

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Albania
Program Title:	Civil Society
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	182-0210
Status:	Continuing
Planned FY 2006 Obligation:	\$4,027,000 AEEB
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$58,000 AEEB
Proposed FY 2007 Obligation:	\$3,254,000 AEEB
Year of Initial Obligation:	1992
Estimated Year of Final Obligation:	2007

Summary: The USAID Civil Society program in Albania encourages civic advocacy and monitoring to focus scrutiny and build pressure on government institutions for greater accountability. These civic monitoring activities include everything from observing elections to monitoring political party finances, to tracking financial and conflict of interest disclosures. The program also includes a large investigative media and survey and polling component, both of which are aimed to reinforce USAID's anticorruption efforts. Lastly, the program seeks to consolidate decentralization and improve services provided by local governments.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2006 Program:

Establish and Ensure Media Freedom and Freedom Of Information (\$500,000 AEEB). USAID assistance will work to create a professional media. Activities include: 1) production assistance to broadcast media on televised investigative news shows; 2) assistance to Albania's first independent television network (ALBNET); 3) support to the Union of Journalists to enhance media independence and investigative reporting. Assistance will equip journalists with the skills to monitor financial disclosures and expose private as well as public sector ethical lapses. Principal contractors/grantees: National Democratic Institute (NDI)(prime), Partners for Democratic Change and The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)(subs).

Promote and Support Credible Elections Processes (\$300,000 AEEB). USAID's provision of technical assistance for the election process is aimed at updating the civil registry in concert with the European Union and Albanian Ministry of Interior, which recently put forward a plan to implement a centralized registry with street addresses, utilizing USAID-produced digitized maps. Principal contractor: IFES (prime).

Strengthen Civil Society (\$1,327,000 AEEB, \$56,461 AEEB carryover, \$1,560 AEEB prior year recoveries). USAID will help nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) increase pressure on the Government of Albania to enforce anticorruption measures. In addition to financing domestic monitoring of the 2006 local elections, USAID will award grants to 25 NGOs from the Albanian Coalition Against Corruption to monitor implementation of anticorruption laws. USAID also aims to strengthen government accountability by training two independent Albanian organizations to administer polls with national samples ahead of the 2006 local elections. The Peace Corps Small Project Assistance program will provide assistance and training to local communities and governments for local economic development. Principal grantee: National Democratic Institute (NDI) (prime), PDC (sub).

Strengthen Democratic Political Parties (\$500,000 AEEB). USAID will provide training and technical assistance on a bi-monthly basis to the second class of party activists through a curriculum at the Leadership Academy founded by USAID in 2004. This year's focus will be political party financing. Principal grantee: NDI (prime).

Support Democratic Local Government and Decentralization (\$1,400,000 AEEB). USAID assistance in this area is aimed at consolidating the decentralization process by enabling local governments to assume

functions transferred to them by the central government and to improve the quality of locally provided public services. Four field offices became operational in FY 2005, and now give assistance to municipalities in 22 of the 36 districts. USAID will support citizen participation in local government budgeting through the service improvement action planning process. On the decentralization side, USAID will help associations formulate policy improvements to give authority to local governments. Special attention will be given to debt financing and the harmonization of laws affecting the decentralization process for key services. Principal contractor: The Urban Institute (prime).

FY 2007 Program:

Strengthen Civil Society (\$1,754,000 AEEB). USAID plans to continue the civil society watchdog, polling and media activities outlined above. As there will be no elections during this period, the program's emphasis will be on monitoring anticorruption reform implementation. Contractors and grantees: to be determined (TBD).

Support Democratic Local Government and Decentralization (\$1,500,000 AEEB). USAID plans to continue to support activities outlined above. Contractors and grantees: TBD.

Performance and Results: Since parliamentary elections fell in the second half of FY 2005, the USAID Civil Society program's first half-year maintained an election focus and produced a number of achievements including Albania's first-ever national poll, its largest and best organized domestic elections observation, its first media monitoring effort; a new inventory of computerized polling unit maps, a high-impact multimedia campaign about new election procedures, and a NGO-based effort to monitor government spending and political party finances. USAID also underwrote 20 locally moderated televised debates.

The program's elections-related achievements paid the largest dividends this year for the Albanian democratization process. The gains are reflected by a number of indices, such as the Nations in Transit Civil (NIT) Civil Society Index, which registered its second year of increase after several years of stagnation, as well as the NIT Electoral Processes Index (set to reflect a half-point increase), and the 2005 NGO Sustainability Index which shows a small but significant improvement on the Advocacy and Public Image dimensions. The joint USAID-Central Election Commission voter information campaign, moreover, cut in half the invalid vote and reduced procedural irregularities reported by observers. The local government program laid groundwork for better services through service improvement plans, but fiscal decentralization saw little progress.

When USAID's support for civil society activities ends, Albania will have a more dynamic and sustainable NGO sector with a range of experience in watchdog activities and a track record of advocacy success. More aggressive monitoring by NGOs and media will become permanent features of Albania's landscape, and a robust check on corrupt practices. The nascent network of domestic election monitors will consolidate into a permanent monitoring capability, obviating the need for international observers. Due to USAID assistance, Albania will have a computerized civil registry that local governments can use not only to update voter lists but also for urban planning and law enforcement. Finally, when this program concludes, Albanian local governments will have the resources and capacity to improve public services.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Albania

182-0210 Civil Society	AEEB	ESF
Through September 30, 2004		
Obligations	43,522	1,250
Expenditures	38,943	1,250
Unliquidated	4,579	0
Fiscal Year 2005		
Obligations	4,975	0
Expenditures	4,782	0
Through September 30, 2005		
Obligations	48,497	1,250
Expenditures	43,725	1,250
Unliquidated	4,772	0
Prior Year Unobligated Funds		
Obligations	58	0
Planned Fiscal Year 2006 NOA		
Obligations	4,027	0
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2006		
Obligations	4,085	0
Proposed Fiscal Year 2007 NOA		
Obligations	3,254	0
Future Obligations	0	0
Est. Total Cost	55,836	1,250