA in the portfolio, it is not systematic, the best examples being:

- The gender equality work, where Sweden has supported women organisations (rights holders) to address domestic violence and women’s political influence in combination with support to legislative reforms in these areas (duty bearers).
- The Framework Organisations, which are supporting both empowerment of rights holders and advocacy towards, and monitoring of, duty bearers.

- The forestry programme where Sweden has supported the capacity building of local forest users associations and regional unions (rights holders) in combination with efforts to support a transparent legislative and policy framework for land ownership and land use (duty bearers).

There is a certain contradiction in the fact that human rights are treated as a sector, while it is also an overarching policy focus. Empowering the people most affected by violations (rights holders), to engage with the system and to support the people in power to deliver effectively, should be a focus of all sectors (environment as well as democracy and human rights). Civil society support should be part of all sector programmes – not only democracy and human rights initiatives.

HRBA is more visible/more explicit in the democratic governance sector and my implicit in relation to natural resources and the environment, something that is problematic. There are emerging areas of conflict over access to, and control over, natural resources (especially water) where the Swedish perspective on HRBA is just as important as in the democratic governance sector. A number of resources are available which can assist in ensuring an HRBA approach in these areas:

- *HRBA And Water/Sanitation*; Sida; September 2012. A description of a human rights-based approach in water and sanitation.
- *HRBA And Sustainable Development*; Sida; December 2012. A description of human rights-based approach in sustainable development.
- *HRBA And Democratic Governance*; Sida; September 2012. A human rights-based approach to democratic governance.

These concerns also relate to the perspectives of the poor, which the evaluation team interprets as being emphasised in reform cooperation in Eastern Europe in terms of equitable development. Equitable access to services and natural resources are essential for addressing the issues of power that may stand in the way of inclusive development in the future. Experience in the Western Balkans in general, and the shrinking public support for EU accession, can be interpreted as indications that the public no longer takes for granted that this process will lead to equitable development or poverty alleviation. Sweden's support for the EU accession process should address this by focusing on risks or resource 'grabs' and more explicit attention to who it is that is receiving the services that are being strengthened with Swedish assistance.

Lesson learnt: Sweden needs to clarify the scope of its commitments to the two perspectives, particularly in relation to developing a new strategy for natural resources and the environment, and in explicitly addressing transparent and equitable access to services and information.

5.3 MOVING FROM POLICY REFORM TO IMPLEMENTATION

There are a number of examples in the current portfolio where Swedish support is moving from policy reform to actual implementation (i.e. actions with direct impact on the lives of Albanians). These impacts are, in most cases, at too early a stage to assess, as the services being provided are only just starting to be rolled out.

The evaluation team has not been able to assess the scope of implementation in many projects in relation to who actually benefits from the services provided. In some cases there are concerns about possible biases, in other cases these are clearly being taken into account. As noted in section 5.4 below, a significant proportion of the portfolio is designed based on assumptions that have yet to be monitored and verified about who will actually benefit from the ultimate implementation. With some projects slated to be completed just as the supported systems are put into place, there is a danger that these assumptions will not be tested. Sweden has a strong relationship with the agencies being supported, partly due to the close relations with Swedish public agencies, and this could be leveraged if additional and appropriate technical assistance is provided, to ensure that results are measured in a verifiable manner.

The evaluation team noted concerns among some interviewees that the emphasis on policy reform carries with it a danger that Sweden may be perceived to support the political elite in Tirana, rather than the population at large. The evaluation team could not confirm the extent to which these concerns are justified. Even the possibility of such a perception suggests that somewhat increased attention to the practical implementation of services based on the supported reforms, along with support to CSOs in monitoring performance, should receive more attention in the future.

Lesson learnt: Sweden has produced, or is on the verge of producing, significant outputs, but additional efforts will be needed to assess the outcomes of these investments in relation to services reaching citizens, and such evidence of outcome achievements will be essential to ensure that Sweden is recognised as having had a concrete impact on the well-being of poor and marginal Albanians.

Sweden has struggled to adapt its strategy to reflect the absorption capacities and capacity development needs at both national and local levels. There is recognition that there are a variety of opportunities and challenges at both levels, and that a systematic structure is unlikely to emerge. At national level, experience in recent years suggests that the challenges may be more related to politicisation and uncertain levels of ownership and commitment. Capacities may exist, but the readiness to apply them to the reforms supported by Sweden has been uneven. At the local level, the challenges relate more to an absolute lack of capacity and difficult choices regarding where and how to start strengthening these capacities. There is recognition of the futility of commune and regional pilots when there is no plausible theory of change for how to expand to a significant scale. There are some very positive examples of where structures have emerged (NFPUA), but the elements for this success are not readily apparent in other areas.

A priority for addressing these macro-micro linkages is to see where there may be signs of emerging synergies. Some reforms at the national level (again, related to forestry) appear to be stimulating engagement at local levels. Others show initial signs of synergies, but these are uncertain (IPRO and training of notaries), and rely on continued commitment after the completion of project support at the central level, which is impossible to predict. Other areas may show some potential, but efforts have thus far been very limited (e.g., programming led by the Framework Organisations).

Lessons learnt: National level efforts are essential, given the limited responsibilities and capacities within local government and the need for legal and policy reform, but with the notable exception of services that can be rolled out through computerised platforms, the possibility to achieve results for peoples' lives is limited without greater attention to decentralised initiatives.

Local level efforts can achieve greater impact, but require a selective choice of partners and channels wherein national and local initiatives can be linked. In lieu of such interlocutors, small pilots are unlikely to be scaled up and should be avoided unless partners operate within a clear sphere of influence where plausible pathways to change can be discerned.

5.4 QUESTIONING ASSUMPTIONS AND ASSESSING ACTUAL IMPACT

Much of the programming currently being supported is based on assumed theories of change, particularly that changes in formal institutional structures (some using internet as an interface with clients) will prove more transparent, accessible and even equitable. The accuracy of these assumptions has rarely been assessed in the current portfolio. Even partners with substantial monitoring capacities, such as the World Bank, have not critically assessed these basic premises.

Of particular note: some of the new programming areas being considered for the future, such as watershed management, payment for environmental services, etc., may be based on plausible assumptions about 'win-win' support to the environment and the poor. But given the high levels of risk related to 'green grabbing', these assumptions would seem to require robust and proactive risk monitoring structures to assess whether the beneficiaries of these types of programmes are actually accessing the intended benefits. Sida's risk assessment structures are primarily focused on internal risks (primarily corruption within project management structures). These are indeed relevant in a context such as Albania, but significant attention is also warranted in relation to external risks, whereby project benefits may be captured by powerful actors. Politicisation has been recognised as contributing to such risks. Interviews have shown that there is recognition of the risks related to powerful actors gaining control over resources, with potentially very negative consequences in relation to equitable development. However, clear mitigation strategies are not in place.

Lessons learnt: Sweden is entering into new areas with high levels of potential risk. It is therefore even more important than before to establish reliable systems to assess outcomes, both those that are intended and also the risks of unintended negative outcomes.

5.5 DOES SWEDEN HAVE A COHERENT STRATEGY IN ALBANIA TODAY?

The overall contours of the Strategy are in some ways quite diffuse, but on closer inspection the evaluation team concludes that there is a significant measure of coherence in the Strategy. In general, we conclude that there is stronger coherence and focus in the democratic governance and human rights sector than in natural resources and the environment. In the latter, the process has led further away from initial objectives and the current portfolio is largely indirectly relevant to the initial outcome objectives.

The theory of change, as represented in the results matrix for the Strategy, is insufficiently conceptualised, and, as such, does not support the Embassy in the formulation of strategic directions, selection of initiatives for funding or the monitoring of results. The results matrix does not represent the reality ‘on the ground’. The lack of coherence between the results matrix document and the actual work of the Embassy prevents the matrix from adding value to planning or monitoring. A new and very different results matrix will be needed in association with the revised strategy, with a focus on its utility to the country team in managing its strategic focus and the monitoring of outputs and outcomes.

The above discussion on the relationship between the direction and work of the Framework Organisations and the overall strategic directions of Sweden in Albania are relevant to the discussion on coherence. Stronger visible linkages between the Strategy and the Framework Organisations would add to the apparent and actual strength and coherence of the Strategy.

Lessons learnt: Sweden has appropriately given priority to being responsive to needs and emerging opportunities over maintaining a strict and static results orientation; and it is now time to realign strategies with the current priorities and the profile that has been developed for Swedish development cooperation.

6 Recommendations to the Embassy and Sida

The following recommendations should all be seen as directed toward an overall narrowing of focus by a more strategic prioritisation of initiatives. The recommendations assume that a process of phasing out many existing initiatives will be undertaken. When new initiatives are chosen, it is hoped that these recommendations can provide a flexible template for considering how they may fit into a more strategic, sustainable and efficient portfolio.

6.1 TOWARDS A MORE COHERENT AND STRATEGIC FOCUS

The proposed direction of support to Albania can be of particular significance in the development of a more coherent and strategic focus. The report has commented on a number of areas where work on strategic directions, and how they are impacted in thinking, planning and discussions, both internally and with partners, can be important in formulating directions and in achieving effective outcomes. The longer-term approach intended for development cooperation with Albania provides a particular opportunity to ensure that necessary formulation happens at the ‘front end’, which will enable more effective analysis of outputs and outcomes during, and at the end of, the cooperation period.

- A more well-developed logic, with clear and visible links between the activities and outputs of funded initiatives and overall outcomes related to results areas is required. It is understood that Sida and the Embassies in the Western Balkans will develop a proposal (‘results offer’) describing the ‘results areas’ on which it will focus, and will be responsible for development of the ‘how’ in terms of achieving outcomes in these results areas. Time and energy should be spent in carefully developing this ‘how’, including detailed consultations with DSDC, other national partners, Framework Organisations and their local partners, the UN and the World Bank, and relevant Swedish agencies in developing the clear theory of change for the upcoming Strategy. The developed results matrix should provide a coherent link between funded activities, outputs and outcomes and the intended overall outcomes of the new Strategy.
- A stakeholder mapping should be undertaken to select the most effective partners and modalities within all selected results areas, and especially in relation to support to, and thorough, civil society. Selection of specific partners should be done within the more detailed discussions undertaken by Sida/the Embassy in operationalising its approach to the Strategy.
- The strategic focus should be informed by a much more proactive approach to assessing outcomes. Underlying theories of change regarding how investments in public administration reform and enhanced services will actually

benefit the population at large should be tested more often in a gender disaggregated manner and with due attention to equitable access to services and information.

- Even though sectors will no longer be the basis for the new strategy, Sweden should remain with a focus on activities within the existing sectors for the following overall reasons:
 - Democratic governance and human rights are the most important factors affecting Albania's path toward respect for human rights, the rule of law and EU approximation; and Sweden can provide a unique and much needed complementary focus, highlighting Swedish core values and policy commitments.
 - Natural resources and the environment are areas where the EU, and other donors, are likely to give insufficient attention and where appropriate resource management processes will have profound impact on future sustainable national development and equitable access to resources.
- Within the context of the planning described above, modest increases in the relative proportion of programming, that has direct implications at the local level, should be considered, based on careful identification and analysis of strategic partners that have proven the capacity to manage micro-macro/national-local linkages. As is discussed earlier in the report, there are complexities in any shift to a greater emphasis at the local level, including the size of the task against the budget and intent of the Strategy – any shifts in emphasis will need to be taken within a framework of likely effectiveness and the potential to achieve outcomes.
- As it is likely that the shift toward a regional Swedish approach to development cooperation in the Western Balkans will include a greater focus on EU accession, it is important to ensure that the Swedish portfolio is configured so as to ensure that Sweden continues to be seen as a proactive proponent of areas where the EU is relatively weak, i.e., a focus on equitable development, gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability. Sweden can provide an important complement to the EU in this regard in the dialogue of the international community with the Government of Albania.
- In democratic governance and human rights, Sweden has a strong portfolio in enhancing transparent and efficient public services, supporting an evidence base for public policy, creating civil society watchdog functions and introducing a stronger gender perspective and voice for the most marginalised groups. These core strengths should remain as the basis for choosing priorities in the future.
- In democratic governance and human rights, the work being done within the public administration is making a strong contribution to an effective and transparent administration, and is contributing to accession processes. Sweden's assistance in the areas of statistics and tax administration has strong regional links with effective contributions in other Balkan countries. Sida/the Embassy would do well to consider, within its detailed strategic planning, how to most effectively build on these initiatives in Albania and regionally. Rather than looking to expand its areas of support, consolidating assistance

with the intent of strengthening long-term impact in terms of EU accession should be considered. While an area of some complexity to planning and implementation, support to the development of strategic management and organisational capacities should be a priority.

- In democratic governance and human rights, the future portfolio should make the development of a vibrant Albanian civil society a specific objective in its own right, and move beyond the tendency observed in this evaluation to perceive civil society as primarily a means to achieve other objectives.
- In natural resources and the environment, it is unlikely that Sweden will be able to exert unique and significant influence within the broader infrastructural investments that are (or should be) emerging, particularly in hydropower and waste management. An appropriate Swedish niche, related to Swedish commitments to human rights, equity and concerns about sustainable resource management, would be in initiatives for promoting equitable resource access, management and control. Land use planning and the strengthening of resource user associations should be important means to achieve these aims. This could have additional positive impacts in relation to slowing out-migration from rural areas to urban Albania and internationally.
- Support to administrative capacity in relation to natural resource management is highly relevant, but it should reflect the fact that power over these resources is shifting fast as new institutional structures related to EU accession and new investment opportunities are appearing. Sustainable and equitable land use and natural resource management requires indicators that take these political and economic factors into account. At a minimum, a 'do no harm' approach to facilitating investment in these areas is essential.
- Swedish support to the forestry sector has been highly relevant and effective in a number of respects. It is, however, somewhat of an anomaly that it is currently classified as only as an input into renewable energy. It would be more appropriate to continue this support within an objective relating to sustainable natural resource management and rural development.
- Consideration should be given to a detailed comparative analysis of the approaches and relative levels of success of the SNV/CNVP forestry programme and the work with the AAC. Important lessons can be learned from understanding what the key factors of success were.
- The current range of gender initiatives should be reviewed (both those primarily focused on gender and activities that are mainstreamed within other projects) as a basis for ensuring that opportunities for cross-learning are acted upon and duplication/mixed messages are avoided. When partners propose new initiatives, they should be obliged to explicitly respond to the opportunities and concerns raised in such a gender review.
- The country team should develop a stronger knowledge base to ensure that the needs of marginalised groups and threats to their rights and livelihoods are made more apparent in programming. This should include ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, LGBT-persons, those who may lack the capacity to use the new computerised modalities, and (most notably) those who may be losing access to the natural resources and livelihoods upon which they de-

pend, due to the nature of the political economy of Albanian development. It may be possible to collaborate with Albanian/regional think tanks or to engage specialised UN agencies (e.g., UN Women) to undertake such analyses.

6.2 TOWARDS GREATER SUSTAINABILITY

- Albanian institutions should play an increasing role in directly managing chosen initiatives. The process of developing the new Strategy should take a critical look at where Swedish priorities and Albanian capacities overlap. This may be best achieved by giving priority to supporting areas where Albanian institutions have proven commitments and basic capacities.
- The Embassy should be more direct and proactive in addressing areas of weak government ownership. The evaluation noted examples of both very strong and very weak ownership. When there are signs of weak ownership, it appears ineffective and perhaps slow to rely entirely on trust fund modalities (e.g., World Bank) and it may therefore be necessary to act directly and discontinue funding at an earlier stage in instances where Albanian ownership is shown to be weak.

6.3 TOWARDS CHOOSING EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT CHANNELS/MODALITIES

- High priority should be given to developing strategic partnerships with agencies that have shown a capacity to effectively close the micro-macro/national-local gap. In both sectors, the Embassy should look critically at the institutions present at the ‘last mile’ (e.g., local government, resource user associations, farmer organisations, extension services, etc.) to see where impact can better be assured through a broader perspective on both national public administration reform and pluralistic service provision. Particular attention should be given to areas where broad public acceptance of EU accession processes will rely on citizens’ (and even Roma) having transparent and equitable access to the new services and administrative procedures that are being rolled out.
- Swedish public agencies can, as an added benefit of their work, provide the Embassy with a perspective on the internal workings of the partnerships with Albanian institutions. The experience in Albania (and elsewhere) indicates that they often lack capacities, however, to: (1) strategically analyse overall outcomes, (2) critically monitor the assumptions regarding outcomes and external risks, and (3) provide an analysis of achievements of crosscutting objectives at the level of beneficiaries. For these tasks, it is recommended that greater use be made of monitoring consultants with a development, rather than technical, background.
- Moving forward, and within the framework of Sweden’s strategic directions as discussed throughout this report, two aspects of this coordination/harmonisation approach will become more prevalent/relevant: linkages with the EU/IPA agenda and strategic priorities and the value-adding possible

where Sweden (within this overarching focus on EU accession) can use its comparative advantage to greatest effect, especially from the perspective of a future Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). While coordination with other donor nations will remain important to a degree, the critical focus will be on ensuring close coordination, dialogue and linkages with DSDC and the EU in order to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness.

6.4 SUGGESTED STRUCTURE FOR A RESULTS OFFER

The following matrix is presented as a tool for reflection over potential ways to uncover synergies and achieve a better balance in the portfolio in relation to:

- National – local mix.
- Governmental and CSO partnerships.
- Policy reforms and services/institutions reaching the target populations.

It also suggests areas where greater harmonisation and synergies could be found between the two sectors Governance and Human Rights and Natural Resources and Environment, thereby presenting a clearer and more coherent image for Swedish development cooperation. This matrix is not presented as a concrete recommendation for an alternative strategy, but it is rather hoped that this proposal can provide some ‘food for thought’ in determining future priorities.

The upper row objectives relate to overall policy reforms. The second row refers to the capacities of civil society and user groups to participate in and act as a watchdog regarding the development process. The bottom row objectives take up the services that Sweden supports and how they are expected to actually reach their intended beneficiaries. The second column from the left proposes where synergies may be found between the two sectors and where a clearer expression of Swedish values and commitments can be made.

Governance and Human Rights	Common concerns between the two sectors	Natural Resources and Environment	Institutional focus
Overall policy reform			
Institutions in place and empowered that can ensure that past progress in legal reforms and policy frameworks related to EU accession, more responsive public services and human rights (e.g. gender equity, accountability, transparency, participation and non-discrimination) are implemented at national and local levels.	Putting rule of law and EU norms into practice by linking national and local governance.	Institutions reflecting EU norms are in place and empowered that can ensure that past progress in legal reforms related to land ownership, sustainable management of forest, pasture and water resources are implemented at national and local levels.	The focus here is more on the public sector/institutions, central and local government. Transparency, accountability.
Civil society as watchdog			
Consolidated and sustainable civil society institutions that can effectively promote and act as a watchdog in relation to equitable access to natural resources and human rights, including those related to gender equity and inclusion of vulnerable populations in EU accessions and overall development processes.	Strong civil society operating within a rights-based and sustainable development perspective.	Empowered community institutions (and their apex structures) that are committed to, and effective at, attaining more sustainable management of forest, pasture and water resources amid the changing norms associated with the EU accession process. Empowered CSOs and interest groups that can monitor performance of institutions and private sector actors.	The focus here is more on Civil Society. Participation, non-discrimination and the right to information.
Services supported by Sweden			
Institutions and governance structures established that are resilient and responsive to the needs of marginal populations in the face of factors such as political changes and the uncertainties associated with the path to EU approximation.	Resilient and responsive public, private and civil society institutional and governance structures.	Institutions and governance structures established that can effectively adapt and respond to climatic hazards and natural resource degradation/over-exploitation in ways that reflect household and community vulnerabilities in the short-term and in the future given the changes that are likely to emerge in association with EU approximation.	The focus here is on both the public and civil society sectors, with an openness to pursue initiatives with the private sector as appropriate.

7 Appendices

7.1 APPENDIX 1 - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND FOCUS GROUP MEETING PARTICIPANTS

7.1.1 Democratic Governance and Human Rights Non-Stakeholder Experts Focus Group Meeting

Mirela Arqimandriti, Gender Alliance for Development Center, Executive Director
Rezart Xhelo, UN Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting Specialist
Elga Mitre, Dutch Embassy, Policy Officer
Fiorela Shalsi, UN Women, National Programme Coordinator

7.1.2 Democratic Governance and Human Rights Stakeholders Focus Group Meeting

Mirian Bllaci, CHWB
Lejla Hadzic, CHWB, Regional Coordinator
Plejada Gugashi, Olof Palme International Center, Local Programme Manager
Jonathan Eaton, CHWB
Aneida Bajraktari, CHWB
Robert Korkuti, Support to Community Policing Project, Manager
Arben Qesku, SKL International, Local Project Manager
Marjana Gorica, INSTAT, Administrative Coordinator
Vasilika Laci, Civil Rights Defenders, Program Officer
Renata Kapidani, Kvinna till Kvinna, Program Officer

7.1.3 Environment And Natural Resources Non-Stakeholder Experts Focus Group Meeting

Zana Vokopola, Urban Research Institute
Rezart Kapidani, Regional Environmental Center
Hermann Plumm, GIZ
Jakob Oetsch, GIZ
Entela Pinguli, Environment Expert
Elvita Kabashi, UNDP
Leonidha Peri, Faculty of Forestry Sciences
Genc Myftiu, SEDA
Xhemal Mato, EcoMovement

7.1.4 Environment And Natural Resources Stakeholders Focus Group Meeting

Janaq Male, SNV/CNVP, Director
Xhevair Llakaj, IPRO, ICT Director
Drita Dade, World Bank, Senior Projects Officer
Silvia Mauri, World Bank, Consultant

7.1.5 Meeting With Civil Rights Defenders Partners

Xheni Karaj, Alliance Against LGBT Discrimination
Vjollca Mecaj, Albanian Helsinki Committee

7.1.6 Meeting With Kvinna Till Kvinna Partners

Afroviti Gusho - Association "Une, Gruaja", Pogradec
Shpresa Banja - Women Forum, Elbasan
Majlinda Hoxha - Argitra Vizion Centre, Peshkopi
Bajana Cevoli - Association of Women with Social Problems, Durres
Ines Leskaj - AWEN Albanian Women Empowerment Network
Irena Shtraza - GADC, Tirana
Brikena Puka - Vatra, Vlora
Silvia Primerano – KtK

7.1.7 Interviewees*Stakeholders*

Dr Alenka Verbole, OSCE, Democratisation Department Head
Elton Lelo – OSCE, Democratisation Department (Gender and Civil Society Unit)
Programme Assistant
Plejada Gugashi, OPIC
Drita Dade, World Bank
Neshat Zeneli, National Employment Service, Employment Service Department Director
Brikena Kasmi – Deputy Minister of Justice
Silvia Primerano, KtK
Renata Kapidani, KtK
Evis Sulko, World Bank, Project Coordinator
Xhevair Llakaj, IPRO, Director of ICT
Per Lyster Pedersen, SCB, Chief Resident Advisor
Per Cronholm, SCB, Project coordinator
Ines Nurja, INSTAT, Director
Elsa Dhuli, INSTAT, Head of Economic Statistics
Alma Hasko, GTD, Contact Point
Emanuela Cocoli GTD, Director International Relations and Integration Department
Gavin Adlington, World Bank
Valbona Kuko – DSDC, Director
Alpina Qirjazi – DSDC, Focal point for Sweden
Vasilika Laci, CRD
Robert Korkuti, SIPU, Community Policing Project Coordinator
Janaq Male, CNVP
Peter Kampen, SNV
Lejla Hadzic, CHWB, Regional Coordinator
Jonathan Eaton, CHWB
Scott Crossett, Solid Waste Project
Agron Haxhimali, Albanian Association of Communes, Executive Director

Expert Non-stakeholders

Merita Meksi, GIZ

Astrid Wein, ADC (Australian Development Cooperation)

Country Team in the Embassy/Embassy Staff

Linda Gjermani, Programme Officer

Rezarta Katuci, Programme Officer

Lisa Fredriksson, Counsellor, Head of Development Cooperation

Robert Nygård, First Secretary, Programme Officer

Emirjona Vukaj, Programme Administrator

Patrik Svensson, Charge d’Affaires

Sida Headquarters

Mikael Elofsson, Western Balkans Unit, Head

Anders Hedlund, Western Balkans Unit

7.2 APPENDIX 2 - LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

7.2.1 Outcome Harvesting

2012. Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt. *Outcome Harvesting*, Ford Foundation.

7.2.2 Sida Documentation

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Strategic Plan For AAC. SHKSH.

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Administration in Albania, General Tax Department (GTD) in Tirana and Durrës”. InDevelop.

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April 2012. Trust Fund Agreement. Sida and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

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Dec 2011. Contract For Consulting Services.

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June 2010. Agreement Annexes.

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Oct 2012. Mid-term Review Aide Memoire. Orgut Consulting AB.

Improved Natural Resources and Environment (2011-2013)

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May 2011. Tommy Österberg. Second Quality Assessment. Lantmäteriet.

June 2011. Lennart Wastesson and Per Gossas-Lindberg. *Sustainable Maintenance And Operations*. Lantmäteriet.

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7.3 APPENDIX 3 – COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTCOME MATRIX

Democratic governance and human rights	Budget	Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.	Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.	To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.	Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
Direct support INSTAT (2010-2014)	SEK 13,870,400	Sustainable and accurate statistics. Census for non-agricultural enterprises and Census on Agricultural Holdings. Funding support for EU funded project to bring census into line with EU standards.					
Statistics INSTAT (2010-2014) (Partnerships in Statistics 3)	SEK 23,318,000	Overall development of INSTAT's human resource and organisational capacity, focused on middle management. Business Price Index, Producer Price Index, Consumer Price Index, Construction Cost Index, Production Cost Index, Business Register, Short-term Statistics, Structured Business Survey, ICT Survey, Quarterly Labour Force Survey.				Knowledge of the socioeconomic and educational realities of the population is key to proper planning. INSTAT's time use survey that contributes to such knowledge. The significance of disaggregating statistics according to gender, disability and ethnicity does not come through in project reporting, nor does the use of disaggregated statistics in monitoring outcomes for particular marginalised groups.	
DAAC phase out (2009-2013)	SEK 15,250,629	Capacity development of the AAC as an organisation of duty bearers. The aim was to enhance effectiveness of service delivery, transparency, accountability and public participation in the communes - some outputs realised in terms of organisational development of the AAC itself, in the development of its strategic focus and its influence on member organisations.	Improvements in citizen participation and organisation (rights holders) in selected communes. Development of the strategic role of the AAC not strong, nor with relation to EU integration efforts.		The AAC initiative contributed to a national focus on women's participation in local governance. The establishment of a quota for female participation in communal councils led to a measurable improvement in the participation of women in local governance structures, although the quota and the level of participation appear to be under some threat currently.	The AAC initiative contributed to a national focus on women's participation in local governance. The establishment of a quota for female participation in communal councils led to a measurable improvement in the participation of women in local governance structures, although the quota and the level of participation appear to be under some threat currently.	

Democratic governance and human rights	Budget	Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.	Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.	To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.	Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
OSCE ALB (2009-2012)	SEK 4,330,378				285 women - all political parties - across country - entered the election campaign knowing how to advocate, speak in public, develop messages and work with media. 200 out of the 285 participants were candidates on election day. Of the 200 candidates, 60 were elected as Municipal Councillors. Of the 785 women that successfully ran in the elections, 60 were trained by the project, this is 8%. The number of the members of the National Platform for Women increased to 1500 active women. The Platform continues strengthening its capacities, and members challenge structures at the local and national level.	Empowerment of women, is in line with a rights-based approach. Swedish support to gender equality in Albania goes beyond increased participation of women in political and administrative spheres, but the Strategy does not currently reflect the breadth of activities or results. There have been shifts in candidate lists, but this has not been converted into women in parliament (the most recent election included 30% women on candidate lists, but only 12.6% women in elected positions). The project involved women with disabilities, and there was a discussion on a quota for persons with disabilities, but the discussion did not result in any specific initiative.	Among the women trained is there has been a focus on Roma women representatives and on women with disabilities. Outcomes still not as strong as efforts. The project involved Roma and Egyptian women, including three candidates for office. None were successful in being elected.

Democratic governance and human rights	Budget	Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.	Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.	To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.	Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
OPIC (2012-2015) OPIC (2008-2011).	SEK 17,280,000 SEK 14,530,000		The OPIC programme clearly and deliberately targets both duty bearers and rights holders. The OPIC programme has a significant process focus, where clear results are not readily defined/described. OPIC focuses on increasing civic activism, especially in mobilising activism in young people and women in their interaction with public officials – thereby influencing policies and decision-making. The focus is on the mobilisation, more than on the influence of policies and decision-making. The involvement of OPIC's partner organisations on governance and administrative processes is visible, and OPIC and its partners have developed practices and mechanisms of communication with public officials, including the establishment of a public hearing practice and participatory budgeting approaches in some Municipalities.		OPIC partners have been supported in their work with other organisations and projects (funded by Sweden and other donors) on the quota for women in government.	OPIC partners have been supported in their work with other organisations and projects (funded by Sweden and other donors) on the quota for women in government.	A focus on the poor is an acknowledged weakness in the OPIC programme.

Democratic governance and human rights	Budget	Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.	Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.	To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.	Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
Cultural Heritage Without Borders (2012-2014) Cultural Heritage Without Borders (2008-2012).	SEK 33,802,840 SEK 20,900,000		The programme defends the right to one's cultural heritage including a perspective on such heritage at the national level and in the effective work it does to strengthen mutual respect for different cultures by linking European perspectives on the maintenance of cultural heritage with local practice, strategies and legislation. It raises the awareness of the importance of cultural heritage, and has a high profile. The impact on legislative systems is limited - attitudinal changes have been greater.				
KtK (2012-2014) KtK (2008-2011).	SEK 15,000,000 SEK 19,211,000		KtK is assisting civil society in developing its own skills and capacity in governance and administrative processes, as well as its involvement in monitoring and lobbying with regards legislation, strategies and action plans impact on human rights, human trafficking and gender equality. Greater attention is needed to direct accountability mechanisms, including a specific focus on monitoring and watchdog roles.		KtK is building capacity in lobbying and advocacy, particularly in relation to legislation, strategies and activities on to human trafficking, domestic violence, gender equality and the economic empowerment of women.	KtK's work focuses on rights holders, although their partners work directly and indirectly with duty bearers. KtK has improved the capacity of its partner organisations, particularly in the areas of advocacy and lobbying for legislative change. Increased technical skills within partners, and increased cooperation with Courts, municipalities and the employment service are all visible components of the improved referral service at the local level for victims of domestic violence. As a result of the efforts of KtK partners and others (including organisations supported by both Swedish and other funding), domestic violence has been included, for the first time, in the penal code of Albania.	A focus on the poor is an acknowledged weakness in the KtK programme.

Democratic governance and human rights	Budget	Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.	Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.	To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.	Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
CRD (2012-2015) SHC (CRD) (2008-2011).	SEK 18,000,000 SEK14,400,000		Civil society organisations impact on governance and administrative processes, including legislation, strategies and action plans: on human rights, transparency and other processes that enable a more open democratic governance. CRD has targeted both rights holders and duty bearers. Support from CRD contributed to the adoption of the anti-discrimination law in 2010 and a legal clinic has been established with and free legal aid provided. CRD partners monitor detention centres, and provide legal and other assistance to detainees, particularly focusing on protecting the rights of those in custody. CRD is building capacity in lobbying and advocacy on legislation, strategies and activities related to human rights.			CRD has targeted both rights holders (the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender community (LGBT), disability and prisoner organisations) and duty bearers (police, detention centres and parliamentarians). Support from CRD contributed to the adoption of the anti-discrimination law in 2010. Through CRD support a legal clinic has been established, and free legal aid provided to those in need of assistance. In a related endeavour, CRD partners monitor detention centres, and provide legal and other assistance to detainees, particularly focusing on protecting the rights of those in custody.	A focus on the poor is an acknowledged weakness in the CRD programme.
Tax admin phase II (2008-2012).	SEK 11,994,865	Development of GTD strategic plan (2012-2015). Improvements to customer service approaches and practice including an openness, convenience and timeliness of servicing in tax offices, as well as improvements in response times. Specific improvements in control systems, initially in three key industries. Linkages of taxation statistics to EU standards				Tax Agency has developed a gender policy: The goal of Albanian Tax Administration's Gender Policy is to promote a gender equal organisation, and a strategy for the implementation of the policy. Further, a pre-study of the Albanian tax system in relation to its effects on gender equality was undertaken.	

Democratic governance and human rights	Budget	Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.	Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.	To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.	Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
IPS ALB (2007-2012).	SEK 8,000,000	Increased DSDC influence over strategic directions and donor relationships. Common donor platform created - linked to government priorities. IPS links planning, policy and budgeting, together with external assistance. Alignment of donor strategies with mid-term budget programming is critical. Development of policy formulation capacity.				Capacity building of duty bearers (to be more transparent and accountable) is in line with a rights-based approach.	
Support to the Alb Nat Employment Service, NES (2011-2014).	SEK 7,741,000	Introduction of a full IT system in all employment offices. Full digitalisation of the job seeker system. Improved transparency of the labour market, labour market statistics, labour market analysis and labour market policies.				The NES programme has applied a form of a HRBA, developed in consultation with unions (rights holders), employer organisations and gender NGOs (although it did not involve other marginalised groups). The labour market is more transparent.	
Support to Community Policing (2012-2016).	SEK 25,173,380			The project is the only focus in this area, and is in its early days. The specific intent of this objective is not clear, as an overall focus of Swedish support. A relevant question is 'why is the focus on the Police and not on the Rule of Law?'		Outputs of this initiative are intended to be based on a human rights perspective, building government capacity and empowering civil society (representing rights holders).	

		Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Reduced vulnerability in the energy sector and efficient use of renewable sources of energy.	Increased Albanian administrative capacity at national and local level for dealing with natural resource issues sustainably in the long term.	Increased and improved interaction between civil society and the state on environment and climate issues.	Increased capacity for the sustainable use of the country's water resources.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
Natural Resources and the environment	Budget						
SNV Forestry Albania (2010-2013)	SEK 28,200,000		A participatory mapping process has been developed using simple hand held mapping devices to delineate boundaries of forests between traditional users in order to prepare formal agreements with local government bodies. Capacity developed in local forest users' associations with regional unions and a national apex institution, the National Forestry and Pasture User Association (NFPUA). Community forestry efforts have yielded results in terms of the organisational capacities in improved management of forest and pastures. Forest User Groups were established, and together with other stakeholders (the Commune and the Forest Service) forestry management plans developed with 250 Forest User Groups.	Identified gaps in the capacity of Local Government in terms of technical forest and pasture management were partly addressed through wider collaboration of a range of actors in forestry as well as involvement of regional government and civil society groups. ORGUT - mid-term evaluation: 'The project has led to an improved institutional framework in the sense that it has activated a number of actors and processes, which has benefited communal forest and pasture users. Some results in enhancing capacity and responsiveness of local government in support of sustainable development. Assistance assessed within this review does not include a significant component focused on the interaction between civil society and government. The work of the NFPUA and the local Forestry User Associations and their interaction with local government and local institutions improve forestry management planning processes - there has been a significant change in the mentality in institutions in relation to forest management.		Clear gender mainstreaming strategy. Report in detail on gender issues, plans, approaches. The strategy has two keys: gender awareness and women's empowerment. SNV has undertaken a gender analysis of the forestry sector in Albania. There is an expressed view in formulation and evaluation documentation that a rights perspective (and specifically a gender perspective) are well represented in design and in implementation.	The project focuses on the rural poor. Building capacity of the government to deliver a more transparent and user oriented policy framework to improve sustainable livelihoods of the rural population.

		Comments On And/Or Actual Outcomes Related To Outcome Statements Per Country Strategy.				The Two Perspectives	
		Reduced vulnerability in the energy sector and efficient use of renewable sources of energy.	Increased Albanian administrative capacity at national and local level for dealing with natural resource issues sustainably in the long term.	Increased and improved interaction between civil society and the state on environment and climate issues.	Increased capacity for the sustainable use of the country's water resources.	Rights-based Perspective i.e. in what way has the project a) built capacity of duty bearers to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability/transparency) b) empowered rights holders to improve their situation and claim their rights (participation, non-discrimination)	The Poor i.e. Does the project make deliberate efforts to identify, reach and include the poor?
Natural Resources and the environment	Budget						
Improved Natural Resources and Environment (2011-2013)	SEK 21,728,000	Project delayed.	There is a linkage between the forestry programme and the initiatives on resource development and property registry, in terms of their impact (and potential for impact) on local land use and natural resource management. There are de facto synergies regarding land use management.				
Land Management (2006-2013)	SEK 40,000,000		Land use planning and related systems.				
Twinning IPRO – Lantmäteriet (2008-2012)	SEK 5,260,000		The computerised system established through the project will significantly improve local management of property, and the services provided to customers. At the policy/management level, improved quality and the up-to-date nature of data will assist local and national institutions and decision-makers in making decisions based on knowledge and data. For customers, consistency of operation in offices, coupled with improved responsiveness and quality of information will provide a more user-friendly process. Assumptions of potential benefits have not been tested through monitoring or disaggregated outcome analyses.				Rather technical project focused on internal efficiency issues and now explicit analyses of outcomes related to clients, so perspectives of the poor are absent.

7.4 APPENDIX 4 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Tirana, 26 October 2012

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN EVALUATION ON RESULTS OF COOPERATION UNDER THE SWEDISH STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH ALBANIA, JANUARY 2009-DECEMBER 2012

1. Background

The Strategy for Development Cooperation (SDC) is the Swedish Government's main instrument for steering and managing development cooperation with a country.

The current Development Cooperation Strategy with Albania is valid for the period 2009 – 2012. The strategy is expected to be extended for one more year. In 26 March 2009, Albania and Sweden signed a bilateral agreement containing the scope and objectives of the cooperation between the two countries. The overall objective is to support a stronger democratic state, sustainable development in the long run and improved opportunities for achieving EU membership.

Swedish support focuses on two sectors: a) democratic governance and human rights and b) natural resources and environment.

Democratic governance and human rights

The overarching Albanian objective for this sector is: Openness and thorough reforms in pursuit of European standards and enhanced democracy, and the protection of human rights and freedoms.

Swedish objectives for this sector are:

- Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.
- Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.
- To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.
- Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.

Natural resources and environment

The overarching Albanian objective in this sector is to: Create conditions for long-term sustainable growth by preserving and protecting Albania's natural resources from destruction and exploitation and by promoting environmental values.

Specific Swedish objectives for this sector are:

- Reduced vulnerability in the energy sector and efficient use of renewable sources of energy.
- Increased Albanian administrative capacity at national and local level for dealing with natural resource issues sustainably in the long term.

- Increased and improved interaction between civil society and the state on environment and climate issues.
- Increased capacity for the sustainable use of the country's water resources.

The Swedish government has commissioned Sida to start the preparations of the new cooperation strategy for Western Balkans for the period beyond December 2012. One of the guiding principles in the process is that future cooperation should be guided by experience gained and achievements made during the previous strategy period.

Preparations for the new country strategy started already in spring and a few studies and desk reviews in specific areas were commissioned by the Embassy. In order for the Embassy to prepare for a new strategy, the evaluation of the current strategy implementation was seen as very important by Sida and the Embassy. This assignment does not cover all aspects of the country strategy implementation and monitoring as the Embassy is aware of the fact that this assignment would need much more time and resources. Very important aspects of the country strategy especially those related with the EU integration, such as the complementarity of Swedish support to EU support, etc. are not included in this assignment but will be an important part of the analysis of Sida. Also the assessment of relevance of the programmes to the different Sida and specific country policy documents is not included in this assignment. The assignment will focus mainly on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Swedish funded contributions. However aspects of relevance and sustainability which address the forward looking perspective of Swedish cooperation of this assignment will be covered.

Currently another assessment is under way with the overall task to make an assessment of the relevance and efficiency of regional contributions/projects. This will primarily be done through analysing the *added value* of regional projects that have been carried out between 2010-2012.

2. Purpose of the ASSIGNMENT

The main purpose of the assignment is two-fold:

- A. To evaluate the effectiveness, cost efficiency and aspects of relevance and sustainability related to a forward looking perspective of the future Swedish cooperation.
- B. To provide recommendations primarily addressed to Sida future cooperation.

3. Scope of the ASSIGNMENT

An assessment of the Swedish support during the period 2009-2012. Assessment shall be made primarily for programmes with an agreement date starting from January 2009 and onwards.

4. Issues to be covered

Effectiveness

The analysis should primarily focus on the outcome level and the questions listed below. The findings should be exemplified with evidence based data emanating from specific contributions. To the extent possible the Consultant is asked to comment on possible contributions to the impact observed in the country (see last question).

1. Assess whether the interventions financed by Sweden have reached their objectives. Which interventions were successful in terms of development results, which failed, general factors for success or failures?
2. Have the interventions considered particularly discriminated social groups in the design of the programme and the implementation of the activities?
3. Is there access to information (openness and transparency) for the stakeholders involved in the individual interventions to be assessed in order for them to participate in a meaningful way?
4. To what extent have the interventions contributed to attaining the objectives of the cooperation strategy?
5. To the extent that is possible, comment how much of the outcome change in the two sectors of the Swedish Cooperation Strategy (having as a background the Albanian National Strategy for Development and Integration/NSDI) can be attributed to the Swedish funding and how can this be demonstrated?

Efficiency

The analysis should cover this aspect:

1. Assess to the extent possible the values of benefits (outputs and outcomes) of the interventions in relation to the costs of producing them (expenditures made)

Relevance

The assessment on the relevance should cover these aspects:

1. Assess the relevance of the interventions financed by Sweden in relation to the current needs and priorities for the country development. Assess whether the strategy had the right focus, or if it left out groups which should have been targeted.
2. The relevance of the on-going interventions in relation to the current needs of the groups the individual interventions target (as an example: is the support provided to women organisations, relevant to their needs and priorities?).

Sustainability

The analysis should focus on sustainability of interventions as envisaged in the future and focus on the following aspect:

1. Assess the requirements for sustainability of interventions with a special focus on ownership

Other tasks of the assignment are linked to the role, management and follow-up of contribution from the Sida team. The expectation for this task is to give recommendations to Sida on how to improve its work for following up the results. The findings and recommendations for the below tasks can be presented in a seminar with the development cooperation/Sida team in Albania.

1. Assess the strengths and constraints by the Sida country team including HQ in relation to the operationalisation and management of the country strategy and integration of two perspectives in the country portfolio.

2. To the extent possible comment on the efficiency of Results Matrix for the Cooperation Strategy as a tool to monitor the implementation of the strategy.

6. METHODOLOGY, TIME SCHEDULE AND REPORTING

The Consultant is expected to be familiar with Swedish key steering documents for development cooperation and methodological approaches.

The assignment will be carried out during 2012 and will take up to 60 person-days. The team is expected to include three persons. The Consultant shall be responsible for all logistics during the assignment.

The evaluation and the reporting must follow DAC's evaluation quality standards. The Consultants shall take care to establish the reliability and consistency of the information by triangulation, i.e. comparing and checking similar information from various sources. Investigation of the potential and actual synergy effects in the portfolio will be highlighted wherever relevant. A mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) approach is envisaged for this evaluation. The evaluation team will outline a well-developed research strategy and propose an appropriate methodology to ensure a transparent and objective assessment of the issues to be analysed in this evaluation.

The evaluation team will make use of secondary and primary data which will be analysed using suitably defined qualitative and quantitative performance indicators. Primary data may be collected using empirical methods through interviews and focus groups. The field-study will be an important part of this assignment. Another field visit is planned for the presentation of the findings in a workshop.

Sida and the Embassy will inform relevant stakeholders about the forthcoming evaluation. It is, however, the responsibility of the consultant to make the practical arrangements for the country visit and interviews.

Inception

The Consultant is asked to begin the assignment by preparing an inception report elaborating on the feasibility of the scope of evaluation, the description of methodological choices, design of causal analysis, data collection methods, instruments for data collection and analysis, the detailed and operational evaluation work plan (including feedback workshops). The Consultant is asked to make an interpretation of the evaluation questions and how they will be researched.

The Consultant shall propose the methodology, time plan and division of labour in an Inception report (maximum 15 pages) submitted to the Embassy no later than, 9 November 2012.

Start-up meeting

The Consultant, Sida and the Embassy will have a start-up meeting on, 12 November 2012 via video conference (alternatively telephone conference). During the start-up meeting the methodology, time plane and budget in the inception report will be discussed and agreed.

Implementation (for more information see above the discussion on methodology)
The assessment shall be performed through studies and analysis of existing reports, evaluations, and other relevant documents as well as through interviews, focus groups, etc. with relevant stakeholders which will include implementing partners (such as government institutions and CSOs), beneficiaries and other donors. The work thus includes a field visit. The Consultant is expected to present a proposal on the division of days between field visit and desk study.

Report writing

The Consultant shall prepare a draft report and submit it to the Embassy in electronic form by, 14 December 2012. The Embassy/Sida comments will be sent to the Consultants by 27 December 2012. A final version of the report shall be submitted to the Embassy, electronically and in two hardcopies by 10 January 2012.

The report should contain a session on conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations.

- The conclusions in the evaluation should be based on analysis and exemplified with evidence based data emanating from specific contributions
- Lessons learnt should provide insights relevant not only to Sida and Embassy but also partners.
- Recommendations should be addressed primarily to Sida and Embassy and presented in order of priority. They should follow the analysis and conclusions and be practical (given the decisions to be taken by Sida for the new regional strategy). Recommendations with regards to the relevance of interventions in relation to the urgency of the needs and priorities of target groups in the country strategy are highly appreciated.

The report shall be written in English and shall not exceed 30 pages, excl. annexes. Approval of the Final Report will be based on its adherence to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.

Contact person at the Embassy in Tirana will be Lisa Fredriksson, at lisa.fredriksson@gov.se and Rezarta Katuci at rezarta.katuci@gov.se.

7. Consultant's qualifications

The assignment is expected to be carried out by three persons. At least one of the three needs to fulfil the required qualifications for Category I (according to Appendix D in the Framework Agreement). The team leader should be an experienced evaluator. The team in combination should have the needed experience and knowledge to perform the tasks foreseen in this assignment including:

- Experience in the region/country
- Experience of human resources and gender equality analysis
- Experience of efficiency analysis and evaluation of strategies

8. Days and Costs for the Assignment

The consultants shall in the inception report propose a timeframe that indicates number of days per consultant engaged for the assignment.

The total maximum cost for the assignment is 510 000 SEK. The inception report shall include a full budget for the assignment, including reimbursement costs.

9. Annexes

Below is a list of annexes and references. Additional information, documents, materials will be provided by the Embassy after the response of the Consultant on the ToR.

- Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Albania 2009-2012
- List of contributions to be evaluated.

10. References

http://www.dsdc.gov.al/dsdc/Department_of_Strategy_and_Donor_Coordination_5_2.php

7.5 APPENDIX 5 – INCEPTION REPORT

Executive Summary

This report summarises the evaluation team's understanding of the scope of the evaluation, and the Terms of Reference, and addresses both an understanding of the Evaluation Questions and how these questions will be assessed, and reported on. Finally, the report details the evaluation team's approach and methodology for the evaluation, including initial thinking on the time frame for each component of the assignment.

Assessment of scope of the evaluation

A bilateral agreement exists between Sweden and Albania (signed 26 March 2009) which describes the overall objective of the relationship as providing support to development of a 'stronger democratic state, sustainable development in the long run and improved opportunities for achieving EU membership.' The *Strategy For Development Cooperation With Albania* (2009-2012) (Strategy) is the Swedish Government's main instrument for steering and managing development cooperation with Albania. Sida anticipates that the strategy will be extended for one more year. In this context, Swedish support focuses on two sectors, which are described below, including both the Albanian Government and Swedish objectives in each sector.

Democratic governance and human rights

The *Albanian objective* for this sector is: Openness and thorough reforms in pursuit of European standards and enhanced democracy, and the protection of human rights and freedoms.

Swedish objectives for this sector are:

- Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.
- Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.
- To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.
- Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.

Natural resources and environment

The *Albanian objective* in this sector is to: Create conditions for long-term sustainable growth by preserving and protecting Albania's natural resources from destruction and exploitation and by promoting environmental values.

Swedish objectives for this sector are:

- Reduced vulnerability in the energy sector and efficient use of renewable sources of energy.
- Increased Albanian administrative capacity at national and local level for dealing with natural resource issues sustainably in the long term.

- Increased and improved interaction between civil society and the state on environment and climate issues.
- Increased capacity for the sustainable use of the country's water resources.

The Swedish government has commissioned Sida to start the preparations of the new cooperation strategy for Western Balkans for the period beyond December 2012. One of the guiding principles in the process is that future cooperation should be guided by experience gained and achievements made during the previous strategy period.

Purpose of the Evaluation

Per the Terms of Reference, the main purpose of the assignment is two-fold:

- To evaluate the effectiveness, cost efficiency and aspects of relevance and sustainability related to a forward looking perspective of the future Swedish cooperation. It is noted that the focus of the evaluation is on effectiveness and cost efficiency, with relevance and sustainability specifically being considered as they relate to 'looking forward' in relation to Swedish cooperation. Impact will not be addressed.
- To provide recommendations primarily addressed to Sida future cooperation.

Scope of The Evaluation

According to the Terms of Reference, the evaluation will make an assessment of Swedish support to Albania for the period 2009-2012, *focused on programmes which started from 2009*. There are a total of 22 initiatives, of which 4 (Cultural Heritage Without Borders, Kvinna till Kvinna, Civil Rights Defenders and Olof Palme International Center) involve two separate agreements each, covering the period prior to 2009 – these four initiatives will be treated as single programmes across the two separate agreements.

Some of the initiatives began before the period under review. These earlier developments are assumed to be included in order to understand the process of developing the Albanian portfolio. This will be relevant for contextualising the evaluation within the long-term relationships in which Swedish cooperation has evolved, but the evaluation will not look at the early history of cooperation. Specific reference is made to Tax admin phase II and Land Management, each of which began some time prior to 2009.

Further, two initiatives, IPS ALB and Twinning IPRO have current agreements which, per evaluation documentation, are not to be included in the evaluation, although there were earlier agreements as well for each of these initiatives. However, these earlier agreements began well before 2009, and further discussion will be required during the Inception Meeting to clarify the inclusion or otherwise of these initiatives.

As currently understood there are 14 projects/programmes which comprise the portfolio proposed in the ToRs as the focus for the evaluation. They are:

Democratic Governance And Human Rights

1. Direct support INSTAT (2010-2014).

2. DAAC phase out (2009-2013).
3. Support to UN programme Albania (2011-2017).
4. Support to Community Policing (2012-2016).
5. Support to the Alb Nat Employment Service, NES (2011-2014).
6. OSCE ALB (2009-2012).
7. Statistics INSTAT (2010-2014).
8. OPIC (2012-2015) and OPIC (2008-2011).
9. Cultural Heritage Without Borders (2012-2014) and Cultural Heritage Without Borders (2008-2012).
10. KtK (2012-2014) and KtK (2008-2011).
11. CRD (2012-2015) and SHC (CRD) (2008-2011).

Natural Resources And The Environment

12. Strategic adviser on solid waste (2011-2013).
13. SNV Forestry Albania (2010-2013).
14. Improved Natural Resources and Environment (2011-2013).

Initiatives Requiring Further Discussion With Sida/The Embassy

Projects/programmes which fall outside the focus dates, per the Terms of Reference:

15. Tax admin phase II (2008-2012).
16. Land Management (2006-2013).
17. IPS ALB (2007-2012).
18. Twinning IPRO – Lantmäteriet (2008-2012).

There are further issues to be addressed with the portfolio of initiatives to be included in the evaluation. Some of the projects/programmes have only recently started. It is assumed that there will be no opportunity to assess the results/outcomes of these initiatives, and that they are included in this assignment as a way of indicating the strategic trajectory of the overall portfolio. Specific reference here is made to Support to Community Policing, Support to the Albanian National Employment Service and Support to the UN Programme in Albania.

Effectiveness and outcomes

The analysis will focus mainly at the outcome level. This means changes in behaviours, decisions, practices, relationships, and capacities of stakeholders targeted or influenced by the intervention. Findings will be ‘exemplified with evidence based on data emanating from specific contributions’, meaning that the evaluation will look at effectiveness of the projects/programmes in relation to the aspects that can be attributed to Swedish support and to which Swedish support may have contributed.

The analysis will describe whether contributions to outcomes have been observed. Overarching outcomes are essentially interpreted as referring to (a) better adherence of the government to its commitments to Democratic Governance and Human rights and to Environmental and Natural Resources management and (b) increased ability of the civil society to hold the government accountable.

As per the ToRs, five specific questions will be addressed:

- Have the interventions financed by Sweden reached their objectives? Which interventions were successful in terms of development results, which failed, general factors for success or failures?
- Have the interventions considered particularly discriminated social groups in the design of the programme and the implementation of activities?
- Is there access to information (openness and transparency), for the stakeholders involved in the individual interventions to be assessed in order for them to participate in a meaningful way?
- To what extent have the interventions contributed to attaining the objectives of the cooperation strategy?
- To the extent that is possible, comment how much of the outcome change in the two sectors of the Swedish Cooperation Strategy (Natural Resources And The Environment and Democratic Governance And Human Rights) (having as a background the Albanian National Strategy for Development and Integration/NSDI) can be attributed to Swedish funding and how can this be demonstrated?

Efficiency

The analysis was expected to assess, to the extent possible, the values of benefits (outputs) of the interventions in relation to the costs of producing them (expenditures made). In discussions with the embassy it has been decided to focus instead on relative efficiency of different activity modalities, methods for which are discussed further below.

Relevance

The assessment will focus on:

- The relevance of the interventions financed by Sweden in relation to the current needs and priorities for Albania's development (the selection and scope of these priorities will be analysed from the perspective of informed experts and stakeholders).
- The focus of the current portfolio in relation to the perspectives and needs of discriminated social groups as a whole in Albania, i.e., whether the strategy had the right focus, or if it left out groups that should have been targeted.
- The relevance of the on-going interventions in relation to the current needs of the groups the individual interventions actually target (as an example: is the support provided to women organisations relevant to their needs and priorities?).

Sustainability

The analysis will focus on the requirements for sustainability of interventions, with a special focus on ownership.

The Sida Team

The analysis will also look at the role of the Sida team in the management and follow-up of contributions. Focus will be put in assessing two specific areas:

- *The strengths and constraints of the Sida country team, including HQ, in relation to the operationalisation and management of the country strategy and integration of two perspectives in the country portfolio.* This means that we will

pay particular attention to the way the two perspectives (“the perspectives of the poor and the human rights perspective”) have been understood and how they have influenced selection and assessments of projects, project design and monitoring tools. The findings will be assessed in relation to the Swedish policy for democracy and human rights and the Sida interpretation of a human rights-based approach, especially the principles of accountability, transparency, participation and non-discrimination.

- *The efficiency of the Results Matrix for the Strategy as a tool for monitoring the implementation of the strategy.* This means that the team will pay particular attention to the theory of change applied by the Sida team and the strategic considerations in selection and combination of interventions. At the outset the team notes that the overall results matrix has some deficiencies and the method proposed below has been chosen as a formative tool to lead to conclusions and recommendations for further developing the Results Matrix.

Limitations To The Evaluation

The availability of data will be a critical issue for the assessment of results. A method is proposed to ‘harvest’ the outcomes described in the existing documentation and verify this through exploring the perspectives of different stakeholders and informed experts, but the evaluation will not have time to gather additional data from project sites or to rigorously verify the claims made in the programme documents and the perceptions that informants present in the workshops and interviews.

Regarding cost efficiency, the evaluation methods presented below (and already agreed with the Embassy) will not alone provide a sufficient basis for judging the efficiency of the specific projects or for making broad generalisations about the appropriateness of the different types of partnerships. The sample of projects and indicators selected will be insufficient to draw rigorous conclusions attributing relative efficiency to the partnership models being used.

It is intended, initially, to look at the overall programme *through* specific projects. *The assignment is not seen as looking at the specific projects*, but to use the projects to inform the analysis with regards the overall outputs and outcomes, as well as the effectiveness and relevance (particularly) of the programming in relation to the Swedish country strategy. The scope and quality of the generalisations made will reflect the range and comparability of the interventions that have been selected for analysis.

The analysis will draw heavily on qualitative approaches – interviews with project and programme personnel and external stakeholders and desk studies of reports and reviews. This will enable us to make an overall judgement of the contributions of the various programmes/projects. However, there is a limit to the level of confidence that can be attributed to the data collected, and the associated analysis of the evaluation team. Findings will be indicative of the views expressed by stakeholders and informed experts and the claims made in available documentation, but will not be supported by data that could be collected through a more rigorous process entered into over a longer period.

Recommendations Regarding The Scope Of The Evaluation

The overall scope of the evaluation is highly ambitious, as noted above. The team will not be able to draw conclusions about specific projects/programmes and the team will have limited ability to independently verify findings apart from perceptions of stakeholders and independent experts and the claims made in reports.

Given the broad scope of the evaluation, it is recommended that some flexibility be given regarding the page limit proposed in the ToRs in order to ensure that space is provided to present evidence for the findings. The team will make every effort to produce a short and accessible report, but is concerned that the limit to the length of the report may have a negative impact on the quality of the report.

Relevance and evaluability of evaluation questions

Per the Terms of Reference, the evaluation will focus on the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness and sustainability, with some specific consideration given to efficiency. Impact will not be addressed apart from in relation to outcomes.

Evaluation Questions

Have the interventions financed by Sweden reached their objectives? Which interventions were successful in terms of development results, which failed, general factors for success or failures?

It will be important to address this set of questions in the context of the overall intent of the evaluation – which is at the outcome at an aggregated level for each sector, not the specific outcomes at intervention level. It will of course be necessary to gather data on outcomes at intervention level in order to do so. The methods described below have been chosen as a way of gathering and aggregating these outcomes. While the enquiry will be addressed through interventions, including questions related to ‘failure’, focus will be maintained on overall outcomes, within the two focus sectors. It will not be possible to specify, in a rigorous and verifiable manner, which interventions have been successful and which have failed, but the evaluation will be able to draw overall conclusions regarding factors that generally appear to influence success and failure.

Have the interventions considered particularly discriminated social groups in the design of the programme and the implementation of activities?

The evaluation will assess the extent to which programming reflects efforts to address the perspectives and rights of discriminated social groups (e.g. Roma, persons with disabilities, LGBT persons, children and persons living in poverty) and will strive to include these groups in focus group discussions, but the team acknowledges that ability to systematically obtain the perspectives of these social groups in face-to-face interactions will be limited. We will also ensure to hear the voices of both men and women.

Is there access to information (openness and transparency), for the stakeholders involved in the individual interventions to be assessed in order for them to participate in a meaningful way?

The team will analyse programme/project design and objectives to understand the extent to which this access has been promoted (e.g., accessible public information on local budgets and plans, policies, complaints mechanisms and functional fora for consultations, and (of course) stakeholder perceptions).

To what extent have the interventions contributed to attaining the objectives of the cooperation strategy?

The evaluators will draw out of their analysis of the outcome level a further *assessment of the contribution of outcomes to the Strategy objectives* (relevance and effectiveness) based on an assessment of project documentation (reports and evaluations) and the specific and detailed inputs of the focus group workshops and individual in-depth interviews. Particular attention will be given to reflecting on how these objectives are interpreted and understood within the different projects and programmes, including the formal and de facto indicators by which different stakeholders and informed experts judge attainment of these objectives.

To the extent that is possible, comment how much of the outcome change in the two sectors of the Swedish Cooperation Strategy (Natural Resources And The Environment and Democratic Governance And Human Rights) (having as a background the Albanian National Strategy for Development and Integration/NSDI) can be attributed to Swedish funding and how can this be demonstrated?

The team will assess this in relation to the spheres of influence through which Swedish support contributes to broader processes in Albanian society. It is assumed that stakeholder claims regarding direct *attribution* will be primarily measured through the documentation reviewed and interviews with project/programme stakeholders, while broader *contribution* will be the primary focus of the evaluation and be assessed through interviews with both stakeholders, informed experts and primary information sources.

Efficiency

Specific comments on the efficiency component of the evaluation are found above, in Limitations To The Evaluation.

Sida Team

As indicated above, this component of the evaluation will be used as a formative process, leading to conclusions and recommendations for improving the utilisation of the Results Matrix.

Proposed approach and methodology

Approach

The evaluation will have four phases/stages.

Inception

The inception phase has focused on elaboration on the scope and feasibility of the evaluation, methodology, including a detailed description of the methodological choices, design of the causal analysis, data collection methods and instruments and evaluation work plan. The inception period and report include an analysis of the relevance and evaluability of the evaluation questions. The Inception Report (this document) includes the evaluation time plan and division of labour. The inception phase will end with an Inception Meeting between the evaluation team and the Embassy, via video conference. The proposals put forth in the Inception Report will be discussed, amended (if necessary) and agreed during the Inception Meeting.

Desk Study

The evaluation team will make use of secondary and primary data. As per the Terms of Reference, the assessment of secondary data will be performed through studies and analysis of *existing reports, evaluations, and other relevant documents*.

Field Work

Primary data will be collected using empirical methods through *interviews and focus groups with relevant stakeholders and informed experts* who will include implementing partners (such as government institutions and CSOs), beneficiaries and other donors. Sida and the Embassy will inform relevant stakeholders about the forthcoming evaluation, and will provide the evaluation team with project and other stakeholder contact details. The evaluation team will, in December, develop a list of stakeholders in close consultation with the Embassy. Apart from the stakeholders, the team will also interview informed experts in the relevant sectors and technical fields. The team will primarily identify these actors independently, but would welcome suggestions from the Embassy as well. Given that the incentives to engage in workshops and interviews will not necessarily be strong among the ‘non-stakeholders’ (informed experts), the team may request a letter of invitation or other modest support to encourage them to take part. Focus group and interview participation targets will be determined and the team will make arrangements at the earliest possible date.

Analysis and Reporting

The evaluation’s analytical results will be provided in a report. The report will draw conclusions based on analysis using evidence coming specifically from the primary and secondary sources of the evaluation, provide lessons learned – insights from the development assistance that will be of relevance to Sida, the Embassy and partners, and make recommendations (addressed mainly to Sida and the Embassy) and presented in order of priority. The recommendations will follow on from the analysis and conclusions, and will be practical in nature. Particular focus will be given to recommendations in relation to the relevance of interventions in relation to the rights and priorities of the target groups in the country strategy. The draft report will be prepared in English. As noted above, the Terms of Reference ask that the report does not exceed 30 pages in length (excluding annexes), but the team may request some flexibility in this regard. The report will be presented to relevant stakeholders at a seminar in Tirana, where there will be an opportunity for input and reflection prior to finalisation

of the report. It is proposed that Jim Newkirk presents the report at this seminar. Following the presentation of the draft report, and receipt of comments from stakeholders, Sida and the Embassy, the report will be finalised and submitted.

Methodology

Effectiveness, Relevance And Sustainability

The evaluation will be largely, but not entirely, based on an outcome harvesting approach¹⁵. The approach will include the following steps:

- Through an initial desk review of the existing documentation on selected projects the team will ‘flesh out’ the descriptions and initial claims regarding outcomes achieved in the two sectors. The official outcome objectives from the Swedish cooperation agreement with Albania will be the point of departure for developing the outcome descriptions, but the evaluators will seek to understand the different interpretations and dimensions of these objectives within the various projects/programmes. The team will discuss these initial hypotheses in the first meetings with Embassy staff.
- These outcome descriptions (and claims in the reports regarding achievements) will be discussed in four mini-workshops, two for each of the sectors. The two workshops for each sector will include focus groups consisting of (a) project stakeholders and (b) informed experts (non-stakeholders).
- We expect that the workshops with stakeholders will primarily discuss (a) the accuracy of the outcome descriptors developed in the desk review, (b) the extent of the achievements of these outcomes, and (c) the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to Swedish support or to what extent the Swedish support has contributed to these achievements. The workshops will be used to understand the theory of change by which Swedish support was intended to, and ultimately contributed to, the outcomes described.
- The informed experts will primarily discuss the relevance of these outcomes, including their potential contributions, in relation to the needs and perspectives of the target groups and the priorities and trends in Albanian development more generally. If the informed experts are aware of the details of the Swedish supported programming they will be encouraged to also assess the achievements and contributions of these projects, with particular attention to ownership, targeting and sustainability.
- The findings of these four mini-workshops will be used to further develop a deeper understanding of the results in relation to the questions posed in the ToR. These will be then verified through additional individual interviews. Where the workshops uncover contributions to the intended outcomes that can be quantitatively measured, the team will search for relevant quantitative data from existing monitoring reports and other documentation from the involved

¹⁵ See 2012. Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt. *Outcome Harvesting*, Ford Foundation.

organisations. This will be used to substantiate, triangulate and thereby verify the findings from the stakeholders, the informed experts, the individual interviews and the field visits.

Efficiency

Different methods will be used to assess cost efficiency. The team will assess a limited number of specific similar project modalities (maximum 3) such as in-country training workshops, regional study tours, or setting up a computerised management information system, within the three projects suggested and compare the costs of these so as to draw lessons regarding efficiency. Selection of these modalities will be made in the discussions with the Embassy at the conclusion of the inception phase. These findings will be analysed in such a way as to be useful for Sida as a reference point for future discussions with partners. Good examples of cost efficiency will be used to develop tentative lessons learnt about future efforts to enhance cost efficiency, using the cases to illustrate useful innovations. Examples with significantly higher costs will be used to illustrate where approaches or systems are inappropriate. This analysis is intended to provide tools for the Embassy to look further into challenges and opportunities to achieving greater cost efficiency. It is very important to highlight here that this analysis will provide an understanding of relative cost efficiency, but not about cost effectiveness, as the team will not be able to attribute outcomes to cost levels in a reasonably rigorous or generalisable manner.

The Sida Team

Drawing on the overall findings of the tasks described above, the team will discuss with the embassy their overall role and management capacities and modalities, especially in terms of capacities to apply a human rights-based approach in the two sectors and to use a results based framework for planning and monitoring of the country strategy. The intention is to develop these findings in a participatory manner with Embassy staff and use these findings as a form of template to consider what would be relevant and realistic recommendations for how the Embassy should proceed in planning future Swedish development cooperation. The team is committed to ensuring that this exercise is utilisation friendly, and therefore see it as important that the recommendations are developed together with Embassy staff, based on this analysis of their roles, capacities and modalities. The team will hold a workshop with embassy staff at the end of the field work and, if necessary, arrange further discussions via telephone/skype to continue this dialogue.

An initial assessment of the Results Matrix for the Strategy raises questions on how practical it has been as a tool for monitoring the implementation of the strategy. The outcomes mentioned seem overambitious (more like impacts) and genuine outcome statements are generally missing. The team has chosen the methodology described here intentionally to fill this gap.

Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation will be carried out according to the following timeframe.

Inception Period

The inception period will begin upon signing of the contract between InDevelop and Sida. Per the Agreement, the Inception Report will be submitted on 12 December. It is proposed to hold the Inception Meeting in the form of a telephone/skype conference on Friday, 14 December.

Desk Study

The evaluation team will begin work on the desk review of documentation, and detailed preparations of field material starting from 10 December. This phase will continue through 21 December. Given the time period of the evaluation, and the fact it stretches over the Christmas and New Year holiday period, there are significant logistical issues with field work and field arrangements to be addressed. Therefore, included in work to be carried out in the desk review period is a decision on participation in each of the 4 focus groups meetings (10 and 11 January), preparation of an invitation to these meetings and sending out of the invitations. Further, an initial listing of interviewees will be established, and contact initiated to set appointment dates and times. Most field arrangements will be either arranged or well advanced prior to 21 December.

Field Work

The evaluation Team Leader, Dr Ian Christoplos and Jim Newkirk will arrive in Tirana on 8 January 2013.

Initial meetings with Sida and the Embassy will take place on the 9th of January.

Focus group meetings will be held on 10 and 11 January. There will be two focus group meetings each day, one in each of the two sectors. One meeting will include project stakeholders, the other informed experts (non-stakeholders).

The three team members present in Tirana on the weekend of 12 and 13 January will work on analysis and report discussions/preparations, and if possible will engage in key stakeholder interviews.

Interviews with key stakeholders will take place from 14- 17 January. Ian Christoplos will be present on 14 and 15 January for interviews, and Jim Newkirk and Sabina Ymeri will complete interviews on 16 and 17. Given the timeframe of the evaluation, no field visits outside Tirana will take place.

A meeting with Sida/Embassy staff is proposed for the morning of the 18th of January. This meeting will be used by the team to address the work of the evaluation on the Sida Team, as described above, and if possible given time constraints to describe some initial findings of the evaluation.

Reporting

Final analysis and reporting will take place from 18 January, and the Draft Evaluation Report will be submitted on 30 January.

Evaluation Team And Division Of Labour

The assignment will be carried out by the following team:

Ian Christoplos, Team Leader. Ian has overall responsibility for the evaluation, including design of the methodology. Ian will also participate in the field work, and has overall responsibility for the evaluation report.

Jim Newkirk, Evaluator. Jim is responsible, together with the Team Leader, for developing the methodology, carrying out the field work, quality assurance of the evaluation process and the final synthesis report.

Annika Nilsson, Evaluator. Annika will contribute with her experience of Sida's working methods in the area of results (such as outcome mapping methods) and policies for Civil Society, Democracy and Human Rights, Environment and Climate change and especially on the application of the two perspectives of the Swedish Global Policy for Development.

Sabina Ymeri, Evaluator. Sabina is the national evaluator and will contribute in data collection, analysis and reporting. Sabina will also assist with logistics, particularly communication with key informants (both project stakeholders and informed experts) in relation to the focus group workshops and key informant interviews.

Other Issues and Recommendations

Evaluation Standards

The evaluation and the reporting will follow DAC's evaluation quality standards. Per these DAC standards (see:

<http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluationofdevelopmentprogrammes/dcdndep/36596604.pdf>) the overarching considerations include:

- **Development evaluation** - Development evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed development intervention, its design, implementation and results. In the development context, evaluation refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of a development intervention. When carrying out a development evaluation the following overarching considerations are taken into account throughout the process.
- **Free and open evaluation process** - The evaluation process is transparent and independent from programme management and policy-making, to enhance credibility.
- **Evaluation ethics** - Evaluation abides by relevant professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for individual evaluators. Evaluation is undertaken with integrity and honesty. Commissioners, evaluation managers and evaluators respect human rights and differences in culture, customs, religious beliefs and practices of all stakeholders. Evaluators are mindful of gender

roles, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, language and other differences when designing and carrying out the evaluation.

- **Partnership approach** - In order to increase ownership of development and build mutual accountability for results, a partnership approach to development evaluation is systematically considered early in the process. The concept of partnership connotes an inclusive process, involving different stakeholders such as government, parliament, civil society, intended beneficiaries and international partners.
- **Co-ordination and alignment** – To help improve co-ordination of development evaluation and strengthen country systems, the evaluation process takes into account national and local evaluation plans, activities and policies.
- **Capacity development** - Positive effects of the evaluation process on the evaluation capacity of development partners are maximised. An evaluation may, for instance, support capacity development by improving evaluation knowledge and skills, strengthening evaluation management, stimulating demand for and use of evaluation findings, and supporting an environment of accountability and learning.
- **Quality control** - Quality control is exercised throughout the evaluation process. Depending on the evaluation's scope and complexity, quality control is carried out through an internal and/or external mechanism, for example peer review, advisory panel, or reference group.

Quality Assurance

Indevelop strives to provide high quality in all of its evaluations and we will carry out systematic quality control to meet both Sida and OECD/DAC requirements. The evaluation will have quality control as an integrated part of the assignment management procedure, regardless of the different scales of the activities. Our commitment to delivering high quality services requires effective quality assurance mechanisms. For this we have developed and apply a quality assurance system, which is compliant with ISO 9001:2000, and managed by Indevelop's Project Manager.

We will request feedback on the evaluation through a performance assessment form, both on the process, the team, deliverables (reports) and other outputs. The feedback will ensure the continuous improvement of the services.

Ms. Anna Liljelund Hedqvist is the appointed Project Manager at Indevelop's office in Stockholm who is responsible for managing the assignment's implementation. She will ensure coordination that leads to the kind of evaluation process that Sida has committed itself to in the evaluation guidelines which include learning and utility (usefulness). She will specifically have contact and liaison with Sida, managing the financial and contractual aspects of the assignment, providing monitoring and coordination of the quality assurance process during implementation, back stopping and support to the team and to facilitate support as needed.

Kevin Kelpin will be responsible for quality assurance and provide technical back-stopping and quality assurance on methodology and the draft and final reports to ensure that the reports are in line with Sida's requirements. He will ensure that the evaluation is in line with Sida's Evaluation Guidelines and meet the OECD/DAC quality standards for evaluation.



Evaluation of Results of Sweden's Development Cooperation Strategy Albania

The report assesses Swedish development cooperation with Albania. There has been a demonstrated growth in government ownership of change processes and management of funds, and supported initiatives are generating improvements in organisational capacity in government agencies. The capacity of CSOs is improving, notably in advocacy and lobbying. Structural aspects of the Country Strategy and its implementation create challenges for the country team, particularly the breadth and fragmented nature of stated priorities. Strategic focus will be informed by a critical analysis of underlying theories of change. The results matrix of the new Strategy will need to provide a coherent results logic.

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