

USAID Mission:	Albania
Program Title:	Rule of Law
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	182-0220
Status:	Continuing
Planned FY 2005 Obligation:	\$2,200,000 AEEB
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$150,000 AEEB
Proposed FY 2006 Obligation:	\$2,200,000 AEEB
Year of Initial Obligation:	1992
Estimated Year of Final Obligation:	2007

Summary: The USAID Civil Society program aims to focus public scrutiny and bring public pressure to bear to improve the transparency of and citizen confidence in Albania's political institutions. It provides technical or financial assistance to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in anticorruption advocacy or watchdog activities and to independent media organizations. USAID also supports domestic election monitoring, parallel vote counts, and polling and data collection, all in an effort to improve an electoral process that has yet to meet international standards for transparency. Finally, the USAID Civil Society program seeks to consolidate Albania's nascent decentralization process and thereby improve government accountability at the local level.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2005 Program: Strengthen Civil Society (\$1,174,000 AEEB, \$250,000 AEEB carryover). USAID will provide technical and financial assistance to organizations actively engaged in anticorruption advocacy activities to bring public scrutiny and pressure to bear in support of official accountability, transparency, and compliance with anticorruption laws. In addition to financing the first-ever domestic election monitoring and parallel vote tabulation effort in upcoming 2005 general elections, USAID will fund a much-needed overhaul of the voter registry. Election-related activities aim to raise Albania's electoral process to international standards. USAID also aims to strengthen government accountability by training independent, non-partisan organizations to carry out large-sample polls to allow candidates for office to shape their platforms ahead of the elections.

Strengthen Democratic Political Parties (\$587,000 AEEB). USAID will provide training and technical assistance to 75 young, reformist party activists. The training will include a strong anticorruption focus and emphasize linkages between party activists with organizations that engage in anticorruption advocacy and/or watchdog or citizen oversight groups. Principal grantee: National Democratic Institute (NDI) (prime).

Establish and Ensure Media Freedom and Freedom of Information (\$586,000 AEEB). USAID will continue to provide technical assistance to create a professional independent media. Activities include training of journalists or journalist associations to enhance investigative reporting, especially as it relates to corruption, transparency and accountability issues. FY 2005 assistance will help equip journalists to monitor financial disclosures and expose private as well as public sector ethical lapses. Principal contractors and grantees include: NDI (prime), Partners for Democratic Change (PDC) and The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) (sub).

Promote and Support Free and Fair Elections (\$300,000 AEEB, \$400,000 AEEB carryover). USAID's provision of technical assistance for the election process is aimed at updating the civil and voter registries by creating a new inventory of digitized maps of Albania's main population centers. The contractor is the International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES) (prime).

Support Democratic Local Government and Decentralization (\$1,400,000 AEEB, \$250,000 AEEB prior year recoveries). USAID assistance in this area is primarily aimed at consolidating the decentralization process by enabling Local Government Units (LGUs) to assume functions

transferred to them by the central government, and to improve the quality of LGU-provided public services. USAID assistance will support citizen participation in LGUs, particularly as regards the budget process, support to local government associations to formulate policies and positions, and support to LGUs with an emphasis on practice-oriented training. Assistance will also be steered to central and local government authorities in harmonizing national legislation affecting the decentralization process and in supporting the development of LGU performance standards in regard to municipal services. The contractor is: The Urban Institute (UI) (prime).

Support Peace Corps (\$30,000 AEEB). The Peace Corps Small Project Assistance program will provide technical assistance and training to local communities and local governments primarily in local economic development.

FY 2006 Program: Strengthen Civil Society (\$2,542,000 AEEB). USAID plans to continue the civil society and media activities outlined above. Local elections will be held in 2006. USAID plans to fund polling and surveys designed to frame and inform a pre-electoral discourse as well as to train and organize another domestic election observation. Principal contractors and grantees include: NDI (prime), PDC and IREX (sub).

Support Democratic Local Government and Decentralization (\$1,500,000 AEEB). FY 2005 activities will continue to receive support. Local Government associations will be encouraged to take apolitical stands on political campaign issues that most affect LGUs and their citizenry. The contractor is: UI (prime).

Support Peace Corps (\$35,000 AEEB). Funding will assist Peace Corps volunteers in their community-based small-scale development activities.

Performance and Results: USAID's civil society activities began to pay dividends as USAID-supported advocacy NGOs waged several campaigns that resulted in the reconsideration or reversal of government policies. A major area of advance was decentralization. The USAID-supported formula for the transfer of funds from the central government to local governments was improved. As a result of U.S. technical assistance, local government units are beginning to operate autonomously from the central government.

Political party assistance programs have increased the number of party activists, pressuring their leadership to embrace the One Member One Vote concept of selecting candidates to advance party reform. FY 2004 saw 13 program participants elected to local office while significant numbers took on key political roles.

The "Heroes" program represents a new model of television programming for the Albanian viewers. One hundred and three episodes have been produced in addition to 26 half hour-long episodes of "Hapur", a 30-minute broadcast profiling everyday corruption and its cost to society. Eight regional broadcasters built a network of regional stations which supports creation of sustainability of the sector.

At the conclusion of USAID support for civil society activities, Albania will have a more politically influential and relatively more sustainable NGO sector with a record of advocacy successes as reflected by conventional measures of sector performance (e.g., the NGO Sustainability Index). More aggressive anticorruption monitoring by key NGOs and more assertive investigative media will become permanent features of Albania's political landscape. Election administration will be closer to international standards and a network of domestic election monitors will be in place for the June 2005 elections and beyond.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Albania

182-0220 Rule of Law	AEEB	ESF
Through September 30, 2003		
Obligations	6,615	250
Expenditures	3,115	129
Unliquidated	3,500	121
Fiscal Year 2004		
Obligations	2,749	0
Expenditures	3,516	0
Through September 30, 2004		
Obligations	9,364	250
Expenditures	6,631	129
Unliquidated	2,733	121
Prior Year Unobligated Funds		
Obligations	150	0
Planned Fiscal Year 2005 NOA		
Obligations	2,200	0
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2005		
Obligations	2,350	0
Proposed Fiscal Year 2006 NOA		
Obligations	2,200	0
Future Obligations	0	0
Est. Total Cost	13,914	250