

ART ALBANIA PROGRAMME

GENERAL INFORMATION

The ART Programme in Albania is part of UNDP's ART Global Initiative, which intends to promote governance and local development cooperation framework programmes among decentralised government authorities. The Programme ended its first implementation phase in 2008 where it had been put in place in the three Albanian regions of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder as the continuity of the IFAD/UNOPS PASARP scheme (Programme of Assistance to Support Albanian Regions and Prefectures) that was operational from 1999 to 2006. In 2009, a Framework Programme was developed and signed for a second implementation phase (2009-2010) mainly in the regions of Vlore and Shkoder.

During its first implementation phase, the ART Albania Programme encouraged local development in the three regions by providing a decentralised cooperation framework through which bilateral donors, European regional and local governments, associations, universities, private sector organisations and firms, citizens' groups and others were enabled to contribute and support Albanian local governments. Such framework contributed to the following main results:

- Enhancement of local planning, implementation and monitoring processes capacities of regional and local governments and stakeholders in the selected regions;
- Further consolidation of the Local Economic Development Agencies in Shkoder (TELEUDA) and Vlore (AULEDA);
- Establishment of linkages and partnership facilitation between Albanian and Italian regional and local authorities and communities for initiating development projects oriented towards implementing local best practices, and fostering cultural dialogue and the European integration of Albania;
- Implementation of mechanisms for a multi-level strategy that simultaneously implements actions at the local, national and international levels in support of the process of localising the MDGs; and
- Enhancement of capacities of key regional and local actors by defining effective and jointly agreed *modus operandi* for the decentralised cooperation linking Italian and Albanian regions.

The Programme's second phase, in line with the first one, intends to support the Albanian Government in implementing its national policies and strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This to be accomplished by promoting a territorial development approach at the regional and municipal administrative level, and in accordance with the Decentralisation and Local Governance Strategy of the Ministry of Interior and the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy of the Ministry of Economy and Trade. The Programme is intended to build upon past results and ensure continuity in the course of a smooth transition, thereby what is presented here, in a consolidated format, are past achievements and current planned activities.

At the regional level, the Programme supports the elaboration of Regional Strategic Plans, promoting the active role of public and private social actors in development processes as well as that of donors, including European regions and local communities. In addition, the Programme actively endorses, at central and local levels, other sectorial national development policies and strategies, in particular those related to health, education and environment. To achieve these goals, ART Albania encourages the participation of different local, national and international actors, creating and supporting innovative partnerships within a global system of cooperation.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Duration	2006-2008 ART Albania Programme First Phase 2009- 2010: Second Phase
Donors and Partners	Bilateral Cooperation: Italian Government; Dutch Development Organisation (SNV); European Union; German Organisation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ); Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA); Swiss Cooperation. Decentralised Cooperation: Regions of Marche, Molise, Puglia, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Sardinia and Emilia Romagna; Universities of Perugia, Ancona and Trieste. UNS Agencies and Programmes: UNDP; UNICEF; WHO; ILO.
Budget	The programme is jointly implemented by UNDP and UNOPS. Its total budget is 2,540,000 USD granted by the Italian Government, out of which 1,263,832 USD are being administered by UNDP, 997,690 USD by UNOPS and 30,000 USD by UNDP ART through the UNDP/HUB/ART Trust Fund in Geneva for monitoring, internal evaluation and reporting activities.

National Management	<p>The Programme's National Counterpart is the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Trade and the Ministry of Interior and Local Authorities.</p> <p>The National Steering Committee is responsible for the Programme's general guidelines and for supervising the pilot LEDAs activities and the strategic planning process.</p>
Local Management	<p>County Development Councils (CDCs) insures Programme implementation, which are currently being established in the Regions of Shkoder and Vlore and are chaired by local authorities. These Councils consist of numerous representatives from the public, civil society and private sectors dealing with the Strategic Planning of their territory.</p> <p>The Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) in Shkoder (TEULEDA) and Vlore (AULEDA), supported through decentralised cooperation technical assistance, will lead the strategic planning exercise. Given that the agencies possess the specific know-how for such exercises, they will become the operative regional tools for implementing and managing the Strategic Plans.</p>

MAIN RESULTS AND ACTIVITIES

Decentralisation and democratic governance: ► Held coordination meetings led by the Ministry of Economy to operationalise and strengthen the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (MWG) that was established in the first phase of the Programme and that is integrated by the Ministries of Interior, Education, Health and Environment. ► Provision of continuous technical assistance to the Government in support of the political and administrative decentralisation process, in dialogue with European Union (EU) structures. ► Support for the design of Albanian decentralisation structures through meetings, workshops and LEDAs, in particular those in Shkoder and Vlore where LEDAs are fully operational. ► Support for the expansion of the mandate and scope of activities of the LEDAs towards their consolidation as Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) (to be finalised by the end of 2010), covering all regional development priorities and reflecting national and regional government's strategies, main concerns and commitments. ► Consolidation of Local Working Groups (LWGs) in both regions, chaired by the local authorities and integrated by representatives from the public, civil society and private sectors. ► Continuous support by the Shkoder (TEULEDA) and Vlore (AULEDA) LEDAs, in periodical consultation with private, government and non-government entities, for the elaboration of the regional strategic development plans. First drafts are ready and initiatives for the mobilisation of international funds have been initiated. Local government authorities and stakeholders from both regions have confirmed their commitment for the implementation of the strategic development plans under the leadership of the Programme and through the LEDAs. ► Identification of two projects in Vlore and Shkoder for implementation throughout 2009 within the jointly priorities tagged in the strategic plans. ► Drafting of the documents for the International Cooperation Territorial Guidelines (intended for the mobilisation of decentralised cooperation actors, mainly from Italy) following a participatory process and mapping territorial potentials, priority value chains, service provision, etc. in both regions. In line with the development plans, other strategic documents were also elaborated such as the stakeholder maps, project ideas and concept notes.

Implementation of cooperation agreements: ► Promotion of partnerships between Albanian and Italian stakeholders, especially with Programme participation in several meetings and events organised by the Italian Embassy in Tirana and the Italian Cooperation. Specific cooperation agreements and joint activities were consolidated and implemented with the Regions of Marche, Molise, Puglia, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Sardinia and Emilia Romagna. ► Concretisation of specific agreements with the Universities of Perugia, Ancona and Trieste for the organisation of several intensive courses on democratic governance, decentralisation, territorial development planning and management, etc. ► Reinforced collaboration with several UN Agencies such as the UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and ILO, as well as with international cooperation agencies such as the GTZ, SIDA, SNV and the Italian and Swiss Cooperation. ► Organisation of an event on *"Human Development and Decentralised Cooperation: Albania's experience"*. ► In collaboration with the Italian Embassy in Tirana, organisation of an international event (to be held in October 2010) for the presentation and promotion of the Programme achievements to potential Balkan and Italian partners. ► Held a visit to Italy and Spain by a delegation of Albanian local specialists from different development related fields to promote the establishment of cooperation agreements as basis for the implementation of specific agreements and larger scale activities in 2010. The delegation also participated in several conferences and workshops on health, higher education and the strategic development of local agencies.

Promotion and exchange of innovation: ► Replication of the innovative "Mother Kangaroo" technique for underweight newborn babies in the Shkoder Hospital, previously implemented by the Department of Paediatrics of the Tirana Hospital with the support of Florence's Meyer Hospital, the Region of Tuscany, 3 health specialist from Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health and the ART Programme in Sri Lanka. ► Development, promotion and inclusion of mental health related innovative practices, especially the establishment of family homes for former hospitalised patients and their incorporation into social activities, in collaboration with the Psychiatric Hospital of Vlore, WHO Albania, and the Puglia and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Regions, at both local and national levels. The Programme is currently coordinating the expansion of this

initiative to other areas with the support of the Sardinia, Molise and Reggio Emilia Regions. ► Provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment on strategies for the eco-treatment of water with the support of the Tuscany Region and the Environmental Protection Agency of Tuscany (ARPAT). This resulted in the consideration of the ecological water phyto-purification methodology as a strategic priority for small and medium-sized local communities by the Albanian Council of Ministers. ► Continuous promotion of sustainable tourism in Shkoder and Vlore, in collaboration with the Marche Region, Federparchi, the Parks Company Consortium, TEULEDA, AULEDA and other local and national stakeholders within the framework of the strategic plans. Both LEDAs were assisted and consolidated through actions implemented by the Programme and are currently playing a substantial role in coordinating sustainable tourism activities. ► Recognition of the innovative Methodology of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for Olive Oil packaging, developed by the Albanian Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Protection Institute as a safe and efficient olive pest control practice. This was followed by the treatment of 109,000 olive trees in 2009, the preparation of a specific brochure on the innovation later promoted on IDEASS' website and the organisation of activities for its replication in Morocco in collaboration with the IPM, the University of Agadir and the ART Programme in Morocco. ► Organisation of cultural-musical initiatives for the enhancement of culture in the Regions of Shkoder and Vlore within the framework of cooperation agreements established with the Regions of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Gorica, Pordenone, Udine and Trieste, the Municipality of Medea, the Central Europe Initiative CEI, the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, the National Italian Committee for Music CIDIM (Member of CIM-UNESCO's International Music Council), Gorica's "Cassa di risparmio" Foundation, the University of Udine, the Music Conservatory Jacopo Tomandini in Urbino and Monfalcone's "Antonio Vivaldi" Music Institute. An example of such initiatives was the implementation of the "*Nei suoni dei Luoghi*" project along with the Music Project Association of the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region.

Sustainable social- economic development: ► Support for the Local Economic Development Agencies of Shkoder (TEULEDA) and Vlore (AULEDA) in their provision of technical assistance on fundraising and finance management to local socio-economic development stakeholders. ► Offering of technical assistance to the TEULEDA for implementing a joint project between the Molise and Shkoder Regions for the establishment of a laboratory for the analysis of milk, olive oil and wine production, according to European standards; the creation of a tourism information and promotion centre for the Shkoder lake and elaboration of a tourist guidebook of the area; the organisation of a course on territorial planning attended by 21 local representatives from 6 Balkan countries, the Albanian LEDAs, etc. ► Provision of continuous international technical assistance to the TEULEDA and AULEDA so that they can become Regional Agencies of Integrated Development by the end of 2010. ► Supply of international technical assistance to both LEDAs for their participation in 11 cross-border cooperation projects in the Adriatic area funded by Interreg IIIA Italy-Albania, the design and implementation of two Regional Strategic Plans and the elaboration of preliminary studies and research on priority development projects and local production value chains.

Capacity development: ► Instruction and funding by the Marche Region of a rigorous course on "*Democratic Governance of Development*", which included guided field visits and exchange of experiences. ► Offering of an intensive national course in Tirana on "*Democratic Development, and Territorial Development Programming*". ► Organisation of an intensive course on "*Territorial Development Planning and Management in Rural Areas*" in Umbria in collaboration with the University of Perugia and co-funded by the Region of Umbria. ► Organised 3 interactive workshops on development frameworks intended to researchers and lecturers from several Albanian universities together with the Universities of Ancona and Trieste. ► Establishment of contacts with the Albanian Ministry of Education in order to found the Albanian branch of the International School for Human Development and preliminary agreements were defined with the Deputy Minister. Three representatives from the Albanian Ministry of Education participated in the workshop held at the University of Camerino in November 2009, aimed at defining the modality and curricula for the International School for Human Development and a draft agreement with the Perugia University was finalised for signature in June 2010.

PROGRAMME CHALLENGES FOR 2010

During 2010, the UNDP ARTGOLD2 Albania Programme will complete the training on the job of the Albanian LEDAs concerning the strategic planning process and finalise 2 regional strategic plans. Moreover, 4 strategic projects will be identified and financed, in collaboration with the Italian decentralised cooperation; and 2 regional laboratories for training in Human Development are to be set up in Vlora and Shkoder, in collaboration with Albanian and international universities. Also, an International Conference on Decentralised Cooperation and Human Development in the Balkan Region will be organised in October to bring in decentralised cooperation partners and donors within the Shkoder and Vlora strategic planning exercises.