



MUNICIPALITIES IN THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS OF ALBANIA

2018 Assessment Report

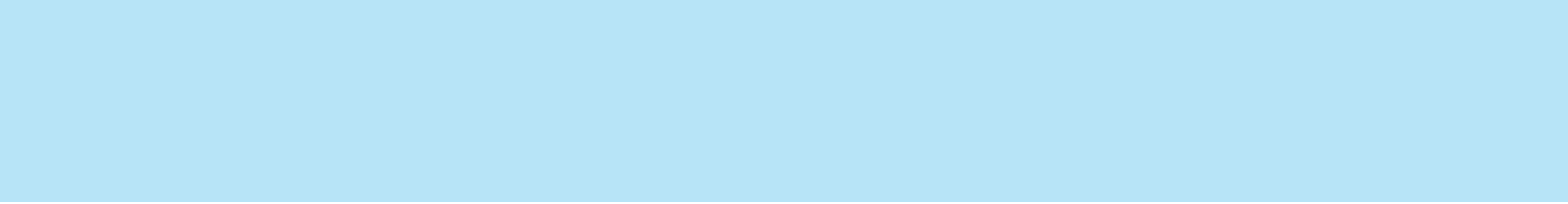


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- **The 2nd Report** highlights the importance of the role of the local government in the integration process of Albania into the European Union, related to the compliance with the accession commitments and 2018 criteria.
- The Report is prepared by the “**Municipalities for Europe**” Project team and the expert, **Mrs. Albana Dhimitri** who prepared the chapter with recommendations.
- **The European Integration Units** in each municipality coordinated the internal management of data collection, while the **Agency for the Support of Self-Government** coordinated the collection of data from 61 municipalities.

DISCLAIMER

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADISA	Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services in Albania
AAM	Association of Albanian Municipalities
ALA	Association of Local Autonomy
AP	Action Plan
AR	Annual Report
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
ASLG	Agency for the Support of Local Self-Government
AU	Administrative Unit
EU	European Union
ISSAC	Inter-sectoral Strategy against Corruption 2015-2020
DoPA	Department of Public Administration
CC	Community Council
CoM	Council of Ministers
CPARS	Crosscutting Public Administration Reform Strategy 2015-2020
SIPD	Social Inclusion Political Document 2016-2020
HIDAACI	High Inspectorate of Declaration and Control of Assets and Conflict of Interest
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
PWD	Person with Disability
PFM	Public Finance Management
GLP	General Local Plan
LGU	Local Government Unit
LPIRE	Local Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptian minorities
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoIE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
MoTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment
MTBP	Medium Term Budget Program
NAPPWD	National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities
NCCSDLG	National Crosscutting Strategy for Decentralization and Local Governance 2015-2020
NSESD	National Strategy for Employment and Skills Development 2016-2020
IOSSH	Integrated One-Stop-Shop
QAS	Quality Assurance System
RDA	Rural Development Agency
REO	Regional Employment Office
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SWM	Solid Waste Management
TAR	Territorial Administrative Reform
PUEDS	Pre-University Education Development Strategy 2014-2020
WG	Working Group

Foreword

Message from Minister of Interior, Mr. Sandër LLESHAJ



This is a very important moment in Albania's history, as the European Commission, for the second consecutive year, has recommended to EU member states to open negotiations with Albania. Although this journey seems to be full of challenges, it should impose a deeper reflection on us, and above all, a higher commitment to fulfill the obligations arising from this process.

Not only the central government, but also the local government units, have much to contribute to the country's path towards the EU. Together we have the responsibility and obligation to build a combined effort, to make the dream of Albanian citizens come true.

As the EU Enlargement Policy Communication 2019 clearly states, the right balance between central and local government, which enables the implementation of reforms, is the only guarantee of Albania's successful integration into the European Union structures. Therefore, without an active engagement of local government structures in the implementation of these policies, the EU legislation, as well as the overall European Integration agenda, little can be done to further the progress of integration.

The "Municipalities in the EU Integration Process of Albania" Assessment Report, is a good representation of the progress made so far by the local government, as well as the challenges they face in meet-

ing the standards, as required by the Stabilization and Association Agreement.

The findings of the report show that for the most part, local government bodies are adapting very well to the overall "machinery" of the integration process. The establishment and functioning of the European Integration Units in each municipality, the dedicated efforts in implementing the standards set by the European integration agenda, a closer cooperation between central structures and the newly created units, as well as their consolidation in providing relevant information and services to their respective communities, are major challenges to be met, but at the same time they provide guarantees for an even greater success in the future.

This evaluation report, supported by European Union assistance, will now be an annual exercise, under the coordination of the Ministry of the Interior and its structures, with the aim of building sustainable capacities in the public administration, thereby ensuring the capability of the relevant Government structures, to successfully lead and coordinate European integration processes at a local level.

I am sure that with hard work, a fuller commitment, as well as more determination, we will all succeed in fulfilling the aspiration of the vast majority of Albanians.

Sandër LLESHAJ
Minister of Interior

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The role of local government in the implementation of policies, implementation of *Acquis Communautaire* and overall European integration agenda is very important. The European Commission highlights again this role in the 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy ***“The role of regional and local authorities in the EU alignment process and eventual application of EU rules needs to be taken into account. An appropriate balance between central, regional and local government needs to be found that best supports the implementation of reforms and the delivery of services to citizens”***¹.

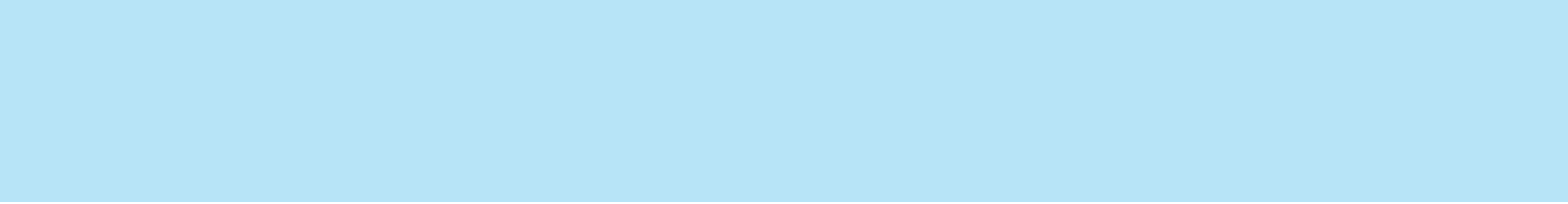
EU integration is challenging and requires many central and local administration efforts. The Government of Albania is moving towards an open government to improve national policies, the transparency and the quality of public services through the development of ICT systems and one-stop shops.

Strengthening of public administration, establishing the dialogue with citizens through open and participative policy-making processes, and enhancing government’s capacity to choose the most appropriate policies among various options are all substantial in terms of connecting governments with their citizens and foster more inclusive and sustainable growth.

This is the second annual edition of report *Municipalities in the EU Integration Process of Albania*. The report aims to present the progress made by Albanian municipalities during 2018 in regard to the fulfillment of the responsibilities as defined by the existing strategic and legal framework and in regard to the alignment with the accession criteria and EU standards.

This report is organized based on the structure of the National Plan for European Integration 2017-2020 and the European Commission Report on Albania. The main findings of the report are summarized below.

¹ European Commission “Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions 2019 Communication On Eu Enlargement Policy “29.5.2019 COM(2019) 260 final, Pg 7.



POLITICAL CRITERIA

Democracy

In 2018, the functioning and role of the Consultative Council, as an effective mechanism of dialogue between local and central government has substantially improved, as well as transparency, information for LGUs and involvement of local self-government associations. The participation of the Central Government and Local Government representatives has increased, while the role of the CC on the consultation and approving of the legal acts affecting the local government has been very important.

Although continued efforts are being made to strengthen capacities of local administration, human resource management and financial sustainability of training remain a challenge. The training system of the local administration is improved through a curriculum review process (91 curricula revised in 2017-2018) based on quality assurance system, improvement of the certification procedures, setting up the e-library and the electronic platform E-PAV for human resource management. In 2018, 764 local public officials were trained on the Civil Service Law, and about 1,008 local officials were trained in the different thematic areas by ASPA. The average number of local officials increased from 14 persons / municipality to 18 persons in 2018. 169 persons or an average of 3 persons / municipality attended the training on the Code of Administrative Procedures, whereas 28% of the municipalities didn't receive training. The allocation of the local budget for training remains very low. Only 52% of municipalities have allocated some funds to cover the cost

of staff for participation in the training (on average 1.9% of the municipality budget), while 48% of municipalities reported that they didn't allocate any budget for training in 2018.

The adoption by the Government of the Decision of the Council of Ministers Nr.450, dated 26.07.2018 "On the establishment of the European Integration and Foreign Assistance Coordination Units" marked an important achievement during 2018. The Decision of the Council of Ministers has institutionalized the so-called EU Desks established in 61 municipalities.

Progress has been made toward fulfilling the obligation for open governance, accountability and e-governance at the local level. The government program for e-services at the local level continues. Progress has been made towards the establishment of Integrated One-Stop-Shop (iOSSH). 49% of the municipalities established the iOSSH, which means 20 municipalities more than in 2017. On average, 50 administrative services are provided through iOSSH. The program to set up the one-stop-shop in all other municipalities is planned to be completed in 2019, while further efforts should be made to increase the number of the administrative services provided through iOSSH and to increase the territorial coverage including all administrative units and remote areas.

Addressing citizens' request of information or complaints, as part of strengthening the accountability of the local government has improved, however, further efforts need to be made to ensure citizens' requests are addressed properly. The information provided by the municipalities shows that municipalities are paying attention to address citizens' requests and complaints. About 82% of the citizens received answers to their request and complaints from the administrative services of their municipality in 2018. This indicates an increased ratio compared to 2017 (75%). Fifteen (15) municipalities have provided responses to all (100%) citizens' requests/com-

plains. However, there is no local government performance management system in place to allow for a more qualitative assessment of the municipalities' responsiveness towards citizens.

Good progress has been made towards increasing transparency of the local government, however, citizens' participation in decision making and cooperation with CSOs remains at a low level. In 2018, about 92% of Albanian Municipalities have drafted their local budget based on the participatory approach. The budgets are published on the municipalities' website and on the Ministry of Finance and Economy dedicated website: www.financatvendore.al. On average, 908 citizens have participated in public meetings/or public hearings during the preparatory process of the local budget. The average is 8 public meetings held per municipality. The municipalities of Gramsh, Librazhd, and Devoll have reported a larger number of organized public meetings (over 25 meetings) while the municipalities of Dropull and Rogozhina have reported that no meetings or public hearings took place in 2018 during the budget preparation process. About 79% of the municipalities report that they have reflected the strategic objectives set out in the local strategic documents in the mid-term local budget program (MTBP) including General Local Plan (GLP), local social protection plan, local plan for integration of ethnic minorities (Roma and Egyptians), and other strategic documents adopted by the municipal council. However, the quality of the MTBP remains problematic and their orientation towards strategic priorities remains to be tested when the new program (output) based approach budget will be implemented by the municipalities. Municipal Council decisions have been published on the website of the municipality in 2018 by almost all municipalities. On average, the online publication scale is 56%.

Attention is paid to review and address Ombudsman reports' findings and recommenda-

tions. During 2018, only 1 report with recommendations has remained under review process (On average, 10 out of 11 recommendations were reviewed by the municipality services). About 62% of the municipalities didn't receive any recommendations from the Ombudsman.

Consolidation of the civil society at the local level remains a challenge. About 46% (less than half) of the municipalities have confirmed cooperation with CSOs in various local issues, mostly in terms of drafting and reviewing policies at the local level and in terms of the process of drafting the budget/and MTBP. This percentage confirms also the fact that CSOs are not established across Albania. In particular, small municipalities lack the presence of civil society organizations. Out of 252 recommendations provided by CSOs in 2018, 204 recommendations (or 93%) were taken into consideration by the municipal councils and local administration during the review process. There is a need to develop a system to record the recommendations provided by the CSOs on different decision-making processes as well as the number of them taken into consideration. Financial capacities of municipalities to support CSOs activities in their administrative areas remain very limited. Only 18 municipalities were able to provide grants in 2018. The total number of grants was 67. Shkoder Municipality reported the provision of 23 grants to the CSOs, followed by Has with 6 grants. 69% of the municipalities haven't provided any grants to local CSOs.

Law Enforcement / Rule of Law

The compliance with the rules on asset declaration and control of conflict of interest is showing progress. In 2018, 58 out of 61 mayors have submitted the declaration of assets according to the legislation. This shows an improvement compared to 2017 where the assets declarations were submitted by 87% or 53 mayors. About 31% of the municipalities declared cases of administrative procedure violations including public procurement. Local administration took measures to mitigate the risks and addressed them properly. About

90% of the municipalities have reported that no cases of *conflict of interest* in the decision-making process have been recorded. Only municipalities of Divjaka, Tropoja and Kurbin reported cases where conflict of interests was identified. The network of local anti-corruption coordinators has been established in 53% of the municipalities, thus making a progress compared to 36% in 2017.

Measures to introduce systematic anti-corruption mechanisms remain a matter of concern.

Only the 15% of the municipalities have adopted the local integrity plan according to the Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2018-2020, while the Integrity plan was in the drafting process in two municipalities. About 8% of the municipalities have either provided inaccurate data or provided no data at all related to this indicator. Only 44% of the municipalities, which have adopted the Integrity Plan, had allocated a specific budget line to implement it in 2018. On average, 47% of the municipalities have participated in two (2) training events related to fight against corruption, while 53% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training events in 2018.

Human Rights

Some efforts have been made in terms of local government capacity building to implement human rights standards, while good cooperation with CSOs is reported.

In 2018, ASPA and other service providers delivered several trainings on *national and international human rights standards* for local public officials. On average, 4 trainings were delivered for 22 municipalities (or 39% of the municipalities); 61% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training on the human rights standards. About 31% of the municipalities reported that good cooperation has been established with the local CSOs in terms of addressing and reviewing cases of human rights violations in 2018. About 95% of 319 cases identified/referred regarding human rights violations were handled according to the protocols of the inter-institutional group chaired by the municipality services.

ECONOMIC CRITERIA

Existence of a functioning market economy

Support to SMEs has shown some progress where a number of good practices are already in place, however, such support needs to be provided by all municipalities. Economic development is one of the main local governance's functions under Law 139/2015 'On local self-government'. About 67% of the municipalities have drafted, at least, one Strategic Local Development Plan, thus improving the business environment; 26% of the municipalities haven't drafted and adopted such strategic plan by the municipal council yet. About 8,245 new SMEs were set up (or 142 on averages in 2018).

About 33% of the municipalities haven't provided any specific services promoting SME development. Several municipalities have applied tax benefits or exemptions for supporting, in particular, women-led SMEs.

ABILITY TO ASSUME MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

Agriculture and Rural Development

Some progress has been made towards local government capacity building in terms of information system and rural and agricultural counseling, as well as in terms of rural infrastructure improvement. Agricultural Information and Advisory Office (AIAO) has been established in 56% of municipalities. Only 58% of the municipalities did participate in capacity building programs. Despite some progress made concerning performance when executing new functions decentralized in 2016, the average percentage of the whole irrigation network maintained/or improved by the municipal services was 38% in 2018, while for irrigation network it was 44%.

Implementation of LEADER approach and Land Deeds registration is progressing very slowly. About 64% of the municipalities failed to set up the LAG until the end of 2018. On average, the Land registration is around 49% at the national level; 3 municipalities have registered 61% to 80% of the overall number of the registration's **Land properties**, while 14 municipalities have a registration rate from 81% to 100%.

Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policies

Improvement of sanitary and veterinary conditions in order to protect consumers' health remains still a concern. In 2018, around 43% of the municipalities didn't have any veterinarian; 23% of the municipalities had licensed markets for trading livestock, while 69% of the municipalities reported that they didn't have any licensed markets; 28% of the municipalities reported cases of violations of food and veterinary safety. Concerning compliance with standards, around 43% of the municipalities failed to fulfill the standards of the food retail mar-

kets; 25% of the municipalities have reported that all their retail markets are in line with the required standards.

Transportation policies

Increasing road safety at the local level is showing some progress, but yet limited efforts are made to promote walking and cycling. In 2018, on average only 52% of the existing urban network of the municipal territory complied with the road standards, while 33% of the existing rural network of the municipalities complied with the road standards, and 35% of the road signage complied, on average, with standards. About 8.6% of the municipal overall budget, on average, was allocated for the road maintenance and 6.82% of the municipal budget for the transportation sector was allocated for road safety. Only 26% of the municipalities have constructed bike lanes, and the average percentage for the bike lanes is 4.1% of the urban network length in 2018, which is a minor percentage. 48% of the municipalities don't have any bike lanes in their urban area.

Improving public transport and providing quality services and facilities to the citizens remains a problem. About 66% of the municipalities published the schedule for public transportation in their territory. 15% of the municipalities had allocated budget for maintenance of the public transport vehicles with an average of 7% of the local budget for the transport sector in 2018; about 66% of the municipalities have provided the maintenance of public vehicles through outsourcing it to private entities.

Energy

Very little progress is made in terms of increasing the efficiency of energy use, while some efforts are made to increase citizens' awareness of more efficient use of energy. In 2018, about 24% of the municipalities have assigned the energy efficiency manager. 66% of the municipalities had not assigned the manager for energy efficiency until the end of 2018. 23% of the municipalities have carried out

training and certification of the energy efficiency manager at the local level; 67% of the municipalities had not developed any Local Action Plan on energy efficiency until the end of 2018. 61% of the municipalities have organized advisory campaigns with the public institutions and business community on the energy efficiency at the local level - 1 campaign on energy efficiency organized, on average, in 2018; 24% of the municipalities haven't organized any advisory campaign. No particular progress is reported regarding institutional capacity building on energy efficiency: 64% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training. The municipal services carried out, on average, 1 inspection about energy efficiency requirements.

Taxes

Improvement of the administration of the local taxes and fees system aimed at the promotion of formal economy. About 77% of the municipalities have adopted local taxes policy to promote formal economy (this indicator shows improvement compared to 2017 when it was at the level of 51%); the municipal tax services carried out an average number of 858 field inspections in 2018 (or more than double compared to the number of inspections in 2017 to combat informality in economy. About 88% of municipalities have set up and regularly update the municipal debtor database. In view of increasing the transparency and public consultation, 5 public hearings were organized, on average, by municipalities for public information and consultations regarding local tax policy in 2018 (25% higher compared to 2017).

Social policy and employment

Limited progress has been made in terms of human resource capacities in social protection at the local level. The average number of additional local government officials responsible for social inclusion in municipalities was 2 in 2018; around 50% of the municipalities didn't have any additional staff in 2018. 234 local public officials

were trained in different areas of social protection in 2018 –4 local staff members trained, on average, among all the municipalities (this indicator is lower compared to 6 in 2017); about 28% of the municipalities haven't participated in any capacity building program in 2018. 51% of the municipalities haven't yet set up 'Needs Assessment and Referral Sector' within Municipality Social Services Directorate. 54% of the municipalities have drafted the Assessment Report on Social Protection at the local level. 46% of the municipalities have drafted a local plan for social inclusion. 53% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training program about the social protection and social inclusion methodology in 2018.

Cooperation in terms of support for active labor programs has shown some progress.

In 2018, around 23% of the municipalities cooperated with employment services (REO/LEO) to increase employment opportunities and skills development, which shows improvement compared to 10% reported in 2017. However, 66% of the municipalities didn't report any cooperation. Around 15% of the municipalities have supported young educated persons for setting up a new business, or 5 cases supported, on average. Around 15% of the municipalities report that there is a very good/and good level of awareness about NEET, while 69% of the municipalities - poor or very poor level of awareness about NEET.

Judiciary and fundamental rights

Very good progress is made in terms of strengthening the system for the protection of child rights, while the budget allocated to child protection measures remains low. Around 90% of the municipalities have set up the Child Protection Unit within the Social Protection Directorate in 2018 (compared to 61% in 2017). Around 80% of the municipalities have established the monitoring system of cases of violation of child rights in the terri-

tory of the municipality (compared to 49% in 2017). 85% of the municipalities organized in 2018 a total of 620 of interdisciplinary group meetings on cases of child abuse, violence, economic exploitation or other forms of violation, with an average number of 11 meetings. Around 1,064 cases were identified and treated by the interdisciplinary group for children protection in 2018, with an average number of 24 in 2018 (19 cases of child rights violations identified in 2017). There are 175 social workers, at the national level, dedicated to child protection (on average, 3 staff members/municipal employees). 25% of the municipalities have allocated earmarked budget for child protection, with an average of 4.5% of the social sector budget; about 54% of the municipalities reported no earmarked budget for 2018;

In view of effective implementation of the Law 10221/2010 “On the Protection from Discrimination”, around 69% of the municipalities have participated in the capacity building programs on the protection from discrimination, or 6 staff members trained, on average; about 48% of all the municipalities have established the system for monitoring discrimination cases, which are identified in the territory of the Municipality; 7% of the municipalities (or 4 municipalities) have reported cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (compared with 13% in 2017); 93% of the municipalities had no cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination during 2018; about 49% of the municipalities didn't organize any awareness campaign on the protection from any form of discrimination.

In view of effective implementation of the Law 96/2017 “On the Protection of ethnic Minorities”, about 47% of the municipalities have organized social and cultural activities and awareness-raising campaigns on rights and protection of ethnic minorities; 7% of the municipalities (N=57) deliver public services in two languages.

Progress is reported with regard to local ad-

ministration capacity building regarding the integration of Roma and Egyptian minorities; about 28% of the municipalities' staff participated in the training programs on local engagements related with NAPIRE; 72% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training program about the implementation of NAPIRE. The local plan for integration of R/E was developed and adopted by the municipal council of about 30% of the municipalities; 45% of the municipalities have participated in trainings for ROMALB system including data collection, updating and reporting (N=55), with an average number of 2 trainings in 2018. About 51% of the municipalities (N=57) have supported Roma and Egyptian communities with investment projects, which are funded by the central budget under the social housing program in 2018.

Measures to strengthen gender equality and develop gender-sensitive budget have continued. Around 72% of the municipalities have set up 'the sector of gender equality' as part of the Social Services Directorate; the local coordinator responsible for gender issues has been appointed by about 83% of the municipalities. In total, 146 staff members or, on average, 4 staff members were trained on gender issues; around 82% of the municipalities have provided specialized services (total 99) for women who have been victims of domestic violence; 25% of the municipalities have prepared gender-sensitive budget/MTBP; Referring the case management, 59% of the municipalities have reported services provided for 156 case managements in 2018; around 52% of the municipalities have cooperated with civil society in regard to gender equality issues through joint activities and partnerships.

Slow progress is made to ensure effective implementation of Law 93/2014 “On the Inclusion and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities”. The Sector for Need Assessment and Referral has been established in 36% of the municipalities. About 66% of the municipal service units have participated in the promotion and awareness-raising campaign about

PwDs' rights and attended trainings on the accessibility standards. The school infrastructure, which fulfills the standards for PwDs, is available, on average, in the range of 34%, whereas about 23% of the municipalities have reported that they have no road infrastructure, which has access for PwDs in their jurisdictions.

Justice, Freedom, and Security

Slight progress is made in terms of advancing the fight against organized crime. Around 46% of the municipalities have set up the working group pursuant to the Action Plan on the fight against organized crime in view of mainstreaming and advancing the municipalities' actions with central governance institutions activities in the fight against organized crime. 49% of the municipalities had drafted the strategic document on public safety, by the end of 2018. There is a need for more efforts in terms of institutional coordination among the relevant Line Ministries, ASLG and the municipalities. Around 51% of the municipalities hadn't set up Community Council by the end of 2018

Education and Culture

Participation of children in the preparatory classes for pre-school education has declined. The average number of kindergartens at the national level is 28 per municipality. The registration ratio of children belonging to the age group of 3-5 years old in this education system has declined from 79% in 2017 to 70% in 2018, but this number might be higher due to the fact that 13% of the municipalities haven't provided available data. 232 children, on average, from the marginalized group including Roma and Egyptian minorities attended the pre-school education in 2018. The fund allocated for infrastructure development of the kindergartens occupies, on average, 2.9% of the municipal budget.

Efforts have continued to ensure quantitative and qualitative inclusion of marginalized groups in the pre-university education system. 0, 42% of the 2018 municipal budget, on

average, was used for registration in the compulsory education of Roma and Egyptian children and other marginalized groups; the average number of dropout by children belonging to these groups was about 7.

Concerning the improvement of school infrastructure of the pre-university education system, 3.48% of the municipal budget, on average, was allocated in 2018. About 20% of the municipalities reported no local budget allocation for investments in schools infrastructure. Planning of school infrastructure enabling accessibility of PwD was accomplished by about 89% of the municipalities.

Municipality representative in school boards has been present in about 87% of the municipalities. About 56% of the municipalities have supported initiatives in regard to setting up school-parent-government communication, while 36% of the municipalities lagged behind in regard to the implementation of such initiative.

Good progress is made with regards to conservation and protection of material and non-material cultural heritage, while financial resources are still limited to invest more in this important area for tourism and economic development. About 74% of the municipalities have reported no cases of violation and illegal construction in the areas of cultural heritage; 6 municipalities (or 10%) have reported 1 up to 5 cases of violations. Municipal services took measures – 1.99% of the 2018 municipal budget, on average, was allocated for the protection of cultural assets. Around 36% of the municipalities have allocated no specific budget for this function. 11 cultural activities have been planned and organized, on average, by the municipalities in 2018.

Regional Policies

In terms of strengthening regional and local cooperation in order to contribute to economic development and reduce regional inequalities, inter-municipal cooperation remains at a modest level, while cross-border cooperation is increasing. Only 56% of the municipalities are

reporting about cooperation with other LGUs, while 34% of municipalities have undertaken joint initiatives to reduce regional disparities. 45% of municipalities are involved in the implementation of cross-border cooperation projects, which are funded by IPA cross border programs.

Environment and Climate Change

In terms of awareness-raising and local government capacity building for its role in relation to protecting the environment, 107 local staff members were trained in 2018; about 20% of the municipalities haven't participated in the capacity building program on environment issues; 75% of the municipalities have organized a total of 241 activities for awareness-raising and education of young generations; about 25% of the municipalities have failed to provide correct data or have provided no data at all for awareness-raising activities in relation to environment and nature protection.

Slow progress has been made towards drafting the action plans for improving the quality of environmental air at the local level; 25% of the municipalities have adopted local Action Plan (LAP) for the improvement of the air quality, while 67% of the municipalities haven't yet developed LAP; 28% of the municipalities have integrated the local measures for the improvement of the air quality in the municipal strategic document including MTBP.

Progress is reported towards improving integrated waste management; about 49% of the municipalities have developed and adopted Waste Management Plan, which is part of MTBP (the percentage of this indicator is higher compared to 2017), while 46% of the municipalities didn't have such WMP; 64% of the municipalities have managed solid waste collection and waste disposal in dumpsites according to their local management plan (this shows improvement compared to 2017 – at the range of 43%); around 85% of the municipalities don't recycle municipal waste, and around 95% of the municipalities were not able

to manage the municipality waste in two separate streams; around 71 authorized disposals, or on average 1, were reported by the municipalities for 2018.

No particular progress is made in terms of strengthening the implementation of task force decision on acoustic pollution in urban centers and coastal tourist areas. 44% of the municipalities hadn't established the task force for acoustic pollution by the end of 2018; in total, there are 88 inspectors or an average number of 1-2 inspectors per municipality; 7 trainings were organized for the municipal inspectors about acoustic pollution, legal framework, and measures at the local level.

More efforts are needed in terms of integrating the climate change risks into local plans in harmony with national priorities and objectives. 66% of the municipalities have drafted and adopted local plan of measures for mitigating climate change risks in line with national priorities and objectives, but around 75% of the municipalities haven't yet collected and recorded data on climate change; 61% of the municipalities didn't participate in any trainings on climate change.

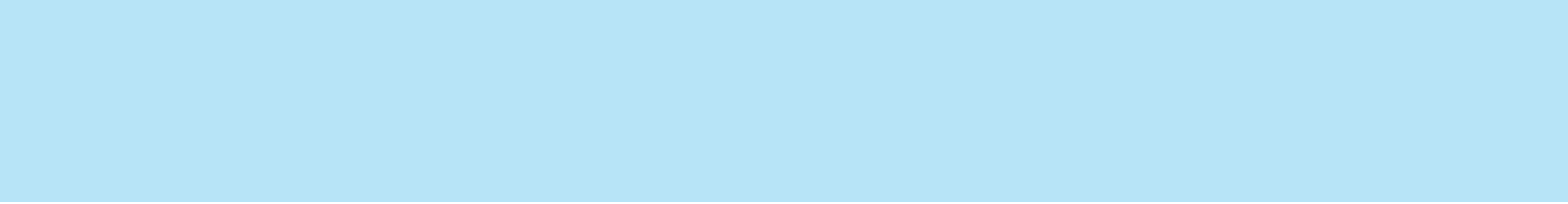
Slow progress is made towards local capacity building in regard to effective management of forest and pastures fund and forestation of degraded areas through recycling in the destination of forest resource revenues. Around 33% of the municipalities haven't drafted any operational plan for the management of forest and pastures fund. The municipalities' employment for this function was, on average, 65% in 2018 compared to the standard for forest specialist. Concerning database for private entities with activities on the management of the forest and pastures fund of the municipality, approximately 25% of the municipalities hadn't yet established any database by the end of 2018.

Financial Control

The human and technical capacities of the local administration have been improved in regard to

the public expenditure management including budget planning capacities and budget execution. The *local government revenues* from local taxes and fees have increased in the national level by 19% compared to 2017, but there are disparities among the individual performance of the municipalities.

About one-third of the municipalities have collected less revenue in 2018 compared 2017; two-thirds of the municipalities have collected more revenues in 2018 compared to 2017, thus ranging from 10% to 79%. The *local government expenditure* in 2018 increased by 7% compared to 2017.



1. INTRODUCTION

This is the second national report on the local government efforts and accountability towards the EU accession process including local democracy, rule of law, public administration and human resource management, human rights and local government performance as provided for by Law 139/2015 “On Local Self-Government”. The specific purpose of the report is to map the municipalities against a set of indicators in the key areas related to political and economic criteria, as well as standards set out in the current framework of respective chapters of *EU Acquis Communautaire* on local government functions as provided for by the Law 139/2015 “On Local Self-Government”².

The report analyses the information about 2018, thus additionally making, where appropriate, a comparison with the municipal mapping in 2017.

The findings of the report and respective data on specific topics/principles will provide useful information that could lead to the development of new policies and measures both, from central government and local government structures, to improve the situation.

The methodology of this report follows the methodology on data design and collection of the first report (2018) with some improvement in terms of redefining the mapping indicators based on consultations with all relevant line ministries and other central public institutions that took place over July-August

2018. The revised indicators have been discussed with the EU Local Coordinators and municipalities in October 2018.

The mapping indicators are organized according to three components of the European Commission Country Report: (i) political criteria, (ii) economic criteria and (iii) ability to assume membership obligations. As the central government institutions are entitled to follow and make progress following requirement and obligations as defined in the national strategic and political documents and the National European Integration Plan 2017-2020, the Municipalities also have responsibilities to implement relevant policies and laws, which are part of the same national European Integration agenda.

The mapping indicators are grouped based on the three above-mentioned criteria and chapters. In addition, the definition of the mapping indicators took into consideration the following:

- Overall and specific objectives of national strategic policies and national documents, for which Municipalities should make progress and have responsibilities for taking measures;
- Objectives of the decentralization reform and Local Self-Government in terms of enhancing the quality and upgrading public services provided by local government on the basis of EU standards, enhancing the transparency and account-

² The set of indicators is defined in the matrix “Municipalities in the EU Integration Process”.

ability of the local government toward the community, and increasing the participation of the citizens and stakeholders in the local government decision-making processes.

Data constraints and challenges

Data collection and processing by municipalities is a big concern. There is no relevant information available from INSTAT in the areas covered by the report. The statistical system at municipality level does almost not exist. This makes it difficult for the municipalities to report on all indicators. The quality of sec-

ondary data from municipalities appeared to be questionable and required further cross-checking. All the matrixes submitted within the first deadline were cross-checked and were sent back to the municipalities for further data revision and clarification of information.

All the data analyzed, which are in this report, are provided by municipalities, therefore the responsibility for the accuracy and respective data figures of each municipal administration.

2. POLITICAL CRITERIA

Sustainability of institutions that ensure democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect and protection of minorities

2.1. Democracy

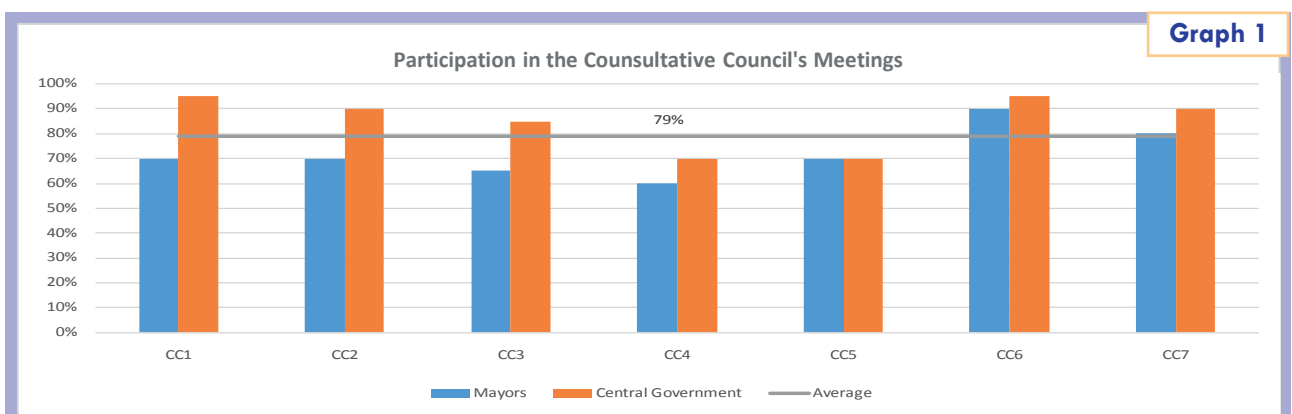
2.1.1. Governance

Specific Objective: Improve coordination of central and local government through the establishment and effective functioning of the Consultative Council (CC).

Progress in achieving the objective will be assessed based on several performance indicators, such as: (i) the Consultative Council between the Central Government and the Local Government is set up on a relevant legal basis (indicator met), (ii) Functional CC: number of meetings within 1 year, (iii) Average participation rate of Mayors in CC meetings, (iv) Average participation rate of Central Government representatives in CC meetings, and

(v) Number of legal acts that have passed the consultation procedure in the CC

In 2018, there has been an overall progress made on the functioning of the CC: In total, seven (7) meetings of the CC have taken place with the support of the ASLG and the Ministry of Interior. The consultation process between the CG and the LG has been institutionalized, through active involvement of all parties in the process of drafting and consulting of various draft decisions / draft laws and draft strategies proposed by the Central Government. Transparency has been enhanced by ensuring the involvement of local government associations in the process of drafting and consulting draft legislation; by frequent informing process of municipalities on important issues in the deliberation and consultation process, as well as on required measures for which Municipalities had to take actions for the implementation of new laws and decisions (DCMs).



The level of participation rate of the Mayors in the CC meetings was 72%; participation rates range from 65% to 90% during the meetings.

The level of participation of central government representatives has been higher compared to mayors: the average rate has been 85% in 2018, ranging from 70% to 95%.

Total participation rate including central and local government was 79%.

The Consultative Council has reviewed 38 legal acts out of a total of 40 submitted during 2018, out of which 8 Draft Laws and 19 Draft Decisions were approved by the CC, while 3 DCMs have been withdrawn for review³. In addition, 2 reports on “Mid-Term Evaluation of the National Cross-cutting Strategy on Decentralization and Local Government (MTR) and “Transparency Program, Information Commissioner and IDM” are discussed and approved in principle by the CC.

ry and consultative role in legal drafting process, in analyzing the impact of the laws during the implementation from local government, as well as in developing policies aimed at improving local governance within of the European integration agenda.

- Monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan (AP) of the National Crosscutting Strategy of Decentralisation and Local Government, and taking measures to address critical issues that impede the effective implementation of the AP
- Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of studies/reports conducted on local self-government with the support of projects from different donors.

Strengthening of public institutions and governance is underlined by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 16) on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. This goal is embraced in the national strategic policy documents as follows: National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015 -2020 (NSDI), Cross-Cutting

Table 1

	Presented	Treated	Adopted	Turned back for review	In Process	Did not pass in the 2018 year
Draft Laws	10	10	8	1	1	-
Draft Decisions	22	22	19	3	3	-
Presentation	8	6	6	-	-	2
TOTAL (2018)	40	38	33	4	5	2

Conclusion

In 2018, the functioning and role of the Consultative Council, as an effective mechanism of dialogue between local and central government has improved, as well as transparency, information for LGUs and involvement of local self-government associations.

Challenges

- Increasing the participation of Mayors in CC meetings.
- Further strengthening of the CC advisory

Public Administration Reform Strategy 2016-2020 (CCPARS), and the National Cross-Cutting Strategy of Decentralization and Local Governance 2015-2020 (NCCSDLG). According to these strategic documents, the specific objective related to the governance is strengthening of the public administration capacities including local governance institution (LGUs) through establishment of a merit-based and sustainable civil service at local level, improving the sustainability and professionalism of public administration through in-depth and continuous training of civil servants of the central and local public administration and strengthening of the

³ Draft Decision “On the Adoption of the National Plan on Air Quality Management”; Draft Decision “On Delegated Functions and Use of Funds for these Functions”; Draft Decision “On Decentralized Education Services and Cooperation with MASR - School Infrastructure, Financing of Preschool Education and Transport in Rural Areas”.

managerial and leadership skills. Despite the efforts, implementation of the CS law is still far from ensuring that a merit-based civil service⁴ is established at the local level

The 7th principle of the good governance⁵ at local level highlights the importance of the competences and capacities of the local administration based on three core concepts:

- (i) The professional skills of those who deliver governance are continuously maintained and strengthened in order to improve their output and impact;
- (ii) Public officials are motivated to continuously improve their performance;
- (iii) Public officials are motivated to continuously improve their performance.

The Department of Public Administration (DoPA) and the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA) have improved the training system for local public administration through a curriculum review process (91 curricula revised) based on quality assurance criteria; the certification procedures for the ASPA training participants has been improved by means of setting up the e-library, which allows the training curricula to be accessible by public officials; an electronic platform E-PAV is operational for the local administration related to the human resource management.

In 2018, ASPA provided mandatory trainings for the new civil servants of the municipalities and specific trainings in different areas such as the following: EU integration, human resource management, local finance, strategic and operational planning, leadership, Code of Administrative Procedures, IPA fund management, and other thematic areas.

ASPA has adapted the curriculum of the Leadership Academy Program (LAP) and delivered training in three stages for local government representatives and in one stage for the top management corps of civil service at the central level. Two training cycles were completed for 24 participants including mayors, deputy mayors and senior level officials of the municipalities. The course

is built upon the 12 Principles of Good Governance.

In 2018, ASPA provided trainings on the Civil Service Law to an average number of about 7(N=59) to public local officials compared to an average of 3 trainings provided in 2017; 13 public officials were trained, on average, in civil service legislation (N=60) compared to 12 officials trained in 2017). In total, 764 local public officials (N=60) were trained in 2018 on

Box 1: EC Progress Report for Albania, 2019

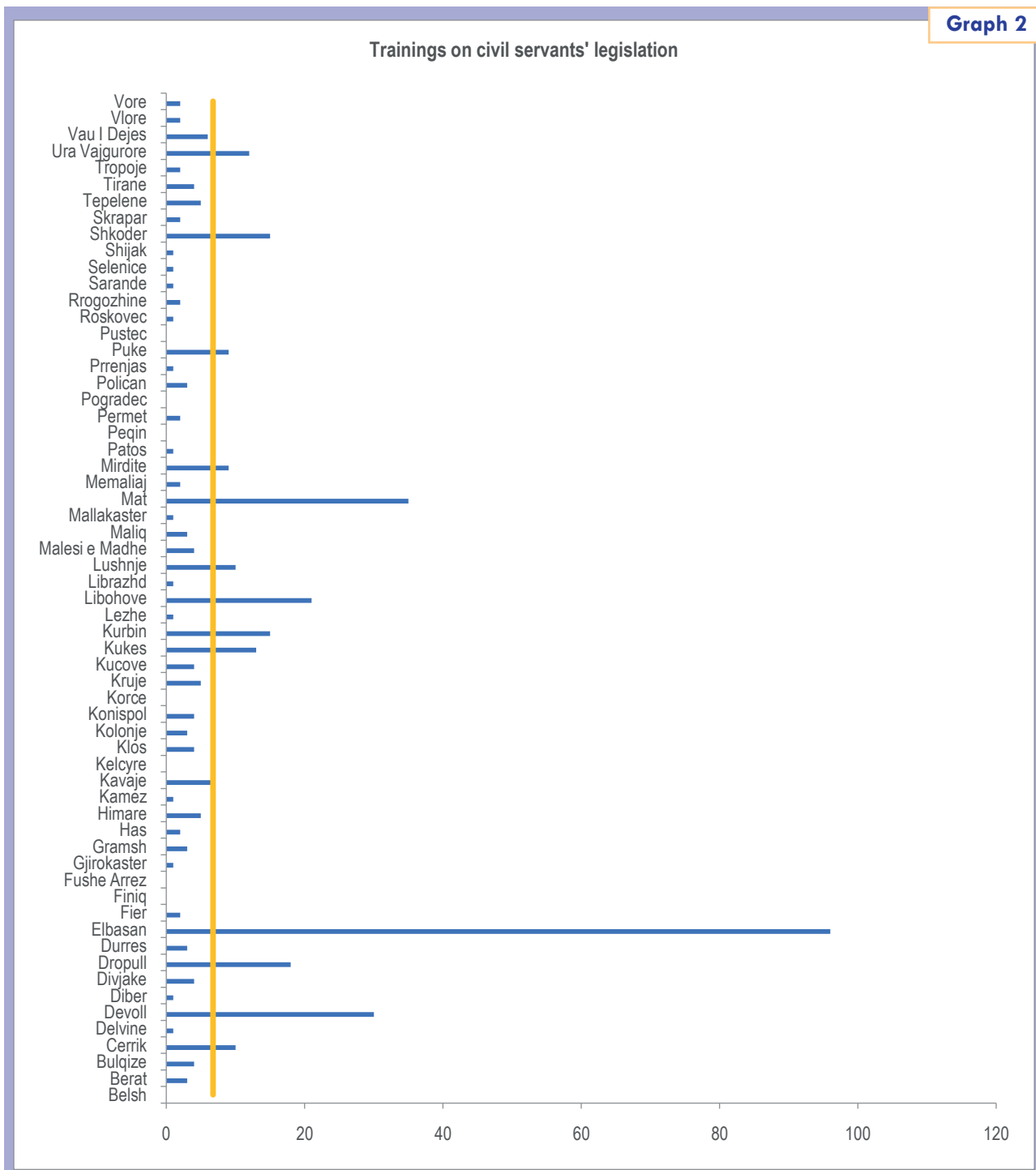
On local government, the territorial administrative reform (TAR) needs to be further consolidated as part of the wider decentralisation agenda. The government undertook a midterm review of the 2015-2020 national cross-cutting strategy for decentralisation and local governance. The Supreme State Audit Institution also carried out an assessment of the TAR and issued a report on it, in October 2018. The new legislation affecting local government is not yet fully harmonised and implemented.

the CSL and all its bylaws. Only 3 municipalities, Has, Klos and Vau i Dejes have reported that none of the staff participated in those trainings. It has to be mentioned that the number of municipalities, the staff of which didn't benefit from trainings of ASPA has declined from 29% in 2017 (17 municipalities) to only 3 municipalities in 2018; Lezha Municipality has not provided data on this indicator.

⁴ EC, Working Document for Albania progress, (17.04.2018)

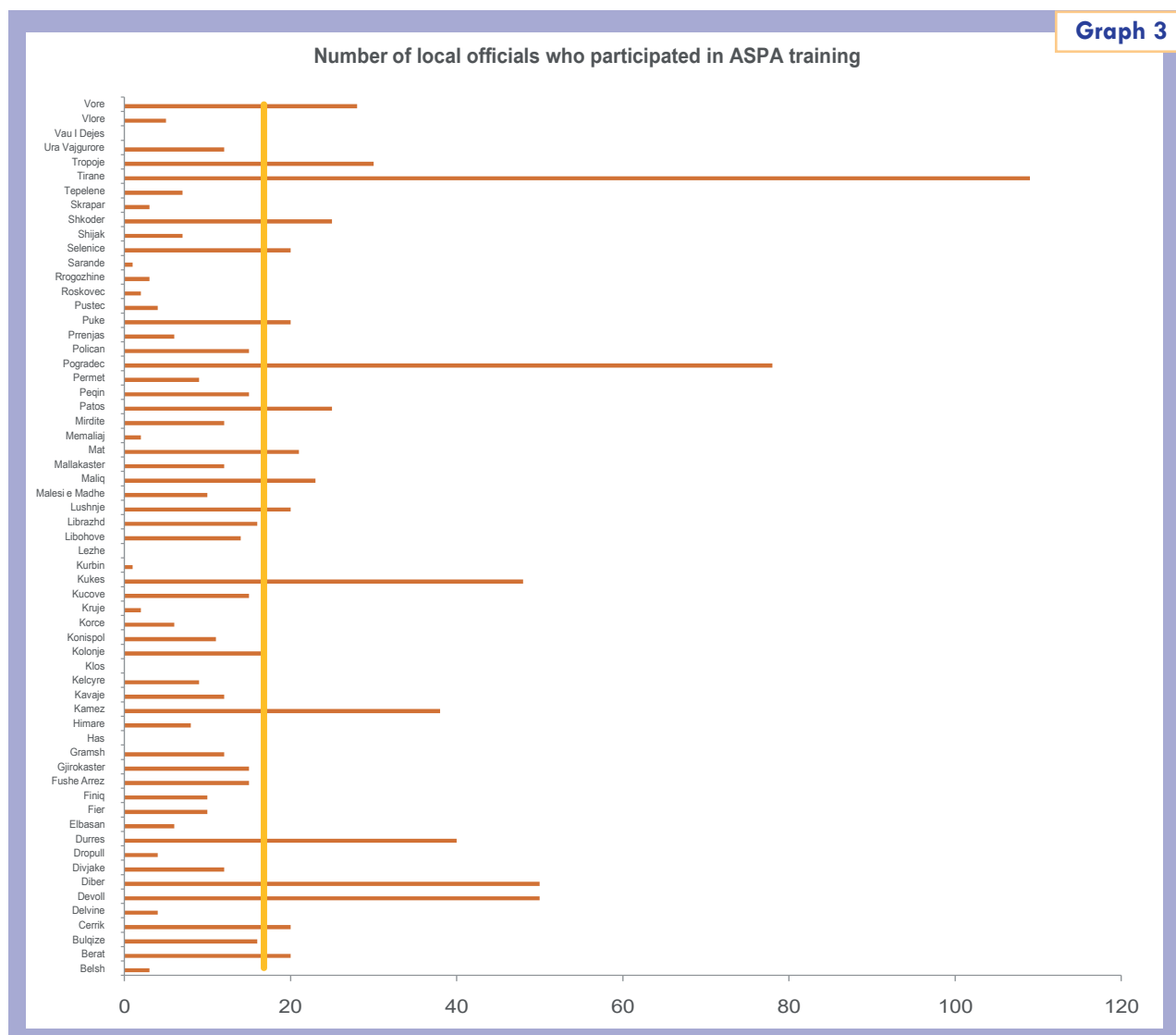
⁵ Council of Europe - Mainstreaming the 12 Principles of good governance in local administration

Graph 2



Thematic area trainings delivered by ASPA; 17 public officials, on average, were trained in different thematic areas managed by ASPA in 2018 compared to 14 public officials trained in 2017

(N=60). Three (3) municipalities (or 5%) haven't participated in any thematic area training in 2018 (4% in 2017); 1 municipality has not provided data on this indicator.



About 71 local public officials participated on HRMIS trainings, with an average of one (1) person (3 in 2017); 169 persons were trained on the Code of Administrative Procedures (N=59) or 3 persons, on average. 28% of the municipalities haven't participated in trainings on the Code of Administrative Procedures; 3% of the municipalities haven't provided data on this indicator. 21 public officials, on average, were trained in different thematic areas from other service providers, which is total 1,316 persons.

The results of a survey led by ASSG/dldp (2018) has shown that the most important contribution of DoPA and ASPA in terms of capacity building for local administration includes the

following: (i) improved curricula – 91 curricula revised through a Quality Assurance System; (ii) improved certification system for the participants; (iii) setting up of the e-library; (iv) operational electronic platform E-PAV (DoPA).

The allocation of local budget for local administration capacity building remains very low. About 52% of the municipalities (N=54) have allocated a specific budget for local staff trainings, at an average of 1.9% of the municipality budget; 48% of municipalities hadn't planned any budget for trainings; the municipality covers only the small expenses (transport cost and per diem); about 11% of the municipalities haven't provided data on this indicator.

2.1.1 Governance

Table 2

2.1.1. Strengthening capacities of the local government administration

	Number of local officials (total)	No. of trainings on civil servants legislation attended	No. of local staff trained on the CS legislation	No. of ASPA trainings attended	No. of local officials who participated in ASPA trainings	No. of local officials trained by other service providers	No. of local staff trained on HRMIS	No. of local staff trained on the new CAP ⁶
Belsh	189	0	3	3	3	15	1	1
Berat	128	3	12	20	20	30	2	0
Bulqize	398	4	14	2	16	20	0	3
Cerrik	112	10	8	5	20	10	1	1
Delvine	29	1	1	2	4	5	0	0
Devoll	297	30	35	10	50	50	1	4
Diber	194	1	36	5	50	6	0	0
Divjake	249	4	2	5	12	1	2	3
Dropull	50	18	2	2	4	16	1	0
Durres	345	3	19	4	40	32	4	5
Elbasan	458	96	96	6	6	9	2	3
Fier	366	2	10	3	10	0	1	No data
Finiq	200	0	0	10	10	7	1	3
Fushe Arrez	65	No data	2	2	15	30	0	1
Gjrokastr	83	1	8	4	15	21	2	4
Gramsh	313	3	3	9	12	18	1	5
Has	36	2	8	4	0	4	0	0
Himare	192	5	3	13	8	3	1	3
Kamez	175	1	1	18	38	32	1	5
Kavaje	604	7	9	3	12	0	0	9
Kelcyre	67	0	3	4	9	5	0	0
Klos	237	4	12	0	0	20	2	2
Kolonje	53	3	9	9	17	21	0	0
Konispol	136	4	3	6	11	6	1	2
Korce	162	0	0	4	6	10	1	0
Kruje	114	5	4	2	2	39	1	4
Kucove	124	4	4	2	15	10	0	8
Kukes	669	13	27	7	48	35	2	11
Kurbin	145	15	10	1	1	20	2	2
Lezhe	630	1	1	5	No data	17	2	3
Libohove	83	21	20	13	14	40	3	1
Librazhd	119	1	14	4	16	10	1	14
Lushnje	277	10	15	105	20	23	0	4
Malesi e Madhe	380	4	10	2	10	6	2	3
Maliq	96	3	3	1	23	3	0	0
Mallakaster	60	1	1	6	12	23	1	0
Mat	147	35	46	8	21	25	2	2
Memaliaj	32	2	2	2	2	7	2	No data
Mirdite	58	9	9	3	12	18	2	3
Patos	99	1	1	15	25	30	0	4
Peqin	264	0	6	1	15	9	2	0
Permet	82	2	7	4	9	4	0	0
Pogradec	680	No data	72	10	78	50	2	4
Polican	70	3	11	1	15	8	0	2
Prrenjas	290	1	1	3	6	7	0	0
Puke	283	9	2	4	20	30	3	3
Pustec	8	0	No data	2	4	10	1	Jo
Roskovec	321	1	2	1	2	18	2	4
Rrogozhine	100	2	1	7	3	14	0	2
Sarande	104	1	1	2	1	5	1	0
Selenice	150	1	20	1	20	30	3	20
Shijak	185	1	11	4	7	42	2	6
Shkoder	271	15	15	10	25	12	0	2
Skrapar	352	2	2	3	3	10	0	2
Tepelene	115	5	3	4	7	2	2	3
Tirane	6200	4	125	14	109	306	3	0
Tropoje	95	2	8	10	30	15	0	4
Ura Vajgurore	100	12	0	12	12	12	2	0
Vau i Dejes	215	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
Vlore	354	2	3	3	5	19	1	2
Vore	211	2	2	7	28	36	2	2

6 Code of Administrative Procedures

Problems and challenges

- ASPA limited budget to cover all the needs of local government units in regard to capacity building;
- Lack of sufficient local budget for training purposes;
- The requests of the municipalities for trainings to ASPA are not carried out through a comprehensive, analyses of institutional needs and prioritization and performance requirements at the local level;
- E-library should be operational and accessible by the local administration;
- Adequacy of administrative competencies, roles and responsibilities regarding the execution of functions and regarding the Human Resource Management policies.
- Human resource management and capacity building: setting up of structures and the capacities within the municipality which will be responsible to ensure effective implementation and the monitoring of the General Development Plans adopted by the Municipality.
- Review and unification of local administrative structures based on some models and guidelines and criteria (i.e. criteria of population.)
- Increasing the capacities of local administration on statistical area, developing database for urban planning and other important sectors for economic development, and strengthening monitoring and reporting capacities at local level.

Specific objective: Enhancement of the local government transparency

Stakeholder engagement and participation increase the likelihood that policy outcomes are delivered for the many and not just the few (OECD, 2017d). Citizen participation and representation is embodied in the Principle 2 of the Good Governance at the local level, which entails the following: (i) citizens are at the center of public activity and they are involved in clearly defined ways in public life at local level, (ii) all men and women can have a voice in decision-making, including those of the less privileged and most vulnerable, either directly or through legitimate intermediate bodies that represent their interests. Such broad participation is built on the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association⁷.

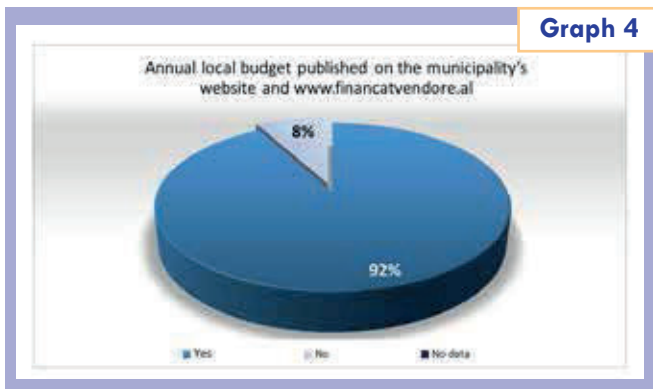
Albanian municipalities are obliged by law⁸ to guarantee public participation in the decision-making process. The municipalities have appointed a coordinator who is responsible for public notification and consultation. Public consultation is not limited only to the consultation on the annual budget and mid-term budget, but it includes the local strategic development plan and the social protection plan. The municipality services have invited community groups, individual citizens, NGOs, businesses, local media to provide inputs and feedback on the local development plans, MTBP / local budget program.

7 Mainstreaming the 12 Principles of the Good Governance. Web source: www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/12-principles-and-elope
 8 Law no. 139/2015, clause 16 on Public Consultation

92% of the Albanian municipalities have drafted their local budget based on the participatory approach; once it's adopted by the municipal council, the local budget is published on the website, which the Ministry of Economy and Finance has developed: www.financatvendore.al. Five categories of citizens have participated and were represented by local CSOs including women, youth, vulnerable groups, persons with disability and national ethnic minorities in the process of drafting the budget and mid-term budget planning.

908 local citizens, on average, participated in public meetings/public hearings on the preparation of local budget in 2018; 8 public meetings, on average, were organized at the national level on budget execution (N=60). 79% of the municipalities have included their adopted local strategic documents in the mid-term local budget program (MTBP) including General Local Plan (GLP), Local Social protection plan, Local Plan for integration of national minorities (Roma and Egyptians), and other strategic documents.

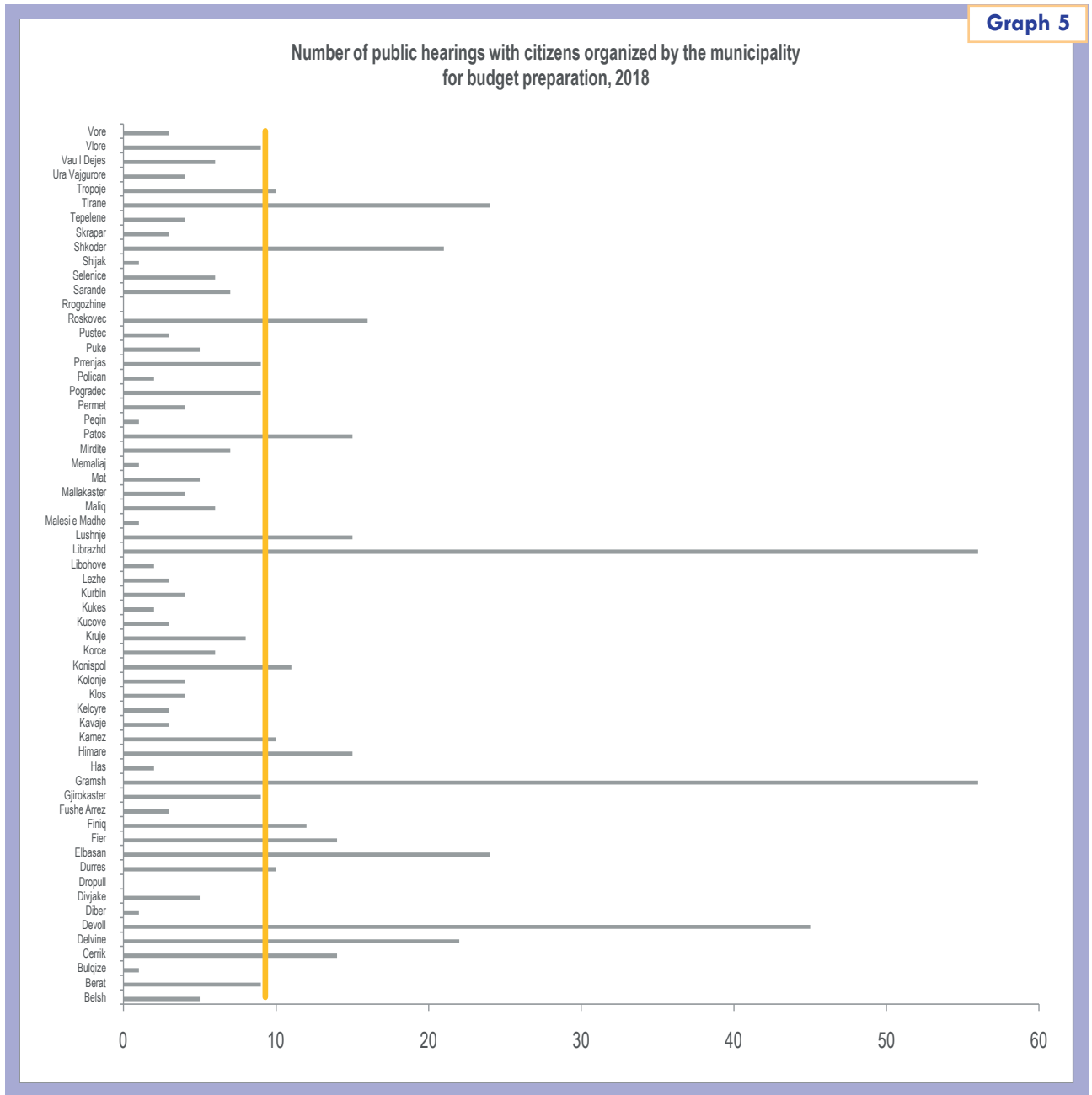
Graph 4



More needs to be done about civic education and how to engage citizens to better and effectively interact with local government units to increase the likelihood that their voice is heard. This can be achieved by providing information on

when and why they have a chance to influence governments' decisions. Strengthening civil education at a young age can help strengthen engagement and participation in the policymaking process⁹.

Graph 5



9 OECD, Embracing Continuous change in government, 2017 (Print and Lange, 2013).

2.1.1 Governance

Table 3

Increase transparency of local finances

	The annual local budget of the municipalities published on the website of the municipality and at www.financatvendore.al	No. of public hearings organized during the budget preparation period	No. of citizens participating in public hearings on the budget discussion	No. of public hearings organized on the realization of revenues and expenditures (on-budget execution)	No. of categories of vulnerable groups ¹⁰ represented by CSOs in public hearings on the budget and its monitoring
Belsh	No	5	858	0	No data
Berat	Yes	9	100	9	5
Bulqize	Yes	1	20,000	0	3
Cerrik	Yes	14	1272	2	3
Delvine	Yes	22	1500	2	0
Devoll	Yes	45	2250	45	4
Diber	Yes	1	125	1	2
Divjake	Yes	5	700	5	5
Dropull	No	0	0	0	0
Durrës	Yes	10	395	1	5
Elbasan	Yes	24	4456	3	7
Fier	Yes	14	1390	11	No data
Finiq	No	12	500	5	0
Fushe Arrez	Yes	3	15	1	2
Gjirokaster	Yes	9	30	4	1
Gramsh	Yes	56	2072	56	2
Has	Yes	2	22	1	2
Himare	Yes	15	975	11	5
Kamez	Yes	10	800	10	4
Kavaje	Yes	3	85	3	2
Kelcyre	Yes	3	37	1	2
Klos	Yes	4	600	2	2
Kolonje	Yes	4	30	2	2
Konispol	Yes	11	500	6	0
Korce	Yes	6	600	6	0
Kruje	Yes	8	750	6	6
Kucove	Yes	3	96	1	5
Kukes	Yes	2	180	2	3
Kurbini	Yes	4	250	3	0
Lezhe	Yes	3	320	3	No data
Libohovë	No	2	0	2	0
Librazhd	Yes	56	2500	56	4
Lushnje	Yes	15	567	15	6
Malesi e Madhe	No	1	120	3	3
Maliq	Yes	6	3000	7	70%
Mallakaster	Yes	4	600	4	3
Mat	Yes	5	200	No data	No data
Memaliaj	Yes	1	76	1	1
Mirdite	Yes	7	930	7	4
Patos	Yes	15	500	15	100
Peqin	Yes	1	0	1	No data
Permet	Yes	4	34	1	2
Pogradec	Yes	9	300	10	5
Polican	Yes	2	35	1	3
Prenjas	Yes	9	635	9	0
Puke	Yes	5	300	1	3
Pustec	Yes	3	30	3	0
Roskovec	Yes	16	110	16	0
Rrogozhinë	Yes	0	0	0	0
Sarandë	Yes	7	300	3	5
Selenice	Yes	6	200	6	5
Shijak	Yes	1	40	1	5
Shkoder	Yes	21	650	37	6
Skrapar	Yes	3	650	3	2
Tepelene	Yes	4	800	4	No data
Tirane	Yes	24	1,727	7	1,147
Tropoje	Yes	10	74	2	3
Ura Vajgurore	Yes	4	100	30	5
Vau i Dejës	Yes	6	215	3	6
Vlore	Yes	9	1500	6	5
Vore	Yes	3	35	1	0

¹⁰ I.e women / women head of household / youth / ethnic groups / disabled people, etc.

Specific objective: Open governance, accountability, and e-governance at the local level

Digitalization of the public services has been one of the Government of Albania objectives, which has provided a positive impact on numerous services. With the support of some donor agencies, integrated ICT system (One-stop-shop) has been developed and its' operational in several municipalities for a set of administrative services. This system has improved public and administrative services delivery (the quality, speed, and ac-

cessibility to the services, enhanced physical infrastructure and improved effectiveness of the local administration).

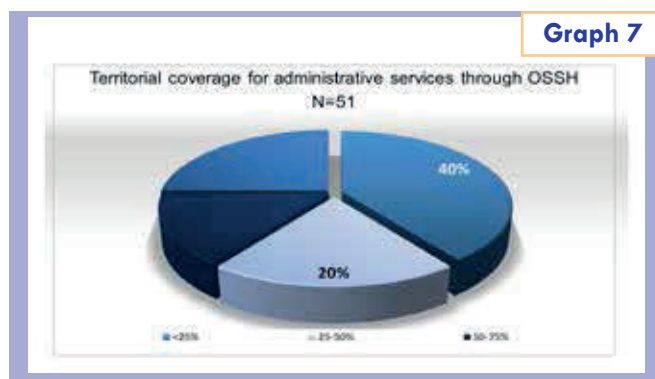
Integrated one-stop-shops have been set up in about 49% of the municipalities, which have reported that, at least, 1 one-stop-shop is operational in their territories. 50 administrative services are provided, on average, through one-stop-shops. Tirana Municipality provides 262 services, Elbasan Municipality 100 services, and Shkodra Municipality 83 services.



Establishment of one-stop-shop in all other municipalities is ongoing (planned in 2019).

Table 4
Establishment of one-stop-shops for public services

	Has the Municipality established a one-stop-shop?	No. of Administrative Units of the Municipality that have a one-stop-shop versus the total number of Administrative Units	No. of Services Provided one-stop-shop (where it exists)
Belsh	Yes	5/5	2
Berat	Yes	5/5	65
Bulqize	No	0	0
Cerrik	Yes	5	30
Delvine	No	0	0
Devoll	Yes	3	10
Diber	No	0	0
Divjake	No	0	0
Dropull	Yes	1	28
Durrës	No	0	0
Elbasan	Yes	18/18	100
Fier	Yes	10/13	71
Finiq	No	0	0
Fushe Arrez	Yes	0	0
Gjirokaster	No	0	0
Gramsh	No	0	0
Has	No	0	0
Himare	No	0	0
Kamez	Yes	1	35
Kavaje	No	1	0
Kelcyre	No	3	0
Klos	Yes	3/3	73
Kolonje	No	1/7	0
Konispol	No	0	0
Korce	Yes	4	64
Kruje	Yes	1/6	15
Kucove	No	0	0
Kukes	No	0	0
Kurbin	No	0	0
Lezhe	Yes	5	71
Libohovë	Yes	1	1
Librazhd	Yes	1	5
Lushnje	No	0	0
Malesi e Madhe	Yes	1/5	4
Maliq	Yes	1/6	60
Mallakaster	Yes	1	15
Mat	Yes	8	76
Memaliaj	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	No	0	0
Patos	No	0	0
Peqin	No	5	0
Permet	Yes	1/5	34
Pogradec	Yes	7/7	63
Polican	Yes	1/3	79
Prrenjas	No	0	0
Puke	No	0	0
Pustec	Yes	0	20
Roskovec	No	0	0
Rrogozhinë	No	0	0
Sarandë	Yes	0	55
Selenice	Yes	5	5
Shijak	No	0	0
Shkoder	Yes	16	83
Skrapar	No	0	0
Tepelene	Yes	1/4	60
Tirane	Yes	27	262
Tropoje	No	0	0
Ura Vajgurore	Yes	4	No data
Vau i Dejës	Yes	50.00%	75
Vlore	Yes	0	55



Vore

No

The number of applications submitted by citizens to get administrative services has increased (up to twice the number of applications for services in some municipalities). 39% of the municipalities, in which one-stop-shops are set up, carry out citizen satisfaction surveys¹¹. The evidence of the surveys shows that the citizens are satisfied with the speed of the services and professionalism of the staff. Some municipalities have admitted that much more work is still needed to improve the quality of services.

Problems and challenges

- Setting up of one-stop-shops in all municipalities;
- One-stop-shop should cover all the territory of the municipality including remote areas;
- Increasing the number of administrative/public services managed through one-stop-shop.

Specific objective: Enhancement of the accountability of the local governance (2.3)

Responsiveness and accountability are embodied in the Principle 2 of the good governance¹² at the local level, which entails that public services are delivered, and requests and complaints are responded to within a reasonable timeframe and Principle 12: Accountabili-

ty based on three core concepts:

- All decision-makers, collective and individual, take responsibility for their decisions.
- Decisions are reported on, explained and can be sanctioned.
- There are effective remedies against maladministration and against actions of local authorities which infringe civil rights.

According to the national legislation, the Albanian municipalities are responsible to deliver public and administrative services in accordance with the standards required by law or other sub-legal acts¹³. An individual or group of citizens has the right to appeal and complain about issues related to municipality functions and competences within the jurisdiction of the local self-government unit¹⁴.

Municipalities should develop procedures and system that will be able to track record and monitor information relating to citizens' complaints and addressing their complaints adequately. The NCCSDLG defines setting up the performance management system for the citizens' complaints. This information should be made available to employees, the Municipal Council (MC) and citizens. Evidence should be kept not only about the number of responses provided to citizens, but also about the quality of the process and the number of citizens' complaints, which were fully addressed. More training needs to be provided to municipalities in terms of ethical and customer care in order to provide good service to the citizens.

As presented in the graph below, the ratio of responses of the municipality services to citizens' requests in 2018 was, on average, 82%. The majority of municipalities, which provided the data, are above the average ratio, while the highest response ratio (100%) is reported by 16 municipalities¹⁵. The lowest response ratio is reported by the municipalities of Saranda (0%), Prrenjas (20.53%), Kukës (14.13%) and Fier (5.77%).

11 Source: Helvetas/dldp Survey Report 2018

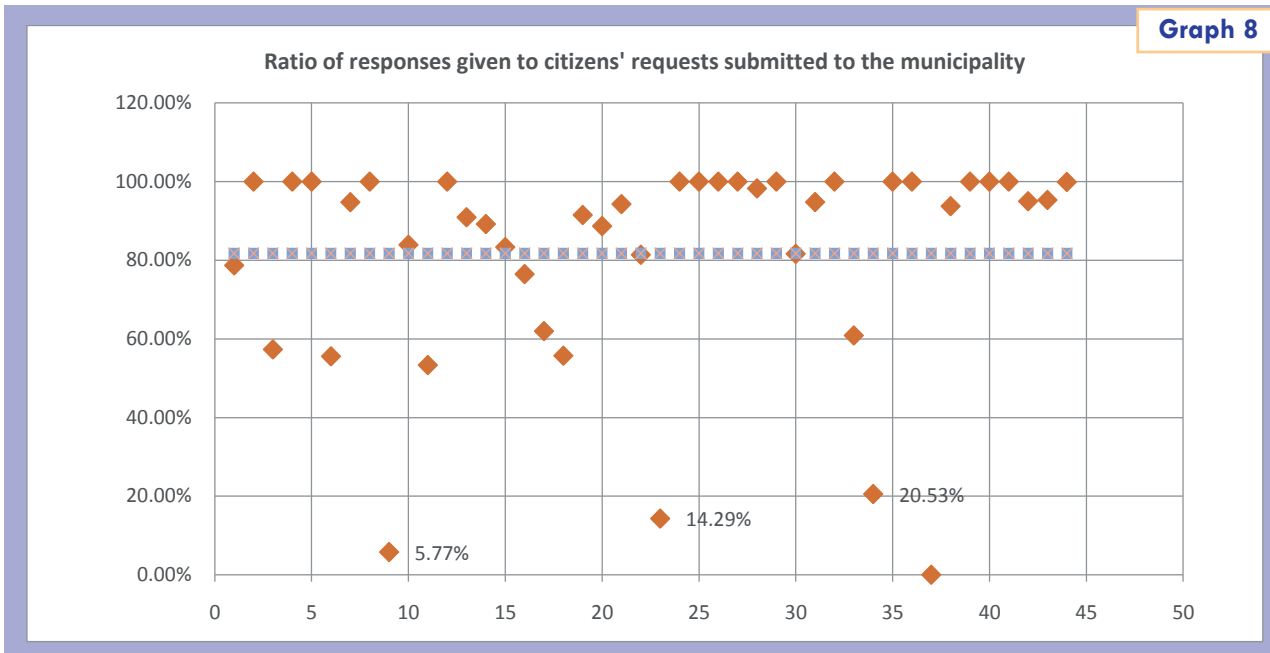
12 Mainstreaming the 12 Principles of the Good Governance. Web source: www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/12-principles-and-elope

13 Law no. 139/2015 "On the Local Self-Government"

14 Law no. 139/2015, Article 19 – The right to appeal, complaint and warning

15 The Municipalities of Bulqizë, Devoll, Dibër, Durrës, Gramsh, Kurbin, Librazhd, Lushnjë, Mallakastër, Patos, Pogradec, Roskovec, Rogozhinë, Shijak, Shkodër, Skrapar

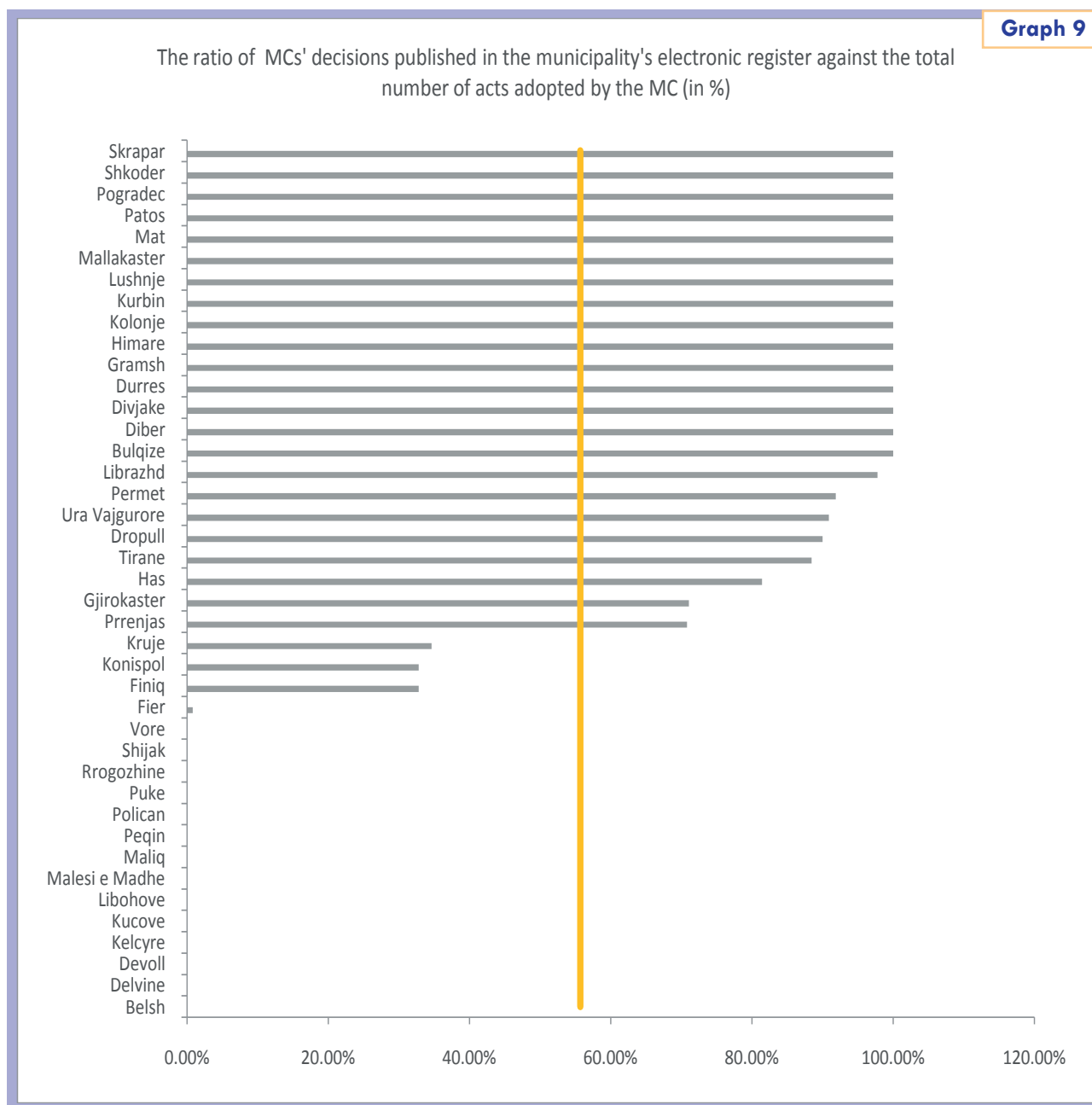
Graph 8



While responding to a citizen complaint or request for information is important, the level of addressing the complaint and solving citizen's problem is essential. Therefore, a mechanism to keep track of the complaints

addressed by municipal administration adequately and effectively is necessary to be developed, along with the change of the management culture towards "putting the citizens first"

Graph 9



Policymaking transparency is necessary to prevent and address the risks of policy capture¹⁶.

All municipalities have reported that *Municipal Council decisions have been published on the website of the municipality*. The ration of the publication of municipal council decisions varied from 33% to 100% of the total number (N=41).

56% is, on average, the online publication rate. About 32% of municipalities have either provided inaccurate data have provided no data at all. Apart from the publication of decisions on the web site, some municipalities ensure live broadcasting of the municipal council meetings (i.e. Tirana, Shkodra).

2.1.1 Governance

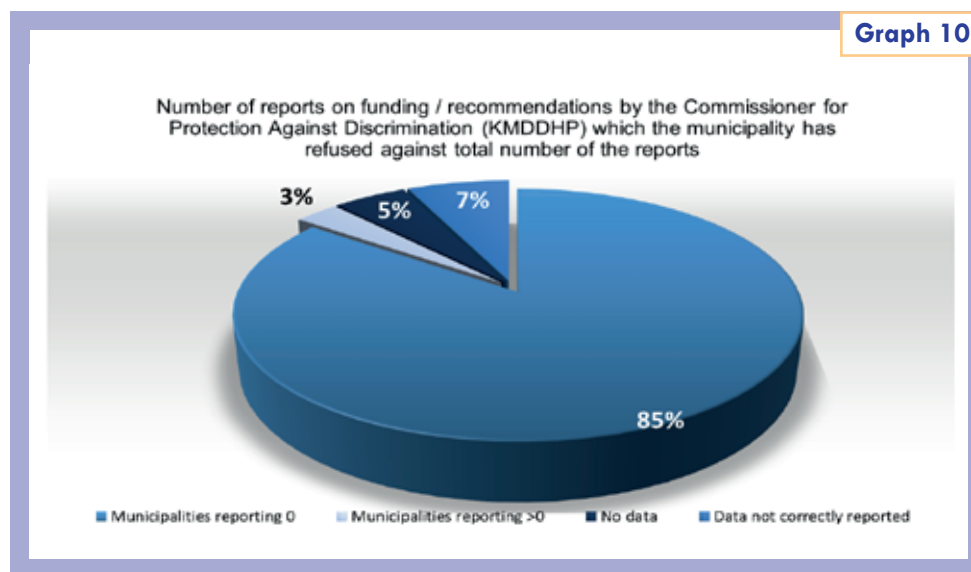
Table 5

2.3 Commissioner for Information and Protection of Personal Data (IDP)

Improve the accountability of local administration			
Municipalities	No. of responses given to citizens' requests against the total number submitted to the municipality	No. of decisions published in the municipality's electronic register, against the total number of acts adopted by the municipality during the reporting year	Number of reports on findings/recommendations of the Commissioner for Protection Against Discrimination which the municipality refused against the total number of reports submitted to the municipality
Belsh	405	0	0
Berat	78.70%	Yes	0
Bulqize	150/150	120/120	20
Cerrik	705/1230	118	0
Delvine	120	0	0
Devoll	16/16	0	0
Diber	100%	100%	0
Divjake	400/720	106/106	0
Dropull	707/746	90/100	0
Durrës	8468/8468	91/91	0
Elbasan	No data	No data	No data
Fier	117/2027	1/126	0
Finiq	856/1020	40/122	0
Fushe Arrez	37	130	0
Gjirokaster	80/150	91/128	0
Gramsh	81/81	101/101	0%
Has	331/364	57/70	0/0
Himare	1158/1298	51/51	0
Kamez	45	158	0
Kavaje	1135/1362	8	0
Kelcyre	260/340	0	0
Klos	220/355	124	0
Kolonje	302/542	90/90	0/0
Konispol	603/659	40/122	0
Korce	400/451	138	0
Kruje	330/350	351/1014	0
Kucove	350/430	0	0
Kukes	31/217	76	3
Kurbini	37/37	66/66	0
Lezhe	41	1	2
Libohovë	260	0	0
Librazhd	1108/1108	133/136	0
Lushnje	20/20	105 / 105	0
Malesi e Madhe	516	0	0
Maliq	0	0	0
Mallakaster	33/33	96/96	1
Mat	5100/5190	112/112	0
Memaliaj	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	112	333	0
Patos	14/14	83/83	0
Peqin	81.63%	0	0
Permet	401/423	68/74	0/0
Pogradec	100.00%	77/77	0
Polican	28/46	0	0
Prrenjas	340/1656	80/113	0
Puke	250	0	0
Pustec	30	No data	No data
Roskovec	100%	107	0
Rrogozhine	100%	0	0
Sarandë	0%	75	0
Selenice	93,75%	No data	0
Shijak	100%	0	0
Shkoder	110/110	82/82	1/3
Skrapar	50/50	45/45	0
Tepelene	95%	No data	0
Tirane	306/321	23/26	0
Tropoje	20	170	0
Ura Vajgurore	1	90.91%	100.00%
Vau i Dejës	99,91%	No data	0
Vlore	322	No data	0
Vore	1460	0	0

Human rights are respected, protected and implemented and discrimination on any grounds is combated within the local authority's sphere of influence. Cultural diversity should be treated as an asset and all have a stake in the local community, identify with it and do not feel excluded¹⁷.

There is a positive fact that the number of the reports from the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination submitted to the Albanian municipalities is limited. Only 5 municipalities (out of 54 providing information)¹⁸ have received reports on cases of discrimination reported by citizens to the Commissioner.



¹⁷ CoE, Mainstreaming 12 principles of Good Governance

¹⁸ 7 municipalities (12%) municipalities have failed to correctly report data about this indicator.

Problems and challenges

- The level of participation of local citizens in decision-making is still relatively low.
- Municipalities have started to use social media to inform the citizens on the public hearings, in particular, during the budget discussions; however, they need to use more innovative solutions that can reduce the cost of citizens' engagement in public life through the presentation of friendly user information via the social network.
- Municipalities don't carry out an annual survey on citizens' satisfaction and feedback on local governance issues.
- Due to limited financial resources, it's difficult for the municipalities to set up an integrated management information system to keep track of citizens' requests and complains about issues related to municipality functions and services,
- Training and capacity building programs for the local officials in relation to service provision, communication and reporting on the complaints are either limited or not existing.

recommendations, which were either refused by the municipalities or are still under the review process.

The Ombudsman submitted to the municipalities, an average number of 11 recommendations in 2018 (N=21), which is higher compared to 2017 (7 recommendations); 35% of the municipalities received reports with recommendations, while 62% of the municipalities didn't receive any reports from the Ombudsman in 2018; 3% of the municipalities haven't provided data about this indicator.

2.1.2. The Ombudsman

The Ombudsman plays a crucial role in terms of promoting accountability through the supervisory role and control of public institutions including local government units in different areas of their activity and competences based on the requests of individual citizens, associations or NGOs presenting local citizens and their legitimate interests.

Specific objective: Improvement of reviewing capacities of the municipalities regarding the reports on the observations and recommendations of the Ombudsman.

This objective is assessed through three indicators: (i) number of reports with findings and recommendation submitted by the Ombudsman to municipalities in 2018; (ii) number of reports accepted by the municipalities; (iii) number of reports with findings and recom-

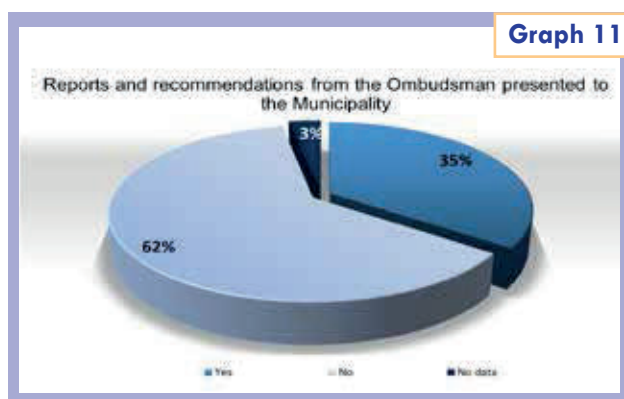
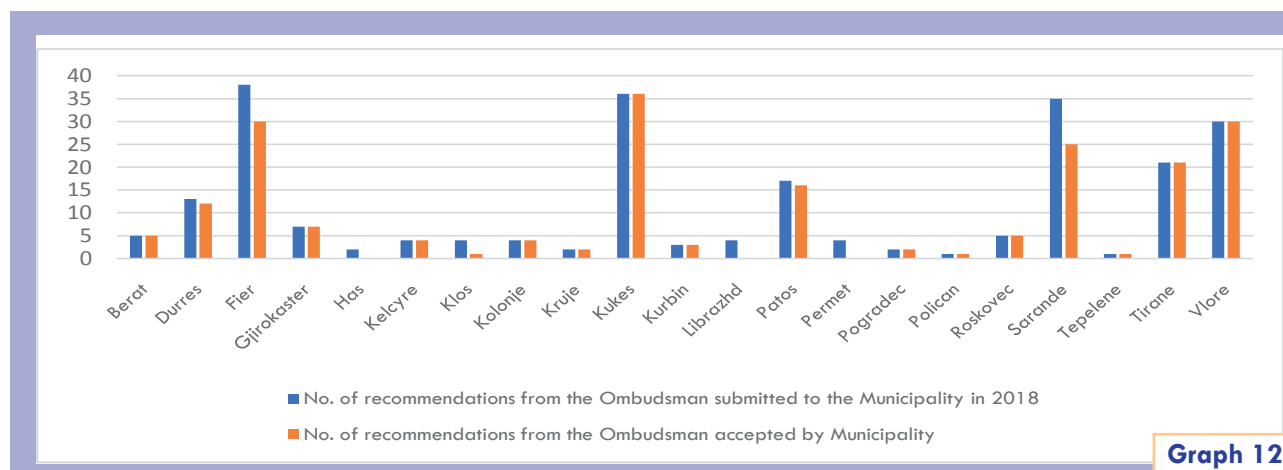


Table 6

3.1 Improve the review by the municipality of the reports of the Ombudsman's findings and recommendations

	No. of recommendations from the Ombudsman submitted to the Municipality during the last year.	No. of recommendations from the Ombudsman accepted by Municipality	No. recommendations by the Ombudsman which were under review at the end of the year
Belsh	0	0	0
Berat	5	5	0
Bulqize	0	0	0
Cerrik	0	0	0
Delvine	0	0	0
Devoll	0	No data	No data
Diber	0	0	0
Divjake	0	0	0
Dropull	0	0	0
Durres	13	12	1
Elbasan	No data	No data	No data
Fier	38	30	8
Finiq	0	0	0
Fushe Arrez	0	0	0
Gjirokaster	7	7	0
Gramsh	0	0	0
Has	2	2/2	0
Himare	0	0	0
Kamez	0	0	0
Kavaje	0	0	0
Kelcyre	4	4	0
Klos	4	1	3
Kolonje	4	4	0
Konispol	0	0	0
Korce	0	0	0
Kruje	2	2	1
Kucove	0	0	0
Kukes	36	36/36	0
Kurbin	3	3/3	0
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	0	0	0
Librazhd	4	0	0
Lushnje	0	0	0
Malesi e Madhe	0	0	0
Maliq	0	0	0
Mallakaster	0	0	0
Mat	0	0	0
Memaliaj	0	0	0
Mirdite	0	0	0
Patos	17	16	1
Peqin	0	0	0
Permet	4	4/4	0
Pogradec	2	2	0
Polican	1	1	0
Prrenjas	0	0	0
Puke	0	0	0
Pustec	0	0	0
Roskovec	5	5	0
Rrogozhine	0	0	0
Sarande	35	25	10
Selenice	0	0	0
Shijak	0	0	0
Shkoder	0	0	0
Skrapar	0	0	0
Tepelene	1	1	0
Tirane	21	21	0
Tropoje	0	0	0
Ura Vajgurore	0	0	0
Vau i Dejes	0	0	0
Vlore	30	100.00%	5
Vore	0	1	0

21 municipalities reported that they received reports from the Ombudsman. 10 findings and recommendations of the Ombudsman were addressed in 2018 (N=21). Seven (7) municipalities have reported that the review process of the Ombudsman's recommendations was still ongoing at the end of 2018.



Graph 12

As noted by the graph above, the municipalities are paying attention to address Ombudsman’s recommendations.

Problems and challenges

- Municipalities should be more actively engaged in reviewing and addressing the Ombudsman’s recommendations in full consultation with concerned citizens and the associations representing them;
- Drafting of guidelines by the municipalities to facilitate the review process in response to the Ombudsman’s findings and recommendations.

- (ii) Promotion of the CSOs’ role in the implementation of projects in the municipality territories.



Graph 13

2.1.3. Civil Society

An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system and should be recognized and treated as such by the state institutions. Some progress was made towards improving the functioning of the National Council for Civil Society and through the passing of the Social Enterprises Law. Substantial efforts are needed to ensure meaningful consultations with civil society actors as part of inclusive policy dialogue¹⁹.

Specific objective: Strengthening of civil society role and enhancing cooperation at the local level

The objective is assessed through five performance indicators on two main levels:

- (i) CSO’s engagement in the local government decision-making process;

About 46% of the municipalities have confirmed cooperation with CSOs about various local issues mostly when drafting and reviewing policies at the local level and when drafting local plans, participation in public hearings and consultations with vulnerable and ethnic minorities groups during the process of drafting the budget/and MTBP. About 252 recommendations were provided at the national level to LGUs; 4 recommendations were provided, on average, by CSOs in relation to municipal decision making in 2018; municipalities have reviewed about 204 recommendations submitted (or 3, on average).

A total number of 259 recommendations were provided by the CSOs to 28 municipalities (46%), which reported that have received recommendations during the decision-making process. 208 or 80% of this number, were reviewed, while 151 (or 73% of the number of recommendation proposed) were taken into consideration.

19 European Commission, Working Document for the Albania Progress (April 2018)

Table 7

4. Cooperation with Civil Society

Municipalities	No. of CSOs recommendations/requests of during the local decision-making process	No. of CSOs recommendations taken into consideration by the Municipality	No. of CSOs recommendations implemented	No. of grants awarded by the Municipality for joint projects in partnership with CSOs	Value (in ALL) of grants awarded by to CSOs
Belsh	0	0	0	0	0
Berat	6	6	6	0	0
Bulqize	0	0	0	0	0
Cerrik	30	15	10	No data	120,000
Delvine	0	0	0	0	0
Devoll	13	13	8	2	4 300 000
Diber	4	4	3	3	8,296,000
Divjake	0	0	0	0	0
Dropull	0	0	0	0	1,185,687
Durrës	7	7	7	1	120700
Elbasan	No data	No data	No data	4	1,700,000
Fier	15	4	11	0	0
Finiq	0	0	0	0	0
Fushe Arrez	3	1	0	0	0
Gjirokaster	15	15	10	0	0
Gramsh	24	24	18	0	0
Has	2	2/2	0	6	2,200,000
Himare	15	6	6	0	0
Kamez	0	0	0	0	0
Kavaje	0	0	0	0	0
Kelcyre	15	15	7	0	0
Klos	0	0	0	0	0
Kolonje	0	0	0	0	0
Konispol	0	0	0	0	0
Korce	0	0	0	2	1.161.178
Kruje	18	18	10	2	800,000
Kucove	3	3	2	0	0
Kukes	0	0	0	1	648,000
Kurbin	2	1	1	3	40,156,218
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data	1	No data
Libohove	2	2	2	0	0
Librazhd	2	1	0	2	3,368,756
Lushnje	0	0	0	0	0
Malesi e Madhe	3	3	3	0	0
Maliq	0	0	0	0	0
Mallakaster	0	0	0	0	0
Mat	0	0	0	0	0
Memaliaj	0	0	0	0	0
Mirdite	3	3	2	0	0
Patos	0	0	0	0	0
Peqin	0	0	0	0	0
Permet	20	20	14	4	1,185,687
Pogradec	2	2	2	0	0
Polican	0	0	0	0	0
Prrenjas	0	0	0	3	892,416
Puke	0	0	0	0	0
Pustec	0	0	No data	0	No data
Roskovec	0	0	0	2	826.048
Rrogozhine	0	0	0	0	0
Sarande	8	5	5	0	0
Selenice	0	1	1	0	0
Shijak	0	0	0	0	0
Shkoder	16	16	16	23	20,895,022
Skrapar	0	0	0	0	0
Tepelene	0	0	0	0	0
Tirane	3	No data	No data	3	69.069.545
Tropoje	3	7	3	3	2,430.0
Ura Vajgurore	3	0	0	0	0
Vau i Dejes	3	10	3	0	0
Vlore	12	100%	67%	2	0
Vore	0	0	0	0	0



29% of the municipalities (N=60) have provided grants in partnership with donor-funded agencies to the local CSOs for the implementation of different projects in support of youth engagement in public life and employment, PwD and integration of the local vulnerable groups including the ethnic minorities. In total, 67 grants or 1 grant, on average, (N=60) were provided by 18 municipalities which is a minor contribution;

69% of the municipalities haven't provided any grants to local CSOs.

All the Western Balkans countries (including local governments) use similar models for funding of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from public budgets, where common challenges relate to insufficient financial sources and transparency or unclear criteria of the selection processes and limited CSOs capacities. To address the common challenges, the EU-funded Regional Program on Local Democracy in the WB (ReLOaD) 2017-2021 aims to strengthen partnerships between local governments and civil society by scaling-up a successful model of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs. In Albania, 30 projects were implemented by CSOs during the first phase (2018-2019), and 40 projects in the second phase (2019-2020) in partnership with 12 partner municipalities²⁰. The projects are addressing main priorities foreseen in the strategic documents of each partner municipalities, aiming to offer better services for the citizens. They are focused on sectors such as: human rights, social inclusions, environment, tourism, youth empowerment and local democracy.

Problems and challenges

- Lack of data on CSOs registered in the territories of municipalities.
- Low capacities of the local CSOs in the area of good governance, competences and functions of the local government, hence weak voice to influence effectively the decision-making at the local level.
- Enhancement of cooperation between the municipality services and the local CSOs to improve local governance for the well-being of all citizens.
- Promotion of the local CSOs by the municipalities through grants in order to implement projects of a common interest.

CONCLUSIONS ON DEMOCRACY

Continues efforts are being made in to strengthen capacities of local administration, while human resource management and financial sustainability of training remain a challenge. The training system for the local administration is improved through a curriculum review process (91 curricula revised in 2017-2018) based on quality assurance system, improvement of the certification procedures, setting up the e-library and the electronic platform E-PAV for human resource management. In 2018, 764 local public officials were trained on the Civil Service Law, and about 1,008 local officials were trained in the different thematic areas by ASPA. The average number of local officials rose from 14 persons per municipality to 18 persons in 2018. Training on the Code of Administrative Procedures was attended by 169 persons or an average of 3 persons per municipality; however, 28% of the municipalities didn't receive training. The allocation of the local budget for training remains very low. Only 52% of municipalities have allocated some funds to cover the cost of staff for participation in the training (1.9% of the municipality budget, on average), while 48% of municipalities reported that they didn't allocate any budget for trainings in 2018.

Progress has been made toward fulfilling the obligation for open governance, accountability and e-governance at the local level. The government program for e-services at the local level continues. Progress has been made towards the establishment of Integrated One-Stop-Shop (iOSSH), with 49% of the municipalities establishing the Integrated One-Stop-Shop (iOSSH), or 20 municipalities more compared to 2017. 50 administrative services are provided, on average, through iOSSH. While the program to set up the one-stop-shop in all other municipalities is planned to be completed by 2019, further efforts should be made to increase the number of the administrative services provided through iOSSH and to increase territorial coverage including all administrative units and remote areas.

Addressing citizens' request for information or complaints, as part of strengthening the accountability of the local government has improved, while further efforts need to be made to ensure citizens' requests are addressed properly. The information provided by the municipalities shows that municipalities are paying attention to address citizens' requests and complaints. 82% of citizens' requests and complaints received, on average, a response in 2018 from the administrative services of their municipality. This indicates an increased percentage compared to 2017 (75%). Fifteen (15) municipalities have provided responses to all (100%) citizens' requests/complaints. However, there is no local government performance management system in place to allow for a more qualitative assessment of the municipalities' responsiveness towards citizens.

Good progress has been made towards increasing transparency of the local government, whereas citizens' participation in decision making and cooperation with CSOs remains at a low level. About 92% of Albanian Municipalities have drafted their local budget in 2018 based on the participatory approach. The budgets are published on the municipalities' website and on the Ministry of Finance and Economy dedicated website: [www.financat-](http://www.financat-vendore.al)

[vendore.al](http://www.financat-vendore.al) 908 citizens have participated, on average, in public meetings or public hearings during the preparatory process of the local budget. The average is 8 public meetings held per municipality. The municipalities of Gramsh, Librazhd, and Devoll reported the largest number of public meetings organized (over 25 meetings) while municipalities of Dropull and Rrogozhina reported that no meetings or public hearings were organized in 2018 during the budget drafting process. About 79% of the municipalities reported that they have reflected the strategic objectives, which are set out in the local strategic documents and in the Mid-term Local Budget Program (MTBP) including General Local Plan (GLP), Local Social Protection Plan, Local Plan for Integration of Ethnic Minorities (Roma and Egyptians), and other strategic documents as adopted by the municipal council. However, the quality of the MTBP remains problematic and their orientation towards strategic priority remains to be tested when the new program based approach budget will be applied by the municipalities. Almost all municipalities have published the municipal council decisions on the website of the municipality in 2018. The online publication range was 56%, on average.

Attention is paid in terms of reviewing and addressing Ombudsman reports' findings and recommendations. Only 1 report with recommendations, on average, has remained under the review process in 2018 (10 out of 11 recommendations, on average, were reviewed by the municipal services). About 62% of the municipalities didn't receive any recommendations from the Ombudsman.

Consolidation of the civil society at the local level remains a challenge. About 46% (less than half) of the municipalities have confirmed cooperation with CSOs in various local issues mostly in terms of drafting and reviewing policies at the local level and in terms of the process of drafting the budget/ and MTBP. This percentage confirms also the fact that CSOs are not established across Albania. In particular, small municipalities lack the

presence of civil society organizations. Out of 252 recommendations provided by CSOs in 2018, 204 recommendations (or 93%) were taken into consideration by the municipal councils and local administration during the review process. There is a need to develop a system to record the recommendations provided by the CSOs on different decision-making processes and the number of them taken into consideration. Capacities of the local CSOs in the area of good governance, competences, and functions of the local government remain still weak, hence a weak voice to effectively influence the decision-making at the local

level. Financial capacities of municipalities to support CSOs activities in their administrative areas remain very limited. Only 18 municipalities were able to provide grants in 2018. The total number of grants was 67. Shkodra Municipality reported the provision of 23 grants to the CSOs, followed by Has Municipality with 6 grants. 69% of the municipalities haven't provided any grants to local CSOs. Enhancement of cooperation between the municipal administration and the local CSOs in terms of improving local governance for the well-being of all citizens is important.

2.2. RULE OF LAW

2.2.1. Fight against corruption

The fight against corruption is one of the five key priorities and recommendations of the European Union to open membership negotiations with our country. One of the measures to address this priority is the adoption and implementation the Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2018-2020²¹, and one of the measures of the Action Plan is to setup the network of anti-corruption coordinators at the local level. The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Agency for the Support of Local Self-Government (ASLG are the institutions in charge of overseeing the implementation of this measure.

Specific objective: Strengthening the regime of disclosure and control of public officials' wealth and management of conflict of interest. (5.1)

This specific objective is assessed through four indicators. About 31% of the municipalities declared cases of administrative procedure violations and corruptions (N=60) in 2018; 67% of the municipalities didn't have cases of administrative procedure violations including public procurement, whereas 2% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator.

According to the national legislation, the mayor is subject to the declaration of assets to the HIDAACI. 95% of the municipalities have reported that the mayor has submitted the assets declaration according to the legislation. 5% of the municipalities have either provided inaccurate data or provided no data at all.

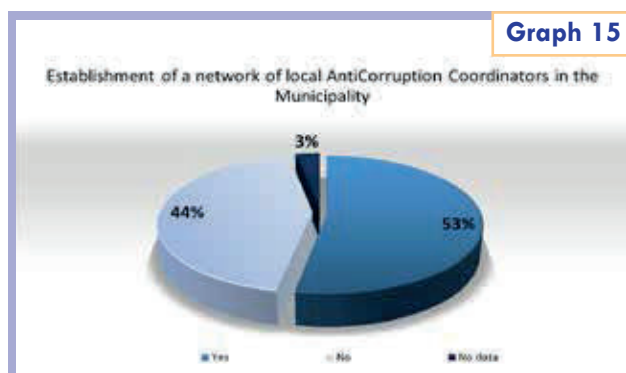
21 The plan is drafted by the State Authority for Geospatial Information (ASIG)

2.2. Rule of Law

Table 8

5.1. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal investigations against corruption

	No. of complaints (appeals) for violations of administrative procedures and corruption	No. of local administration officials who have declared the assets, as required by law	No. of conflicts of interest statements by local officials and the City Council during decision making.	Establishment of the network of local anti-corruption coordinators in municipalities/contact points
Belsh	18	1	0	No
Berat	5	1	0	No
Bulqize	0	1	0	No
Cerrik	0	1	0	Yes
Delvine	0	1	0	Yes
Devoll	10	No data	No data	No data
Diber	8	1	0	Yes
Divjake	4	1	32	Yes
Dropull	0	1	0	No
Durrës	0	1	0	Yes
Elbasan	0	1	0	Yes
Fier	0	1	0	Yes
Finiq	0	1	0	No
Fushe Arrez	0	1	0	No
Gjirokaster	2	1	0	Yes
Gramsh	0	1	0	No
Has	2	1	0	Yes
Himare	0	1	0	No
Kamez	0	1	0	Yes
Kavaje	0	1	0	Yes
Kelcyre	3	1	0	No
Klos	0	1	0	No
Kolonje	1	1	0	Yes
Konispol	1	1	0	No
Korce	0	1	0	No
Krujë	0	1	0	Yes
Kucove	0	1	0	No
Kukes	9	1	0	No
Kurbini	0	1	20	No
Lezhe	No data	1	0	Yes
Libohovë	0	1	0	No
Librazhd	0	2	0	Yes
Lushnjë	0	1	0	Yes
Malesi e Madhe	0	1	0	No
Maliq	0	1	0	No
Mallakaster	0	1	0	Yes
Mat	0	1	0	No
Memaliaj	0	1	0	No
Mirditë	15	1	0	Yes
Patos	0	1	0	Yes
Peqin	0	1	0	Yes
Permet	7	1	0	Yes
Pogradec	0	1	0	Yes
Polican	0	1	0	Yes
Prrenjas	0	1	0	No
Puke	0	1	0	No
Pustec	0	1	0	No
Roskovec	0	1	0	Yes
Rrogozhinë	0	4	0	No
Sarandë	0	1	0	No
Selenice	1	1	0	Yes
Shijak	2	1	0	Yes
Shkoder	0	1	0	Yes
Skrapar	4	1	0	Yes
Tepelene	0	1	0	Yes
Tirane	0	1	0	No data
Tropojë	2	1	4	Yes
Ura Vajgurore	0	1	0	Yes
Vau i Dejës	5	1	0	No
Vlore	0	1	0	Yes
Vorë	1	1	100%	No



As regulations and monitoring mechanisms continue to develop and EU Member States have differences with regard to asset declarations, the need to maintain the right balance between public disclosure and the right of public officials to privacy will become more and more prominent²².

- 90% of the municipalities didn't have any cases of *conflict of interest* (CoI) in the decision making process involving members of the Municipal Council in 2018; 10% of the municipalities didn't provide accurate data;
- 4 municipalities²³ did have any cases of declarations of conflict of interest involving members of the Municipal Council, while the local administration took measures to prevent it;
- 53% of the municipalities appointed the local anti-corruption coordinator in 2018; 44% of the municipalities haven't appointed the local anti-corruption coordinator yet; about 3% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator.

Table 9**5.3. Adopting anti-corruption policies at the LG level**

	Integrity Plan for the Municipality adopted	Budget funds planned for implementation of local anti-corruption policy
Belsh	Yes	No
Berat	Yes	No
Bulqize	No	No
Cerrik	No	No
Delvine	No	No
Devoll	No data	No data
Diber	No	No
Divjake	No	No
Dropull	No	No
Durres	No	No
Elbasan	Yes	No
Fier	No data	0
Finiq	No	No
Fushe Arrez	No	No
Gjirokaster	No	No
Gramsh	No	0
Has	No	No
Himare	No	0
Kamez	No	No
Kavaje	No	2.70%
Kelcyre	No	No
Klos	No	0
Kolonje	No	No
Konispol	No	No
Korce	No process	No
Kruje	Yes	0
Kucove	No	No
Kukes	No	No
Kurbin	No	0
Lezhe	No data	Yes
Libohove	No	No
Librazhd	No	No
Lushnje	No	No
Malesi e Madhe	No	No
Maliq	No	No
Mallakaster	No	No
Mat	No	No
Memaliaj	No data	No data
Mirdite	No	No
Patos	No	No
Peqin	No	No
Permet	No	No
Pogradec	Yes	0
Polican	Yes	No
Prrenjas	No	No
Puke	No	No
Pustec	No	No
Roskovec	No	No
Rrogozhine	No	No
Sarande	No	No
Selenice	No	No
Shijak	No	No
Shkoder	Yes	Yes
Skrapar	Yes	No
Tepelene	No	No
Tirane	No data	No data
Tropoje	No	Yes
Ura Vajgurore	Yes	No
Vau I Dejes	No	0
Vlore	No	No
Vore	No	0%

22 OECD, 2017 - Embracing Continuous Change in Government, point 3.2 'Transparency in policy making'.

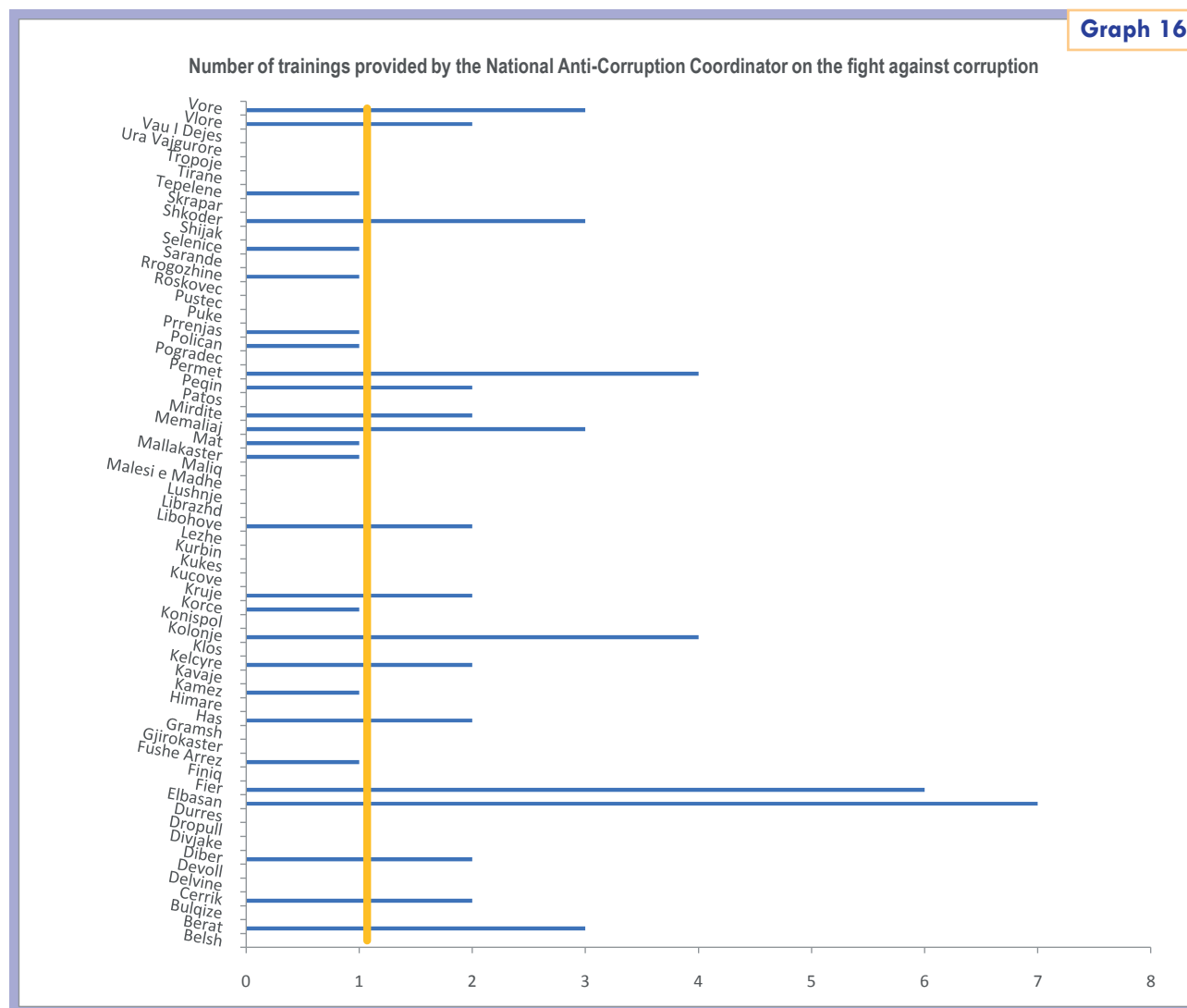
23 Tropoja, Divjaka, Vora and Kurbin

5.2 Specific objective: Capacity building of the local government administration to fight corruption(5.2)

This specific objective is assessed through three indicators: (i) number of trainings on the fight against corruption, (ii) the level of updating the municipality’s electronic register of citizens claims and complaints according to the legal deadlines, (iii) setting up of a Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism (M&E) in the public services delivery and economic aid at local level (in the municipality).

- 47% of the municipalities, on average, have participated in two (2) trainings on the fight against corruption (N=57) – this shows improvement compared to 2017 (1 training), total 61 persons trained; 53% of the municipalities haven’t participated in any training in 2018;
- About 6% of the municipalities haven’t provided data about this indicator.

According to the legislation²⁴, the municipalities are responsible for updating the electronic



24 Law no. 199 / 2014 “On the right to Information”, Article 8 “Register of requests and responses”. The Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data sets standards about the format and content of the register.

register of requests and responses every 3 months. The information must be published on the website of the municipality, as well as on a public place in the municipality. The register doesn't include the identity of the person applying for information.

- 57% of the municipalities have regularly updated the municipality's electronic register of citizens' complaints and requests according to the legal deadlines; the other municipalities have either provided inaccurate data or no data at all.
- In 2018, 45% of the municipalities (N=55) have set up the M&E mechanisms of monitoring the quality of the public service delivery in the area of municipality's competences in general, and the cash social assistance delivery; 10% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator.

5.3 Specific objective: Adoption of anti-corruption policies at the local level

This specific objective will be assessed through two performance indicators. Under the Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2018-2020²⁵, the municipalities should draft and adopt the Integrity Plan, the aim of which is to prevent corruption in the public services delivery by them (at the local level). To this end, the municipalities will be assisted by the National



Coordinator for the fight against corruption and the Ministry of Internal Affairs following the instructions of the Ministry of Justice.

- Only 15% of the municipalities have adopted local integrity plan according to the Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2018-2020; 2% of the municipalities had the Integrity plan in drafting process; about 8% of the municipalities have either provided inaccurate data or provided no data at all related to this indicator.

Even in cases when the municipality has adopted its local integrity plan regarding the fight against corruption, it's not effectively executed if the plan isn't part of the budget planning of the municipality.

25

The plan is drafted by the State Authority for Geospatial Information (ASIG)

Table 10

5.2. Strengthening capacities of the local government administration in the fight against corruption

	No. of CCC trainings on the fight against corruption in which the municipality participated	The degree of updating of the municipality's electronic register of claims and complaints according to the deadlines set out in the legislation.	M & E mechanism for providing public services and economic assistance to the municipality established
Belsh	0	0	No
Berat	3	Yes	Yes
Bulqize	0	No	No
Cerrik	2	Periodic	Yes
Delvine	0	No	No
Devoll	No data	No data	No data
Diber	2	Yes	Yes
Divjake	No data	0	No
Dropull	0	0	No
Durrës	0	4	No
Elbasan	7	0	Yes
Fier	6	50	No data
Finiq	0	Periodic	Yes
Fushe Arrez	1	0	Yes
Gjirokaster	0	Yes	No
Gramsh	0	4	No
Has	2	Monthly	Yes
Himare	0	Always	Yes
Kamez	1	100%	Yes
Kavaje	0	0	Yes
Kelcyre	2	0	Yes
Klos	0	0	Yes
Kolonje	4	Monthly	Yes
Konispol	0	Yes	Yes
Korce	1	Daily	No
Kruje	2	1	No data
Kucove	0	No	No
Kukes	0	4	Yes
Kurbin	0	No	No
Lezhe	No data	Yes	No data
Libohovë	2	0	No
Librazhd	0	30%	No
Lushnje	0	0	No
Malesi e Madhe	No data	No data	No
Maliq	0	4	No
Mallakaster	1	No	No
Mat	1	Yes	No
Memaliaj	3	0	Yes
Mirdite	2	Yes	No
Patos	0	No	No
Peqin	2	Yes	Yes
Permet	4	Monthly	Yes
Pogradec	0	3	Yes
Polican	1	No	Yes
Prrenjas	1	4	No
Puke	0	0	No
Pustec	0	Periodic	No
Roskovec	0	100%	No
Rrogozhinë	1	0%	No
Sarandë	0	75%	No
Selenice	1	100%	Yes
Shijak	0	0%	No
Shkoder	3	Periodic	Yes
Skrapar	0	Yes	No
Tepelene	1	4	No data
Tirane	0	No data	No data
Tropoje	0	Periodic	No
Ura Vajgurore	0	12	Yes
Vau i Dejës	0	Yes	Yes
Vlore	2	No data	Yes
Vore	3	0	No

4 out of 9 municipalities, which have adopted the Integrity Plan regarding the fight against corruption, had provided a specific budget-allocation in 2018 for its implementation.

Problems and challenges

- Limited coordination efforts by the central institutions to support the municipalities when drafting their local Integrity Plan regarding the fight against corruption relevant to the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2018-2020.
- Limited technical and human capacities of the municipalities in terms of adopting the local policies relevant to the Government of Albania policy and in terms of adopting instruments regarding the fight against corruption.
- Limited local financial sources for the implementation of the local Integrity Plan.
- Lack of adequate training of the local officials in the fight against corruption. Provision of training to other local officials who are not officially appointed by the Local Authority in the capacity of the local anti-corruption coordinator is not effective.

CONCLUSIONS ON RULE OF LAW

The compliance with the rules on asset declaration and control of conflict of interest is showing progress. 58 out of 61 mayors have submitted the declaration of assets in 2018

according to the legislation. This shows an improvement compared to 2017 where the assets declarations were submitted by 87% or 53 mayors. About 31% of the municipalities declared cases of administrative procedures violations including public procurement. Local administration took measures to mitigate the risks and addressed them properly. About 90% of the municipalities reported that they have had no cases of *conflict of interest* in the decision-making process. Only municipalities of Divjaka, Tropoja and Kurbin reported about cases where conflict of interests was identified. The network of local anti-corruption coordinators has been established in 53% of the municipalities, thus making a progress compared to 36% in 2017.

Measures to introduce systematic anti-corruption mechanisms remains a concerning issue. Only 15% of the municipalities have adopted local Integrity Plan according to the Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2018-2020, while the Integrity plan was in the drafting process in two (2) municipalities. About 8% of the municipalities have either provided inaccurate data or provided no data at all about this indicator. Only 44% of the municipalities, which have adopted the Integrity Plan, provided a specific budget allocation for its implementation in 2018. 47% of the municipalities, on average, have participated in two (2) trainings related to fight against corruption, while 53% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training in 2018.



2.3. HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Specific objective: *Local government capacity building to implement national and international human rights standards*

Albania has made efforts and is committed to the continuous improvement of human rights standards. The national legal framework guarantees respect for minority rights. It complies with international conventions, laws and standards. The core document is the Constitution

of the Republic of Albania and other important laws²⁶. Law no. 10221 “On the protection from discrimination” and the Law no. 96/2017 “On the protection of national minorities” are the two key laws adopted by the Parliament. Albania is a member in different international and regional organizations, and has ratified a number of international conventions on human rights including the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe.

26 Law “On the Ombudsman” (8454/1999), Law “On the protection of personal data” (9887/2008), Law “On gender equality” (9970/2008), Electoral Code (2008), Law “On juridical assistance” (10039/2008), Law “On the protection from discrimination” (2010), Decision of the Council of Ministers “On the organization and functioning of the State Committee for Minorities”, as amended (Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 726/12, dated December 2018), National Plan for Stabilization and Association, as amended, Law “On the rights and protection of ethnic minorities”, as amended (Law No. 96/2017), NAPIRE 2016-2020, Law (no. 22/2018) “On social housing”.

2.3. Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities

Table 11

6.1. Strengthen the capacity of local government to implement national and international human rights standards

	No. of trainings by central authorities / CSOs on national and international human rights standards	No. of local government officials trained on national and international human rights standards	No. of licensed CSOs dealing with cases of human rights violations in cooperation with the Municipality	No. of referred cases on human rights violations	No. of violation of human rights cases handled by inter-institutional groups / Municipality
Belsh	0	0	0	0	0
Berat	3	10	2	2	2
Bulqize	0	0	0	0	0
Cerrik	0	0	0	0	0
Delvine	1	1	0	0	0
Devoll	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Diber	No data	5	2	0	0
Divjake	0	1	0	2	0
Dropull	0	0	0	0	0
Durres	0	0	3	78	78
Elbasan	5	150	3	61	61
Fier	1	1	0	0	0
Finiq	0	0	0	17	17
Fushe Arrez	8	2	2	0	0
Gjirokaster	0	0	0	0	0
Gramsh	0	0	2	35	35
Has	3	8	0	4	5
Himare	0	0	1	0	0
Kamez	0	0	0	0	0
Kavcje	4	4	1	1	1
Kelcyre	3	12	0	0	0
Klos	0	1	0	4	4
Kolonje	6	10	0	11	5
Konispol	0	0	0	0	13
Korce	0	0	0	0	0
Kruje	2	2	1	1	1
Kucove	0	0	9	24	24
Kukes	5	6	0	0	0
Kurbin	0	0	2	0	0
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	3	4	0	0	0
Librazhd	1	3	3	0	1
Lushnje	1	1	1	0	0
Malesi e Madhe	0	0	0	0	0
Maliq	0	0	0	0	0
Mallakaster	0	0	0	0	0
Mat	0	0	0	16	0
Memaliaj	0	0	0	0	0
Mirdite	3	12	2	2	2
Patos	0	1	0	0	12
Peqin	0	2	0	0	0
Permet	6	12	0	6	6
Pogradec	4	4	No data	0	0
Polican	1	1	0	1	1
Prrenjas	0	0	1	25	10
Puke	0	0	0	0	0
Pustec	0	0	0	No data	No data
Raskovec	0	0	0	0	0
Rrogozhine	0	0	0	0	0
Sarande	0	0	0	0	0
Selenice	0	0	0	0	0
Shijak	0	0	0	0	0
Shkoder	20	18	23	18	20
Skrapar	0	0	0	0	0
Tepelene	0	0	0	0	5
Tirane	2	3	24	2	2
Tropoje	3	1	1	0	0
Ura Vajgurore	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Vau i Dejes	0	0	0	0	0
Vlore	6	4	1	No data	No data
Vore	0	0	0	9	1

The Ombudsman has been actively promoting the rights of vulnerable groups, including the submission of special reports and recommendations. The policy and legal framework on non-discrimination is broadly in line with European standards.²⁷

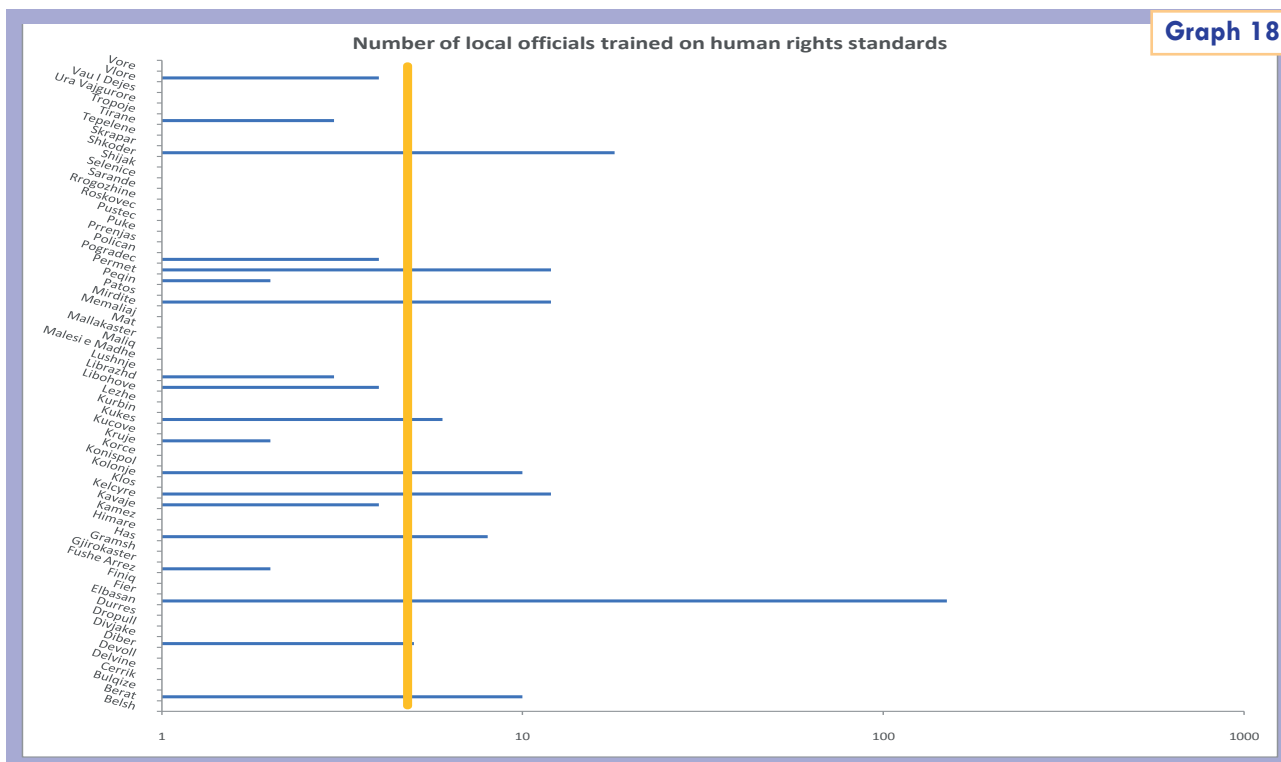
- Human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion are embodied in Principle 11 of the good governance at local level, thus focusing on four core concepts: (i) human rights are respected, protected and implemented, and discrimination on any grounds is combated within the sphere of influence of the local authority; (ii) cultural diversity is regarded as an asset, while continuous efforts are made to ensure that all the local community has a stake in it, identify with it and do not feel excluded; (iii) social cohesion and the integration of disadvantaged areas are promoted; (iv) access to essential services is preserved, in particular, for the most disadvantaged parts of the population. In 2018, ASPA and other service providers **provided training to local public officials on national and international human**

- rights standards;** 4 trainings were delivered, on average, for 27 municipalities (or 44% of the municipalities); 56% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training on the human rights standards (N=57). Elbasan Municipality reported the largest number of municipal staff trained (150 persons) followed by Tirana Municipality (145 persons).

A total of 279 local public officials were trained on human rights standards (5 local officials trained, on average).

31% of the municipalities reported that they had established good cooperation with the local CSOs with regard to addressing and reviewing cases of human rights violations in 2018; 62% of the municipalities didn't have cases of cooperation with CSOs; 4 municipalities failed to provide data about this indicator.

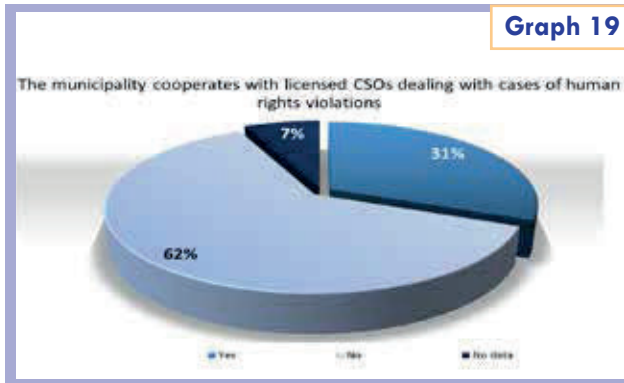
The best experience is reported by Shkodra Municipality, which has signed 23 agreements with the CSOs to cooperate in this area and has intensified the cooperation not only with the CSOs, with which an agreement has



27 Source: the 2018 EU Progress Report, key priority 5.

2.3. Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities

been signed, but also with the other CSOs, with which a cooperation agreement is not necessarily signed.



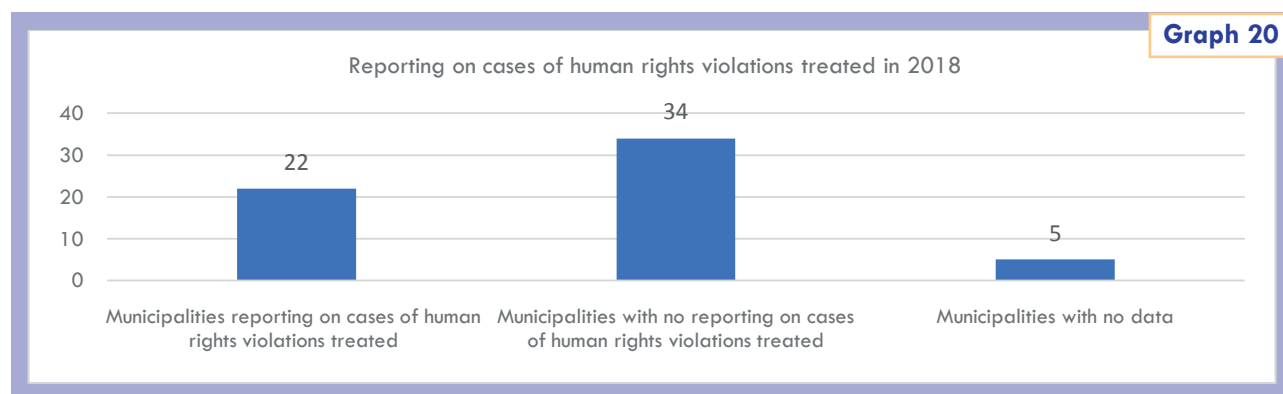
A number of municipalities have reported that they have received good support from UNDP, UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision, etc., when dealing with human rights and Roma community.

In total, 319 cases of human rights violations were reported to the municipal services in 2018, while 95% of those cases were handled by the inter-institutional group led by the municipal services according to the protocols. The majority of cases reported are those related to domestic violence, violence against children. The Finiq Municipality reported about cases of violence related to property rights, while Tirana Municipality is more concerned about the treatment of Roma community regarding the specificity of the living conditions and traditions of this community. Cooperation has been established between Tirana Municipality and the Council

of Europe to discuss about the European standards on human rights.

Problems and challenges

- Lack of awareness about human rights in society and local administration.
- Very few specialized local CSOs.
- Lack of the tradition of the municipal services to ask the CSOs support when handling cases on human rights violations.
- Limited professional capacities of the human rights sector in local administration, combined with difficulties to attend trainings organized outside the municipality due to the long distance in the case of remote municipalities and lack of funds to cover the costs.
- Difficulties to identify the cases of violations due to the reluctance of citizens to report them to the municipality or other offices.
- Establishment of a secure environment for identification, reporting and follow up of the cases up to their final solution;
- Efficient and effective set-ups dealing with the elimination of human rights violation and inter-institutional cooperation when dealing with the violation of human rights.
- Enhanced service quality and sustainability of municipal structures when dealing with human rights protection services.
- The difficulty of integration and sustain-



ability of Roma community in labor market, the establishment of secure and sustainable settlement and their integration in social housing schemes, due to their living traditions and high frequency of mobility across different locations.

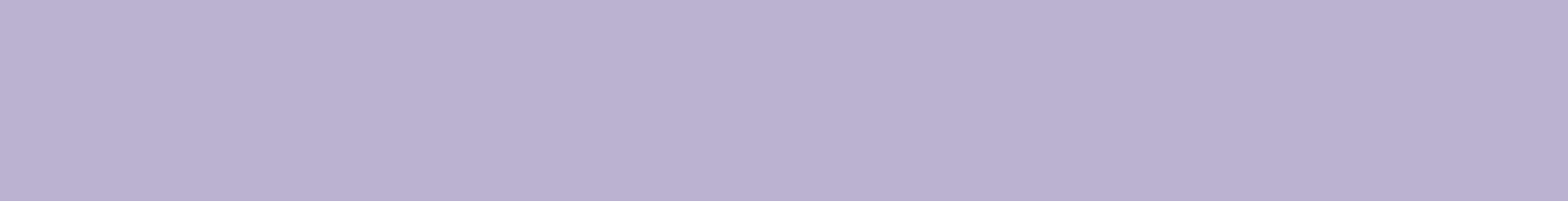
CONCLUSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Some efforts have been made to build the local government capacities in terms of implementing human rights standards, whereas more needs to be done to train the local administration and raise a awareness of local administration and community on human rights. In 2018, ASPA and other service providers provided several trainings to local public officials on national and international human rights standards. 4 trainings, on average, were provided to 22 municipalities (or 39% of the municipalities); 61% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training on the human rights standards. More needs to be done to inform the municipalities about the potential organizations and trainings on European human rights standards, as well as about capacity building of municipal administration dealing with human rights issues. Increased efficiency of the inter-institutional coordination and coopera-

tion is necessary in order to timely address the cases of human rights violations.

Good cooperation with CSOs is reported, but a very few specialized local CSOs are active, while no organizations exist in small municipalities. About 31% of the municipalities reported that they have established good cooperation with the local CSOs when addressing and handling cases of human rights violations in 2018. The inter-institutional group led by the municipal services handled according to the protocols about 95% out of 319 identified/referred cases of human rights violations. Municipalities reported that the number of CSOs specialized in dealing with human rights is limited. There is also a lack of understanding of traditional behavior to asks the CSOs support when dealing with the cases of human rights violations.

Raising awareness and establishment of a secure environment in municipalities, in order to encourage citizens to report cases of violations, while those including domestic violence and child violations. in particular, must receive high attention and be in the focus of cooperation between the municipalities and CSOs activity in the future.



3. ECONOMIC CRITERIA

Functional market economy and the capability to handle the EU competition and market forces

3.1. EXISTENCE OF A FUNCTIONAL MARKET ECONOMY

Specific objective: Improvement of the business environment

Improving the business climate, simplification of rules and regulations, encouraging of the entrepreneurship culture at all levels, improvement of financial crediting to SME and start-ups and business based on innovation are some of the objectives under the National Strategy for Business and Investments 2014-2020 in Albania and a priority of the EU integration process.

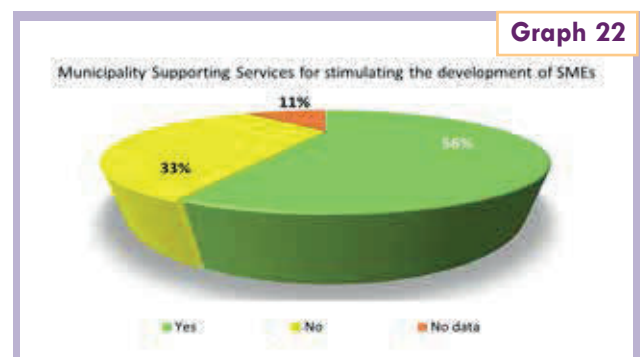
Albania has made some progress and is moderately prepared in regard to the development of a functional market economy. Regulations related to business remained cumbersome and the rule of law shortcomings continued to hamper businesses and deter investments. Improving the business environment requires further efforts²⁸.

The economic development is one of the main local government functions under Law 139/2015 “On the Local Self-Government”. The specific objective of this functional area is assessed against 5 performance indicators. 67% of the municipalities have drafted, at least, one Strategic Local Development Plan



(GLP), which is adopted by the municipal council (N=58); 1 municipality had the strategic plan under the drafting process and 26% of the municipalities don't have such strategic plan at the local level yet.

A number of municipalities have adopted more than one local development plan including Social Protection plan, Local Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptian minorities.



Due to the arrears accumulated from the previous years and limited local available

28 Source: EU Progress Report for Albania (2018)

The box below presents some good practices identified in 2018.

BOX 3: GOOD PRACTICES OF MUNICIPALITIES SUPPORT FOR SMES' DEVELOPMENT

Tirana Municipality has taken 10 initiatives to promote SME development and start-up businesses in Tirana area in cooperation with GIZ in 2018, including the training of 150 young and adult persons. Other activities were coordinated with state institutions and business entities in the business ecosystem of Tirana; four (4) grant schemes were applied in support of 67 entrepreneurs and 25 commercial spaces were made available to the local businesses for renting.

Fier Municipality offers intermediation services with the banking systems during SMEs applications for loans.

Diber Municipality has delivered training for SMEs and it has trained 15 touristic guides in cooperation with CSOs.

Diber Municipality and **Roskovec Municipality** have provided small grants for SMEs development: the support in Diber was provided to SMEs working in the area of agriculture tourism while the support in Roskovec was provided to 10 SMEs run by women. The amount of grants is up to 100,000 Albanian Leks.

Berat Municipality has established the Economic Council as a consultative body with a participation of 11 economic operators.

Gramsh Municipality has stimulated participation of the SMEs in the IPA CBC Project "STEP", which provided support to touristic operators in Gramsh area to open their accounts on Trip Advisor and promotion of their activities in the regional networks, in addition to facilitating SMEs participation in the "Natyra Fest

2018" fair.

Himara Municipality and **Pogradec Municipality** have applied differentiated fee schemes for the businesses, farmers, or businesses operating in production sectors (up to 50% of tax on buildings).

Kavaja Municipality has given support to small businesses by providing to them free rent premises and also guidance and advisory services.

Korça Municipality provides facilities for businesses in the area of "Old Pazar;

Kruja Municipality offered tax relief for SMEs active on hostel and agriculture tourism.

Patos Municipality has applied tax and fee exemption for all new businesses that were opened in 2018 by the students who completed the studies in 2017-2018; tax and fee reduction up to 30% for family businesses run by war veteran families and with people with disabilities.

Shkodra Municipality under took several initiatives in terms of the following: (i) improving the conditions for business start ups; (ii) simplifying administrative procedures; (iii) strengthening institutional cooperation with the aim of promoting qualified labor; promotion and support for local business cooperation through financial initiatives; creation of New BID Areas and implementation of start up for young people within the project Yes Future IADSA Program.

sources, only 56% of the municipalities have provided supporting services for SME development in their municipalities in 2018. About 33% of the municipalities haven't provided any specific services promoting SME development (N=54). Seven (7) municipalities (or 11%) haven't provided any information or data about this indicator.

43 municipalities (or 70%) reported about new SMEs established in their territories (N=58), in total 8,245 in 2018 (or 142, on average); 24% of the municipalities have reported that no new SMEs were established over the reporting period. One of the problems identified in the reports is the lack of a system to maintain data (register) of SMEs. The information on this indicator is very vague in the major part of municipalities. This indicates that there is either a lack of vision on how SMEs could be supported or there is need to strengthen cooperation with them, or the respective departments lack the accountability to provide adequate information.

There are three measures of support to SMEs that are mostly reported as measures to support SMEs development: (i) organization of local fairs; (ii) establishment of business facilities (open markets); and (iii) fiscal measures in the form of tax reduction. In addition, some municipalities are cooperating with CSOs to train businesses, in particular, those working in tourism and hospitality services. Provision of small grants to support new SMEs or start-ups is applied in a very small number of municipalities.

Problems and challenges

- Limited municipality financial resources to support new business entities, through competitive grant schemes that can promote setting up of the new business entities, and innovation-based enterprises.
- Few municipalities have provided incentives supporting new social business entities managed by young persons, women, and vulnerable groups and in rural areas.

- Municipality support to SME development should be included in the local budget/MTBP.
- Enhancing the business environment by providing qualitative services in order to make the cities and regions more attractive for domestic and foreign investments and increase Albanian competition in the region.

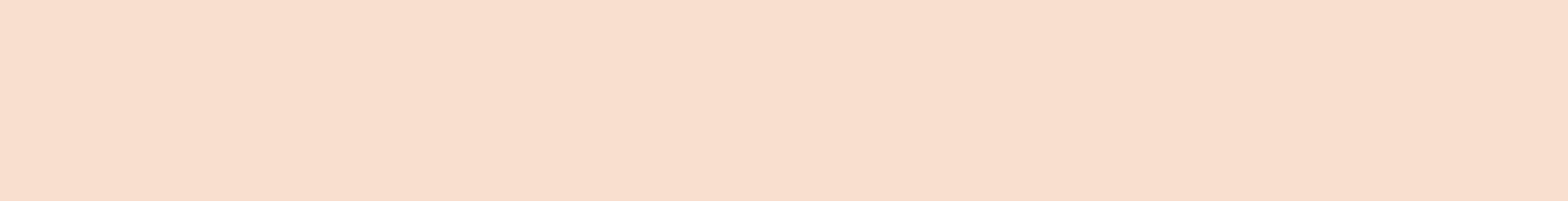
CONCLUSIONS ON THE EXISTENCE OF A FUNCTIONING MARKET ECONOMY

Support to SMEs has made some progress, with some good practices established; however, such support needs to be provided by all municipalities. The economic development is one of the main local government functions under Law 139/2015 “On Local Self-Government”. About 67% of the municipalities have drafted, at least, one Strategic Local Development Plan improving the business environment; 26% of the municipalities had failed to develop such strategic plan and to have it adopted by the municipal council.

About 8,245 new SMEs (or 142, on average) were set up in 2018.

Municipalities have limited financial resources to support new business entities through competitive grant schemes that can promote setting up of the new business entities, and innovation-based enterprises. About 33% of the municipalities haven’t provided any specific services, which promote SME development. Several municipalities have applied tax relief to support, in particular, women-led SMEs. Few municipalities have provided incentives supporting new social business entities managed by young persons, women, and vulnerable groups and in rural areas.

Better and more supportive business involvement at the national level. Local support to SMEs must be considered also in the framework of enhancing the overall business environment through providing qualitative services in order to make the cities and regions more attractive for domestic and foreign investments and increase Albanian competition in the region.



4. ABILITY TO ASSUME MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

Ability to take over the accession commitments, in particular, the ability to effectively implement the rules, standards, and policies of the acquis, as well as the commitment to political, economic and monetary union.

4.1. Chapter 11: Agriculture and Rural Development

The common agricultural policy supports farmers and rural development. This requires strong management and control systems, common EU rules for quality policy and organic farming. In the EU integration process, the Albanian authorities among other important priorities, should, in particular: (i) plan and allocate resources for improving farm and animal registers and use of available agricultural statistics in policy-making; (ii) complete the reform of the advisory system in agriculture in order to strengthen the growth of investment in agriculture and agro-processing; (iii) complete the legal, institutional and administrative framework for organic products, protected designation of origin and protected geographical indication²⁹.

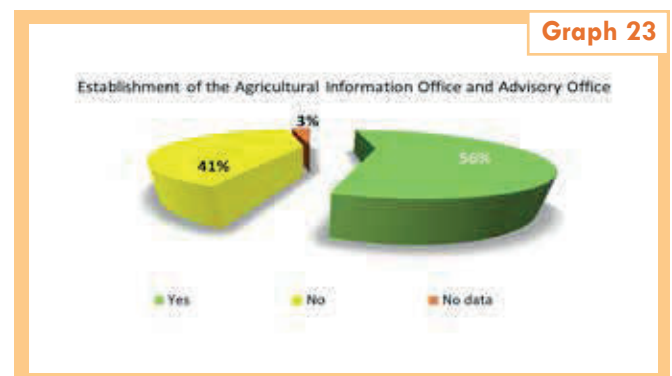
Specific objective (11.1): Local administration capacity building in the agricultural and rural development and advisory system

Until the end 2018, Agricultural Information and Advisory Office (AIAO) have been established in 34 municipalities (or 56% of them), while it hasn't been established in 41% of the rest of the municipalities (N=59); 3%

municipalities didn't provide any data about this indicator.

The average local fund allocated for agricultural and rural development was about 9% of the municipality budget in 85% of the municipalities in 2018 (N=52); 16 municipalities have reported that they didn't allocate any budget for the sector.

About 15% of the municipalities have reported either incorrect data or no data at all. The graph shows that the municipalities of Divjake and Dropull have allocated 50%-80% of the overall local budget budget for rural development, which is a questionable issue.



29 Source: 2018 EU Progress Report for Albania, chapter 11.

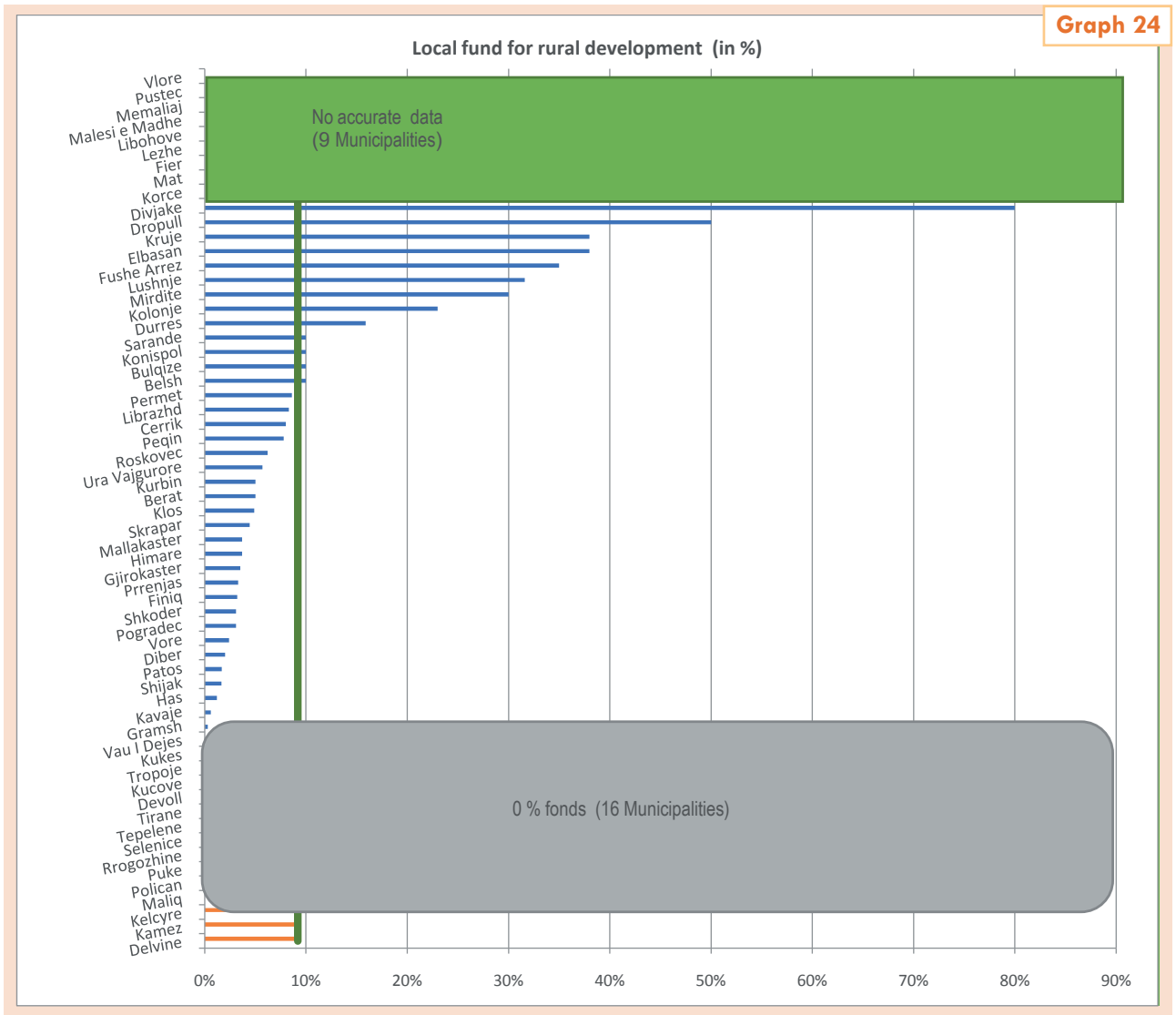
4. ABILITY TO ASSUME MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

Table 12

11.1.1. Strengthen the capacities of local administration in the agricultural and rural information and advice system

	Establishment of the Agricultural Information Office and Advisory Office	The Municipality budget ratio for Local Rural Development in the reporting year (in%)	No. of staff training of the Agricultural Information Office and Advisory Office ³⁰
Belsh	Yes	10.00%	0
Berat	Yes	5.00%	3
Bulqize	No	10.00%	0
Cerrik	Yes	8.00%	2
Delvine	Yes	0.00%	0
Devoll	Yes	0.01%	0
Diber	No	2.00%	0
Divjake	Yes	80.00%	2
Dropull	No	50.00%	0
Durrës	No	15.90%	0
Elbasan	Yes	38.00%	6
Fier	Yes	No data	5
Finiq	No	3.20%	4
Fushe Arrez	No	35.00%	4
Gjirokaster	Yes	3.50%	2
Gramsh	Yes	0.31%	2
Has	Yes	1.20%	1
Himare	Yes	3.70%	3
Kamez	No	0.00%	0
Kavaje	No	0.60%	0
Kelcyre	Yes	0.00%	2
Klos	Yes	4.90%	1
Kolonje	Yes	23.00%	0
Konispol	Yes	10.00%	0
Korce	No	14,497,000 leke	0
Kruje	Yes	38.00%	1
Kucove	Yes	0.03%	4
Kukes	No	0.20%	3
Kurbin	Yes	5.00%	0
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	No	No data	4
Librazhd	Yes	8.30%	1
Lushnje	No	31.60%	0
Malesi e Madhe	Yes	No data	No data
Maliq	Yes	0.00%	5
Mallakaster	No	3.70%	0
Mat	No	Jo	0
Memaliaj	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	Yes	30.00%	2
Patos	No	1.69%	5
Peqin	Yes	7.80%	0
Permet	Yes	8.60%	2
Pogradec	Yes	3.10%	10
Polican	Yes	0.00%	4
Prrenjas	No	3.30%	0
Puke	No	0.00%	0
Pustec	No	No data	No data
Roskovec	No	6.20%	0
Rrogozhine	No	0.00%	0
Sarandë	Yes	10.00%	2
Selenice	Yes	0.00%	2
Shijak	No	1.65%	0
Shkoder	Yes	3.10%	6
Skrapar	No	4.44%	0
Tepelene	No	0.00%	0
Tirane	Yes	0.00%	1
Tropoje	No	0.05%	0
Ura Vajgurore	No	5.70%	0
Vau i Dejes	Yes	0.20%	5
Vlore	Yes	Yes	1
Vore	Yes	2.40%	6

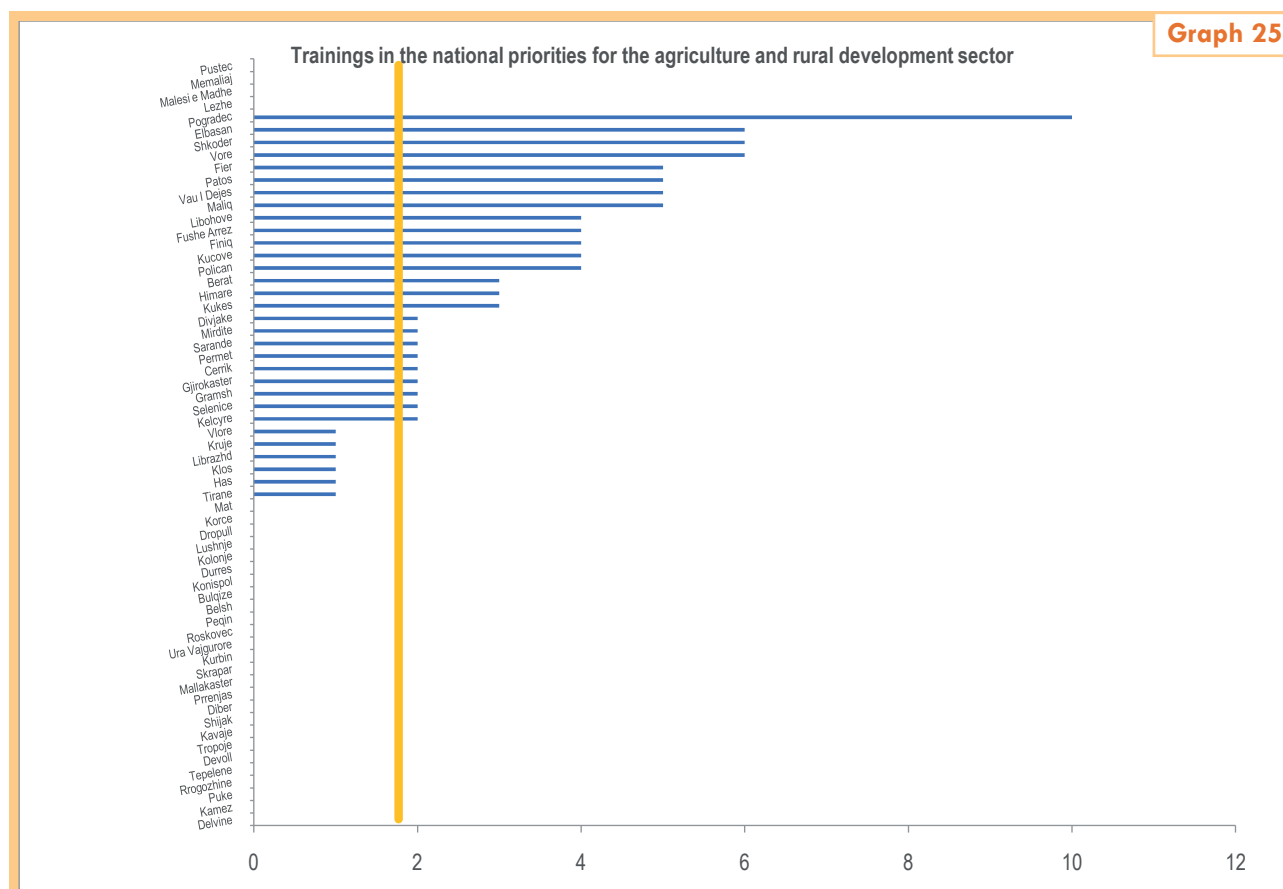
³⁰ On national priorities in the agriculture and rural development sector in line with the EU integration process (competitiveness of the agricultural sector and improvement of production techniques, IPARD and fisheries)



In 2018, only 51% of the municipalities have participated in trainings related to the national priorities regarding the agriculture and rural development sector, including, among others, the competitiveness, IPARD manage-

ment, improving production techniques and fishing (N=61); trainings attended varies from 1 or 2 training up to 10 trainings attended by the staff in the case of Pogradec Municipality.

4. ABILITY TO ASSUME MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS



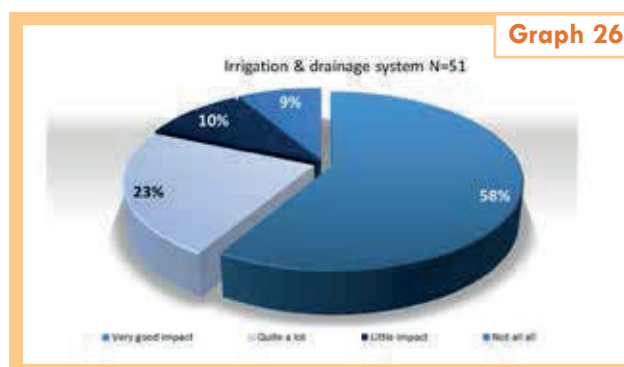
The results of a survey about the progress and results achieved as part of the mid-term review of NCCSDLG, May-August 2018³¹, and specifically about the impact of the irrigation and drainage management after it was transferred to the municipalities, has shown the following: 76% of the respondents rated the impact of this function “as very good impact/and good impact”, and 22% as “little/and no impact”.

Problems and challenges

- Low political commitment of some municipalities that have failed to set up AIAO in line with national priority.
- Limited municipality financial and human resources to strengthening the role of AIAO in their territory.
- Lack of strategic policies in agriculture and rural development at the local level in line with Crosscutting Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development

2014-2020 and in harmony with specific local opportunities.

- Cooperation with the advisory organizations specialized in the area.
- Completion of AMTP registration allowing all the farmers to obtain the certificate of land ownership.
- Poor road infrastructure in remote rural areas is an obstacle for rural development.



31 The survey was supported by dldp / ASLG

Specific objective: Improvement of productivity and competitiveness in the agriculture sector, improvement of rural infrastructure, balanced territorial and economic development of rural areas

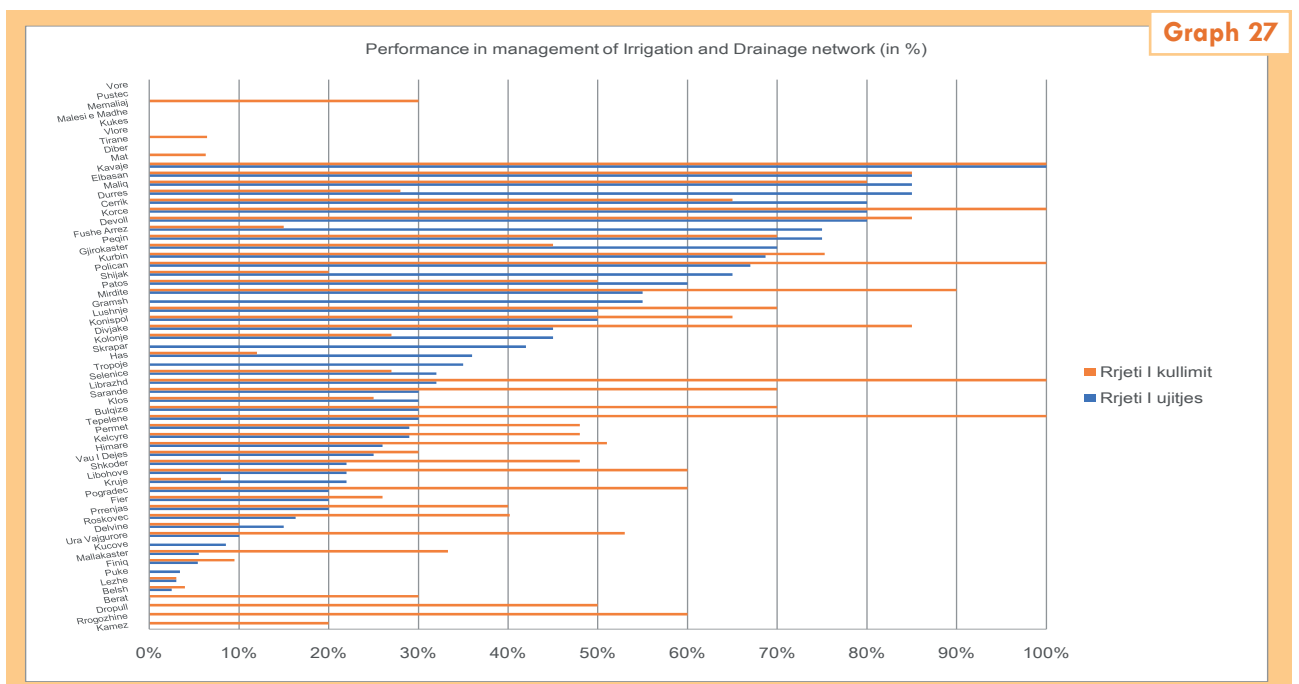
Improving productivity, competitiveness and quality standards is both, a strategic objective of the CSARD 2014-2020 and common EU integration priority. Improving irrigation and drainage network and its management is crucial for the agricultural sector development.

The Government of Albania transferred this function in 2016 to the LGU inline with the decentralization reform process; the assets, human and financial resources were transferred to all the municipalities to exercise this function. About 267 public employees were transferred from the central government (Regional Directorates of Irrigation and Drainage Boards) to 61 Municipalities, which adapted the existing management structures.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development supported all the municipalities with new excavators and investment in some pumping stations.

Results of the survey³², which was carried out in a sample of municipalities, about the management of this newly transferred function showed improvement in terms of municipality territorial coverage and increased efficiency of the use of the available resources (improvement in 2018, 2017 vs 2015).

The performance indicators related to this specific objective include: (i) improvement of the irrigation system as % of the overall municipal irrigation network for the reporting period; (ii) improvement of the drainage system as % of the overall municipal drainage network; (iii) number of grants provided to local farmers for agriculture and rural development.



32 Helvetass Swiss Interoperation/dldp Survey (2017-2018)

4. ABILITY TO ASSUME MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

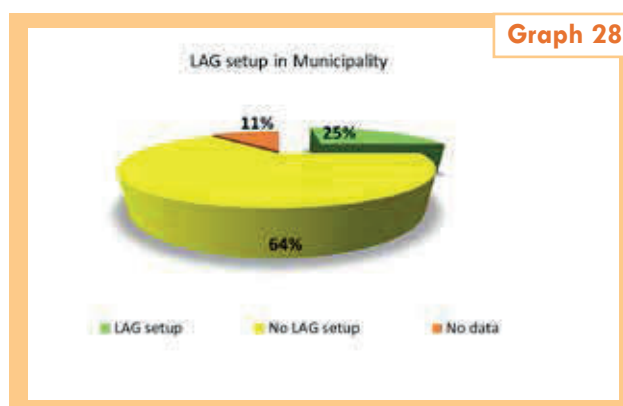
- The whole irrigation network managed/improved by the municipality services was 38%, on average, in 2018 (N=53)³³. The range of irrigation network management varies from 2.5% (the lowest percentage) to 100% (maximum percentage) for Kavaja Municipality. The municipalities of Berat, Rogozhinë, Kamëz, Dropull, reported 0%, while municipalities of Kukës, Dibër, Malësia e Madhe, Pustec, Memaliaj, Tirane and Vlore reported that “no data are available”.
- 44% of the local network was maintained or improved, on average, in 2018 when referring to the drainage network management. The range of irrigation network management varies from 3% (Lezha), which is the lowest percentage, up to 100% (maximum percentage) in Korçë, Kavajë, Librazhd, and Tepelenë municipalities. Kukës, Kuçova, Pustec, and Vlore municipalities reported that “no data are available”.
- About 84% of the municipalities have reported that they hadn't provided any grants from the local budget to local farmers. Divjakë, Konispol, Mirditë, Vlorë, and Finiq municipalities have reported that they had supported local farmers through grant schemes from the municipal budget to promote agricultural products, agriculture business development, agriculture tourism and innovation based enterprises in the rural area.

Problems and challenges

- Increased allocation of the financial and technical sources to improve the irrigation and drainage system.
- Extended cooperation with neighboring municipalities to ensure effective management of the irrigation and drainage systems (networks).
- Municipalities allocate very limited funds from their own budget to competitive grant schemes to promote agricultural

products, agriculture business development, agriculture tourism and innovation based enterprises in the rural area.

- Lack of collection points for agricultural products that provide an adequate standard of storing the agricultural products.



Specific objective (11.3): Implementing the LEADER approach

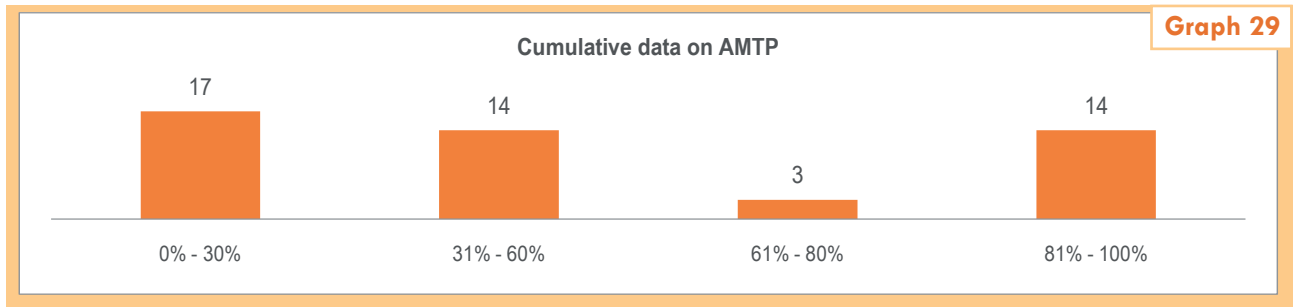
The LEADER approach is associated with local empowerment through local strategy development and resource allocation. The main tool for the application of the LEADER approach to area development and involvement of local representatives in decision-making is the Local Action Group (LAG). Local Action Groups are established through the partnership between the public sector, private sector and civil society. The purpose is to support farmers and other relevant stakeholders through drafting and implementing the rural development integrated strategy. This approach is not consolidated across all municipalities.

Local Action Groups were set up only in 15 municipalities (or 25%) in 2018, while seven (7) municipalities (or 11%) didn't provide any data about this indicator.

Specific objective (11.4): Acceleration of Land Properties Registration (AMTP)

49% was the cumulative average of the Land Deeds, which were registered by the municipalities in 2018, compared to the overall

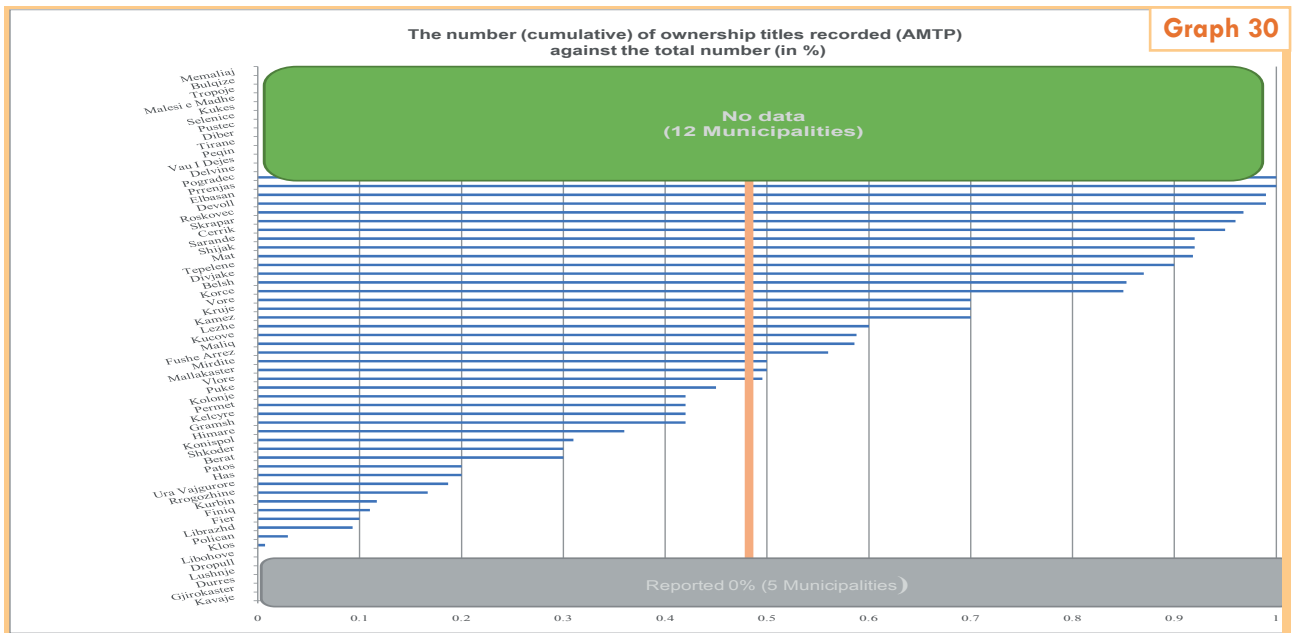
33 The data collected from the municipalities did not show quite well the execution of this function.



number of Land Deeds at national level; about 28% of the municipalities (N=61) have reported either incorrect data or no data at all. It shows that the registration process is behind schedule of the Action

Plan of the NCCSDLG.

Only 3 municipalities have registered 61% to 80% of the Land Deeds, while 14 municipalities have a registration percentage, which varies from 81% to 100%.



Problems and challenges

- Awareness-raising among the municipalities about LEADER approach and LAG role.
- Enhancing operability and functioning of the existing LAG.
- Full registration of the Land Deeds by the municipal services.

CONCLUSIONS ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Some progress has been made towards local government capacity building in relation to the

information system and rural and agricultural counseling, as well as the improvement of rural infrastructure. Agricultural Information and Advisory Offices (AIAO) have been established in 56% of municipalities. Only 58% of the municipalities participated in capacity building programs. Despite some progress achieved concerning performance in terms of exercising the new functions decentralized in 2016, the average percentage of the whole irrigation network, which was maintained/ or improved by the municipal services in 2018, was 38%, while for the irrigation network it was 44%.

Application of LEADER approach and Land properties registration is progressing very slowly. About 64% of the municipalities hadn't set up the LAG until the end of 2018. The Land properties registration (AMTP) is around 49%, on average, at the national level; 3 municipalities have registered 61% to 80% of the overall number of AMTP, while 14 municipalities have registered 81% to 100% of them.

4.2. Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policies

The amended law on “On the Veterinary Service in the Republic of Albania (Law 10465/2011) defines the role and tasks to Local government Units, which are responsible to: (i) cooperate with the competent authority and other offices of the regional veterinary service regarding the implementation of prophylactic measures; (ii) take measure to reduce and eradicate infectious diseases in animals; (iii) comply with the requirements of the law on the control of street dogs and cats; (iv) determine the locations of landfills or collection sites of dead animals and cooperate in order to eliminate them, and take measures to fence and protect waste collection sites and the landfill of dead animals

the site. Following the Government strategic policy³⁴, the local Government Units in cooperation with the competent central authority have joint responsibilities in terms of ensuring food safety of the citizens.

Specific objective: Improvement of sanitary and veterinary conditions in order to protect consumers 'health

This specific objective is assessed through five performance indicators.

The average number of food safety inspectors³⁵ across all the municipalities (N=59) ranged between 3-4 in 2018. Five municipalities (or 8%) didn't provide correct data or provided no data at all (N=61) about this indicator.

- 52% of the municipalities have reported that they have 1 veterinarian, on average (N=32); around 43% of the municipalities didn't have any veterinarian in 2018; 5% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.

About 23% of the municipalities have had licensed markets for trading livestock in 2018; while 69% reported that they didn't have licensed market in their jurisdiction. 28% of the municipalities (N=61) have reported cas-



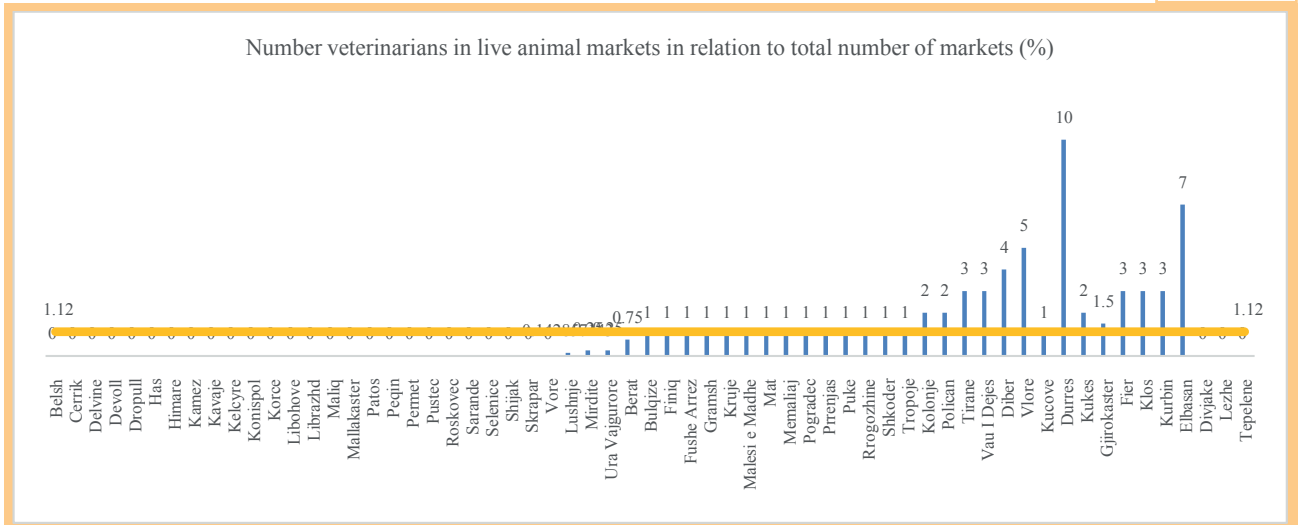
and prevent other animals from entering

es of violations of food and veterinary safe-

34 The Cross-cutting Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development, 2014-2020.

35 The indicator on the number of veterinary inspectors at the municipality level will not be valid in 2019 due to the amendment of the Law 10465 / 2011 “On Veterinary Service”.

Graph 32



ty, while 66% of them have reported no cases of standards' violations. About 6% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.

Law no. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government" provides for the supervisory role re-

garding food retail markets. This function of the LGUs is assessed by a fifth performance indicator, which has been agreed with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, which is defined as the number of licensed food retail markets by the municipality services against the total number of food retail markets in the municipality.

43% of the municipalities failed to fulfill the standards of the food retail markets in 2018;; 25% of the municipalities have reported that all their retail markets are in line with the required standards, while 18% of them (N=61) ensured only partial standards.

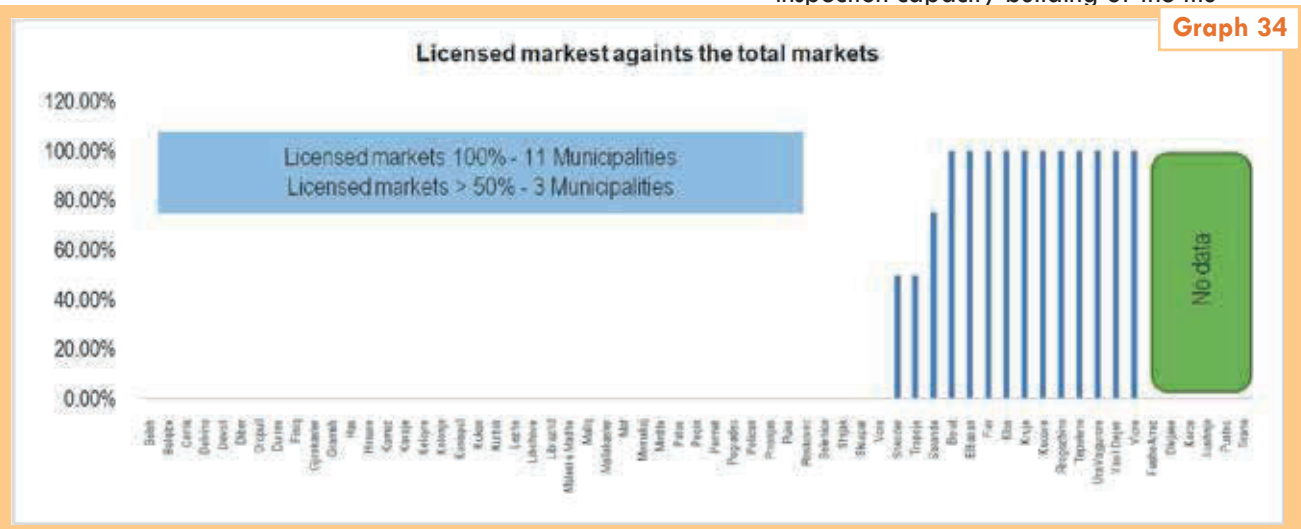
Graph 33



Problems and challenges

- Inspection capacity building of the mu-

Graph 34



2000 public employees.

The results of a study “On the performance of new local government functions” (2018) shows that the transport sector performance indicators used for the rural transport reveals improvements (2016/2017 compared to 2015). The pool of LGUs, which were subject to the study, showed enhanced performance during 2016-2018 concerning public transport and transport lines³⁷.

Specific objective: Increase road safety at the local level

This specific objective is assessed through 8 performance indicators, which are defined in consultation with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy’s experts and in line with the sector performance indicators regarding the right definition.

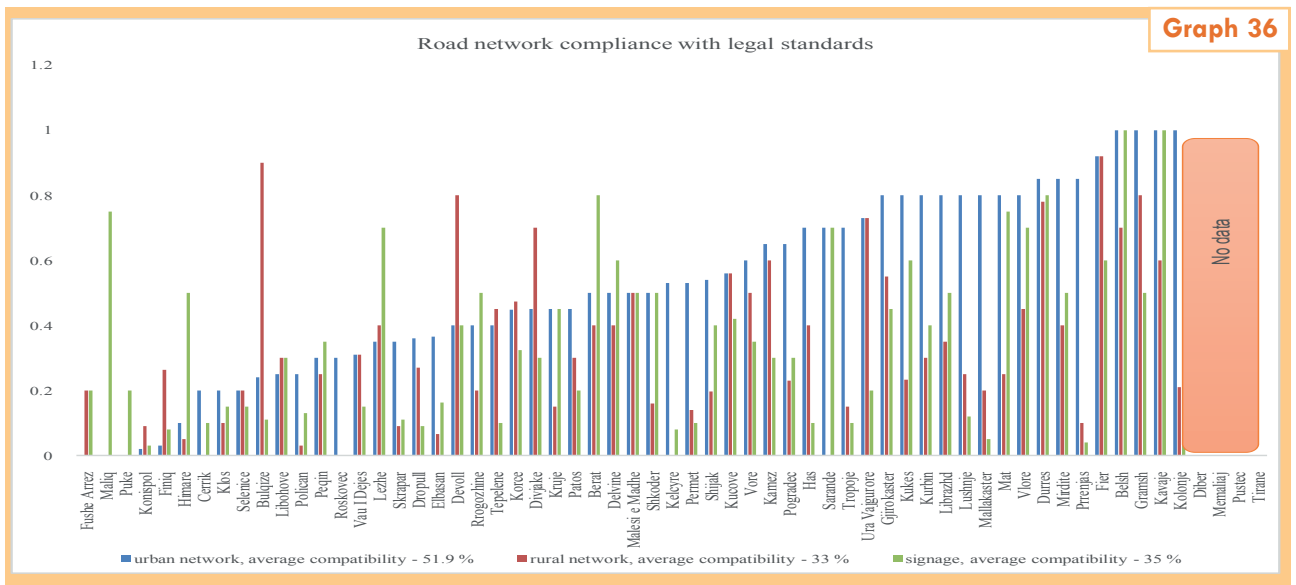
- 52%, on average, of the existing *urban network* of the municipalities complied with the road standards in 2018. This indicator ranged from the lowest level of %³⁸ to the highest one of 100%. About 5% (or 3 municipalities) didn’t provide any data related to this indicator (N=57).

- 33%, on average, of the existing *rural network* of the municipalities complied with the road standards in 2018. This indicator ranged from the lowest level of 0%³⁹ to the highest one of 92%. About 5% (or 3 municipalities) didn’t provide any data related to this indicator (N=57).

- 35%, on average, (N=57) of the *secondary and tertiary road network* of the municipalities (excluding the national roads) complied with the road signage standards.

81%, on average, of the villages of the municipalities against the overall number of the villages of the municipalities were linked through the existing road network to the municipalities’ center in 2018, while 78% of the villages were linked between them through the existing road network. This indicator ranged from 20% to 100% of the overall number of villages of the municipalities.

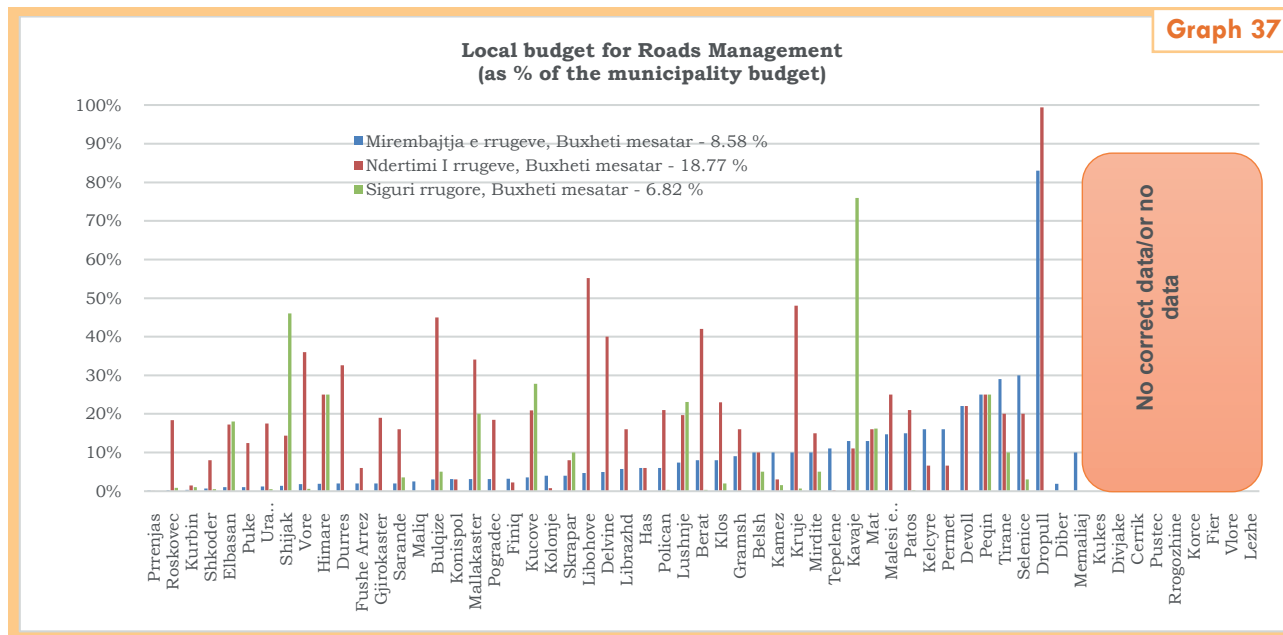
Budget allocation for road maintenance in 2018 was at a low level. 8.6%, on average, of the municipality overall budget was allocated for the road maintenance. The maximum percentage of the indicator (30% of



37 Source: The study report “On the performance of new local government functions”, O. Shapo (2018)

38 Fushë-Arrëz and Maliq municipalities.

39 Maliq, Pukë and Cërrik municipalities.



the municipality budget) seems overestimated. About 15% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.

- Funding for road reconstruction varied from 0% to 34%⁴⁰ of municipality budget among the municipalities;

- 8.8% was the average percentage of the overall municipality budget in 2018.
- 6.82%, on average, was the budget allocation for road safety compared to the municipalities allocation for the transport sector (N=56).

Tabela 13

14.1. Increasing road safety at the local level

	% of the existing urban road network in accordance with road standards	% of the existing rural road network in accordance with road standards	% of the existing road network in compliance with standards of signaling	No. of villages connected to the center of the Municipality through the existing road network versus the total no. of villages (%)	No. of AUs villages connected between them through the existing road network against the total number of villages (in%)	The ratio of Local budget for road maintenance in Municipality Budget in 2018	Percentage of Local budget for construction / rehabilitation of roads in Municipality budget in 2018	Road Safety budget ratio to Local Fund for Transport Sector (in%)
Belsh	100.0%	70.0%	100.0%	100.0%	76.0%	10.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Berat	50.0%	40.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	8.0%	42.0%	0.3%
Bulqize	24.0%	90.0%	11.0%	96.0%	5600.0%	3.0%	45.0%	5.0%
Cerrik	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%	8570.0%	8750.0%	194.0%	1300.0%	1940.0%
Delvine	50.0%	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	100.0%	4.9%	40.0%	0.0%
Devoll	40.0%	80.0%	40.0%	100.0%	100.0%	22.0%	22.0%	0.0%
Diber	20-30%	20-30%	50-60%	100.0%	70.0%	1.9%	0.0%	No data
Divjake	45.0%	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%	100.0%	146.0%	1560.0%	0.0%
Dropull	36.0%	27.0%	9.0%	72.0%	65.0%	83.0%	99.4%	0.0%
Durrës	85.0%	78.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	2.0%	32.6%	0.0%
Elbasan	36.5%	6.6%	16.3%	99.0%	80.0%	1.0%	17.2%	18.0%
Fier	92.0%	92.0%	60.0%	95.0%	82.0%	210000000.0%	700000000.0%	30000000.0%
Finiq	3.0%	26.3%	8.0%	100.0%	100.0%	3.2%	2.2%	0.0%
Fushë Arrez	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	90.0%	90.0%	2.0%	6.0%	0.0%
Gjirokaster	80.0%	55.0%	45.0%	57.0%	4700.0%	2.0%	19.0%	0.0%
Gramsh	100.0%	80.0%	50.0%	33.0%	15.0%	9.0%	16.0%	0.0%
Has	70.0%	40.0%	10.0%	80.0%	80.0%	6.0%	6.0%	0.0%
Himare	10.0%	5.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	1.9%	25.0%	25.0%
Kamez	65.0%	60.0%	30.0%	90.0%	90.0%	10.0%	3.0%	1.5%
Kavaje	100.0%	60.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	13.0%	11.0%	76.0%
Kelcyre	53.0%	0.0%	8.0%	48.0%	48.0%	16.0%	6.6%	0.0%
Klos	20.0%	10.0%	15.0%	95.0%	100.0%	8.0%	23.0%	2.0%
Kolonjë	100.0%	21.0%	13.0%	43.0%	43.0%	4.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Konispol	2.0%	9.0%	3.0%	100.0%	100.0%	3.1%	3.0%	0.0%
Korçë	44.8%	47.3%	32.4%	95.5%	100.0%	64567400	28.000.000	0.0%
Krujë	45.0%	15.0%	45.0%	40/50	40/50	10.0%	48.0%	0.7%
Kuçovë	56.0%	56.0%	42.0%	75.0%	75.0%	3.5%	20.9%	27.8%
Kukës	80.0%	23.3%	60.0%	83.0%	65.0%	100.0%	100.0%	9.2%
Kurbini	80.0%	30.0%	40.0%	20.0%	66.7%	0.3%	1.5%	1.0%
Lezhë	35.0%	40.0%	70.0%	95.0%	No data	No data	No data	No data
Libohovë	25.0%	30.0%	30.0%	100.0%	100.0%	4.7%	55.2%	0.0%
Librazhd	80.0%	35.0%	50.0%	96.0%	65.0%	5.7%	16.0%	0.0%
Lushnjë	80.0%	25.0%	12.0%	100.0%	100.0%	7.4%	19.7%	23.1%
Malesi e Madhe	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	35.0%	98.0%	14.7%	25.0%	0.0%
Maliq	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	86.4%	70.0%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Mallakaster	80.0%	20.0%	5.0%	36.6%	87.8%	3.1%	34.1%	20.0%
Mat	80.0%	25.0%	75.0%	95.0%	95.0%	13.0%	16.0%	16.2%
Memaliaj	No data	No data	No data	52.0%	5200.0%	10.0%	No data	No data
Mirditë	85.0%	40.0%	50.0%	32.0%	85.0%	10.0%	15.0%	5.0%
Patos	45%	30.0%	20.0%	80.0%	55.0%	15.0%	21.0%	0.2%
Peqin	30.0%	25.0%	35.0%	29.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Permet	53.0%	14.0%	10.0%	59.0%	59.0%	16.0%	6.6%	0.0%
Pogradec	65.0%	23.0%	30.0%	100.0%	100.0%	3.1%	18.5%	1,68
Polican	25.0%	3.0%	13.0%	100.0%	No data	6.0%	21.0%	0.3%
Prrenjas	85.0%	10.0%	4.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Pukë	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1.1%	12.4%	0.0%
Pustec	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	0.0%	730000	0.0%
Roskovec	30.0%	73.3%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.2%	18.4%	0.8%
Rrogozhinë	40.0%	20.0%	50.0%	60.0%	70.0%	28000000	60.400.000	18000000
Sarandë	70.0%	0.0%	70.0%	100.0%	2000.0%	2.0%	16.0%	3.5%
Selenicë	20.0%	20.0%	15.0%	10.0%	3000.0%	30.0%	20.0%	3.0%
Shijak	54.0%	19.7%	40.0%	16.0%	100.0%	1.4%	14.4%	46.0%
Shkodër	50.0%	16.0%	50.0%	9300.0%	9300.0%	0,7%	8.0%	0,5%
Skrapar	35.0%	9.0%	11.0%	90.0%	69.0%	4.0%	8.0%	10.0%
Tepelenë	40.0%	45.0%	10.0%	100.0%	30.0%	11.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Tiranë	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	29.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Tropojë	70.0%	15.0%	10.0%	95.0%	95.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0,3%
Ura Vajgurore	73.0%	73.0%	20.0%	18.0%	2000.0%	1.2%	17.5%	0.5%
Vau i Dejës	31.0%	31.0%	15.0%	28.0%	3400.0%	0	13.4%	0.4%
Vlorë	80.0%	45.0%	70.0%	85.0%	90.0%	2,696,000 leke	4.0%	0.0%
Vorë	60.0%	50.0%	35.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1.8%	36.0%	0.6%

Specific objective: Improving public transportation

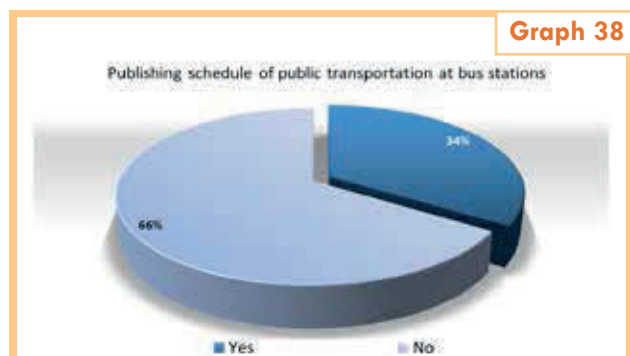
Under the national legislation on the transportation sector, transport services are sub-contracted and fully provided by private operators. They should ensure good quality of service delivery, publish the daily schedule of public transportation for each transport line at the bus station, and also cover the maintenance of transport vehicles. The municipality has the overall responsibility of controlling the effective and efficient service delivery to the citizens against the terms of the contract obligations. Despite the fact that the public transportation service is outsourced, the municipalities don't allocate budget for the maintenance of public transportation vehicles.

- About 34% of the municipalities have published the schedule of public transportation at the bus station; the rest of 66% of the municipalities hadn't published the public transportation schedule.
- Only 9 municipalities (or 15%) have allocated budget for maintenance of the public transport vehicles with an average of 7% of the local budget for the transportation sector. About 85% of the municipalities have reported that maintenance service is provided by private companies under the terms of contract obligations.

14.2. Improving public transport

	Municipal public transport plan published at bus stations	Municipality budget for maintenance of public transport vehicles in relation to total fund for the transport sector in 2018 (in%)
Belsh	No	0%
Berat	No	0
Bulqize	No	0
Cerrik	Yes	2.14
Delvine	No	0%
Devoll	0.00%	No data
Diber	No	0.00%
Divjake	No	10.00%
Dropull	No	0
Durres	No	0
Elbasan	Yes	No data
Fier	Yes	0
Finiq	No	0%
Fushe Arrez	0	0
Gjirokaster	No	0
Gramsh	Yes	0%
Has	No	0
Himare	No	25%
Kamez	Yes	0
Kavaje	Yes	0.00%
Kelcyre	No	0.00%
Klos	No	0.00%
Kolonje	No	0.00%
Konispol	No	0.00%
Korce	Yes	Jo
Kruje	Yes	0
Kucove	No	0%
Kukes	No	0
Kurbini	No	0
Lezhe	No	0%
Libohove	No	0
Librazhd	No	0
Lushnje	No	0
Malesi e Madhe	No	0
Maliq	No	0
Mallakaster	Yes	0%
Mat	1	13%
Memaliaj	1	No data
Mirdite	Yes	0%
Patos	No	0
Peqin	No	0.10%
Permet	No	0
Pogradec	Yes	0
Polican	Yes	0%
Prrenjas	No	0
Puke	No	0
Pustec	Yes	0
Roskovec	No	0
Rrogozhine	Yes	800000
Sarande	No	0
Selenice	0	0
Shijak	No	0
Shkoder	Yes	Jo
Skrapar	No	1.35%
Tepelene	No	0
Tirane	Yes	No
Tropoje	Yes	0.13%
Ura Vaigurore	No	0.50%
Vau i Dejes	No	No
Vlore	Yes	0%
Vore	Yes	0%

Graph 38



Graph 39



Problems and challenges

- The use of old vehicles, lack of air conditioning.
- Despite the increased inter-city lines, there is a need for more lines to be covered.
- Lack of inspection and controlling capacities of the municipal services.
- Setting up of an electronic ticket system in the urban transportation service.
- Development of GPS system to report about the performance of the public transportation service.
- Setting up SIT intelligent systems and station computerization.
- Support the development of green taxi services.

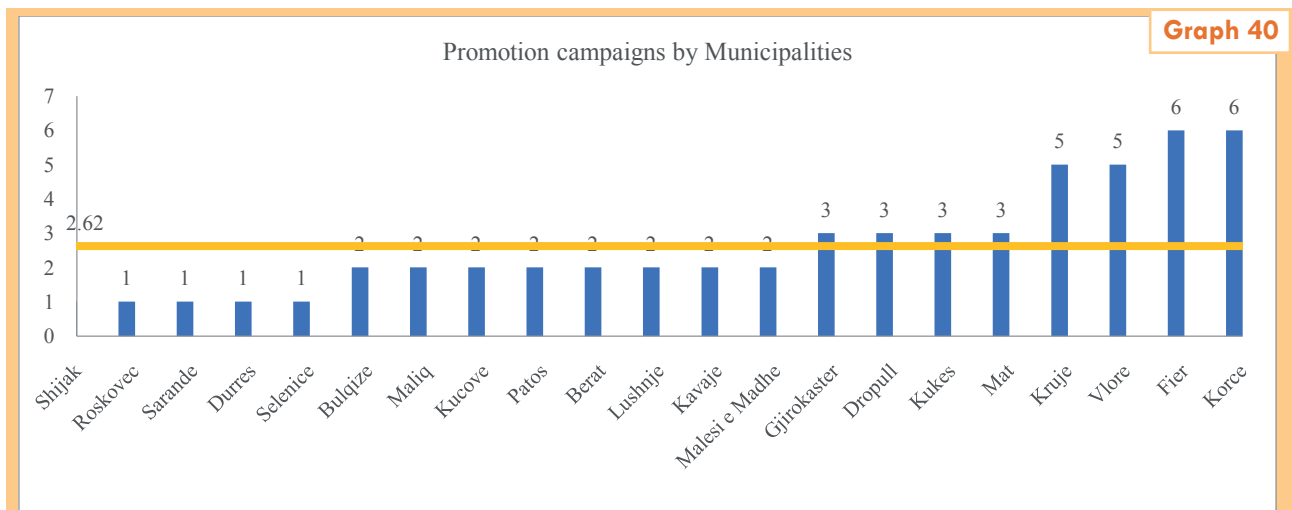
Specific objective: Promotion of walking and biking

Development of co-modal solutions by means of optimizing the individual transportation modes and focusing on energy-efficient and environmentally friendly transport modes is a specific objective of the Transportation Sector Strategy and the Action Plan 2016-2020. During the recent years, municipalities have demonstrated and added attention to the improvement of urban road infrastructure in order to enable walking and biking.

- About 26% of the municipalities have constructed bike lanes (N=61); 4.1% bike lanes, on average, were available in 2018; the percentage ranged from 0.01% (Berat Municipality) up to 14% (Tirana Municipality).
- 29 municipalities (or 48% of them) don't have any bike lanes.

62%, less than 3 on average, (N=38) of the municipalities have organized in 2018 awareness-raising campaigns for walking and biking in the framework of the European Mobility Week and World Environment Day.

The graph below presents the municipalities that organized such awareness events. Korça is the municipality that organized the highest number of events. Tirana Municipality has also organized such events, but data about the number of events are not presented by the municipality.



Graph 40

Table 15
14.3. Promotion of walking and bicycle walking

	Ratio of bicycle routes in urban areas in relation to total km roads in urban areas (in %) ⁴¹	% e Internal road network of urban areas provided with pavements	The walking and biking promotion campaign undertaken by the municipality
Belsh	No data	No data	0
Berat	0.01%	87.00%	2
Bulqize	0.40%	15%	2
Cerrik	2	No data	Yes
Delvine	0.00%	80%	Yes
Devoll	No data	15.00%	0
Diber	5.00%	80.00%	0
Divjake	3.00%	70.00%	No
Dropull	0	10.00%	3
Durrës	0.2	80.00%	1
Elbasan	0.16%	26.50%	Yes
Fier	No data	60.00%	6
Finiq	0	0%	0
Fushe Arrez	0.35 km	35%	Yes
Gjirokaster	4%	8%	3
Gramsh	0%	95%	Yes
Has	0	30%	Yes
Himare	0	5%	Yes
Kamez	0	35.00%	No
Kavaje	0.04%	95.00%	2
Kelcyre	0.00%	53.00%	Yes
Klos	0.00%	50.00%	0
Kolonje	0.00%	50.00%	No
Konispol	0.00%	10.00%	Yes
Korce	15 km	90%	6
Kruje	0	70%	5
Kucove	0.0%	22.4%	2
Kukes	11.71%	80%	3
Kurbin	0	100%	0
Lezhe	4%	70%	Yes
Libohove	3%	0%	0
Librazhd	0	70%	No
Lushnje	0.1%	90%	2
Malesi e Madhe	600m	600m	2
Maliq	2 km	20%	2
Mallakaster	0%	80%	No
Mat	0	95%	3
Memaliaj	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	0	80%	Yes
Patos	2%	70%	2
Peqin	32 Km	70%	No
Permet	0	53%	Yes
Pogradec	0	52%	Yes
Polican	10%	90%	Yes
Prrenjas	2	80%	No
Puke	0	40%	No
Pustec	No data	No data	No
Roskovec	0.15%	70%	1
Rrogozhine	0	40%	Yes
Sarande	0	80%	1
Selenice	1	10	1
Shijak	0	50%	1
Shkoder	8%	40%	Yes
Skrapar	0%	90%	No
Tepelene	0	90%	No
Tirane	14%	No data	No data
Tropoje	0%	70%	Yes
Ura Vajgurore	No data	No data	No data
Vau i Dejes	0	3%	No
Vlore	No data	80%	5
Vore	0%	92%	0

41 The indicator has to be cumulative to measure progress from year to year.

Problems and challenges

- Degree of citizens' awareness of the environmental problem and promotion of alternative ways of mobility.
- Lack of appropriate financial resources for investment to build bike lanes and to expropriate the owners.

CONCLUSIONS ON TRANSPORT POLICY

Increasing road safety at the local level is showing some progress, but yet limited efforts are made to promote walking and biking. Only 52%, on average, of the existing urban network of the municipalities complied with road standards in 2018, while in the case of the existing rural network of the municipalities was 33%, while the road signage complied 35%, on average, with standards. About 8.6%, on average, of the municipalities overall budget was allocated for the road maintenance while the budget allocation for road safety against the municipalities' allocation for the transportation sector was 6.82%. Only 26% of the municipalities have built bike lanes; the bike lanes constituted 4.1%, on average, of the urban network length in 2018, which is a small percentage. 48% of the municipalities don't have any bike lanes in their urban area.

Improving public transportation and delivering of quality services and comfort to the citizens remains a challenge. About 66% of the municipalities published the public transportation schedule in their territory. 15% of the municipalities had allocated budget for maintenance of the public transport vehicles with an average of 7% of the local budget for the transportation sector in 2018; about 66% of the municipalities have ensured the maintenance of public means as part of the contracts with private companies (outsourced).

4.4. Chapter 15: Energy

The National Strategy for Energy, 2018 – 2030⁴² (NSE) and the Action Plan for Energy Efficiency (NAPEE) 2018-2021⁴³ define institutional responsibilities not only for the central administration institutions, but also for the Local Government Units. The first obligation for the municipalities stays with the appointment/recruitment of the energy efficiency manager, who will lead, after being trained and certified, the process of drafting the Action Plan (AP) on energy efficiency at the local level.

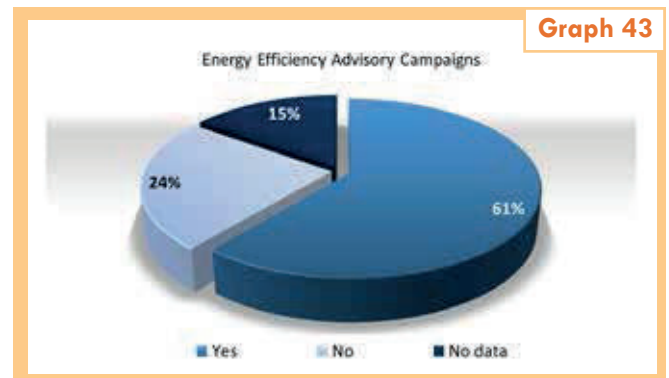
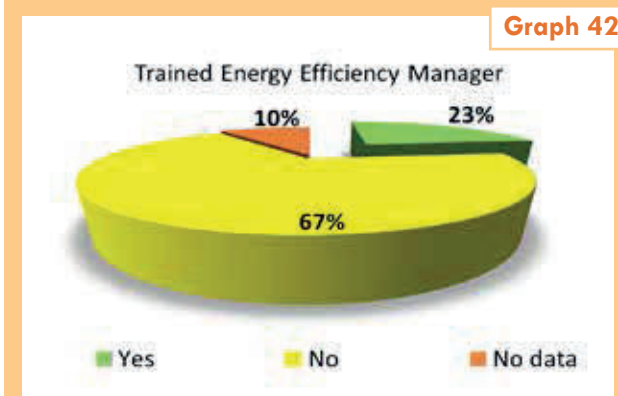
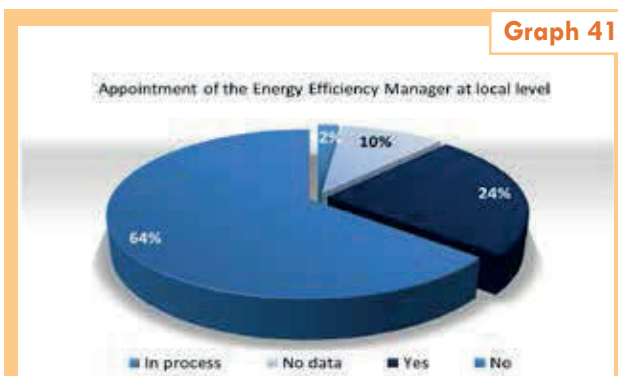
The Action Plan as adopted by the municipality will be in line with NAPEE 2018-2021 and integrate measures linked with the application of methods and requirements for public institutions, private entities, construction of the new public buildings and public services, schools and kindergartens, street lighting, and other related areas as defined by the sector legislation.

Specific objective: Increasing efficiency of energy use in houses and apartments for both, public and private services.

About 24% of the municipalities have appointed the energy efficiency manager (N=55); 10% of the municipalities haven't reported any data about this indicator; 66% of the municipalities hadn't appointed the energy efficiency manager until the end of 2018.

Training and certification of the energy efficiency manager at the local level is carried out by 23% of the municipalities.

Local Action Plan on energy efficiency is drafted and adopted by the municipal council in 25% of the municipalities (N=58); 2 municipalities (or 3%) had the LAP in drafting process; 67% of the municipalities hadn't drafted Local Action Plan on energy efficiency until the end of 2018.



Tirana Municipality has included measures on energy efficiency within the Green City Action Plan (2018), AP for Adaptation to Climate Change for Tirana (2015). Meanwhile, the Tirana municipality has already an Energy Efficiency Action Plan already adopted in 2013, which sets out energy efficiency measures that extend to 2020.

61% of the municipalities have organized in cooperation with the central institutions advisory campaigns with the public institutions and business community on the energy efficiency at the local level; in total, 59 awareness-raising campaigns (1 campaign, on average, per municipality) were carried out at national level; 24% of the municipalities haven't organized any advisory campaign; 15% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.

42 Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 480/31.07.2018 "On the option of the National Strategy for Energy".
 43 The National Action Plan (NAPEE) will be reviewed every 3 years

Table 16
15.1. Increasing the efficiency of energy used

	Appointment (recruitment) of the Energy Efficiency Manager in the Municipality	Training and certification of the energy manager from the respective structures	Drafting of the Local Action Plan in accordance with the National Action Plan (2018-2020) on energy efficiency -.	The number of counseling campaigns undertaken by the Municipality or in co-operation with central institutions
Belsh	No data	Jo	Jo	0
Berat	No	Yes	No	4
Bulqize	Yes	Yes	Yes	0
Cerrik	Yes	No	No	1
Delvine	No	No	No	0
Devoll	No data	No data	Yes	No data
Diber	No	No	No	0
Divjake	No	No	No	0
Dropull	No	No	No	0
Durres	No	No	No	0
Elbasan	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Fier	No	No	No	0
Finiq	No	No	No	0
Fushe Arrez	No	No	Yes	No data
Gjirokaster	No	Yes	No	0
Gramsh	No	No	No	0
Has	Yes	Yes	No	0
Himare	No	No	No	No
Kamez	No	No	No	0
Kavaje	No	No	No	0
Kelcyre	Yes	Yes	No	1
Klos	Yes	Yes	Yes	0
Kolonje	No	No	No	0
Konispol	No	No	No	0
Korce	Yes	Yes	Yes	No data
Kruje	No	No	Yes	0
Kucove	Yes	No	No	0
Kukes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0
Kurbin	No	No	No	0
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	Yes	Yes	No	2
Librazhd	No	No	No	0
Lushnje	No	No	No	0
Malesi e Madhe	No	No	No	2
Maliq	No	No	No	3
Mallakaster	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Mat	In process	In process	In process	No data
Memaliaj	No data	No data	In process	No data
Mirdite	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Patos	Po	Po	Po	4
Peqin	Jo	Jo	Po	20
Permet	Po	Po	Jo	1
Pogradec	Jo	Jo	Po	1
Polican	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Prrenjas	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Puke	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Pustec	Jo	Jo	Po	No data
Roskovec	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Rrogozhine	0	0	Jo	0
Sarande	Jo	Jo	Po	0
Selenice	No data	No data	No data	No data
Shijak	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Shkoder	Po	Po	Jo	5
Skrapar	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Tepelene	Jo	Jo	Jo	0
Tirane	Jo	Jo	Po	4
Tropeje	Po	Jo	Jo	3
Ura Vajgurore	No data	No data	No data	No data
Vau i Dejes	Jo	Jo	Jo	Jo
Vlore	Po	Po	Po	2
Vore	Jo	Jo	Jo	0

Institutional capacity building on energy efficiency: Very few municipalities have participated in trainings about the measures and requirements of the NAPEE in the reporting year (2018); about 20% of the municipalities participated in those training; 64% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training; about 5% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.

Table 17
15.2. Increased efficiency of energy use: improving implementation of minimum requirements for public and private buildings and services

	Number of local administration trainings on the National Action Plan on Energy Efficiency 2018-2020 and minimum requirements for public / private buildings/services	No. of controls on energy efficiency requirements in public and private buildings undertaken by the Municipality under the responsibility of the Energy Manager and relevant findings.
Belsh	0	0
Berat	4	0
Bulqize	0	10
Cerrik	1	No data
Delvine	0	0
Devoll	0	No data
Diber	0	0
Divjake	0	0
Dropull	0	0
Durres	1	0
Elbasan	0	2
Fier	0	0
Finiq	0	0
Fushe Arrez	2	0
Gjirokaster	0	2
Gramsh	0	0
Has	0	0
Himare	0	0
Kamez	0	1
Kavaje	0	0
Kelcyre	1	2
Klos	0	1
Kolonje	1	3
Konispol	0	0
Korce	0	No data
Kruje	0	0
Kucove	0	0
Kukes	0	0
Kurbini	0	0
Lezhe	0	No data
Libohove	2	0
Librazhd	0	0
Lushnje	0	0
Malesi e Madhe	1	0
Maliq	0	0
Mallakaster	0	0
Mat	N	No data
Memaliaj	2	No data
Mirdite	0	0
Patos	4	3
Peqin	0	20
Permet	1	2
Pogradec	4	0
Polican	0	0
Prrenjas	0	0
Puke	0	0
Pustec	No data	No data
Roskovec	0	0
Rrogozhine	0	0
Sarande	0	0
Selenice	No data	No data
Shijak	0	0
Shkoder	3	5
Skrapar	0	0
Tepelene	1	0
Tirane	0	0
Tropoje	0	6
Ura Vajgurore	No data	No data
Vau i Dejës	0	0
Vlore	1	No data
Vore	0	0

44 Tirana Municipality has included measures on energy efficiency within the Green City AP (2018), AP on the Adaptation to Climate Change for Tirana (2015)

Due to the limited number of the energy efficiency managers appointed by the municipalities, few inspections on energy efficiency applications were carried out in 2018 under the requirements by the municipalities in the construction of public and private buildings. 1 inspection, on average, was carried out by the municipalities regarding the compliance with the energy efficiency requirements; 64% of the municipalities haven't organized any energy efficiency inspections in 2018. About 16% of the municipalities haven't provided any data about this performance indicator.

Problems and challenges

- Lack of the energy efficiency manager in the local administration as required by the national energy strategy.
- Lack of political attention by the mayors and the municipal councils regarding the alignment of local measures with the central government priorities regarding the energy sector.
- Limited human, technical and financial resources for drafting and aligning the AP for Energy Efficiency at the local level with NAP-EE 2018-2021.
- Lack of effective coordination between the Line Ministries and other central institutions and the municipalities regarding energy efficiency.

CONCLUSIONS ON ENERGY

Very little progress is made in terms of increasing the efficiency of energy use, while some efforts are made to increase citizens' awareness about a more efficient use of energy. Concerning the efficiency increase of energy use, about 24% of the municipalities appointed the energy efficiency manager in 2018 (N=55); 66% of the municipalities hadn't assigned the energy efficiency manager until the end of 2018.

Training and certification of the energy efficiency manager at the local level is accomplished by 23% of the municipalities. Local Action Plan on energy efficiency is drafted and adopted by the municipal council in 25% of the municipalities⁴⁴; 67% of the municipalities hadn't drafted any Local Action Plan on energy

4.5. Chapter 16: Taxes

efficiency until the end of 2018 (N=58).

61% of the municipalities have organized advisory campaigns with the public institutions and business community on the energy efficiency at the local level - 1 campaign, on average, on energy efficiency organized in 2018; 24% of the municipalities haven't organized any advisory campaigns.

Institutional capacity building on energy efficiency: very few municipalities have participated in trainings about the measures and requirements of the NAPEE in the reporting year (2018). 64% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training. The municipality services had carried out, on average, 1 inspection about energy efficiency requirements implementation in 2018.

4.5. Chapter 16: Taxes

A range of support and information for taxpayers has been launched including websites, help desks, call centers, business visits, and brochures. The Tax Administration began to implement the Anti-Informality Action Plan⁴⁵.

The law on local finances improved the predictability of local government sources, thus defining that the unconditional transfer shouldn't be less than 1% of the previous year's GDP; the reference tax rates are introduced for almost all taxes. Local discretion in terms of modifying the tax rate is defined regarding the property tax⁴⁶. Some changes were made to the system of shared taxes, as follows: (i) the sharing rate to be transferred to the municipalities for the vehicle registration tax increased to 25% of the collection; (ii) the personal income tax (PIT) was introduced as a shared tax. The collection of a value-based property tax in favor of municipalities failed to become operational in 2018. A fiscal cadastre for property tax administration at the local level is in the process of being established.

Specific objective: Improvement of the admin-

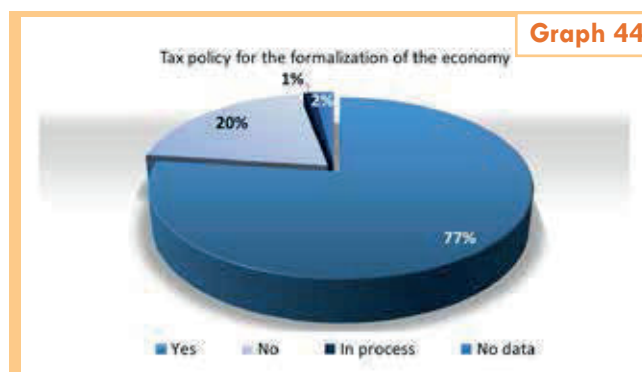
45 PFM Strategy Monitoring Report (March 2018)

46 +/-30% of the indicative tax rate.

istration of the local taxes and fees system in terms of increasing the tax base

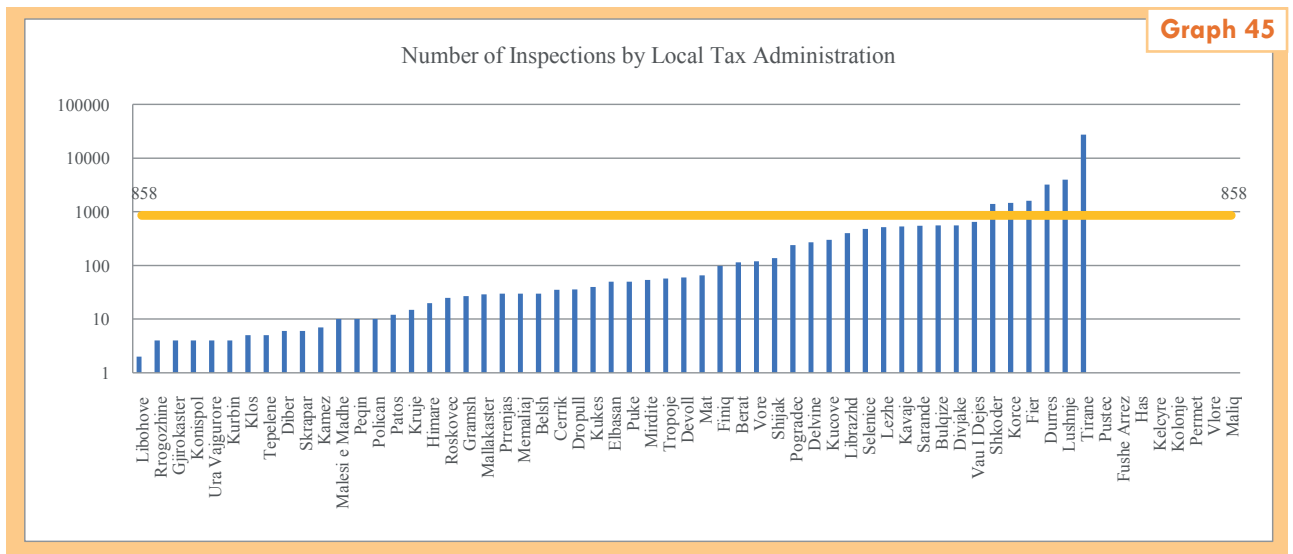
Many municipalities have improved the local tax administration. Improvements mostly consist of improving services to citizens, increasing the transparency for business registration, and online appeal requests by individual citizens and business entities. The level of formalization of the economy was improved through setting up the online system (ICT) with the public institutions, thus enabling the exchange of key information about the local taxes and fee collection. Planning of inspections in business entities by local taxes administration services has also improved.

- About 77% of the municipalities (or 47 municipalities) have adopted local tax policy to promote formal economy; 20% of the municipalities haven't adopted any local tax policy.
- 858 field inspections, on average, (or more than double compared to the number of inspections in 2017) were carried out in 2018 by the municipal tax services to combat informality in the economy. Given that the number of field inspections carried by Tirana municipality GDLT is very high, the average number of field inspections across



all the other municipalities excluding Tirana Municipality is 338 (or 24% higher against the average number of the field inspections as carried out in 2017).

The municipalities should organize public hearings with the business stakeholders about

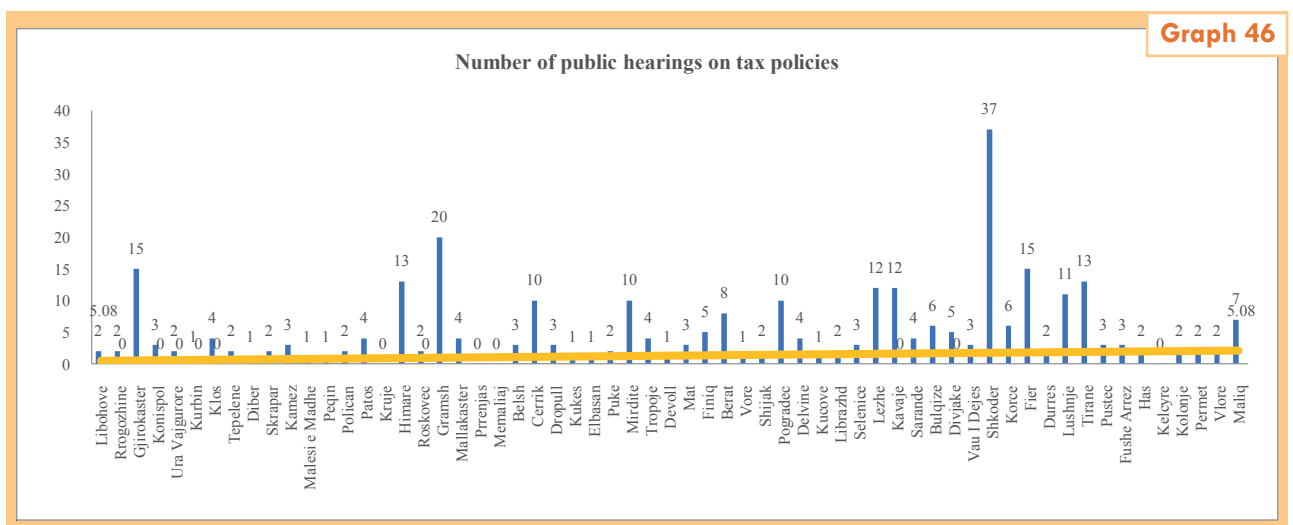


the new local tax initiatives and to get feedback and recommendations.

- 5 public hearings, on average, were organized in 2018 by municipalities regarding information and consultation on local tax policy (25% higher against 2017).
- About 88% of municipalities (or 54 municipalities) have set up and regularly update the municipal debtor database; four (4) municipalities haven't established a municipal debtor database yet, while 1

municipality was in the process of setting up the database; no data were provided by 3 (or 2%) of other municipalities.

The municipal revenues from the local taxes and other fees increased in 2018 against 2017 - the average local revenues collection across all the municipalities is 28% higher in 2018. Seven (7) municipalities have increased local revenues above 70% in 2018 compared to 2017⁴⁷.



47 Durrës, Kavajë, Fushë-Arrëz, Bulqizë, Finiq, Polican and Tepelenë municipalities.

Table 18

16.1. Improve the administration of the local tax and tariff system in terms of increasing the taxable base

	No .of on-site inspections undertaken by the municipality to prevent informal economy in its territory	No. of public hearings with business groups organized by the municipality for information and involvement in discussing municipal tax policies	Building a municipal debtors database (program)	Increase of revenues realized from local taxes and fees in the reporting year
Belsh	30	3	Yes	12%
Berat	115	8	Yes	-10%
Bulqize	561	6	Yes	83%
Cerrik	35	10	Yes	-10%
Delvine	270	4	No data	No data
Devoll	60	1	Yes	25%
Diber	6	1	Yes	2%
Divjake	562	5	Yes	12000000
Dropull	36	3	Yes	27.00%
Durres	3200	2	Yes	72.00%
Elbasan	50	1	Yes	7.20%
Fier	1611	15	Yes	693817000
Finiq	99	5	Yes	83.60%
Fushe Arrez	No data	Jan 03	No	80.00%
Gjirokaster	4	15	Yes	11%
Gramsh	27	20	Yes	14%
Has	No data	2	Yes	5.00%
Himare	20	13	Yes	20.00%
Kamez	7	3	Yes	8.00%
Kavaje	531	12	Yes	83.00%
Kelcyre	No data	0	Yes	27.00%
Klos	5	4	Yes	2.00%
Kolonje	No data	2	Yes	17.70%
Konispol	4	3	Yes	11.00%
Korce	1474	6	Yes	55.187.283 ALL more than 2017
Kruje	15	0	Yes	2.4%
Kucove	300	1	Yes	5.00%
Kukes	40	1	1	No data
Kurbin	4	1	Yes	Jo
Lezhe	515	12	Yes	45000000
Libohove	2	2	Yes	0
Librazhd	400	2	Yes	10.00%
Lushnje	4000	11	Yes	10%
Malesi e Madhe	10	1	No data	35%
Maliq	Po	7	Yes	12%
Mallakaster	29	4	Yes	39.80%
Mat	65	3	Yes	70%
Memaliaj	30	No data	In proces	No data
Mirdite	54	10	Yes	18%
Patos	12	4	2	15%
Peqin	10	1	No	No data
Permet	No data	2	Yes	27.00%
Pogradec	240	10	Yes	25%
Polican	10	2	Yes	84%
Prrenjas	30	0	No	3 000 000
Puke	50	2	Yes	55%
Pustec	No data	3	Yes	20%
Raskovec	25	2	Yes	55%
Rrogozhine	4	2	Yes	9%
Sarande	550	4	Yes	8.2 %
Selenice	480	3	Yes	No data
Shijak	137	2	Yes	70%
Shkoder	1400	37	Yes	11%
Skrapar	6	2	Yes	2.10%
Tepelene	5	2	Yes	102%
Tirane	27527	13	Yes	28.50%
Tropoje	57	4	No	8.00%
Ura Vajgurore	4	2	Yes	25000 Albanian Leks
Vau i Dejes	650	3	Yes	0.9 %
Vlore	No data	2	Yes	58%
Vore	120	1	Yes	9%

Problems and challenges

- Formalization of the economy and increase of local revenue collection.
- Limited technical capacities, financial and ICT system for the effective administration of the local revenues from taxes and fees.
- Sustainability and professionalism of the municipal tax services.
- Inspection capacity building to cover the expanded territory of the municipalities.
- Setting up of the fiscal cadastre.
- Active engagement and participation of citizens and business community in public consultations organized by the municipal services of tax administration.

CONCLUSIONS ON TAXES

Concerning the improvement of the administration of the local tax and fee system, about 77% of the municipalities have adopted in 2018 local tax policy to promote the formal economy (this indicator shows improvement compared to 2017 when it was 51%); 20% of the municipalities had failed to adopt any local tax policy.

858 field inspections, on average, were carried out in 2018 by the municipal tax services to combat informality in the economy (or more than double compared to the number of inspections as carried out in 2017). About 88% of municipalities have set up and regularly update the municipal debtor database (N=59).

In view of enhancing transparency and public consultation, 5 public hearings, on average, were organized in 2018 by municipalities for public information and consultations about local tax policy (25% more compared to 2017).

Improvement of the administration of the local tax and fee system aimed at the promotion of formal economy. About 77% of the municipalities have adopted local tax policy to promote the formal economy (this indicator

shows improvement compared to 2017 when it was 51%); 858 field inspections, on average, were carried out in 2018 by the municipal tax services to combat informality in the economy (more than double compared to the number of inspections in 2017). About 88% of municipalities have set up and regularly update the municipal debtor database. In view of enhancing transparency and public consultation, 5 public hearings, on average, were organized in 2018 by municipalities for public information and consultations about local tax policy (25% more compared to 2017).

4.6. Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment

Social protection is a core function, for which both, central and local government, have joint responsibilities⁴⁸ and coordination role to carry out. Although, the social protection function is not fully decentralized, the municipalities have allocated in the last few years after the TAR more human and financial resources to accomplish social protection at the local level. The local social policy is aligned with the national priorities⁴⁹ consisting of the improvement and functioning of the cash social assistance system based on a set of criteria, enhancement of vulnerable persons accessibility to public services, social assistance to persons with disability and ethnic minorities in order to protect them from social exclusion and poverty and boost their inclusion and employment opportunities through supporting participation in active employment programs and skills development (vocational education / vocational programs).

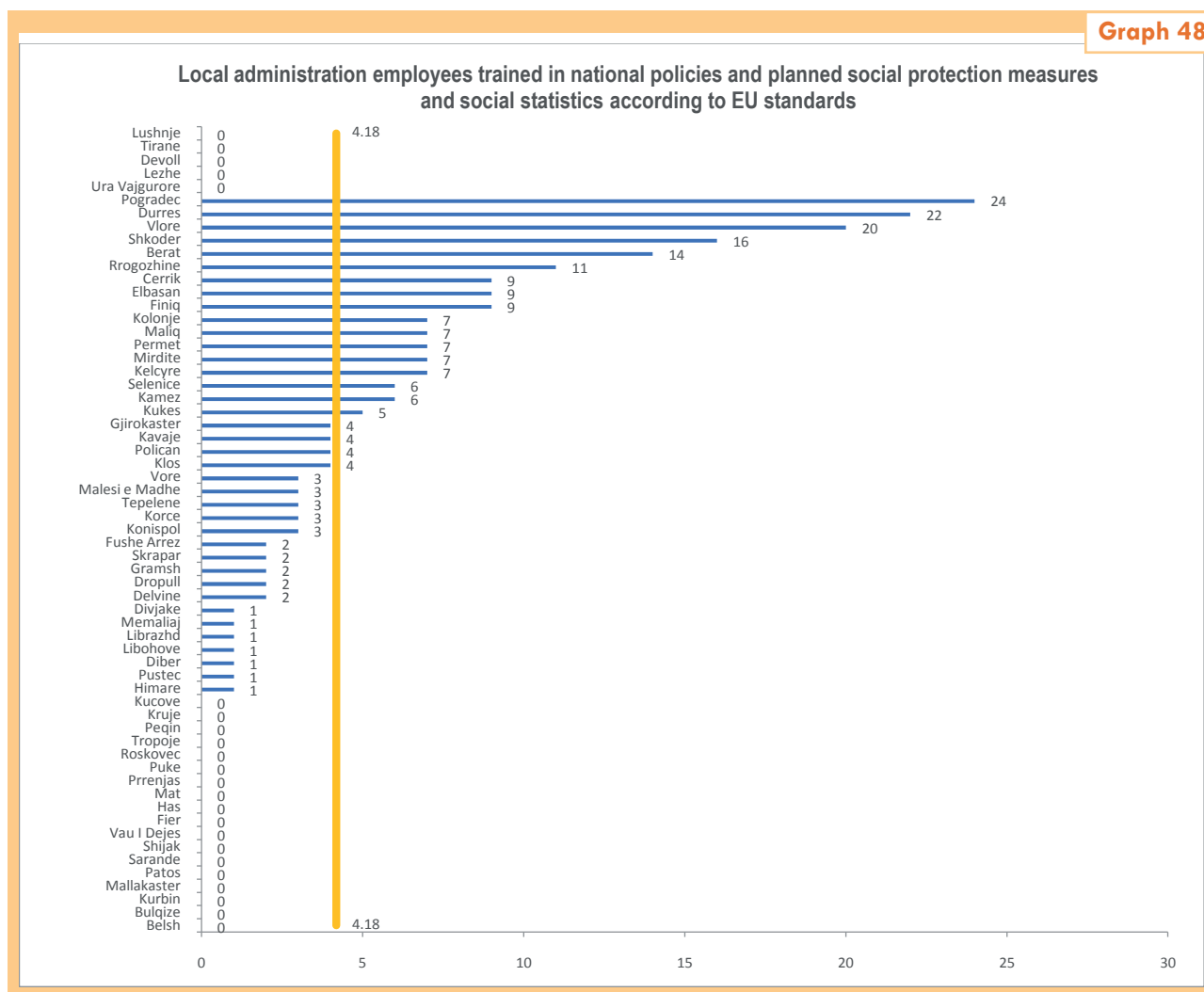
Specific objective: Social protection at the local level

The progress of the implementation of social protection policy at the local level is achieved through the assessment of 10 performance indicators, which consist of municipal human resources assigned for the social protec-

48 Law 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government".

49 National Strategy for Social Protection 2015-2020; National Strategy for Employment and Skills Development 2014-2020

Graph 48



tion function, administration and evaluation of cash social assistance, capacity building (trained local public officials), social housing, and municipal social care centers (daily or residential centers).

- There were 2 additional local government officials, on average, responsible for social inclusion in municipalities (compared to 3 additional staff members in 2017). Twenty-eight (28) municipalities didn't have any additional staff in 2018, which is the same number of staff as in 2017.
- There were 1.4 additional local officials, on average, responsible for managing, monitoring and evaluating the cash social assistance scheme across all the municipalities. About 50% of the municipalities (or 31 municipalities) didn't have any additional staff in 2018.

Increase of functions and competences of local government units need to be associated with capacity building measures. Local government officials of Social Services Department have participated in 2018 in various training programs on the new cash social assistance system, integrated social service delivery, human rights management, ROMALB system, social statistics according to EU standards, and other topics. The trainings are supported by central institutions (budget funds) and donor funded projects.

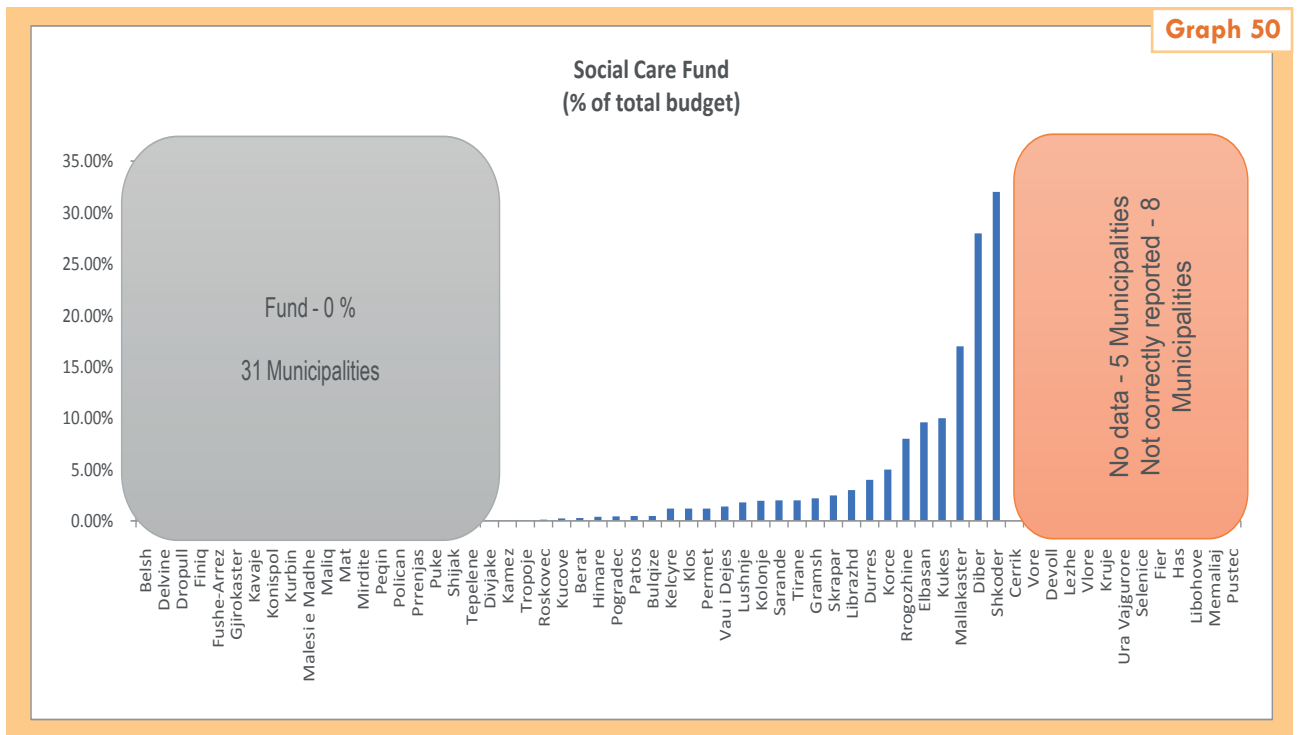
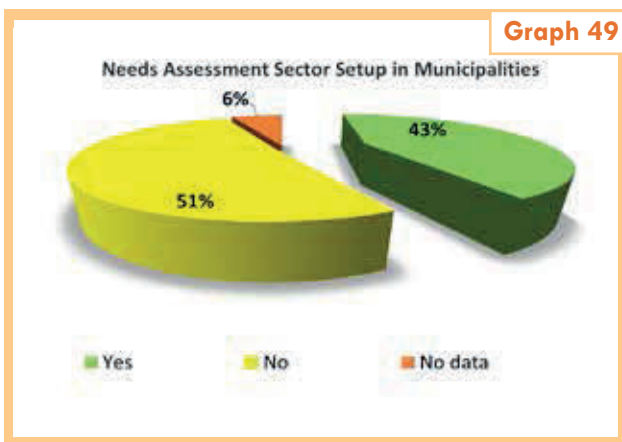
- About 234 local public officials were trained in different areas of social protection in 2018; 4 local staff members, on average, were trained across all the municipalities (this indicator is lower compared to 6 in 2017); about 28% of the municipalities didn't participate in any capaci-

ty building program in 2018.

- About 43% of the municipalities have set up the Needs Assessment and Referral Sector within the Municipal Social Services Directorate, while 51% haven't established this office yet; 3% of the municipalities didn't provide data. *Mobile teams* within the Municipal Social Services Directorate monitor the social service delivery and carry out the local needs assessment; the number of these mobile teams depends on the size of the mu-

nicipality.

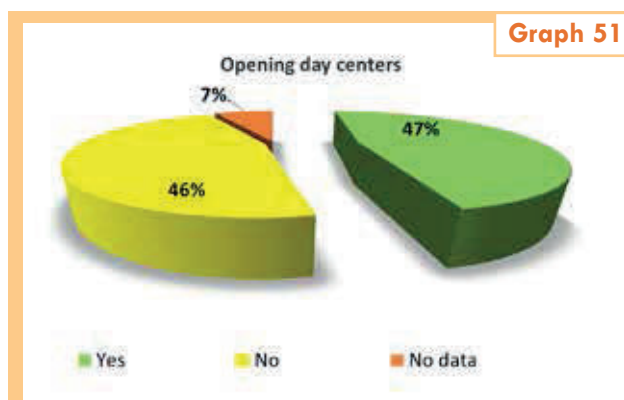
- About 54% of the municipalities have prepared the Assessment Report on Social Protection covering their territory; 2 municipalities haven't yet finished it, while 38% of the municipalities haven't prepared any assessment report on the municipal social needs.
- Municipalities allocate funds from their own budget to support poor households and individuals who are not included in the cash social assistance scheme (6% of the cash social assistance fund pool) – this fund is used as a bonus for renting the house, financial aid for poor households and support for community centers.
- The local fund allocated for social care was, on average for N=48, 2.85% of the municipal budget in 2018; 271 more PwD, on average, were assisted in 2018 compared to 2017 (N=48).



Local investments to improve poor house conditions and to build new social houses are very limited. Municipalities have human and technical capacities in the urban development and housing office that are generally capable to prepare urban infrastructure projects. The local staff drafts feasibility studies, whereas the financial resources of the municipalities are limited and run short of meeting the local needs regarding the improvement of house conditions in some area including Roma and Egyptian minorities and regarding the construction of the new social houses. The Law⁵⁰ on Social Housing defines administrative and procedural rules for planning, administration, and distribution of social housing stipulating that 20% of the overall amount requested to be financed under the Social Housing Programs should be co-funded by the municipality itself.

- About 8% of the municipalities have provided support for social housing for the victims of trafficking. The value indicator varies from 0% to 70%⁵¹ in favor of persons who have been subject of trafficking was against the overall number of beneficiaries at the local level in 2018.
- 84% of the municipalities haven't supported any building of social housing for the victims of trafficking in 2018.

Community centers are established with the support of central and local government and with the contribution of donor-funded projects. The daily community centers provide integrated services for members of the vulnerable groups including women, Roma, and Egyptian minorities, children, third age and PwD. In some cases, LGUs have signed cooperation agreements with local NGOs that provide additional resources to the community centers.



- 47% of the municipalities have, at least, one operational community center; about 46% of the municipalities don't have any community center.
- The average number of persons receiving services from the community centers is 173 (N=57); 52% of the municipalities don't provide services from community centers.

50 Law no.22/2018 "on Social Housing"

51 The Vlora Municipality

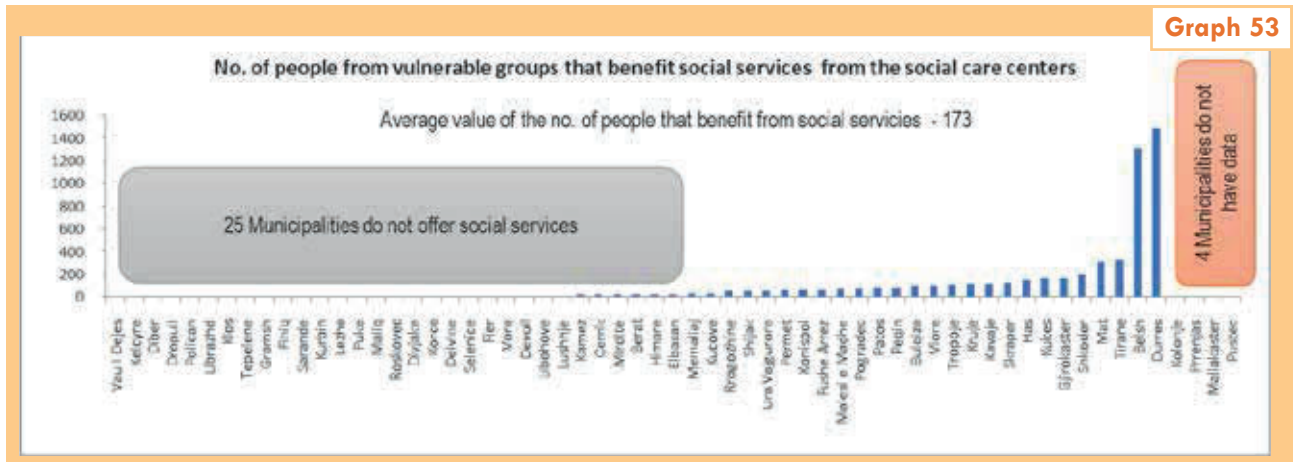


Table 19

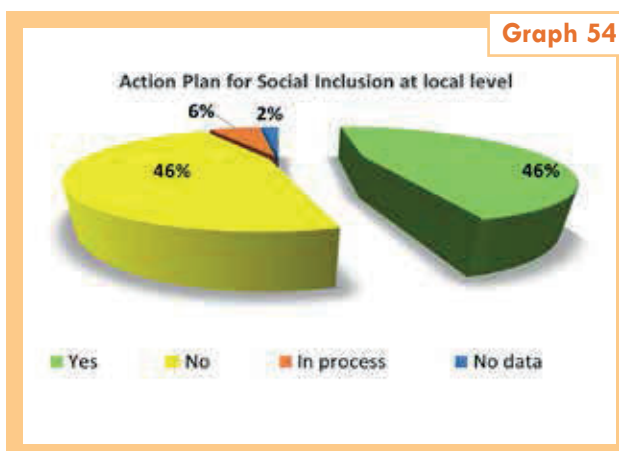
19.1. Social protection at the local level

	No. of additional local government officials responsible for social inclusion	No. of additional local government officials responsible for managing, monitoring and evaluating the Aid Scheme	Local administration officers trained in national policies and planned social protection measures and social statistics according to EU standards	The Social Protection Assessment Report on the territory of the Municipality drafted	The sector of Needs Assessment and Referral established in the municipality	Share of Funds for Social Care Expenditures vs. Municipality Budget (in%)	Share of social housing cases offered to victims of trafficking / total number of social housing beneficiaries	Categories of vulnerable groups for which a daycare center for social care was established	No. of people from vulnerable groups benefiting social services in established social care centers
Belsh	0	0	0	No	No	0%	0%	0	0
Berat	1	1	14	Yes	Yes	0.30%	3%	3	120
Bulqize	0	0	0	Yes	No	0.5%	No data	1	18
Cerrik	9	6	9	Yes	No	1.2	0	0	0
Delvine	0	2	2	No	No	0	0	0	60
Devoll	7	0	No data	Yes	Yes	1000000	0	0	No data
Diber	1	0	1	Yes	Yes	28%	0%	2	100
Divjake	No data	No data	1	No	Yes	No	0	0	0
Dropull	0	1	2	No	No	0	0	0	0
Durres	2	1	22	Yes	Yes	4.00%	1	1	330
Elbasan	7	7	9	No	Yes	0.09%	0	4	315
Fier	1	0	0	Yes	Yes	No data	No data	2	150
Finiq	0	0	9	No	Yes	0%	0%	0	0
Fushe Arrez	2	2	2	Yes	Yes	0	0	2	30
Gjirokastr	2	0	4	Yes	Yes	0%	0	1	103
Gramsh	0	0	2	Yes	Yes	2.2%	0	2	15
Has	1	8	0	Inprocess	No	No data	0	1	60
Himare	0	3	1	Yes	Yes	0.40%	0	0	0
Kamez	0	6	6	No	No	No	0%	No	No
Kavaje	1	0	4	No	No	0	0.00%	0	81
Kelcyre	0	1	7	Yes	No	1.20%	0.00%	0	79
Klos	0	0	4	Yes	Yes	1.20%	0.00%	0	0
Kolonje	10	1	7	Yes	No	1.96%	0.00%	1	0
Konispol	0	0	3	Yes	Yes	0.00%	0.00%	0	0
Korce	0	1	3	Yes	Yes	5%	0	2	9
Kruje	22	0	0	No	No	180.000 Albanian Leks	0	2	116
Kucave	No	No	No	No	No	0.27%	0	1	10
Kukes	15	19	5	No	Yes	0.1	0	3	110
Kurbin	0	0	0	Yes	No	0	0%	No	163
Lezhe	2	0	No data	Yes	Yes	531197000	0	2	50
Libohove	1	1	1	Inprocess	No data	No data	0	0	0
Librazhd	1	1	1	Yes	No	3%	0	3	199
Lushnje	0	0	Yes	No	Yes	1.80%	0	1	52
Malesi e Madhe	2	1	3	Yes	No	0	60 families	0	0
Maliq	2	3	7	No	7	0	0	No data	No data
Mallakaster	0	0	0	Yes	1	17.00%	0	0	0
Mat	1	1	0	Inprocess	No	0	0%	3	163
Memaliaj	1	1	1	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	1
Mirdite	0	0	7	No	No	0%	0	0	0
Patos	0	0	0	No	No	0.50%	0	0	0
Peqin	3	1	0	Yes	No	0	0	0	0
Permet	0	1	7	Yes	No	1,2%	0	1	60
Pogradec	0	0	24	Yes	No	0.45%	0%	1	50
Polican	0	0	4	Yes	Yes	0%	0%	Yes	23
Prenjas	1	3	0	Yes	No	0	0	0	0
Puke	1	0	0	Yes	No	0	0	0	0
Pustec	0	No data	1	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Roskovec	1	0	0	No	No	0.13%	0	3	70
Rrogozhine	1	0	11	No	No	8%	0	0	0
Sarande	0	0	0	No	No	2.00%	0	4	81
Selenice	6	6	6	No	Yes	70.000 Albanian Leks	0	0	0
Shijak	0	0	0	No	No	0%	0%	1	118
Shkoder	5	0	16	Yes	Yes	32%	0	6	1300
Skrapar	0	0	2	No	Yes	2.50%	0.00%	0	0
Tepelene	0	0	3	Yes	No	0	0%	No	0%
Tirane	No data	No data	No data	2	Yes	2%	0	5	1482
Tropoje	1	1	0	Yes	No	0.01%	2.50%	0	0
Ura Vajgurore	0	0	No data	No	No data	3 000 000	No data	No data	0
Vau i Dejes	0	0	0	No	No	1.4%	0	1	27
Vlore	0	0	20	Yes	Yes	⁸³²	70- 80%	5	No data
Vore	6	1	3	Yes	No	3	0	0	0

52 1% + expenditures for poor households 4.000.000+ reserve fund for emergencies

Specific objective: Social inclusion at the local level

Municipalities drafted in 2018 the social services map covering their territory. Some of the municipalities have adopted the Local Plan for Social Inclusion; about 20% of the municipalities have drafted the Local Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptian minorities (LPIRE) at the local level. The LPIRE includes measures in six priority areas: civil registration, education, and intercultural dialogue, employment and skills development, health care, housing,



and urban integration, and social protection.

- About 46% of the municipalities have drafted a social inclusion local plan and municipal councils have adopted it; the percentage of this indicator is higher compared to 10% that the municipalities reported for 2017.
- About 6% of the municipalities have reported that the social inclusion local plan was in the drafting process; 46% of the municipalities haven't yet drafted any social inclusion local plan yet. One municipality has failed to provide any data.
- The indicator (ref. 19.2.2) defined as the percentage of cases of the vulnerable category supported under the social housing program in 2018 is fulfilled correctly only by a limited number of the municipalities and, thus it couldn't be generalized.

About 39% of the municipalities participated in 2018 in capacity building program regarding the evaluation methodology of social protection and social inclusion that was supported by Ministry of

Health and Social Protection; about 53% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training program regarding the above area.

Progress has been made by the municipalities in 2018 concerning the establishment of the statistical database according to EU indicators on social inclusion. About 45% of the municipalities have already such statistical database in place compared to 10% in 2017.

Problems and challenges

- Limited financial and human capacity to establish the Need Assessment and Referral Sector within the Social Service Department of the Municipality.
- Lack of funds and other resources to setup the daily community centers and to provide integrated services to the groups in needs in each municipality.
- Development of the skills of the local staff working in the Social Services Offices of the Municipality in addition to the reporting skills (i.e., drafting of the Social Protection Assessment Report at the local level annually).
- Limited human, technical and financial resources to setup the statistical database according to EU indicators on social inclusion by all municipalities in the country.

Specific objective: Support for active work programs

Poverty may be expressed as insufficient access and a form of deprivation from public services, resources available to most of the population, or as the inability to benefit from them. The most important instruments used by the employment services and municipal staff in 2018 to integrate the unemployed persons and vulnerable groups into economic life/labor market include the following: (i) integration of jobseekers into the labor market through skills development and their active involvement into employment programs and community programs; (ii) encouragement and support to set up new business entities, self-employment and job formalization.

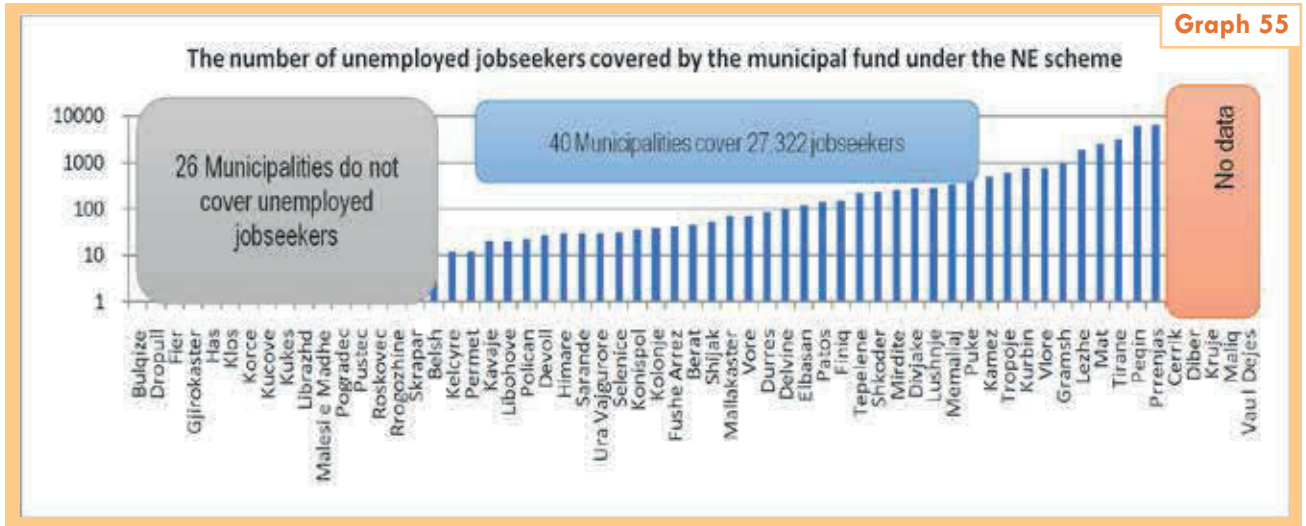
Table 20

19.3. Support for active work programs

	No. of unemployed people receiving financial assistance for vocational education and training	No. of students attending vocational education, who receive scholarships.	No. of PwDs supported by the Municipality for vocational education and training	No. of young people completing university education and vocational training financially supported for starting a private business	The level of awareness of the municipality on NEEs in its territory - partial database established by the Regional Education Directorate	No. of NEEs who are financially supported by the Municipality in cooperation with RED and REO for vocational education and training	Forms of co-operation with DAR for the socio-economic reintegration of NEE in its territory	Municipality initiatives for Co-operation with DAR on Improving / Enhancing the Opportunities for Vocational Education and Training	No. of unemployed people receiving financial assistance for vocational education and training in cooperation with the REO
Belsh	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Berat	45	45	5	10	0	Yes	3	Yes	No
Bulqizë	0	0	No data	0	0	No	0	No	0
Cerrik	24 households	0	No data	0	0	Not good	0	0	0
Delvine	105	0	5	0	0	0	0	No data	0
Devoll	27	647	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Dibër	No data	25	77	1	20	Yes	0	0	1
Divjake	280	0	3	80	0	0	0	0	0
Drapull	0	0	No data	0	0	No	0	0	0
Durrës	86	63	273	32	107	0	0	0	0
Elbasan	120	140	461	56	0	461	0	Yes	Yes
Fier	0	0	No data	0	0	No	No	No	No data
Fintq	150	0	0	0	0	Very low	0	0	0
Fushë Arrez	42	492	23	2	0	0	0	0	0
Gjirakaster	0	0	15	0	0	No	0	No	0
Gramsh	964	8	56	5	5	Yes	40	0	0
Has	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Himare	30	0	0	0	0	No data	No data	Yes	No
Kamëz	506	0	450	50	0	0	0	0	0
Kavajë	20	0	63	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kelcyre	12	0	4	0	0	Not good	0	0	0
Klos	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	Yes	No
Kolonjë	38	0	7	0	0	Not good	0	0	0
Konitopol	36	0	9	0	0	Not good	0	0	0
Korçë	0	0	0	0	0	Yes	0	No data	0
Krujë	No data	3	55	0	0	No data	No data	No data	No
Kuçovë	0	29	3	0	0	No	0	No data	0
Kukes	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kurbin	771	0	19	0	0	Yes	0	1	0
Lezhë	1878	No data	67	211	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Libohovë	20	25	1	1	24	0	0	0	1
Librazhd	0	0	5	0	0	Very low	0	1	0
Lushnjë	289	0	14	1	0	0	0	0	0
Malet e Madhe	0	0	No data	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mallq	No data	147	36	24	0	0	0	0	0
Mallakaster	68	0	15	0	5	No	0	0	0
Mat	2600	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Memaliaj	330	20	6	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No process
Mirditë	250	20	18	4	0	Generic info	12	2	1
Paros	147	0	4	0	0	No	0	0	1
Pecin	6235	6235	30	0	0	0	0	Yes	0
Permet	12	0	4	0	0	No good	0	0	0
Pogradec	0	0	164	0	0	High	0	Yes	3
Polican	23	0	6	0	0	Good	0	Yes	Yes
Pirrenjas	6614	0	25	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pukë	496	12	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pustec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Yes	No
Roskovec	0	0	5	0	9	No	0	0	0
Rragozhine	0	97	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sarandë	30	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selenice	31	No data	23	No data	No data	No data	No data	Yes	3
Shijak	51	102	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shkoder	234	234	90	100	4	Good	0	4	1
Skrapar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No	No
Tepelenë	222	24	5	6	No data	No data	0	0	No data
Tirane	3085	180	349	12	33	No data	No data	No data	No data
Tropajë	592	38	20	0	79	Very low	No data	No	1
Ura Vajguare	30	0	8	No data	0	No data	No data	No data	No data
Vau i Dejës	No data	No data	133	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Vlorë	777	777	42	22	No data	No data	No data	Meetings and activities	10
Vore	70	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0

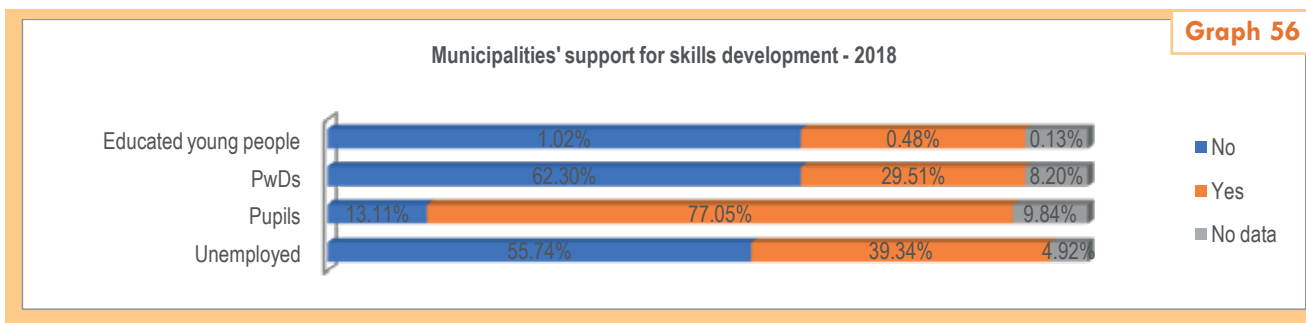
A total number of 27,322 jobseekers benefited cash social assistance and were also supported by the municipality to be part of the vocational program in 2018; to this end,

REO/LEO. 161 (N=56) PwD, on average, were supported. A total number of 9,387 persons were supported. About 5% of the municipalities (N=61) haven't provided any data about this indicator.



the municipalities coordinated actions with the Regional/Local Employment Offices. An average number of 683 unemployed persons were assisted by the municipalities (N=58).

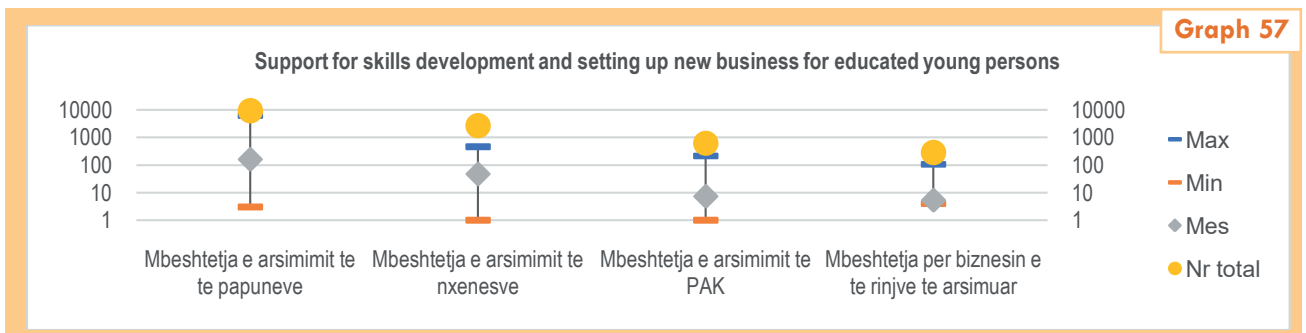
About 77% of the municipalities have supported vocational education (scholarships) in 2018, with an average number of 48 pupils (N=47); 161 unemployed persons, on average,



About 39% of the municipalities have provided services to assist the enrollment of PwD in the skills development program. These services are coordinated with Vocational Education Centers and

age, were supported for skills development; a total of 9,384 persons were supported in 2018.

In general, municipalities have been involved



in drafting policies or initiatives to raise funds to set up new businesses or to support self-employment of young educated persons. This has been supported also by various donor-funded projects.

15% of the municipalities have provided support to young educated persons in order to set up a new business (N=61); 5 cases, on average, were supported in 2018 (N=54); 11% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator.

Awareness level about NEET and the level of active cooperation among regional employment offices and the municipal services is low concerning active economic involvement of the persons belonging to the NEET category: 15% of the municipalities have had a very good/and good level of awareness about NEET, while 69% of the municipalities - poor or very poor level of awareness about NEET.

Concerning joint initiatives between the municipalities and Regional/Local Employment Offices to reintegrate NEET category, only 23 % of the municipalities have reported that they have established good cooperation, while 66% of them didn't provide any evidence or confirm the cooperation.

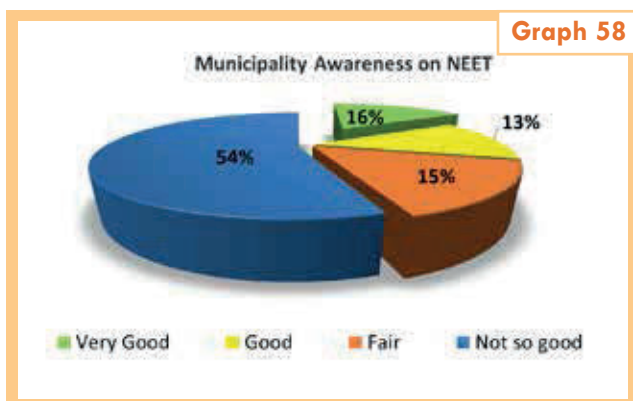
Problems and challenges

- Lack of initiatives and grants to support new business start-ups by young educated people, self-employment and job formalization at the local level.
- Cooperation among central and local government institutions in various functions of the social area including NEET category should be enhanced;
- Cooperation with the local NGOs to improve economic inclusion and opening of the social business entities should be strengthened.;

CONCLUSIONS ON SOCIAL POLICY AND EMPLOYMENT

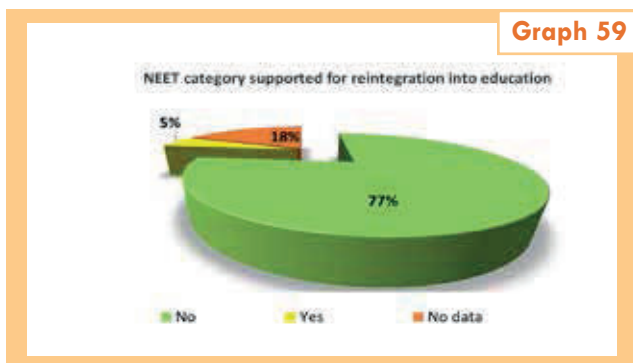
Limited progress has been made in terms of human resource capacities in social protection at the local level. The municipalities had an average number of 2 additional local government officials responsible for social inclusion in 2018; around 50% of the municipalities didn't have any additional staff in 2018. 234 local public officials were trained in different areas of the social protection areas in 2018 – 4 local employees, on average, were trained in all the municipalities (this indicator is lower compared to 6 in 2017); about 28% of the municipalities haven't participated in any capacity building program in 2018. 51% of the municipalities haven't set up yet the "Needs Assessment and Referral Sector" within the Social Services Directorate of the Municipality. 54% of the municipalities have drafted the Assessment Report on Social Protection. 46% of municipalities have drafted a local plan of social inclusion. 53% of the municipalities have failed to participate in any training program on the methodology of social protection and social inclusion in 2018.

Graph 58



About 77% of the municipalities (N=61) haven't provided any support/service to NEEE category. Only 5% of the municipalities have provided assistance to NEET category, which shows improvement compared with 2017 (3%).

Graph 59



Cooperation in terms of support for active labor programs has made some progress. About 23% of the municipalities have had cooperation with employment services (REO/LEO) in 2018 to increase employment opportunities and skills development, something which shows improvement compared to 10% reported in 2017; however, 66% of the municipalities didn't report any cooperation. Around 15% of the municipalities have supported young educated persons to set up new businesses, or support was provided to 5 cases, on average. Around 15% of the municipalities report about a very good/and good level of awareness about NEET, while 69% of the municipalities - poor or very poor level of awareness about NEET.

4.7. Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights

The legal framework to ensure the respecting of human rights in Albania is well developed; it starts with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and several important Universal Declarations and International Conventions⁵³. The national legal framework is well developed including the Ombudsman Law (8454/1999), Law on the Personal Data Protection (9887/2008), Law on the Gender Equity (9970/2008), Election Code (2008), Law on Legal Aid (10039/2008), Law 18/2017 "On the Child Rights and Protection", Law on the Protection from Discrimination (2010), Decision of Council of Ministers on the Establishment of the State Committee on Minorities, as amended, (Decision of Council of Ministers 726/December 2018)⁵⁴, National Plan for Stabilization and Association Agreement, as amended, Law on the Rights and Protection of Minorities(2006/2007), Decision of Council of Ministers on the Education of Minority Communities Members in the Mother Tongue

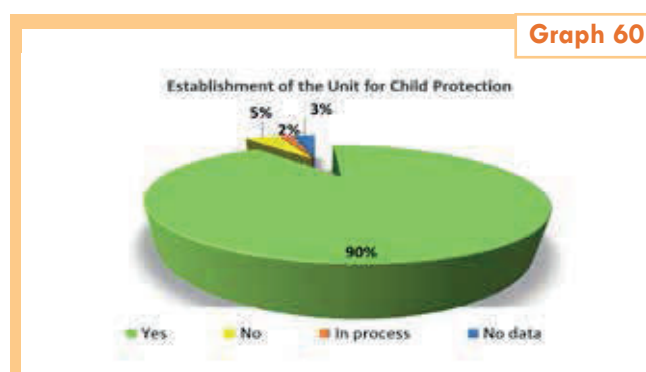
(1994), National Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptian minorities (NAPIRE), 2016-2020.

The duty of local government to protect human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion is outlined in Principle 11 of Good Governance and the Strategy for Innovation and Public Administration. The core concepts of human rights and cultural diversity are based on the following: (i) human rights are respected, protected and implemented, and discrimination on any grounds is combated within the local authority's sphere of influence; (ii) cultural diversity is treated as an asset, and continuous efforts are made to ensure that all the local community has a stake in it, identify with it and don't feel excluded; (iii) social cohesion and the integration of disadvantaged areas are promoted; (iv) access to essential services is preserved, in particular, for the most disadvantaged parts of the population.

Specific objective: Strengthening the system for the protection of child rights

The progress is assessed through nine (9) performance indicators.

- 90% of the municipalities have set up the Child Protection Unit within the Social Protection Directorate in 2018 compared to 61% in 2017 under the legal provisions of the law⁵⁵; the rest



53 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), adopted in our country 1955, International Convention on Civil and Political rights (1966), ratified in 1991, International Convention on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1976 (1991), the European Convention on Human rights of the Council of Europe, and the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the protection of the national minorities), the International Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1980 (1996), the Convention on encouraging and protecting against unemployment (no. 168 of ILO), 1988 (2006), the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Convention for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse (Law no. 10071/2009)

54 Adopted on 12 December 2018

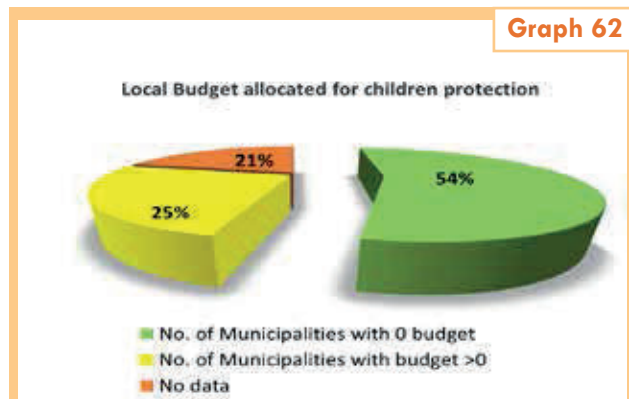
55 Law no. 18/2017 "On the Child's Rights and Protection".

of the municipalities have assigned the related task to one the existing employees of the Social Protection Directorate of the Municipality.

- About 80% of the municipalities (N=61) have established the system of monitoring the cases of violations of child’s rights in the territory of the municipality. This shows a positive development compared to 2017 (49%); about 16% of the municipalities haven’t established such a system yet; one municipality is working on setting up the system.
- An average number of 11 interdisciplinary group meetings were held between the municipalities (N=54) about cases of children involved in abuses, violence, economic exploitation or other forms of violation of child’s rights; this indicator ranged from 1 to 143 meetings⁵⁶ during 2018. About 28% of the municipalities (N=54) have held more than 10 meetings of the interdisciplinary group for the child protections in 2018, which shows that the monitoring system enabling identification and prevention of abusive cases of the child’s rights isn’t strong yet.
- An average number of 24 cases were identified and treated in 2018 across all the municipalities (N=60) by the interdisciplinary group for protection of child rights against abuses, violence or economic exploitation, in total 1,064; this indicator shows an increase of the number of cases treated by the inter-

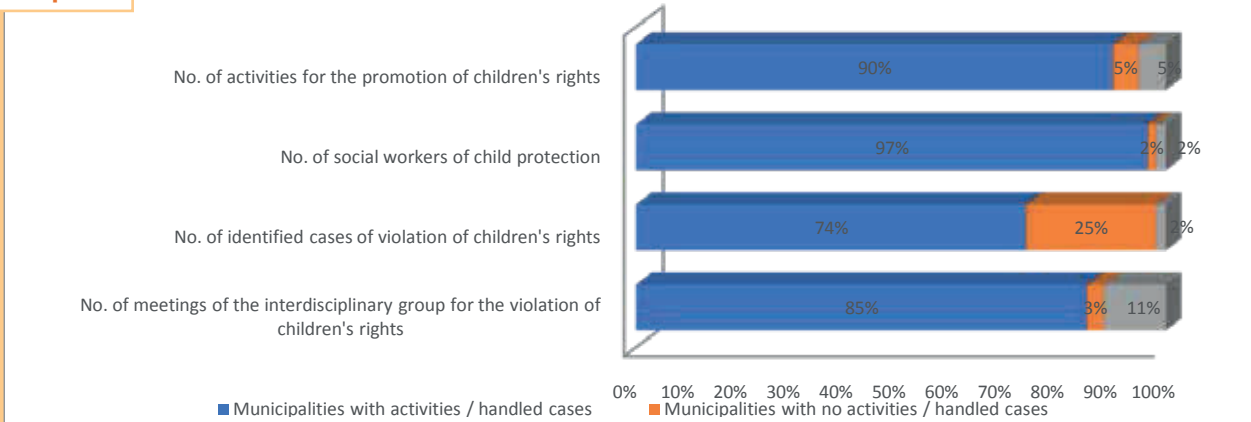
disciplinary group compared to 2017 (19 cases). Only one (1) municipality has not provided any data about this indicator.

The indicator concerning the budget allocation for child protection is defined as the percentage against the local budget for social protection. About 54% of the municipalities (N=61) reported no earmarked budget for 2018; around 25% of the municipalities have allocated earmarked budget for child protection related actions; 4.5% of the social sector budget (N=48) is the average earmarked budget of the municipalities; about 21% of the municipalities didn’t provide any data related to this indicator.



Human resources allocation for child protection varied from a minimum of 1 staff member up to a maximum of 27 staff members;

Graph 61



the average number of dedicated staff at

56 Tirana Municipality.

the national level is about 3 members; a total number of 402 awareness-raising and child rights promotion activities were organized by the municipalities at the national level, while an average number of about 7 activities were organized between the municipalities (N=58); only 3 municipalities haven't provided any data in this regard.

Problems and challenges

- Lack of sufficient human and financial resources for the protection of child's rights at the local level.
- High-level commitment and attention for setting up the system of monitoring the cases of violations of child's rights.
- Limited financial and human capacities to increase and improve the quality of public service including legal services, psychological, childcare services, education and employment of family members.
- The need to develop Management Information System or a simple database for services and to build reporting capacities.
- Limited financial resources for setting up a specialized center for the provision of inte-

grated services for abused children or children of vulnerable groups showing complex problems.

- Lack of local CSOs targeting child protection and lack of local funding (grants) for implementation of the joint projects to support the needs of this target group.

Specific objective: Effective implementation of Law 10221/2010 "On the Protection from Discrimination"

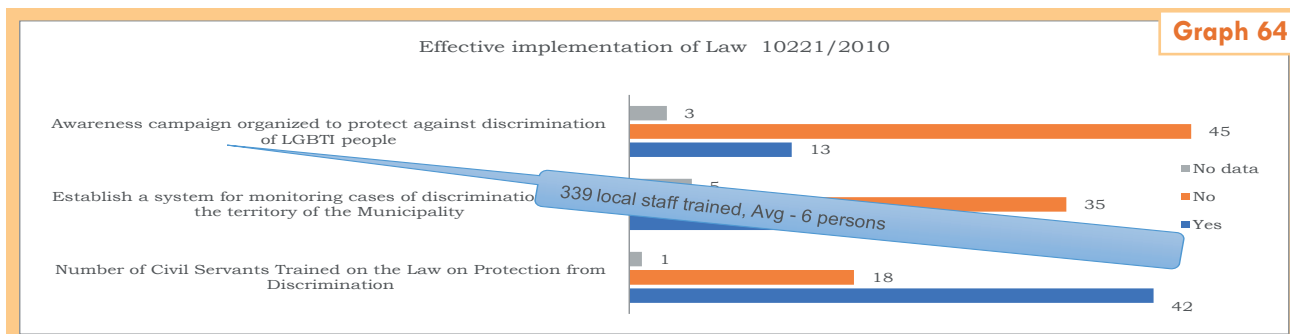
European Integration represents not only an opportunity for Albania, but also a challenge in terms of effective enforcement of human rights and the effective implementation of the Law 10221/2010 "On the Protection from Discrimination". The specific objective is assessed through four performance indicators.

- About 69% of the municipalities have participated in the training programs on the protection from discrimination, thus as total of 339 local officials were trained; 6 municipal staff members, on average, were trained, therefore benefiting from the capacity building in 2018 (compared to 2 in 2017).

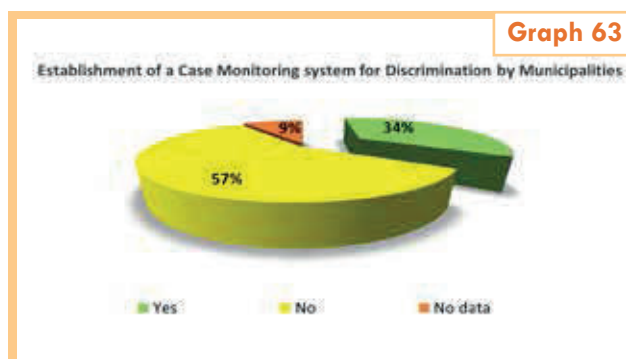
Table 21

23.2. Effective implementation of Law 10221/2010 “On Protection from Discrimination” and Public Awareness Raising

	No. of Civil Servants trained on the Law on Protection from Discrimination	Establish a system for monitoring cases of discrimination within the territory of the Municipality:	Level of cooperation of the Municipality with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination	Awareness campaigns organized by the Municipality in Schools or the Community for Protection from Discrimination of LGBTI
Belsh	1	No	0	No
Berat	1	Yes	1	Yes
Bulqize	1	No	No	No
Cerrik	4	No	Good	No
Delvine	0	No	No data	No
Devoll	1	No data	No data	No data
Diber	0	Yes	0	No
Divjake	1	Yes	Very good	No
Dropull	1	No	Good	No
Durres	21	No	No	Yes
Elbasan	150	Yes	Moderate	Yes
Fier	1	No	1	Yes
Finiq	1	Yes	No	No
Fushe Arrez	0	0	No	No
Gjirokaster	1	Yes	1	Yes
Gramsh	0	Yes	0	No
Has	4	No	Good	No
Himare	0	No	No	No
Kamez	0	No	0	No
Kavaje	4	No	Yes	No
Kelcyre	4	No	Good	No
Klos	4	Yes	No	No
Kolonje	1	No	Good	No
Konispol	1	Yes	0	No
Korce	20	Yes	3	No
Kruje	1	Yes	Very low	Yes
Kucove	100%	No	Yes	No
Kukes	5	No	No	Yes
Kurbin	0	No	No	Yes
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	0	No	Yes	No
Librazhd	10	No	0	No
Lushnje	3	No	Yes	Yes
Malesi e Madhe	2	Yes	0	No
Maliq	1	No	0	No
Mallakaster	0	No	0	No
Mat	15	0	0	No
Memaliaj	1	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	6	Yes	0	No
Patos	0	No	0	No
Peqin	2	No	No	No
Permet	4	No	I mirë	No
Pogradec	24	Yes	0	No
Polican	5	Yes	No	No
Prrrenjas	0	No	0	No
Puke	0	No	0	Yes
Pustec	1	No data	No data	No
Roskovec	No	No	No	No
Rrogozhine	2	No	No	No
Sarande	0	No	No	No
Selenice	6	2	Very good	No
Shijak	4	No	100%	Yes
Shkoder	0	Yes	Very good	No
Skrapar	2	No	0	No
Tepelene	1	Yes	0	No
Tirane	2	No data	20	Yes
Tropoje	4	1	No data	No
Ura Vajgurore	0	0	0	No
Vau i Dejës	0	No	0	No
Vlore	15	Yes	Good	Yes
Vore	0	1	1	No



- About 34% of all the municipalities (N=61) have established the system of monitoring the discrimination cases, which are identified in the territory of the Municipality. This indicator shows improvement compared to 2017 (reported as 25%). The monitoring system enables the local administration to register all the cases identified, ensure proper reporting to the municipal authority, and undertake effective measures in cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD); 8% of the municipalities didn't provide available data.
- About 7% of the municipalities (or 4 municipalities) have reported about the cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (compared to 13% in 2017); 93% of the municipalities have had no cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination; about 6% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator.



- About 44% of the municipalities (N=61) have organized awareness-raising campaigns for the protection against discrimination including LGBT rights; about 49% of the municipalities didn't organize any awareness campaign; this indicator shows improvement compared to 2017 (98% of the municipalities without any awareness campaign); about 6% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator for the reporting period (2018).

Problems and challenges

- Lack of sufficient human and financial resources to effectively deal with the full range of the cases of discrimination at the local level.
- Lack of appropriate capacity building program about legal issues and services regarding the law and standards as required by the Law "On Protection from Discrimination".⁵⁷
- Limited financial capacities and attention of the municipality services to organize awareness-raising campaign and community education activities.
- Lack of local CSOs and limited local funding (grants) to undertake joint initiatives between the municipality services and civil society organization in the fight against discrimination and recognition of the minorities rights.

Specific objective: Effective implementation of Law 96/2017 "On Rights and Protection of Ethnic Minorities"

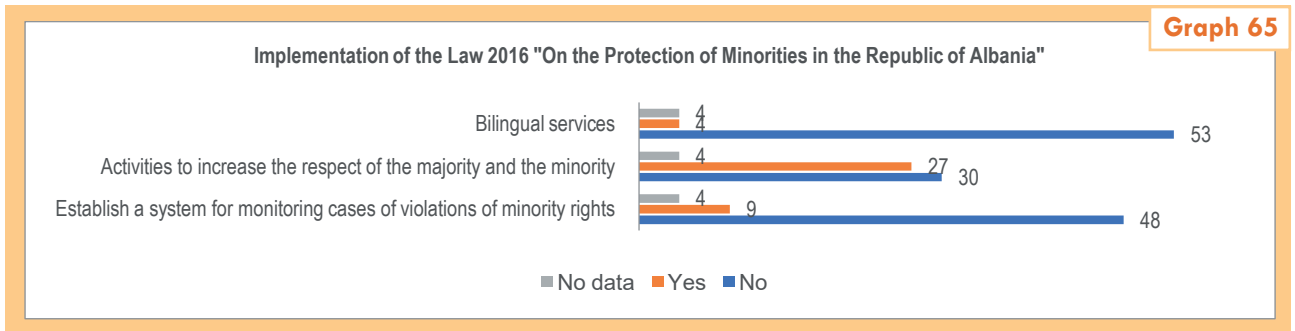
Improvement of the intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding, promotion of Roma, Egyptians and other ethnic groups' talents in art, musical instruments, craft in social-cultural activities, strengthening of the cooperation and coordination between central institutions and the municipal services are some of the priority measures of NAPIRE 2014-2020.

- About 47% of the municipalities have organized in 2018 social and cultural activities and awareness-raising campaigns on *Rights and Protection of Ethnic Minorities*, including the following; the organization of Roma Culture Week (2-8 April); 1 June - the International Children Day; 17 October – the International Day against Poverty; 10 December – the International Day of Tolerance, and other activities. 53% of the municipalities didn't organize any such activities; 4 municipalities haven't provided any data in this regard.

Table 22

23.3. The effective implementation of Law 2016 “On the Protection of Minorities in the Republic of Albania”

	Establishment of a system for monitoring cases of violations of minority rights in the territory of the Municipality	Socio-cultural activities organized by the Municipality in order to increase awareness and mutual respect between the majority and the minority of the population	Written and oral bilingual public and administrative services of the municipality, in the cases of minorities within its territory
Belsh	No	Yes	No
Berat	Yes	Yes	No
Bulqize	No	No	No
Cerrik	No	1	No
Delvine	No	1	No
Devoll	No data	No data	No data
Diber	Yes	Yes	No
Divjake	No	0	0
Dropull	No	1	No
Durres	No	Yes	No
Elbasan	Yes	7	No
Fier	No	8	0
Finiq	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fushe Arrez	No	0	0
Gjirokaster	No	1	0
Gramsh	No	0	0
Has	No	0	No
Himare	No	0	No
Kamez	No	0	0
Kavaje	No	0	0
Kelcyre	No	1	No
Klos	No	0	No
Kolonje	No	1	No
Konispol	Yes	Yes	Yes
Korce	0	1	0
Kruje	0	Yes	0
Kucove	No	0	No
Kukes	No	Yes	No
Kurbin	No	0	0
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	Yes	0	0
Librazhd	0	1	0
Lushnje	No	0	0
Malesi e Madhe	No	0	0
Maliq	No	0	0
Mallakaster	No	0	0
Mat	No	0	0
Memaliaj	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	Yes	No	No
Patos	No	0	No
Peqin	No	0	No
Permet	No	1	No
Pogradec	No	10	0
Polican	No	No	No
Prenjas	No	0	0
Puke	Yes	0	0
Pustec	No	No data	0
Roskovec	No	Yes	No
Rrogozhine	0	1	0
Sarande	No	0	1
Selenice	No	No	1
Shijak	No	3	0
Shkoder	Yes	Yes	No
Skrapar	No	0	0
Tepelene	0	0	No
Tirane	No data	3	No data
Tropoje	No	0	0
Ura Vajgurore	No	0	0
Vau i Dejes	0	0	0
Vlore	No	4	No
Vore	0	1	0

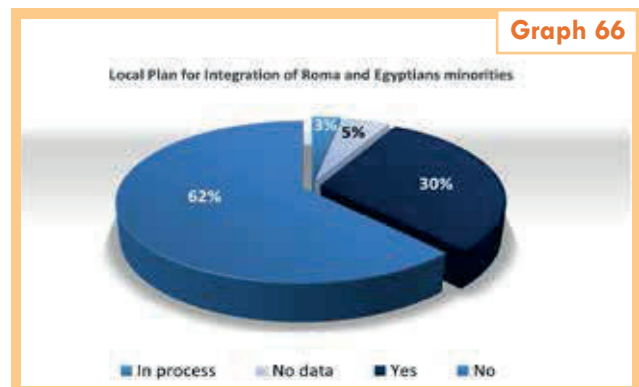


- The two-language public service is regulated by the Law on the Minorities Protection. Only 7% of the municipalities (N=57) provide the public services in two languages; 4 municipalities didn't provide any data about this indicator.

Specific objective: Improvement of the work coordination between central and local authorities to implement the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians minorities 2016-2020

During the last two years, more municipalities have been committed to the drafting of local plans and initiatives with focus on the integration of Roma and Egyptians into economic and social life and in the framework of law enforcement⁵⁸. Some municipalities have developed with the support of donor-funded projects local plans, which are aligned with the national priorities outlined in the NAPIRE 2014-2020 and in compliance with the legal framework.

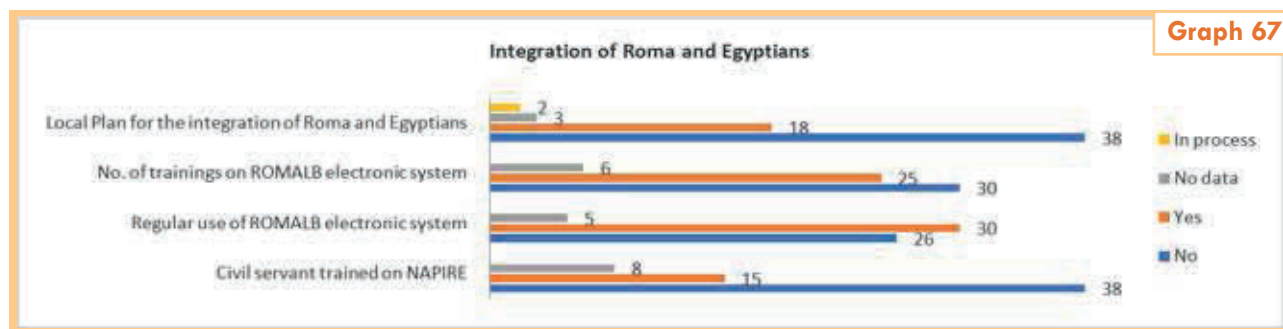
The improvement of the coordination between central government institutions at the local level and municipal services, establishment of integrated service systems at local level, economic empowerment, application of the instruments to improve the education level (e.g., part-time secondary education for the adult persons), free of charge vocational training, awareness-raising about social protection programs (cash social assistance, social pension, unemployment benefit, disability allowance), assistance to submit the application for the cash social assistance, training of



municipal social services staff on sector legislation, human rights, behavior change, model for enhancing the accessibility of vulnerable communities to the public services have been some of the measures implemented at the local level.

- About 28% of the municipalities' staff participated in the training programs on local engagements related with NAPIRE in 2018 (N=53); about 72% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training program for the implementation of NAPIRE. This indicator shows that the situation has slightly improved compared to 2017 (reported as 78%); 8 municipalities haven't provided any data.
- About 30% of the municipalities (N=61) have reported that a local plan for integration of R/E at the local level is drafted and adopted by the municipal council; the LPIRE has been drafted through the consultation process with the communities and the local NGOs representing their interests; 3% of the municipalities reported that the development process of LPIRE was ongoing.

58 Law 96/2017 "On the Rights and Protection of Ethnic Minorities"



- 45% of the municipalities have participated in trainings about the implementation of ROMALB system including data collection, updating and reporting (N=55); around 2 municipalities, on average, have participated in trainings (this shows improvement compared to 2017 with the average number of 1 municipality; six (6) municipalities haven't provided any data.
- About 57% of the municipalities have regularly used the ROMALB system (N=56); 5 municipalities haven't provided any data. Roma and Egyptian minorities are facing poor quality of housing conditions in some areas of the municipalities, weak infrastructure in their living areas, problems with properties' legalization and Roma illegal settlements.

Some municipalities have made investments in the last year to improve the conditions of the houses.

- About 51% of the municipalities (N=57) have supported in 2018 Roma and Egyptian communities with investment projects, which were funded by the central budget under the social housing program,⁵⁹ by the Regional Development Fund, and by their own budget. Tirana, Shkoder, Fier, Elbasan, Pogradec, Berat and Kruje municipalities have implemented 3 to 10 projects in support of these ethnic minorities; the average number is about 2 projects (N=29); 4 municipalities haven't provided any data about this indicator.
- A total number of 4217 jobseekers were registered (N=45), 1778 of whom were employed.

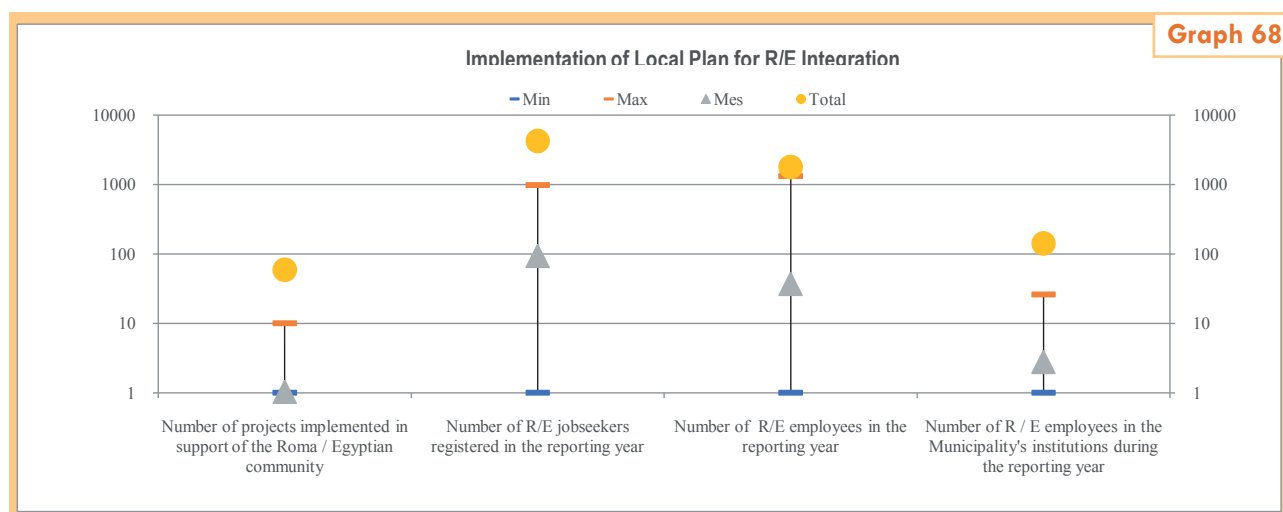


Table 23

23.4. Improve work coordination between central and local authorities for the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania 2016-2020

	Civil Servant of IG Committed by the Municipality for NAP/IRE	Trained for the implementation of the National Action Plan	No. of trainings conducted	Regular use of the ROMALB system	MALEB electronic system	No. of beneficiaries R / E of social housing programs / total applications	No. projects implemented in support of the R / E community	Number of employees registered in the reporting year	Number of R / E employees in the Municipality's institutions
Beish	No	Yes	0	No	No	2	0	0	0
Berat	Yes	Yes	1	2/41	No	5	627	108	2
Bulqize	No	No	0	0	No	0	No data	0	0
Cerrik	No	Yes	5	No data	Yes	1	No data	No data	No data
Delvine	No data	No	1	0	Yes	0	522	1324	3
Devoll	No data	No data	No data	2.5	No data	2	No data	No data	No data
Dibër	No	Yes	2	65/100	Yes	1	50	20	15
Divjake	No	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	0
Drapoll	No	No	0	0	Yes	1	0	0	0
Durrës	No	Yes	1	40	Yes	1	0	0	0
Elbasan	Yes	No	1	54	Yes	4	No data	9	No data
Fier	No	Yes	1	3	Yes	3	0	0	0
Fierq	No	No	1	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Fishe Arrez	No	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	0
Gjrokastr	No data	In process	1	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Gramsh	Yes	Yes	1	0%	Yes	0	0	3	0
Has	No	No	0	0	No	0	No data	No data	No data
Himare	Yes	Yes	1	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Kamez	No	Yes	1	0	Yes	1	0	0	5
Kavaje	No	Yes	0	1	No	1	0	0	0
Kelcyre	No	Yes	0	10/14	Yes	1	No data	No data	4
Klos	No	No	0	50.00%	No	0	100	0	0
Kolonje	No	No	0	0	No	0	No data	1	1
Konispol	No	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	0
Korce	No	No	6	46%	Yes	2	0	0	0
Kruje	No data	Yes	No data	No	No	10	982	36	No data
Kuçove	Yes	No	No data	24	Yes	1	No data	No data	1
Kukes	No	Yes	4	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Kurbin	No	No	0	0	No	0	2	0	0
Libohovë	No	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	1
Librazhd	Yes	No	1	69/259	Yes	2	97	17	5
Lushnje	No	No	0	7	No	1	228	1	1
Malësi e Madhe	Yes	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	0
Mallq	No	No	0	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Mallakaster	No	No	0	0	No	0	4	0	0
Mat	No	Yes	0	18	No	0	No data	0	No data
Memaliaj	Yes	In process	1	0	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	Yes	No	1	21/64	Yes	1	630	1	1
Patos	No	No	0	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Peqin	Yes	Yes	0	0	Yes	0	0	1	1
Permet	No	Yes	0	10/14	Yes	1	No data	No data	26
Pogradec	Yes	No	4	44	Yes	3	117	30	23
Polican	No	No	0	0	Yes	1	5	3	0
Prenjtas	No	No	1	0/85	No	1	0	0	2
Puke	No	No	3	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Pustec	No	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	0	0	0
Roskovec	Yes	Yes	0	0	Yes	1	1	5	5
Rrogzhihe	No	No	0	0	No	0	150	62	0
Sarandë	No	No	0	115/672	Yes	1	150	1	3
Selence	No data	No	2	No data	Yes	0	No data	No data	No data
Shijak	No	No	0	0	No	1	32	7	2
Shkoder	No	Yes	2	5%	Yes	4	219	83	1
Skrapar	Yes	No	2	0	Yes	0	0	0	0
Tepelene	No	No	1	8	Yes	1	No data	2	4
Tirane	No data	Yes	1	37	No data	3	80	60	4
Tropoje	No	No	0	6	0	1	80	4	4
Ura Vajgurore	No data	No	0	0	No	0	No data	No data	No data
Vau i Dejës	No	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	0
Vlore	Yes	Yes	No data	No differentiated treatment	No data	2	No data	No data	21
Vore	No	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	1

Problems and challenges

- Lack of coordination and joint efforts for regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of LPIRE implementation.
- Lack of coordination among the municipalities and Line Ministries for resolving issues related to the transfer of buildings from central institutions to the municipalities. The buildings⁶⁰ have been used from R/E for many years. Lack of ownership by the municipality doesn't allow the municipality to apply investment projects to improve living conditions.
- Limited financial capacities to strengthen human resources covering the issues of Roma and Egyptian minorities at the local level.
- Failure to provide grants to the local CSOs supporting R/E minorities.
- Limited financial capacities to improve the living conditions and neighborhood urban infrastructure of Roma and Egyptian minorities according to the standards, and to build social houses in the territory of each municipality.
- Weak reporting capacities in relation to regular reporting on the progress of LPIRE implementation; the implementation progress of the local plan for these minorities isn't published on the municipality website.

Roma and Egyptian communities don't have a continuous interest in accessing employment services and the opportunities offered by the employment services; lack of interest to follow and complete the compulsory education and vocational training courses.

Specific objective: Strengthening the system of ensuring gender equality

- This specific objective of the National Strategy on Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2016-2020 is assessed by means of 13 performance indicators.
- About 72% of the municipalities have set up the Gender Equality Sector as part of the Social Services Directorate (N=57); four (4) municipalities haven't provided any data. This indicator shows improvement in 2018 compared to 2017 (75%).



- About 83% of the municipalities appointed the local coordinator responsible for gender issues regardless of whether the sector of gender equality is set up or not. This indicator shows improvement in 2018 compared to 2017. About 13% of the municipalities haven't appointed the local coordinator for gender issues. Two (2) municipalities (or 3% of the municipalities) didn't provide any data about this indicator).

The application of mechanisms in the framework of referral against domestic violence is operational in about 83% municipalities; 3% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.

- With regards to capacity building programs on gender issues, the municipal staff (N=54) attended an average number of 4 trainings. This shows improvement compared to the number of this indicator in 2017, which was 1 training, on average; 7 municipalities have either provided inaccurate data nor no data at all.



- Around 82% of the municipalities (N=61) have provided specialized services (total 99)

60 The case of Pogradec Municipality

to women who have been victims of domestic violence. The number of services to this target group ranged from 1 to 9, with an average of 2 (similar level with 2017).

- 79% of the municipalities have provided regular reporting into the REV-ALB system in the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, with an average number of 12 reports. About 87% of the municipalities (N=61) have reported regularly on gender equality issues and other relevant topics at the local level, with an average number of 15 reports. About 25% of the municipalities (N=56) have drafted gender-sensitive budget/MTBP. The indicator is slightly lower compared to reporting in 2017 (30%).



Around 52% of the municipalities cooperate with civil society about gender equality issues through joint activities and partnerships, such as on activities of promoting gender equality, daily work with community centers, meetings with individuals, families, and stakeholders.

59% of the municipalities have reported about services (case management) – a total of 156 cases managed or 3 cases, on average, for 2018; 21% of the municipalities didn't provide any case management services; 20% of the municipalities didn't provide any data related to this indicator.

The existence of kindergartens and nurseries with standards and good services is a precondition, which enables active participation of women in the economic and social life. The



maintenance and reconstruction of kindergartens and nurseries is a local government function. About 75% of the municipalities (N=57) have reported that municipalities have provided the maintenance and reconstruction of kindergartens and nurseries in their territory. 17 kindergartens and nurseries, on average, were well maintained in 2018, while the total number was 761. About 18% of the municipalities haven't provided any services for the maintenance or reconstruction of these preschool education institutions; four (4) municipalities didn't provide any data about 2018.

About 57% of the municipalities (N=56) have reported that they had organized different activities to promote gender equality, women rights and the fight against domestic violence at the local level. This indicator was about 5 activities (N=35), on average; about 34% of the municipalities (N=56) haven't organized any awareness-raising activity on gender equality at the local level. This indicator shows improvement compared to 2017 (42% of the municipalities without any gender-awareness activity).

Table 24

23.5. Strengthen the system for ensuring gender equality

Sector of Gender Equality in the Municipality	Local Coordinator on Gender Issues in Municipalities	Applying mechanisms within the framework of the Domestic Violence Reference System	No. of trainings of civil servants of local administration with gender equality experts	No. of specialized services provided by the Municipality for women victims of domestic violence / divided by AUS	No. of regular Municipality MPS data reporting on the monitoring process through the REV-ALB system	No. of regular municipal reporting on the gender equality at the local level	Gender budgeting of the Municipality in MITB	No. of activities undertaken in cooperation with CSOs on gender discrimination	No. of case management services	No. of kindergartens and kindergartens built/maintained by the Municipality in the reporting year	Local budget for Women, Domestic Violence Victims, Social Housing, Social Care Services, Economic Aid against the Municipality's Social Sector Budget	No. of activities organized by the Municipality for Promoting Gender Equality
Belsh	Yes	Yes	1	0	0	0	No	7	0	20	0%	2
Berat	Yes	Yes	4	1	0	1	Yes	3	5	4	0.10%	3
Bulqize	Yes	Yes	0	4	0	0	No	0	0	No	0.30%	0
Carrir	Yes	Yes	3	0	No data	2	No	0	10	2	2.3	5
Dalvine	Yes	Yes	6	1	6	2	No	0	3	0	0	0
Devoil	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Diber	Yes	Yes	7	4	12	0	Yes	16	5	1	500000	3
Divjake	Yes	Yes	0	No data	No data	No data	No	No data	8	2.00%	10.00%	No data
Dropull	Yes	Yes	1	0	12	4	No	0	No data	0	0	0
Durres	Yes	Yes	3	3	250	250	Yes	5	3	4	No data	10
Elbasan	Yes	Yes	3	2	12	4	Yes	6	15	73	0.50%	6
Fier	Yes	Yes	0	5	3	0	No	10	5	65	0	10
Finiq	Yes	Yes	2	2	7	0	No	3	3	9	0	2
Fushë Arroz	Yes	Yes	2	0	No data	0	No data	50	1	6	2783040 ALL	1
Gjirokaster	Yes	Yes	1	5	1	1	No	5	5	13	0	5
Gramsh	Yes	Yes	0	No	30	35	0	1	7	5	0	4
Has	No data	Yes	2	1	1	4	No	0	2	5	No data	0
Himare	Yes	Yes	0	3	12	0	Yes	0	3	14	0.20%	1
Kamez	Yes	Yes	0	5	0	0	No	0	0	0	513000 LV.2018	0
Kavaje	Yes	Yes	4	5	0	0	No	0	No data	31	0	17
Kelcyre	No	Yes	2	4	0	0	J	2	4	0	0	0
Kiles	No	Yes	3	3	4	4	Yes	0	3	21	16.9%	0
Kolonje	Yes	Yes	2	1	6	8	No	4	2	0	No data	4
Konispol	Yes	Yes	1	0	6	4	No	2	4	4	0	2
Korce	1	Yes	3	1	0	118 cdo muaj	Yes	20	No data	43	1.12%	0
Kruje	Yes	Yes	1	5	No data	No data	No	0	No data	10	0	5
Kucove	Yes	Yes	0	0	Yes	4	Yes	1	1	0	0.18%	0
Kukes	No data	Yes	5	No data	15	No data	No	3	4	1	0	2
Kurbin	Yes	Yes	0	0	24	2	No	0	0	13	0	5
Lezhe	Yes	Yes	48	No data	No data	2	Yes	20	No data	No data	400,000 ALL	5
Libohove	Yes	No	0	0	No data	0	No	0	0	1	0	1
Librazhd	No	No	5	0	2	3	No	0	0	15	0	0
Lushnje	Yes	Yes	No	9	51	0	No	0	5	30	0	0
Malësi e Madhe	No data	No	No data	0	4	0	No	2	0	0	27%	No
Mallq	No	No	0	0	0	0	No	0	0	0	0	0
Mat	Yes	Yes	2	3	0	1	0	1	2	33	1.37,000	3
Mat	No	No	0	0	0	0	No	6	2	27	0	0
Mëmaliaj	1	No data	No data	No data	0	0	No data	No data	0	1	No data	No data
Mirdite	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5	3	No	2	2	17	3%	2
Patos	No	Yes	0	1	0	0	Yes	0	2	14	1%	5
Peqin	Yes	Yes	2	1	0	1	No	0	1	26	Yes	2
Permet	Yes	Yes	2	4	17	9	No	2	4	7	No data	2
Pogradec	Yes	Yes	5	5	64	102	Yes	4	7	41	5,000,000	5
Polican	No	Yes	0	1	Yes	1	No	0	0	1	No	0
Prenjas	Yes	Yes	4	1	17	17	No	10	6	21	0	10
Puke	Yes	No	10	0	0	0	No	0	0	2	0	0
Pustec	No	No	0	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Roskovec	No	Yes	1	6	8	1	No	7	6	15	137,000	2
Rragozhine	No	1	2	0	0	0	No	0	5	0	0	0
Sarande	Yes	Yes	1	1	0	1	Yes	5	5	0	12000	3
Selenice	Yes	Yes	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	22	70000	No data
Shijak	No	Yes	1	0	0	0	No	0	0	15	9000000	0
Shkoder	Yes	Yes	2	7	1	1	Yes	14	7	5	88%	17
Skrapar	Yes	Yes	2	0	10	2	Yes	0	3	5	0	3
Tepelene	Yes	Yes	1	0	1	1	No	1	5	15	0	5
Tirane	Yes	11	1	No data	No data	2	Yes	12	No data	74	No data	1
Tropeje	Yes	Yes	1	0	1	1	No	3	0	1	No	2
Ura Vajguore	No	No	0	0	0	0	No data	No data	No data	No data	3 000 000	0
Vau i Dejtes	No	Yes	0	0	0	1	0	5	No data	6	0	0
Vlore	Po	Po	No data	3	No data	4	Jo	5	No data	17	Nuk ka rre fund te deklaruar	5
Vore	Po	Po	0	1	Jo	Po	Jo	0	3	6	0	0

Problems and challenges

Limited financial capacities to setup social care services for women, victims of domestic violation and trafficking, and to build social houses.

- Limited financial capacities to cover potential cases in the remote administrative unit of the municipalities.
- Lack of sufficient human, technical and administrative resources dealing with the full range of these sensitive issues and special facilities.
- The need to strengthen coordination between local administration and central institutions to ensure effective implementation of the measures under the National Strategy on Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2016-2020.

Lack of local CSOs, which support women, and lack of local funding (grants) to implement joint projects to support the needs of this target group.

Specific objective: Effective implementation of the Law 93/2014 “On the Inclusion and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities”

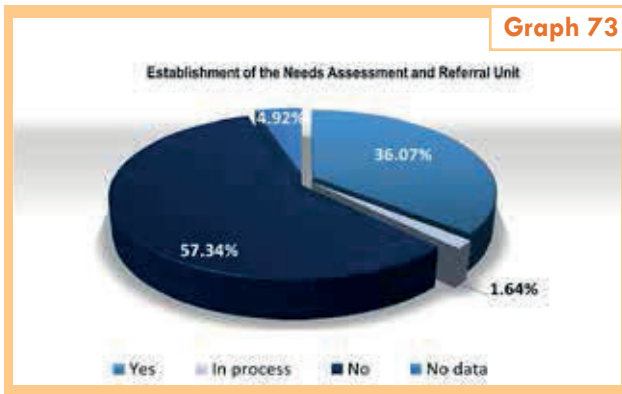
- The implementation progress of the measures, which are set out in the National Action Plan for PWD 2016-2020 at the local level is assessed through 9 performance indicators:

About 36% of the municipalities have established the Need Assessment and Referral Sector within the Social Service Directorate. This indicator shows improvement compared to 2017 (16%); however, this structure was still missing in about 57% of the municipalities (N=58).

Table 25

23.6. Protection of PWD's Rights: Effective Enforcement of Law 93/2014 "On the Inclusion and Access of Persons with Disabilities"

	No. of awareness-raising activities and training by all institutions on the accessibility standards of people with disabilities which Municipality participated	Establishment of the Needs Assessment and Referral Unit	Prepare the Local Action Plan for Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities / Planned in the MTBP	Number of 6- Monthly Reports from the Municipality of MSHPS on PWD issues	% increase of local budget funds for the removal of environmental and infrastructure barriers of disabled people in the territory of Municipality	Share of schools in the Municipality equipped with infrastructure that provides access to PWD in relation to the total number of schools in the Municipality (in %)	Number of Public Institutions in the Municipality equipped with infrastructure providing access to the PA in relation to the total number of public institutions (in%)	Civil Servants of Local Administration for PWD Matters	Road Infrastructure within the Municipality Ensuring Accessibility for PWD (% km of urban area)
Belsh	6	Jo	Jo	0	5.00%	5.00%	5%	1	0%
Berat	5	Po	Po	0.17%	30%	4/45	0.2%	6	0%
Bulqize	0	Jo	Jo	0	0.00%	0	1	1	Jo
Cerrik	2	Jo	Po	6	0	19.20%	No data	5	No data
Delvine	2	Jo	Jo	6	No data	0	2	3	No data
Devoll	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	2	0
Diber	3	Jo	Po	0	No data	5	No data	15	7-8%
Divjake	No data	Po	Po	2	10.00%	60.00%	2.00%	5	2.00%
Dropull	0	Jo	Jo	0	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	Po	60.00%
Durrës	11	Jo	Po	2	0	95.00%	80.00%	11	80.00%
Elbasan	25	Po	Po	3	30.00%	80.00%	75.00%	16	65.00%
Fier	5	Po	Po	2	0	No data	No data	2	No data
Finiq	1	Jo	Jo	0	0%	0	0	5	5%
Fushe Arrez	4	Po	Po	0	0	3	0	Po	0.50%
Gjirokaster	2	Po	Po	6	0	0	0	2	10%
Gramsh	5	Po	Po	2	0	20%	60%	10	85%
Has	0	Jo	No data	0	0	No data	No data	No data	No data
Himare	2	Po	Jo	2	0	0%	0%	3	0%
Kamëz	48	Jo	Po	2 X/Month j	3.00%	70.00%	1%	3	0
Kavajë	4	Po	Jo	2	0.00%	3.33%	0.05	0	85.00%
Kelcyre	0	Jo	Jo	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5	13.00%
Klos	0	Jo	Po	2	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4	0.00%
Kolonjë	0	Jo	Po	0	0.00%	1.00%	30.00%	7	10.00%
Konispol	1	Jo	Jo	2	0.00%	0	0	5	3.00%
Korçë	3	Jo	Po	0	1.17%	12	6	2	40%
Krujë	3	Jo	Po	2	No data	3	100%	6	No data
Kuçovë	0	Po	Jo	Po	0	2/18	2/7	4	0
Kukës	2	Jo	Jo	2	0.016%	11.60%	4	7	No data
Kurbin	0	Jo	Jo	2	0	6	14	4	15%
Lezhë	2	Po	Po	2	No data	No data	No data	2	No data
Libohovë	0	Po	Jo	0	2	3	1		50%
Librazhd	3	Jo	Po	0	2	63	63%	0	20%
Lushnjë	Jo	Po	Jo	2	0	4%	28.57%	1	0
Malesi e Madhe	5	Jo	Po	6	0	40%	30%	2	2%
Maliq	0	Jo	Jo	0	0	0	0	0	30%
Mallakastër	8	1	Jo	2	0%	100%	8	4	80%
Mat	1	Jo	Po	0	0	1%	No data	0	0
Memaliaj	No data	No data	In process	2	No data	2	3	1	No data
Mirditë	6	Jo	Jo	0	1%	98%	90%	7	40%
Patos	0	Jo	Jo	0	0	0%	10%	3	30%
Peqin	10	Jo	Po	2	0	7	0	6	Po
Permet	7	Jo	Po	0	0	18%	58%	5	13%
Pogradec	2	Po	Po	2	0	4.60%	20%	9	5%
Polican	1	Po	Jo	0	0%	25.00%	15%	3	100.00%
Prrenjas	2	Jo	Jo	2	0	6.67%	3	1	0
Pukë	1	Jo	Jo	6	0	0	0	1	0
Pustec	No data	Jo	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Roskovec	0	Jo	Jo	Jo	0	100%	100%	1	100%
Rrogozhinë	0	Jo	Po	0	0	0	0	1	10%
Sarandë	0	Jo	Jo	1	31.20%	50%	50%	1	25%
Selenicë	3	Po	No data	2	No data	No data	1	6	No data
Shijak	2	Jo	Po	1	0	0	5	4	70%
Shkodër	2	In process	Jo	Periodic	No data	15%	85%	11	6%
Skrapar	1	Po	Jo	2	0	0	5.90%	1	0%
Tepelenë	2	Po	Jo	2	0%	4%	0	1	25%
Tiranë	10	Po	Po	No data	No data	70.00%	No data	No data	No data
Tropojë	2	Po	Jo	Periodic	0	1	0	8	0
Ura Vajgurore	0	No data	Jo	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Vau i Dejës	2	0	Jo	0	0	5%	3%	7	80%
Vlorë	No data	Po	Jo	No data	0	90%	No data	10	60%
Vorë	1	0	Po	2	0	1	2%	1	40%



About 82% of the municipalities (N=54) have assigned public officials for PwD issues, while about 6% of the municipalities haven't allocated any human resources for this target group. The average number of social workers assigned to this function in the municipalities is 4 (N=54). About 66% of the municipalities services (N=56) have participated in promotion and awareness-raising campaign about PwDs' rights and in trainings on the accessibility standards; 26% of the municipalities didn't participate in any such promotion and training activity in 2018; 4 promotion activities, on average, were supported in 2018, a number which is higher compared to 2017 (1 activity).



Institutional measures at the local level regarding the inclusion of PwD are generally part of the Social Protection and Inclusion Plan, which is drafted and adopted by the municipality. About 44% of the municipalities (N=57) have either adopted the LP of Social Inclusion or have it under the drafting process. The percentage of this indicator is

higher compared to 2017 (23% of the municipalities with the local plan adopted); 4 municipalities didn't provide any available data for the reporting period.

Pursuant to the legal provisions of Law 93/2014 "On the Inclusion and Accessibility of PwDs", the Municipalities have to report regularly every six months to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP). About 84% of the municipalities have reported regularly, while 13% of the municipalities have either provided incorrect data or no data at all.

- Effective implementation of the Law on PwDs requires allocation of the necessary financial resources. The accessibility of the services by the PwDs is closely linked with the building of appropriate infrastructure. The average increase (in percentage) of local budget funds for removing infrastructure obstacles for people with disabilities was 2.3% higher in 2018 compared to 2017 (N=50). About 18% of the municipalities have reported increase of the local budget in terms of infrastructure improvement (roads, schools, public services), while 64% of the municipalities haven't increased the sector budget.
- About 34% of schools, on average, are provided with PwD infrastructure in 72% of the municipalities (N=54), whereas about 28% of the municipalities have reported no available schools infrastructure for PwDs.
- 32% of the local public institutions and services, on average, are provided with PwD infrastructure in 74% of the municipalities (N=50); about 26% of the municipalities (N=50) have reported that they don't have any appropriate infrastructure for the PwDs; about 18% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.

About 56% of the municipalities have reported the existence of road infrastructure with accessibility for PwDs in the urban area; 23% of the municipalities have reported that they don't have any road infrastructure with accessibility for PwDs. 31% of local roads

had infrastructure with accessibility from PwDs compared to the total road length in the urban area (N=48) at the end of 2018.

Problems and challenges

Limited financial sources to cover the capacity building needs of social workers for PwDs.

- Limited local financial sources for adapting infrastructure to ensure accessibility of PwDs in public schools, public institutions and services, and their mobility.

Lack of sufficient human resources to cover the needs of this target group at the local level.

CONCLUSIONS ON JUDICIARY AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Very good progress is made in terms of strengthening the system for the protection of child's rights, while the level of the budget allocated to child protection measures remains low. Around 90% of the municipalities have set up the Child Protection Unit within the Social Protection Directorate in 2018 (compared to 61% in 2017). Around 80% of the municipalities have established the system of monitoring the cases of violations of child's rights in the territory of the municipality (compared to 49% in 2017). A total of 620 meetings of interdisciplinary group meetings were organized by 85% of the municipalities in 2018 about cases of child abuses, violence, economic exploitation or other forms of violation, with an average number of 11 meetings. Around 1,064 cases were identified and treated by the interdisciplinary group for child protection in 2018, with an average number of 24 cases in 2018 (19 cases of child rights violations identified in 2017). There are 175 social workers dedicated to child protection (on average 3 staff members/municipality) at the national level. 25% of the municipalities have allocated earmarked budget for child protection, with an average of 4.5% of the social sector budget; about 54% of the municipalities reported no

earmarked budget for 2018;

In view of the effective implementation of the Law 10221/2010 "On the Protection from Discrimination", around 69% of the municipalities have participated in the capacity building programs on the protection from discrimination, or 6 staff members, on average, were trained; about 48% of all the municipalities have established the system of monitoring the discrimination cases, which are identified in the territory of the municipality; 7% of the municipalities (or 4 municipalities) have reported cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (compared to 13% in 2017); 93% of the municipalities have had no cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination during 2018; about 49% of the municipalities didn't organize any awareness campaign about the protection from any form of discrimination.

In view of effective implementation of the Law 96/2017 "On the Protection of Ethnic Minorities", about 47% of the municipalities have organized social and cultural activities and awareness-raising campaigns about the Rights and Protection of Ethnic Minorities; 7% of the municipalities (N=57) deliver public services provision in two languages.

Progress is reported with regard to local administration capacity building for the integration of Roma and Egyptian minorities. About 28% of the municipalities' staff participated in the training programs on local engagements related to NAPIRE; 72% of the municipalities haven't participated in any training program about the implementation of NAPIRE. Local plans for integration of R/E were drafted and adopted by the municipal councils of about 30% of the municipalities; 45% of the municipalities have participated in trainings for ROMALB system including data collection, updating and reporting (N=55), with a participation in 2 trainings, on average, in 2018. About 51% of the municipalities (N=57) have supported Roma and Egyptian communities with investment projects funded by the

central budget under the social housing program in 2018.

Measures to strengthen gender equality and to draft gender-sensitive budget have continued.

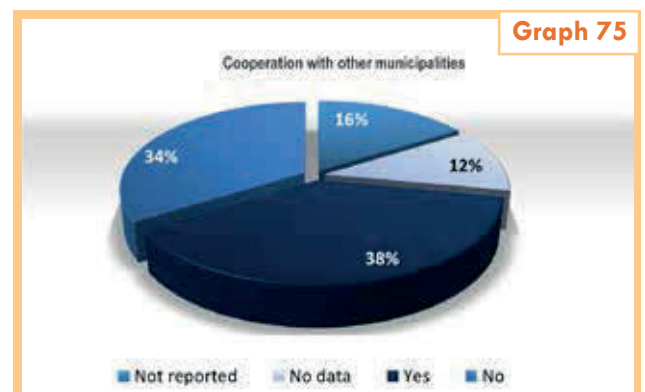
Around 72% of the municipalities have set up the Gender Equality Sector as part of the Social Services Directorate; about 83% municipalities had appointed the local coordinator responsible for gender issues. A total of 146 staff members or 4 staff members, on average, were trained on gender issues; around 82% of the municipalities have delivered specialized services (total 99) for women who have been victims of domestic violence; 25% of the municipalities have drafted gender-sensitive budget/MTBP; referring to the case management, 59% of the municipalities have reported services provided for the management of 156 cases in 2018; around 52% of the municipalities have cooperated with civil society about issues of gender equality through joint activities and partnerships.

Slow progress is made to ensure effective implementation of the Law 93/2014 “On the Inclusion and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities”.

The Needs Assessment and Referral Sector was established in 36% of the municipalities. About 66% of the municipal service units have participated in the promotion and awareness-raising campaign about PwDs’ rights and they have attended trainings on the accessibility standards. 34% of the schools infrastructure, on average, which fulfills the standards for PwDs, is available, whereas about 23% of the municipalities have reported that they don’t have any road infrastructure with accessibility for PwD that is available in their municipalities.

4.8. Chapter 22: Regional Policies

Collaboration between two or more Local Government Units to perform functions and provide specific services of mutual benefit may be accomplished by two or more LGUs within a Regional Council or between different Regional Councils through a Joint Powers Authority⁶¹. This collaboration can be effectively carried out based on a mutual joint agreement, the delegation of competences and responsibility or subcontracting to a third party. The agreement is then approved by the respective municipal councils, and a notification is sent to the Prefect of the Region within 30 days of the date of the establishment of the Joint Powers Authority. The agreement between two or more Municipalities becomes effective only after the legal clearance of the Prefect. Additionally, Municipalities may make agreements and establish partnerships with foreign institutions/LGUs of other countries, including EU Member States.



About 38% of the municipalities have cooperated with other municipalities in order to improve economic development, to better manage specific functions, while 34% of the municipalities didn’t have any cooperation; around 28% of the municipalities failed to report or reported no data at all.

61 Law 139/2015, Article 14.

4.8. Chapter 22: Regional Policies

Table 26

22.1. Strengthen cooperation in regional and local development in order to contribute to economic development and reduce regional inequalities

	No. of collaborations with other municipalities	Participation in Joint initiatives undertaken to reduce regional disparities
Belsh	2	Yes
Berat	3	No
Bulqize	4	Yes
Cerrik	1	Yes
Delvine		
Devoll	No data	No data
Diber	0	No
Divjake		
Dropull	0	Yes
Durrës	0	No
Elbasan	0	Yes
Fier	3	No
Finiq		
Fushe Arrez	0	No
Gjirokaster	0	No
Gramsh	5	No
Has	2	Yes
Himare	1	Yes
Kamez	0	No
Kavaje	5	Yes
Kelcyre	3	Yes
Klos	0	No
Kolonje	0	No
Konis		Yes
Korce	No data	Yes
Kruje	2	Yes
Kuçovë	2	Yes
Kukës	18	Yes
Kurbin	0	No
Lezhe	No data	No data
Libohovë	2	No
Librazhd	2	No
Lushnjë		
Malesi e Madhe	0	No
Maliq	0	No
Mallakastër	0	No
Mat		
Memaliaj	No data	No data
Mirditë	2	Yes
Patos		
Peqin		
Permet	3	Yes
Yesgradec	2	Yes
Yeslican	1	Yes
Prrenjas	0	No
Pukë	0	No
Pustec	No data	No data
Roskovec	0	No
Rrogozhinë	0	No
Sarandë	7	Yes
Selenice	0	No
Shijak	0	No
Shkoder	6	Yes
Skrapar	1	No
Tepelene	0	No
Tiranë	No data	No data
Trojesje	1	Yes
Ura Vajgurore	0	No
Vau i Dejës		
Vlorë	No data	Yes
Vorë		

Participation in joint initiatives to reduce regional disparities is very limited, while cooperation in the framework of cross border programs or twinning initiatives with municipalities from the EU Member States exist in few municipalities.

Poliçan Municipality has reported about cooperation with the neighboring municipalities in the area of waste management. *Pogradec and Prrenjas municipalities* cooperate in the area of forest and water management. “Forty Municipalities” Project has helped with capacity building partnerships, exchanging of best practices and the establishment of the DSO. (Meath)

Shkodra Municipality: membership in the forum of the cities located at the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, FAIC, Cooperation with Hungarian Water Technology Institute on issues related to water supply and sewerage, cooperation with Podgorica Municipality about joint initiatives in the field of civil society, environment, tourism, arts and culture; cooperation with Strasbourg Municipality, part of the European Solidarity Network - Strasbourg Club in the field of human rights protection. *Skrapar Municipality*: Twinning with Vaccarizzo Albanese Municipality (Italy); *Puka Municipality*: cooperation with Plava Commune in the framework of IPA Montenegro – Albania CBC Program. *Saranda Municipality*: cooperation with Corfu Municipality, Ioannina Municipality, Igumenica Municipality (Greece), the of Riccione and Otranto municipalities (Italy) and Suharek and Gjakova municipalities (Kosovo). Several activities and exchange of experiences and best practices, especially with Corfu and Ioannina, have taken place. *Pogradec Municipality*: it has approved the cooperation agreement with the city of Wismar in Germany about the organization of Multicultural Festival and organization of activities to promote local traditions and products.

Cooperation between the municipalities of Shkoder, Lezhe and Korça to exchange experiences about the functioning of commu-

nity centers. *Bulqize Municipality* and *Dibra Municipality* organize together the Harvest Fair and the “Dibra and Mati Days” in Tirana, Ulza Fair, and the Coordinated Program for the Promotion of Preschool Education. “Dibra and Mati Days” Fair in Tirana serves as a way to promote the local products of the area, reduce the differences between municipalities, and to promote co-operation.

CONCLUSIONS ON REGIONAL POLICIES

Inter-municipal cooperation remains at a modest level in terms of strengthening regional and local cooperation in order to contribute to economic development and reduce regional inequalities, while cross-border cooperation is increasing. Only 56% of the municipalities report about cooperation with other LGUs, while 34% of municipalities have undertaken joint initiatives to reduce regional disparities. 45% of municipalities are engaged in the implementation of cross-border cooperation projects, which are funded by IPA Cross-border Programs.

The municipalities have reported that conditions need to be set and behavior needs to be changed so that municipalities can get more engaged in inter-municipal cooperation initiatives. A more fostering environment needs to be developed, and the spirit of cooperation should be enhanced.

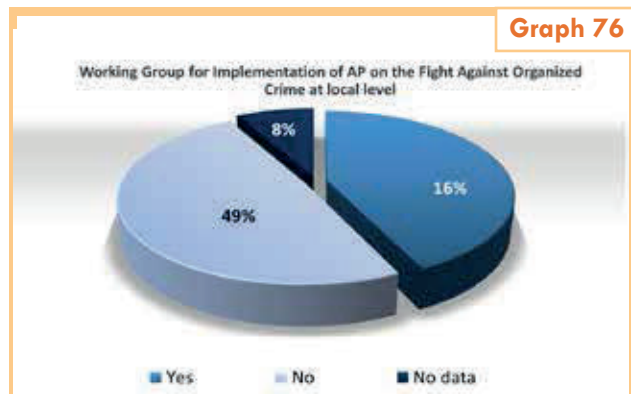
4.9. Chapter 24: Justice, freedom, and security

Combating organized crime is an objective of the National Plan for European Integration 2017-2020 in the area of justice, freedom, and security.

Specific objective: Advancement of the fight against organized crime

The progress of this specific objective is assessed by means of three (3) performance indicators:

- Setting up of the working group for the implementation of the Action Plan of the fight against organized crime at the local level:



about 43% of the municipalities have set up the working group; 54% of the municipalities hadn't set up the WG by the end of 2018; about 8% of the municipalities didn't provide data.

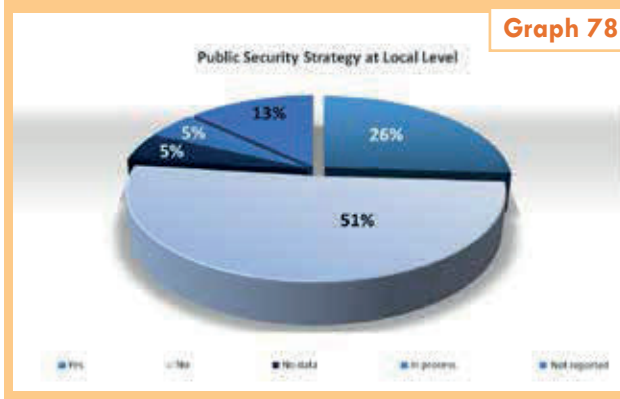
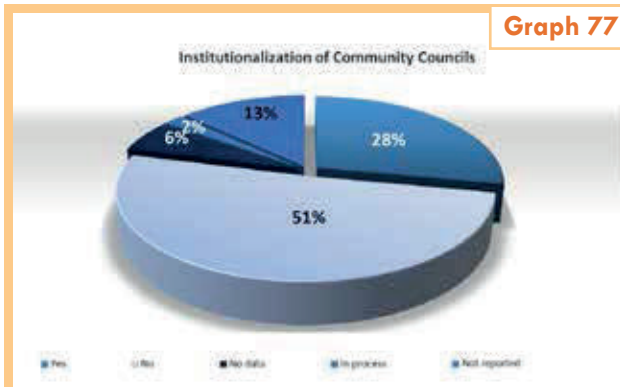
- About 26% of the municipalities have drafted a strategic document about public safety at local level, while 6% of the municipalities had it under drafting process at the end of 2018; 51% of the municipalities hadn't drafted such policy document of public security in 2018; about 18% of the municipalities have either provided no data at all/or they have failed to provide correct data.

Table 27

24.1 Development of the fight against organized crime

	Working Group in the Municipality to implement the Action Plan for the Fight against Organized Crime set up	Local Public Security Strategies at Local Level adopted	Establishment of Community Councils
Belsh	No	Yes	Yes
Berat	No	Yes	Yes
Bulqize	No	No	Yes
Cerrik	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delvine	Yes		
Devoll	No	Ne process	Yes
Diber	Yes	Yes	Yes
Divjake	Yes		
Dropull	No	No	No
Durrës	Yes	No	No
Elbasan	No data	Yes	Yes
Fier	Yes	No	No data
Finiq	No	No	No
Fushe Arrez	No	No	No
Gjirokastrë	No	Yes	No
Gramsh	Yes	Yes	Yes
Has	Yes	No	No
Himare	No	No	Yes
Kamez	No	No	No
Kavajë	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kelcyre	Yes	No	No
Klos	No	No	No
Kolonjë	Yes	No	No
Konispol	No		
Korce	No	No	No
Krujë	Yes	No	No
Kucovë	No	No	No
Kukës	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kurbini	No	No	No
Lezhë	No data	No data	No data
Libohovë	Yes	No	No
Librazhd	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lushnjë	No		
Malesi e Madhe	Yes	No	No
Maliq	No	No	No
Mallakastër	No	Yes	Yes
Mat	Yes		
Memaliaj	No data	Ne proces	Ne proces
Mirditë	No	No	No
Patos	Yes	Yes	No
Peqin	Yes		
Permet	Yes	No	No
Pogradec	Yes	Yes	No
Polican	No	No	No
Prrenjas	No	Yes	Yes
Pukë	No	No	No
Pustec	No data	No data	No data
Roskovec	No	Ne proces	No
Rrogozhinë	No	No	No
Sarandë	No	No	No
Selenice	No	No	No
Shijak	No	Yes	Yes
Shkoder	Yes	No	No
Skrapar	Yes	No	No
Tepelene	No	No	No
Tiranë	No data	No data	No data
Tropojë	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ura Vajgurore	No	No	No
Vau i Dejës	Yes		
Vlorë	Yes	No	Yes
Vorë	No		

About 28% of the municipalities (N=61) have reported that they have established the Community Councils (CC); 51% of the municipalities hadn't set up the CC but the end of 2018.



Problems and challenges

- High-level commitment at the local level for setting up Working Groups in the fight against organized crime,
- Professional support by the central institutions and coordination for developing the strategy for public safety at the local level which is aligned with the central governance policy.
- Capacity building programs for members of the Working Groups at the local level in the fight against organized crime.

CONCLUSIONS ON JUSTICE, FREEDOM, AND SECURITY

Around 46%⁶² of the municipalities have set up the working group to implement the Action Plan about the fight against organized crime

(N=56) in view of aligning the municipalities actions with central governance institutions in the fight against organized crime; 49% of the municipalities haven't set up the WG; around 8% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator.

Around 51% of the municipalities had failed to draft the strategic public security policy paper at the end of 2018. There is a need to put more efforts to institutional coordination among the relevant Line Ministries, ASSG and the municipalities. Around 51% of the municipalities had failed to set up the Community Council at the end of 2018

4.10. Chapter 26: Education and Culture

Specific objective: Increase participation in preparatory classes for pre-school education

Participation of children in kindergarten and preparatory classes for pre-school education is an important precondition for better results in education. Kindergarten and pre-school education institutions management is the local government responsibility, which is defined in Law 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government". Upon the decentralization reforms, the management of pre-university and pre-school education system was transferred in 2016 to the municipalities including the management of education infrastructure, staff salaries payment, management of dormitories of the pre-university institutions with the exclusion of the vocational schools dormitories.

According to the study "On the Performance of New Local Government Functions"⁶³ (2018), the municipalities have improved the quality of their services. This progress was evaluated through the sector performance indicators as follows: (i) number of children per teacher; (ii) number of children within the group of pre-school education system and; (iii) number of pupils per class for the pre-university education system. Additionally, the central government (MoFE) has transferred the respective funds to the municipalities; MoFE's data show an increase of the financial resources for this function in 2016-2018.

62 The indicator is 43% if N=61

63 Author: O. Shapo (2018)

- There are about 28 kindergartens, on average, in the municipalities (N=61). The indicator ranges between 128 (maximum number) in Tirana Municipality and only 1 kindergarten in Has and Memaliaj municipalities. There is a total number of 1,693 kindergartens at national level.
- The capacity of kindergartens at the national level was 1,193 children, on average (N=60).
- The ratio of registration children belonging to the age-group of 3-5 years old in the pre-school education is about 70% at the national level (N=53/or 87% of the municipalities); about 13% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.

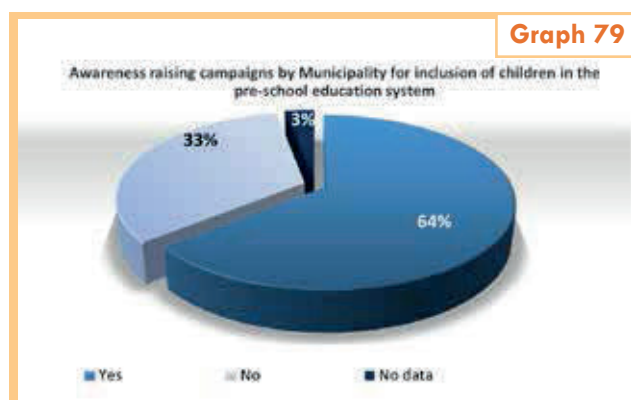
Table 28

26.1. Increase participation in preparatory classes for pre-school education: the possibility of participation and mass inclusion of children in the pre-school education system

	Number of kindergartens in the municipality	The total capacity of kindergartens in the municipality	Children's enrollment rate (3-6 years old) versus the number of children enrolled in kindergartens to the total number of children in the municipality of the respective age group	Awareness-raising campaign on parents for the inclusion of children in the pre-school education system undertaken by the municipality	Investment budget approved in the budget for construction of new kindergartens and reconstruction of existing one versus the local budget
Belsh	20	500	98.00%	Jo	3.90%
Berat	43	1366	65.00%	Po	1.00%
Bulqize	34	929	90.00%	Po	4.00%
Cerrik	4	799	86.70%	Jo	0.00%
Delvine	13	275	30.00%	Po	0.00%
Devoll	31	1575	823	Po	0.00%
Diber	81	2513	95.00%	Po	0.00%
Divjake	16	939	62.00%	Po	61.00%
Dropull	4	60	20.00%	Jo	0.00%
Durrës	55	3600	23.00%	Jo	32.60%
Elbasan	109	4451	26.00%	Po	0.10%
Fier	65	3473	95.00%	Po	2714000
Finiq	9	400	25.00%	Po	0.20%
Fushe Arrez	6	74	75.00%	Jo	0.00%
Gjirokaster	6	780	Jo	Po	2.00%
Gramsh	43	1550	94.00%	Po	3.00%
Has	1	16	80.00%	Po	0.00%
Himare	13	195	529/301	Jo	0.00%
Kamez	18	2655	70.00%	Po	No data
Kavaje	8	566	100.00%	Po	0.00%
Kelcyre	6	120	96.00%	Po	0.00%
Klos	22	408	85.00%	Po	9.00%
Kolonje	15	256	98.00%	Jo	0.00%
Konispol	8	250	30.00%	Po	0.00%
Korce	42	2414	1 ne 5 femije	Po	0.00%
Kruje	35	700	61.00%	Po	
Kucove	24	833	73.00%	Jo	1.17%
Kukes	54	1659	70.00%	Po	0.70%
Kurbin	18	870	70.00%	Jo	0.00%
Lezhe	54	2652	88.00%	Jo	No data
Libohove	4	180	98	Jo	0.00%
Librazhd	26	1123	85	Jo	10.40%
Lushnje	75	2300	97.00%	Jo	1.00%
Malesi e Madhe	18	500	80.00%	Jo	10.00%
Maliq	45	1292	0.00%	Po	0.00%
Mallakaster	32	775	2.53%	Jo	0.00%
Mat	32	20%	75.00%	Po	0.00%
Memaliaj	1	20	No data	No data	No data
Mirdite	21	500	95.00%	Po	11.00%
Patos	17	800	81.50%	Jo	0.00%
Peqin	26	490	99.00%	Po	0.00%
Permet	9	325	96.00%	Po	0.00%
Pogradec	40	2550	70.00%	Jo	0.00%
Polican	10	320	95.00%	Po	0.00%
Prrrenjas	20	650	80.00%	Jo	0.00%
Puke	15	550	95.00%	Po	0.00%
Pustec	7	60	No data	Po	0.00%
Roskovec	16	575	38.90%	Jo	0.00%
Rrogazhine	20	1300	15.00%	Po	0.03%
Sarande	13	1073	95.00%	Po	4.30%
Selenice	22	40	445	Po	3000000
Shijak	17	605	87.00%	Jo	0.00%
Shkoder	58	2525	63.00%	Po	2.82%
Skrapar	20	272	100.00%	Po	0.00%
Tepelene	16	500	80.00%	Po	0.00%
Tirane	118	12530	3756	No data	No data
Tropoje	23	550	50.65%	Po	3.20%
Ura Vajgurore	36	751	8.94%	Po	No data
Vau i Dejes	18	669	95.00%	Po	1.40%
Vlore	49	14	No data	Po	20,000,000
Vore	12	884	100.00%	Po	4.50%

Municipal services organize in coordination with the Regional/Local Education Institutions awareness-raising campaigns with parents in order to enroll children in the pre-school education system. About 64% of the municipalities have organized in 2018 awareness-raising campaigns with parents about children enrollment in coordination with the Regional Education Office/Local Education Office.

- 232 children, on average, belonging to Roma and Egyptian minorities were enrolled in the pre-school education in 2018 (N=43); around 30% of the municipalities didn't provide data about this indicator.
- 9,984 children of the marginalized groups reported that they have attended the compulsory education over the school year 2018⁶⁴ (N=43).



The fund of the municipalities concerning local investments to construct new kindergartens and to reconstruct the existing ones was, on average, 2.9% of the municipal budget (N=52). About 49% of the municipalities (N=61) reported that they had not allocated any local budget was for the construction and reconstruction of kindergartens in 2018; around 14% of the municipalities have either failed to report any data or they have reported no data at all.

Specific objective: Quantitative and qualitative inclusion of marginalized groups in the pre-university education system

Municipalities have made efforts over the recent years to draft local plans in line with strategic policy objectives, such as Social Protection Plan at the local level and Local Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptian minorities. In order to ensure a quantitative and qualitative inclusion of marginalized groups in the pre-university education system, joint responsibilities and measures are laid down to be carried out by municipal social services and the education offices (REO). There are no segregation cases in schools, and Roma and Egyptian children are attending the same education program as the majority of the pupils, but there is no qualitative data about the education level (i.e., average grade for R/E children).

- The average local fund for the enrollment of Roma and Egyptian children in the compulsory education was 0.42% (N=50) of the municipal budget for 2018. About 18% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.
- The average number of dropout from compulsory education of children belonging to marginalized groups is about 7.

Specific objective: Improvement of the school infrastructure of the pre-university education

The school infrastructure standards including heating system, proper infrastructure that enables accessibility of PwDs, and compliance of new buildings with energy efficiency standards have been some of the measures outlined in the Sector Strategy for Pre-university Education. The construction and reconstruction of schools and their maintenance is also stipulated in the local legal framework. The local administration draft projects, which are expected to be funded either by the budget of the municipality or through applications to the Regional Development Fund (RDF).

64 Elbasan Municipality reported 5021 children within the compulsory education system

Table 29

26.3. Improving the school infrastructure of pre-university education

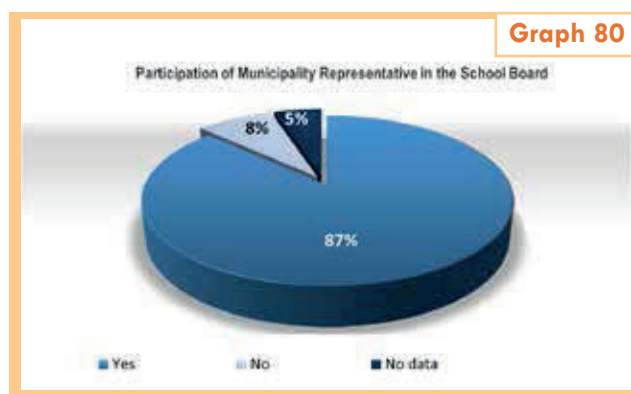
	Inclusion of PWD infrastructure in municipal reconstruction / construction projects	Local investment fund for the construction of new schools / and the reconstruction of existing schools versus the municipal budget approved in 2018 (%).
Belsh	No	0%
Berat	Yes	0.70%
Bulqize	No	1.00%
Cerrik	Yes	5.1
Delvine	No	No data
Devoll	85000000	0
Diber	Yes	No data
Divjake	No	20%-40%
Dropull	No	0
Durres	Yes	9.60%
Elbasan	Yes	1.70%
Fier	No data	No data
Finiq	No	0.60%
Fushe Arrez	3	0%
Gjirokaster	Yes	2%
Gramsh	3	3.7%
Has	Yes	0
Himare	No	12%
Kamez	Yes	2.00%
Kavaje	No	4.40%
Kelcyre	Yes	0.00%
Klos	No	0.00%
Kolonje	Yes	2
Konispol	No	0.06%
Korce	0	15 000 000
Kruje	0%	49,965,265
Kucove	Yes	2.14%
Kukes	Yes	25%
Kurbin	Yes	8.50%
Lezhe	Yes	3.80%
Libohove	Yes	0
Librazhd	Yes	3
Lushnje	Yes	2.90%
Malesi e Madhe	No	7.20%
Maliq	Yes	2.40%
Mallakaster	Yes	3.40%
Mat	Limited	0
Memaliaj	No data	No data
Mirdite	Yes	5%
Patos	Yes	1%
Peqin	0,7%	0,7%
Permet	Yes	0
Pogradec	Yes	4,6%
Polican	Yes	3%
Prrenjas	Yes	0
Puke	No	1.3%
Pustec	No	No data
Roskovec	Yes	1.14%
Rrogozhine	No	0.08%
Sarande	2	12%
Selenice	0	60000000
Shijak	Yes	1.35%
Shkoder	100%	2,82%
Skrapar	Yes	2.40%
Tepelene	No	0
Tirane	No data	5.00%
Tropoje	3%	0.05%
Ura Vajgurore	No data	No data
Vau I Dejes	Yes	18.4 %
Vlore	Yes	11%
Vore	Yes	4.5%

- 3.48% of the municipality budget (N=51), on average, was allocated in 2018 concerning planning of the local investments for construction and reconstruction of the municipality schools belonging to the pre-university education system; about 20% of the municipalities (N=61) reported that they hadn't allocated any local budget for this purpose, while 14% of the municipalities haven't reported any data at all.
- About 89% of the municipalities (N=61) accomplished the planning of PwDs infrastructure in schools reconstruction and in the new buildings; about 11% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.

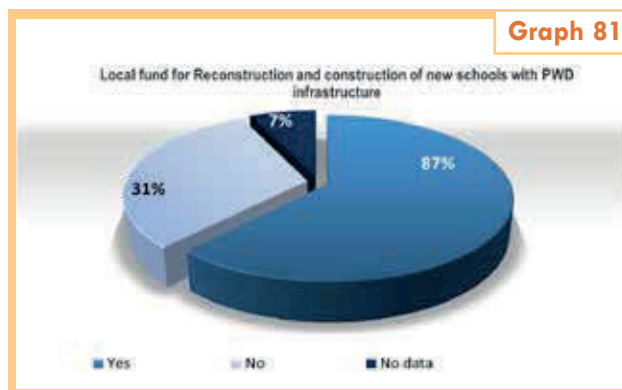
Specific objective: Improvement of decision-making process in the pre-university education schools

The representative of the municipality participates in the schools boards and in the meetings with the parents in the frame of the initiative "We do the school-work at school".

- The representative of the municipality in the school board has been present in about 87% of the municipalities (N=61); about 3% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.



- About 56% of the Municipalities (N=61) have undertaken and implemented the initiative to support the establishment of school-parent-government communication, whereas about 36% of the municipalities haven't implemented such initiative, and 8% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.



Problems and challenges

- Limited financial capacities for reconstruction and construction of new buildings for kindergartens and schools of the pre-university education in the urban and rural area against all standards to make it possible to reduce the number of children per classroom.
- Limited local capacities for setting up a database to assess the local needs for children enrollment in kindergartens.
- Limited financial capacities to create conditions (infrastructure), which allow children to have a meal.
- Better institutional coordination at the local level for more support to make sure that all Roma and Egyptian children complete the compulsory education; improvement of reporting concerning education results of children from ethnic minorities.

Specific objective: Conservation and protection of material and not-material cultural heritage, the national treasure of Albanian people generations

Protection and promotion of cultural values and cultural heritage, proper management and administration of cultural assets is a decentralized function, which is defined in the Law⁶⁵ on Local Self-Government. This objective is also a priority of the NPEI 2017-2020 in the field of education and culture.

- About 74% of the municipalities have reported that they had no cases of violation and illegal construction in the municipality's areas of cultural heritage (N=51); 6 municipalities (or 10%) have reported 1 up to 5 cases of

violations. Municipalities have taken measures against the cases of violations.

- The average percentage of the local fund invested for the protection of cultural assets was 1.99% of the municipal budget in 2018 (N=51); 36% of the municipalities haven't allocated any specific budget for this function; about 18% of the municipalities have reported either incorrect data / or no data at all.

Specific objective: support creativity and creative activity of Albanian artists through the enhancement of cultural activity and the involvement of artists

- About 11 cultural activities (N=59), on average, were planned and organized by the municipalities in 2018 to promote local culture and traditions; about 3% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.
- The data provided on the percentage of the municipality's budget in support of cultural activities haven't been correct and credible to generalize the findings.

Table 30

26.6. Supporting creativity and creative activity of Albanian artists through the enhancement of cultural activities and the artists' involvement

	No. of cultural activities planned by the municipality to promote national and local culture	No. of cultural activities organized by the municipality to promote national and local culture	The local fund approved for cultural activities of the municipality versus municipality's budget for cultural heritage in 2018 (in%).
Belsh	6	6	0.20%
Berat	42	20	9%
Bulqize	5	5	0.30%
Cerrik	4	8	0.6
Delvine	1	1	0
Devoll	12	14	0.01%
Diber	14	14	0.04%
Divjake	No data	No data	0
Dropull	9	6	100.00%
Durres	16	16	4.00%
Elbasan	21	18	0.49%
Fier	6	10	30650000
Finiq	4	4	0.01%
Fushe Arrez	1		5000000
Gjirokaster	22	20	1%
Gramsh	12	8	0.7%
Has	4	4	100%
Himare	15	15	0%
Kamez	36	36	0.50%
Kavaje	15	15	0.30%
Kelcyre	0	0	100.00%
Klos	10	10	7.00%
Kolonje	3	3	100.00%
Konispol	12	8	0.08%
Korce	15	15	20%
Kruje	17	25	0
Kucove	7	9	6.60%
Kukes	6	6	4,9%
Kurbin	5	4	800.000 lek
Lezhe	5	6	No data
Libohove	3	3	2%
Librazhd	8	8	6.20%
Lushnje	1	1	3%
Malesi e Madhe	6	6	7%
Maliq	3	19	0.70%
Mallakaster	2	2	2.84%
Mat	13	9	5%
Memaliaj	9	9	No data
Mirdite	15	25	No data
Patos	3	3	8.50%
Peqin	19/19	19	0.30%
Permet	6	6	100%
Pogradec	33	33	1%
Polican	12	8	2%
Prrenjas	1	2	0.33%
Puke	27	27	1.7%
Pustec	No data	No data	350
Roskovec	3	3	1.07%
Rrogozhine	20	12	0.01%
Sarande	7	5	1.5%
Selenice	3	2	0
Shijak	2	2	0.54%
Shkoder	25	10	2.5%
Skrapar	26	26	7.4%
Tepelene	12	12	0,8%
Tirane	13	15	1
Tropoje	8	4	0.01%
Ura Vajgurore	15	15	No data
Vau i Dejes	9	9	0.90%
Vlore	15	20	25,000,000
Vore	4	4	0.40%

Problems and challenges

- Promotion of local cultural heritage for the new generation and development of cultural tourism.
- Limited financial resources and local budget for the protection and restoration of cultural heritage objects.
- Local residents who live in the protected area face with the high cost of restoration according to national rules and standards.

CONCLUSIONS ON EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Specific objective: Increase participation in preparatory classes for pre-school education

Regarding the increased participation in preparatory classes for pre-school education, the average number of the kindergartens at national level) is 28 (N=61), and the registration of children of the age group 3-5 years old in this education system was about 70% (N=53), which was less than 79% in 2017. About 13% of the municipalities haven't provided any data. 232 children, on average, from the marginalized group including Roma and Egyptian minorities had attended the pre-school education in 2018 (N=43). The municipalities have allocated about 2.9%, on average, of the municipal budget (N=52) for reconstruction and construction of new kindergartens.

Specific objective: Quantitative and qualitative inclusion of marginalized groups in the pre-university education system

0, 42% of 2018 municipal budget, on average, was used for enrollment in the compulsory education of Roma and Egyptian children and other marginalized groups; the average number of dropout by children belonging to these groups was about 7.

Concerning the improvement of school infrastructure of the pre-university education system, 3.48% of the municipal budget, on average, was allocated in 2018 (N=51); about 20% of the municipalities (N=61) reported

that they hadn't allocated any local budget for investment in schools. About 89% of the municipalities accomplished planning of schools infrastructure allowing accessibility of PwDs.

The representative of the municipality in school boards has been present in about 87% of the municipalities (N=61); about 56% of the municipalities have supported initiatives to set up school-parent-government communication; 36% of the municipalities haven't implemented such initiative.

With regards to conservation and protection of material and not-material cultural heritage, about 74% of the municipalities have reported that they haven't had any cases of violation and illegal construction in the areas of cultural heritage; 6 municipalities (or 10%) have reported 1 up to 5 cases of violations. Municipal services took measures about this – 1.99% of the 2018 municipal budget was allocated, on average, for the protection of cultural assets. Around 36% of the municipalities didn't allocate any specific budget for this function. Municipalities n planned and organized 11 cultural activities, on average, in 2018 (N=59).

4.11. Chapter 27: Environment and climate change

Specific objective: Awareness-raising and capacity building of Local Government Units about their role in protecting the environment, nature and forest management

Local government capacity building and awareness-raising for the protection of environment, nature, and forest management and administration is a development objective of the National Strategy for Environment Strategy 2018-2030 and a priority of the European Integration agenda of the country. The municipalities have an important role to play concerning awareness-raising of local citizens in terms of protecting the environment, nature and forests and minimizing organic contamination.

- About 107 local public officials were trained on environmental legislation and environmental protection and standards/benchmarks. About 2 trainings, on average, were organized (the same number as in 2017). The indicator ranges from 1 to 6, which means that all municipalities (N=46) have participated with, at least 1 public official, who has been trained.
- About 20% of the municipalities haven't participated in the capacity building program on environment issues; about 5% (or 3 municipalities) haven't provided available data.
- 75% of the municipalities have organized a total of 241 awareness-raising activities with regard to the supporting role of the municipalities in terms of the awareness-raising campaigns with local citizens and business entities to protect the environment, nature, and forests and to minimize organic contamination;; 5 awareness-raising activities were organized, on average, in 2018.
- About 25% of the municipalities have either provided incorrect data or no data at all for awareness-raising activity in regard to the protection of the environment, nature, and forest.

Specific objective: Education of Young Generations for Environmental Conservation and Pollution Minimization

There is a lack of culture and behavior among Albanian citizens and young people towards environment protection, nature, forest, and environmental pollution. Education of young people is important and the municipalities need to do more in this regard. The theme of 2018 World Environment Day of the was "Beat Plastic Pollution" - a call for action for each citizen to fight one of the greatest environmental challenges, activities during the Earth Day, promotion activity to plant trees, and other themes related to the environment.

- About 75% of the municipalities (N=61) have organized educational and awareness-raising meetings at schools and campaigns for environmental protection and against the pollution.
- A total of 188 awareness-raising activities or 4 activities, on average, were carried out in 2018; (N=46), which is higher compared to 2017 (3 activities on average). About 25% of the municipalities have either provided incorrect data or no data at all related to this indicator.

Table 31

27.1. Awareness-raising and capacity building of local governments on protecting the environment, nature and forest management

	No. of staff trained on environmental legislation and its implementation, environmental priorities in terms of EU integration	Public awareness campaign for environmental protection and pollution minimization organized by the Municipality, central institutions and other actors (CSOs / projects)	Education of new generations for environmental conservation and minimization of pollution
Belsh	4	3	3
Berat	1	3	5
Bulqize	6	Yes	Yes
Cerrik	1	16	2
Delvine	1	1	2
Devoll	3	2	1
Diber	0	12	12
Divjake	2	Yes	Yes
Dropull	2	0	0
Durres	2	0	0
Elbasan	No data	7	Yes
Fier	1	2	3
Finiq	0	0	8
Fushe Arrez	4	10	5
Gjirokaster	1	1	0
Gramsh	3	3	3
Has	3	11	3
Himare	4	Yes	2
Kamez	1	0	0
Kavaqe	1	3	2
Kelcyre	2	0	6
Klos	2	4	0
Kolonje	2	4	4
Konispol	0	0	6
Korce	2	10	10
Kruje	2	10	Yes
Kucove	2	2	2
Kukes	0	2	2
Kurbini	2	Yes	7
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	1	5	2
Librazhd	0	2	14
Lushnje	3	Yes	Yes
Malesi e Madhe	1	No	No
Maliq	0	0	0
Mallakaster	0	7	Yes
Mat	1	3	3
Memaliaj	1	No data	No data
Mirdite	2	14	Yes
Patos	1	9	6
Peqin	5	9	10
Permet	2	11	6
Pogradec	1	7	4
Polican	0	Yes	Yes
Prrenjas	0	4	2
Puke	3	14	8
Pustec	No data	No data	No data
Roskovec	1	25	10
Rrogozhine	3	Yes	Yes
Sarande	1	Yes	6
Selenice	2	3	Yes
Shijak	3	3	3
Shkoder	5	3	5
Skrapar	0	No data	No data
Tepelene	2	6	3
Tirane	6	1	1
Tropoje	0	2	3
Ura Vajgurore	1	Yes	3
Vau i Dejes	0	No	7
Vlore	2	6	4
Vore	6	1	0

Specific objective: Drafting the action plan to improve the quality of environmental air at the local level.

- With regard to LAP about the improvement of the air quality, 25% of the municipalities have developed and adopted the Local Action Plan (the indicator percentage is higher compared to 2017 when it was 18%).
- 3% of the municipalities had the Local Action Plan under drafting process at the end of 2018; 67% of the municipalities haven't drafted the LAP about the improvement of the air quality in the territory of the municipality.



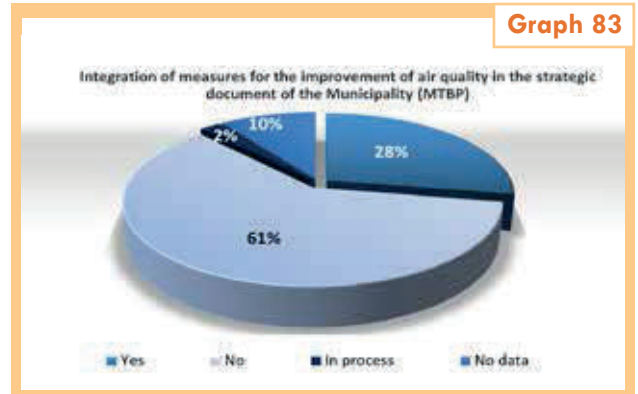
- About 28% of the municipalities have integrated the local measures about the improvement of the air quality in their strategic document including MTBP – which shows improvement if compared 2017 (20%), while 61% of the municipalities don't have an integrated strategic document yet.

Table 32

27.3. Development of action plans to improve air quality at the local level

	Local Action Plan to improve air quality in compliance with the National Quality Improvement Plan	Integrate actions, to improve air quality, in the strategic document of the municipality / MTBP
Belsh	No	No
Berat	No	Yes
Bulqize	No	No
Cerrik	No	No
Delvine	No	No
Devoll	No	No
Diber	Yes	Yes
Divjake	Yes	Yes
Dropull	No	No
Durrës	No	No
Elbasan	Yes	Yes
Fier	No	No
Finiq	No	No
Fushe Arrez	Ne process	Ne process
Gjirokaster	No	No
Gramsh	Yes	No
Has	No	No
Himare	No	No
Kamez	Yes	Yes
Kavaje	Yes	No
Kelcyre	No	No
Klos	Yes	Yes
Kolonje	No	No
Konispol	No	No
Korce	No	Yes
Kruje	No	No
Kucove	No	Yes
Kukes	No	No
Kurbini	No	No data
Lezhe	No data	No data
Libohovë	Yes	No
Librazhd	No	No
Lushnje	No	No
Malesi e Madhe	No	No
Maliq	Ne process	No
Mallakaster	No	No
Mat	No	No
Memaliaj	No data	No data
Mirdite	No	No
Patos	Yes	No
Peqin	Yes	Yes
Permet	No	No
Pogradec	Yes	Yes
Polican	No	No
Prrenjas	No	No
Puke	No	No
Pustec	No	Yes
Roskovec	No	No
Rrogzhdinë	Yes	Yes
Sarandë	No	No
Selenice	No data	No data
Shijak	Yes	Yes
Shkoder	No	Yes
Skrapar	No	Yes
Tepelene	No	No
Tirane	No	Yes
Tropoje	No	No data
Ura Vajgurore	Yes	No
Vau i Dejes	No	No data
Vlore	No	No
Vore	Yes	Yes

Graph 83



- 2% of the municipalities were in process of integrating the local measures into the strategic document at the local level. Around 10% of the municipalities haven't provided any data.

Problems and challenges

- Limited planning capacities and commitment of the decision-making bodies at the local level to draft the action plan to improve the air quality and to integrate the local measures into the strategic document and MTBP of the municipality.
- Limited capacity in order to provide continuous training about the environment protection, knowledge of the legislation and best practices against benchmarks.
- Limited financial resources to organize education and awareness-raising activities for the local citizens, business entities and the new generation.
- Limited involvement of civil society stakeholders, schools and students to protect the environment and nature, to reduce air pollution and to improve air quality.
- Regular trainings on environment issues and air quality.

Specific objective: Improvement of Integrated Waste Management

A new strategic document for the Environment Protection 2018 – 2030 was drafted and adopted by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) with donor and experts support based on the approach of the minimum

affordable standards. The improvement of integrated waste management in the country, meeting of international and national standards, improvement of the sector performance against benchmarks, expanding the waste services coverage and quality including the remote areas are some of main objectives of this new strategic document. Two new Decisions of the Council of Ministers⁶⁶ on the cost and fee calculation model, as well as on the methodology on dumpsite closure and rehabilitation standards, have been the base of countrywide municipal interventions to cope with emergency situation of the waste management sector; The MTE has drafted the Map of 199 waste disposal sites and an action plan to reduce the dumpsites hazards in 2018. Several municipalities have been supported by donor-funded projects to draft and implement the waste management plan at the local level.

- 49% of the municipalities had drafted and adopted by the end of 2018 the Waste Management Plan, which is part of MTBP (the percentage of this indicator is higher compared to 2017 – which was 11%); 3% of the municipalities were in the process of drafting the local waste management plan;



- About 46% of the municipalities didn't have such WMP, and, consequently, they hadn't included in the MTBP, while 2% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.

- Around 64% of the municipalities have managed solid waste collection and waste disposal in 2018 in dumpsites according to their local management plan (this shows improvement compared to 2017 – when it was 43%;



31% of the municipalities managed them without having an integrated WMP.

- Around 8% of the municipalities collect urban waste through separated dumpsters, and this is carried out by a small number of persons who collect separated waste; 85% of the municipalities don't recycle the municipal waste. The MTE has made a decision that the collection of the municipality waste should be done based on two waste's streams.



- Around 95% of the municipalities weren't able to manage the municipality waste in two separate streams, 3% of the municipalities have managed to accomplish it, while 2% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.

- A total of 71 authorized disposal sites or 1, on average, (N=50) were reported by the municipalities for 2018.
 - About 33% of the municipalities report to have, at least, 1 waste unauthorized disposal site in their territory; 64% of the municipalities reported that they didn't have any unauthorized waste disposal sites; 3% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.
 - Based on the reported data, the average distance of the municipality centre to the nearest landfill is 18 km. Fushë Arrëz (80 km), Himarë (75 km) and Tepelenë (70 km) are the municipalities, which have landfill locations far away from the center of the municipality .
- Problems and challenges**
- Limited planning capacity to develop and adopt Integrated Waste Management Service (iWMS) and to ensure its implementation according to standards and performance benchmarks.
 - Limited administrative and financial capacities to extend the Integrated Waste Management Service across the territory of the municipality.
 - The waste service fee doesn't cover the full cost; this is coupled also with the fee collection that is less than 100%.
 - Municipal administration capacity building and monitoring of waste collection and disposal according to the minimum affordable standards and local fees of the service.
 - Increasing awareness of the local citizens to dump household waste in two separate bins.
 - Continuation of investment in Bushat landfill, because all stages of the project haven't been completed. Bushat landfill management remains a challenge after it will be fully built.
 - Separation of waste at the source in accordance with the MTE decision (legal requirements).
 - Construction of new landfill in some municipalities.

Table 33

27.4. Improve integrated waste management

	Local IWM plan designed, planned in MTBP	Collection and deposition of urban waste of the municipality is done according to the local IWM Plan	The recyclable waste of the municipal territory is recycled according to the objectives of the local MIM Plan (from recycling companies / or public enterprises)	Number of unauthorized landfills in the municipality territory	Number of authorized landfill sites/incinerators in the territory of the municipality	Waste is separated at the source according to legislation	Distance to the center of the municipality from the nearest landfill
Belsh	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	30
Berat	No	Yes	No	3	2	No	5
Bulqize	No	Yes	No	3	0	No	1.5
Cerrik	No	No	No	0	0	No	18
Delvine	Ne Proces	Yes	No	0	1	No	11
Devoll	No	No	Yes	42	1	No	32
Diber	Yes	Yes	No	3	1	No	2
Divjake	No	Yes	No	0	4	No	7.2
Dropull	Yes	No	No	0	1	No	4
Durres	No	Yes	No	0	4	No	7
Elbasan	Yes	Yes	No data	0	2	No	22
Fier	No	No	No	0	1	No	12
Finiq	Yes	Yes	No	3	1	No	9
Fushe Arrez	No	No	No	0	1	No	80
Gjirokaster	No	Yes	No	5	0	No	43
Gramsh	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	50
Has	Yes	No	No	0	1	No	3
Himare	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	Yes	75
Kamez	No	No	No	1	0	No	20
Kavaje	Yes	Yes	No	4	0	No	60
Kelcyre	No	No	No	0	0	No	No data
Klos	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	20
Kolonje	No	No	No	0	1	No	12
Konispol	Yes	Yes	No	0	0	No	60
Korce	Yes	Yes	Yes	0	1	Yes	14
Kruje	No	No	No	2	2	No	6
Kucove	No	Yes	No	0	2	No	3.5
Kukes	Yes	Yes	No	0	2	No	6
Kurbini	Yes	Yes	No	4	0	No	44.7
Lezhe	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	25%
Libohove	Yes	Partially	No	4	1	No	50
Librazhd	No	No	No	1	0	No	24
Lushnje	No	No	No	0	4	No	55
Malesi e Madhe	Yes	Partially	No	4	1	No	45
Maliq	No	Yes	No	0	1	No	2
Mallakaster	No	No	No	0	1	No	5
Mat	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	3
Memaliaj	In process	Yes	Partially	1	0	No data	No data
Mirdite	No	No	No	0	2	No	6
Patos	No	No	No	2	1	No	5
Peqin	Yes	No	No	6	1	No	3
Permet	Yes	No	No	0	1	No	3
Pogradec	Yes	Yes	No data	0	1	No	15
Polican	No	Yes	No	0	1	No	3
Prrenjas	No	No	No	0	1	No	5
Puke	Yes	Yes	No	0	2	No	4
Pustec	No	No data	No	2	2	No	2
Roskovec	No	No	No	0	1	No	4.5
Rrogozhine	Yes	Yes	Yes	0	0	No	3
Sarande	No	Yes	No	0	2	No	17
Selenice	No data	Yes	No	3	1	No	3
Shijak	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	16
Shkoder	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	16
Skrapar	Yes	Yes	No	3	2	No	2
Tepelene	No	Yes	No	0	1	No	70
Tirane	Yes	Yes	Yes	No data	1	No	7
Tropoje	No	Yes	No	5	2	No	2.6
Ura Vajgurore	Yes	Yes	No	0	1	No	3
Vau i Dejes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No data	1	No	10
Vlore	Yes	Yes	Partially	0	2	No	2
Vore	No	Yes	No	0	1	No	8

Specific objective: Enforcement of task force decision on acoustic pollution in urban centers and coastal tourist areas

Enforcement of task force decision on acoustic pollution in urban centers and coastal tourist areas is one of the objectives of the National Strategy for Environment 2018-2030 and a priority of the National Plan for European Integration. Following the legal obligations provided for by Law no. 9774/2007 "On the Evaluation and Management of Noise in the Environment", the municipalities have to draft and adopt local action plans about noise in residential areas, noise evaluation process, defining of quiet areas in a residential or open environment, and about imposing sanctions against breaches of the law by different subjects.

- About 49% of the municipalities have established the task force for acoustic pollution, while 44% of the municipalities hadn't established it yet by the end of 2018; 7% of the municipalities didn't provide data.
- A total of 88 inspectors were employed in 2018 with an average number of inspectors, (N=30).
- 7 trainings were organized in 2018 for the municipality inspectors about acoustic pollution, legal framework and measures at the local level.

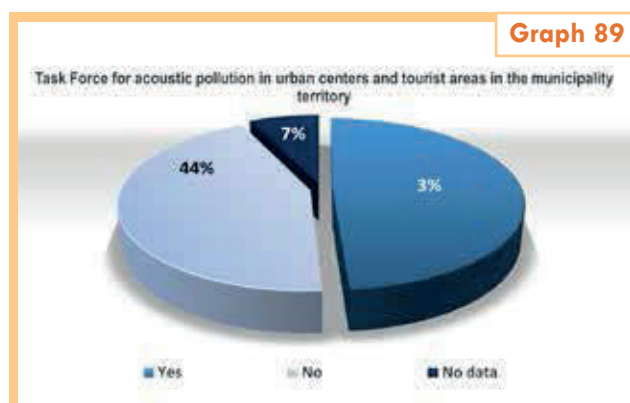


Table 34

27.5. Strengthen implementation of task force decisions on acoustic pollution in urban centers and coastal tourist areas

	No. of municipal police inspectors in the task force raised for acoustic pollution in urban centers and tourist areas in the municipality territory	No. of trainings in which the municipal police inspector participated in acoustic pollution
Belsh	0	0
Berat	3	0
Bulqize	No data	0
Cerrik	0	0
Delvine	0	0
Devoll	0	0
Diber	5	0
Divjake	2	0
Dropull	1	0
Durres	2	0
Elbasan	No data	0
Fier	0	0
Finiq	0	0
Fushe Arrez	2	2
Gjirokaster	0	0
Gramsh	0	0
Has	1	0
Himare	0	0
Kamez	0	0
Kavaje	17	3
Kelcyre	2	0
Klos	5	0
Kolonje	11	0
Konispol	0	0
Korce	1	0
Kruje	0	0
Kucove	0	0
Kukes	0	0
Kurbín	2	0
Lezhe	No data	No data
Libohove	2	0
Librazhd	1	0
Lushnje	1	0
Malesi e Madhe	0	0
Maliq	0	0
Mallakaster	0	0
Mat	1	0
Memaliaj	4	No data
Mirdite	2	0
Patos	0	0
Peqin	0	0
Permet	1	0
Pogradec	2	1
Polican	0	0
Prrenjas	0	0
Puke	3	0
Pustec	0	0
Roskovec	0	0
Rrogozhine	0	0
Sarande	1	0
Selenice	3	No data
Shijak	8	0
Shkoder	0	0
Skrapar	1	1
Tepelene	0	0
Tirane	No data	No data
Tropoje	1	0
Ura Vajgurore	1	0
Vau I Dejes	1	0
Vlore	1	0
Vore	0	0

Problems and challenges

- The number of inspectors to check acoustic problems is small in big municipalities, in which the problems are more evident. This is combined with lack of knowledge and training on the requirements stipulated by Law no. 9774, dated 12.07.2007 “On the Evaluation and Management of Noise in the Environment”.
- Tasks forces in charge of enforcing the decision on acoustic pollution in urban centers and coastal tourist areas aren’t trained to carry out their functions properly.
- Lack of equipment that enables the inspectors to measure the acoustic pollution in dB (decibel) and impose fines on entities breaching the allowed level.

Specific objective: Integration of the climate change risks into local plans in harmony with national priorities and objectives

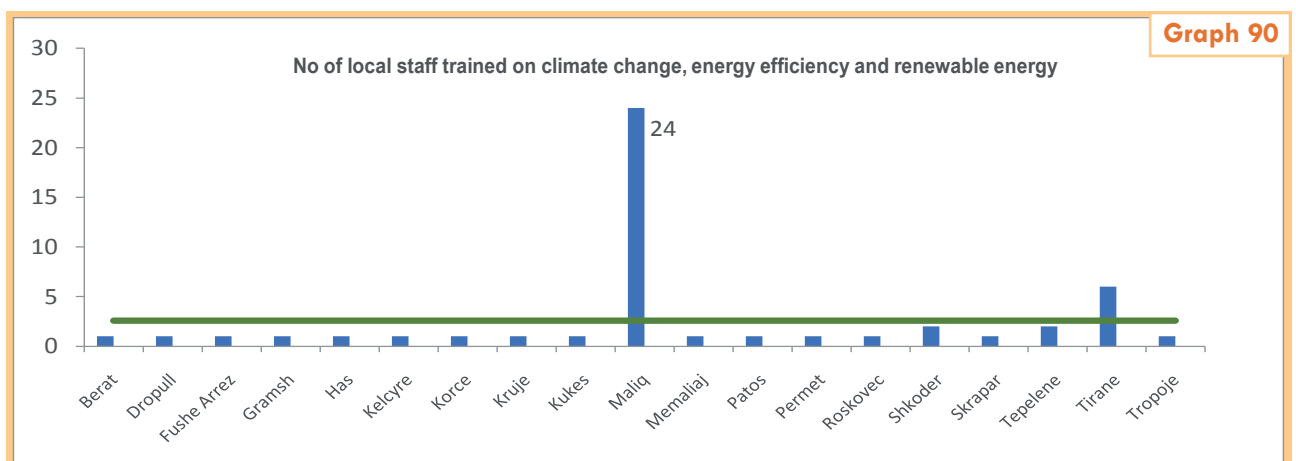
- 66% of the municipalities have drafted and adopted the local action plan regarding the mitigation of climate change risks in line with national priorities and objectives, while 25% of the municipalities haven’t drafted the local plan.

Specific objective: Increasing the capability to adapt to the advertising effects of climate change at the local level

Municipalities should collect and record climate data together, draft reports about the actions, which are planned to mitigate and

adapt to climate change and to reduce CO₂ emissions by achieving the above mentioned objectives in the framework of the implementation of the National Action plan of the strategic document on the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and objectives under the Climate Change Convention⁶⁷.

- Around 8% of the municipalities have collected and recorded climate data together, while 75% of the municipalities haven’t collected such data; around 16% of the municipalities haven’t provided any data.
- Concerning capacity building of experts on climate change at the local level, around 31% of the municipalities reported that, at least, one local staff member was trained in 2018; 61% of the municipalities didn’t participate in any trainings; 8% of the municipalities didn’t provide any data related to this indicator.
- The data concerning the local budget and other funds for environment friendly investment projects addressing adaptation to climate change and reducing CO₂ emissions in line with local plans (i.e. coastal municipalities) have been very limited to the extent that it couldn’t be possible to generalize the findings; only 3 municipalities allocated budget with an average amount f around 5,000,000 Albanian Leks; 82% of the municipalities didn’t allocate any local budget in 2017 for projects for addressing adaptation to climate change and reducing CO₂ emissions, while 13% of the municipalities provided either incorrect data or no data at all.



67 United Nations Climate Change Conference

The municipalities have highlighted that there is a need to provide more monitoring equipment and parallel policies to remove old vehicles that pollute the environment. Air protection measures need to be strongly enforced, and municipali-

ties should start imposing severe fines on all polluters (not just cars but also businesses, such as restaurants or small production shops that cause air pollution through the emission of the cooking smoke into the air).

Table 35

27.6.1. Integrate the risks of climate change into local plans in harmony with national priorities and objectives
27.6.2. Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change at the local level

	Local Plan drafted/updated by municipalities most vulnerable to climate change that has integrated the dangers of climate change, mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change.	Budget spent on local investment projects (friendly) addressing adaptation to climate change and reduction of CO ₂ emissions in line with local plans and priority areas for the most vulnerable municipalities	Collecting and keeping climatic data together with reports on measures taken or planned to mitigate and adapt to climate change;	Number of trained specialists on climate change, energy efficiency, and renewable energies
Belsh	No	0%	No	0
Berat	Yes	No	No	1
Bulqize	No	0	No data	0
Cerrik	No	0	No	0
Delvine	Yes	0	No data	0
Devoll	Yes	3	Yes	0
Diber	No	5,000.00 €	No data	0
Divjake	No	0	No	0
Dropull	No	0	No	1
Durres	No	0	No	0
Elbasan	No data	No data	No data	No data
Fier	No	0	No	0
Finiq	No	0	No	0
Fushe Arrez	No process	0	No	1
Gjirokaster	No	0	No	0
Gramsh	No	0	No	1
Has	No	0	No	1
Himare	Yes	0.20%	No	0
Kamez	No	0	No	0
Kavaje	No	0.00%	No	0
Kelcyre	No	0	No	1
Klos	No	547200	No	0
Kolonje	No	0	No	0
Konispol	No	0	No	0
Korce	Yes	0	No	1
Kruje	No	No	No	1
Kucove	No	No	Yes	0
Kukes	No	0	No	1
Kurbini	No	No	No	0
Lezhe	No data	No data	No data	No data
Libohove	No	0	No	0
Librazhd	No	0	No	0
Lushnje	No	0	No	0
Malesi e Madhe	No	0	No	0
Maliq	No	0	Yes	24
Mallakaster	No	0	No	0
Mat	No	0	No	0
Memaliaj	No data	No data	No data	1
Mirdite	No	0%	No	0
Patos	No	No	No	1
Peqin	No	0	No	0
Permet	No	0	No	1
Pogradec	No	0	No	0
Polican	No	No	No	0
Prrenjas	No	No	No	0
Puke	No	0	No	0
Pustec	No data	No data	No data	No data
Roskovec	No	0	No	1
Rrogozhine	No	0	No	0
Sarande	No	0	No	0
Selenice	No data	No data	No data	No data
Shijak	No	0	No	0
Shkoder	Yes	13815000	Yes	2
Skrapar	No	0	No	1
Tepelene	No	0	No	2
Tirane	Yes	No data	Yes	6
Tropoje	Yes	0	No	1
Ura Vajgurore	No data	No data	No data	No data
Vau i Dejës	No	0	No	0
Vlore	No	No	No data	0
Vore	No	0	No	0

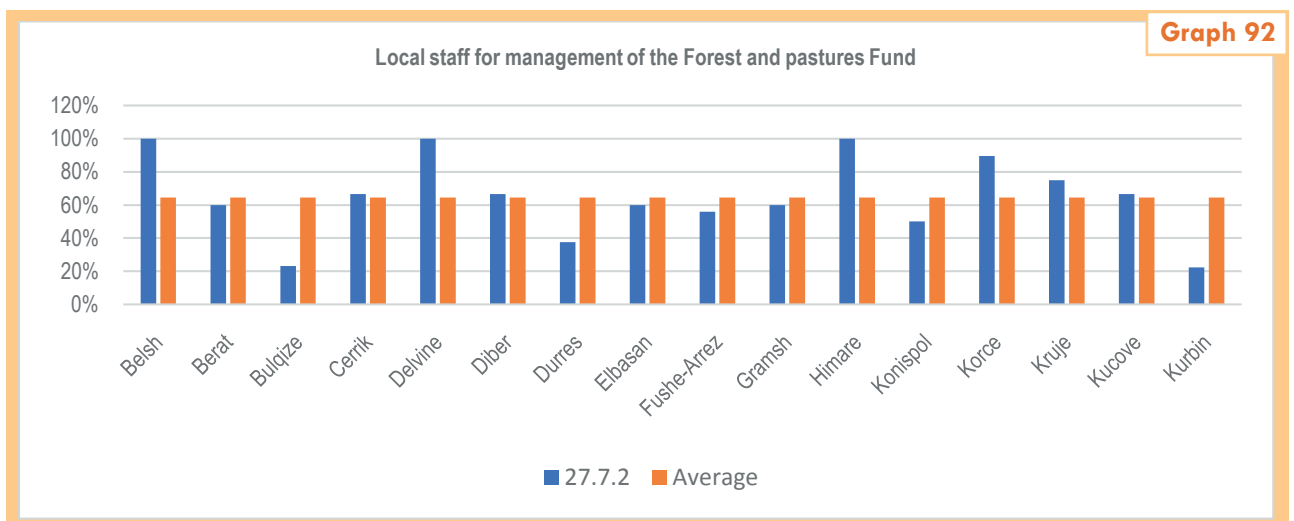
Specific objective: Afforestation of degraded areas through recycling in the destination of forest resources revenues and arrears of entities operating in the forestry fund

The national legal framework⁶⁸ on the forest and pastures management regulates the management of the national fund (protected areas), local government fund and private entities fund in compliance with legal requirements and standards as stipulated by the legislation. While protected areas are managed by the National Agency for the Protected Areas, the municipalities are responsible for the management of the forest and pastures of their territory based on the operation plan at the local level. 103 employees were transferred to 58 municipalities upon the Decision of the Council of Ministers (433/2016) on the transferring of this function to the local government.

The results of a study in 2018 on the evaluation of the performance of the newly transferred functions including forest and pastures management⁶⁹, revealed that the number of local employees dedicated to this function is lower than the number (standard) stipulated by the law.

The specific objective is assessed by means of three indicators:

- The municipality capacity for drafting operational local plan: about 59% of the municipalities have drafted and adopted the operational local plan regarding the management of the forests and pastures fund under the law; 33% of the municipalities haven't drafted the operational plan yet; 8% of the municipalities didn't provide any data.
- About 26% of the municipalities have provided correct data about the number of local staff members working on the management



68 The Law no. 49/2016 "On the National Fund of Forests and Pastures Management"
 69 Supported by dldp and MFE (2018)

4.11. Chapter 27: Environment and climate change

of forest and pastures fund in conformity with the standard as stipulated by the law, while 74% of the municipalities provided either incorrect data or no data at all.

- The municipalities employment for this function was 65%, on average, in 2018.

- About 66% of the municipalities have set up the database for private entities with activities in the management of the forest and pastures fund of the municipality, while 25% of the municipalities didn't have such database operational at the end of 2018.

Table 36

27.7. Afforestation of degraded areas through recycling in the destination of forest resource income and obligations of entities operating in the forestry fund

	Local Action Plan for Sustainable Management of Forests and Pastures developed	No. of specialists for forest fund management in the municipality against the number of specialists according to the requirements of the legislation	Development of databases on the subjects that exercise activity on the forest and pasture fund of the Municipality
Belsh	Yes	1	Yes
Berat	Yes	3/5	No
Bulqize	No	6/26	Yes
Cerrik	No	2/3	No
Delvine	No	6	Yes
Devoll	No data	No data	No data
Diber	Yes	4/6	Yes
Divjake	Yes	1	No
Dropull	Yes	2	Yes
Durrës	No	3/8	Yes
Elbasan	Yes	62.00%	Yes
Fier	Yes	2	Yes
Finiq	Yes	4	Yes
Fushe Arrez	No	14/25	No
Gjirokaster	No	1	Yes
Gramsh	Yes	60%	Yes
Has	No	5	Yes
Himare	No	9/9	Yes
Kamez	No	0	No
Kavaje	Yes	1	No
Kelcyre	No	3	Yes
Klos	Yes	11	Yes
Kolonje	Yes	7	Yes
KonisYesl	Yes	1/2	Yes
Korce	No	17/19	Yes
Kruje	Yes	6/8	Yes
Kuovë	No	2/3	Yes
Kukes	Yes	25	Yes
Kurbini	Yes	2/9	Yes
Lezhe	Yes	No data	Yes
Libohovë	Yes	1	No
Librazhd	Yes	9	Yes
Lushnje	No	3	Yes
Malesi e Madhe	Yes	14	Yes
Maliq	Yes	24/10	Yes
Mallakaster	No	2	No
Mat	No	0	No
Memaliaj	No data	1	No data
Mirdite	No	17/35	Yes
Patos	No	2	No
Peqin	Yes	4	No
Permet	Yes	3	Yes
Yesgradec	Yes	14/13	Yes
Yeslican	Yes	4/6	Yes
Prrenjas	Yes	10/10	Yes
Puke	Yes	15	No
Pustec	No data	2	No data
Roskovec	No	0	Yes
Rrogozhine	Yes	1/2	Yes
Sarandë	Yes	1	Yes
Selenice	Yes	5	No data
Shijak	Yes	2	No
Shkoder	Yes	56.00%	Yes
Skrapar	No	23/23	No
Tepelene	No data	2	Yes
Tirane	No data	No data	Ne process
TroYesje	Yes	0	Yes
Ura Vajgurore	Yes	1/1	Yes
Vau i Dejes	Yes	0.63	Yes
Vlore	No	0	No data
Vore	Yes	2	No

Problems and challenges

- Limited financial and technical capacities to draft the local operational plan regarding the management of the forest and pastures fund and to setup the database of the private operators, which carry out activities in the forest fund of the municipality.
- Increasing human resources for the proper management and inspection of the Municipal Forest and Pasture Fund in compliance with the standard as stipulated by the law.
- Limited financial resources for regular capacity building of the local staff working on the forest fund and management.
- Recruitment of forest specialists should be carried out under the legal requirements.

CONCLUSIONS ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Concerning awareness-raising and local government capacity building about their role in protecting the environment, 107 local staff members were trained in 2018; about 20% of the municipalities haven't participated in the capacity building program on environment issues. 75% of the municipalities organized a total of 241 activities about awareness-raising and education of young generations; about 25% of the municipalities have provided either incorrect data or no data at about awareness-raising activity regarding the protection of the environment and nature. Environmental issues should be included in the curriculum of primary school education. Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment should take initiatives to include environment protection subject in the education curricula of the school similar to subjects such as citizenship, music and so on. Education and awareness-raising efforts should start in the early childhood age in order to be most effective and sustainable through adulthood.

Slow progress has been made towards drafting the action plan to improve the quality of environmental air at the local level. 25% of the municipalities have adopted local Action Plan

(LAP) for the improvement of the air quality, while 67% of the municipalities haven't drafted the LAP yet; 28% of the municipalities have integrated the local measures of the improvement of the air quality into the strategic document of the municipality including the MTBP.

Progress is reported towards improving integrated waste management. About 49% of the municipalities have drafted and adopted the Waste Management Plan, which is part of MTBP (the percentage of this indicator is higher compared to 2017), while 46% of the municipalities didn't have such iWMP; 64% of the municipalities have managed solid waste collection and waste disposal in dumpsites according to their local management plan (this shows improvement compared to 2017, when it was 43%); around 85% of the municipalities don't recycle the municipal waste, and around 95% of the municipalities weren't able to manage the municipality waste in two separate streams; around 71 authorized disposal sites were reported by the municipalities for 2018, which means 1 disposal site, on average.

No particular progress is made in terms of enforcing the task force decision on acoustic pollution in urban centers and coastal tourist areas. 44% of the municipalities hadn't established the acoustic pollution task force yet at the end of 2018; there is a total of 88 inspectors or 3 inspectors per municipality, on average; 7 trainings were organized for the for acoustic pollution, inspectors of the municipalities about the legal framework and measures at the local level.

More efforts are needed in terms of integrating the climate change risks into the local plans in harmony with national priorities and objectives. 66% of the municipalities have drafted and adopted the local action plan for the mitigation of climate change risks in line with national priorities and objectives, but around 75% of the municipalities haven't yet collected and recorded data on climate change. 61% of the municipalities didn't participate

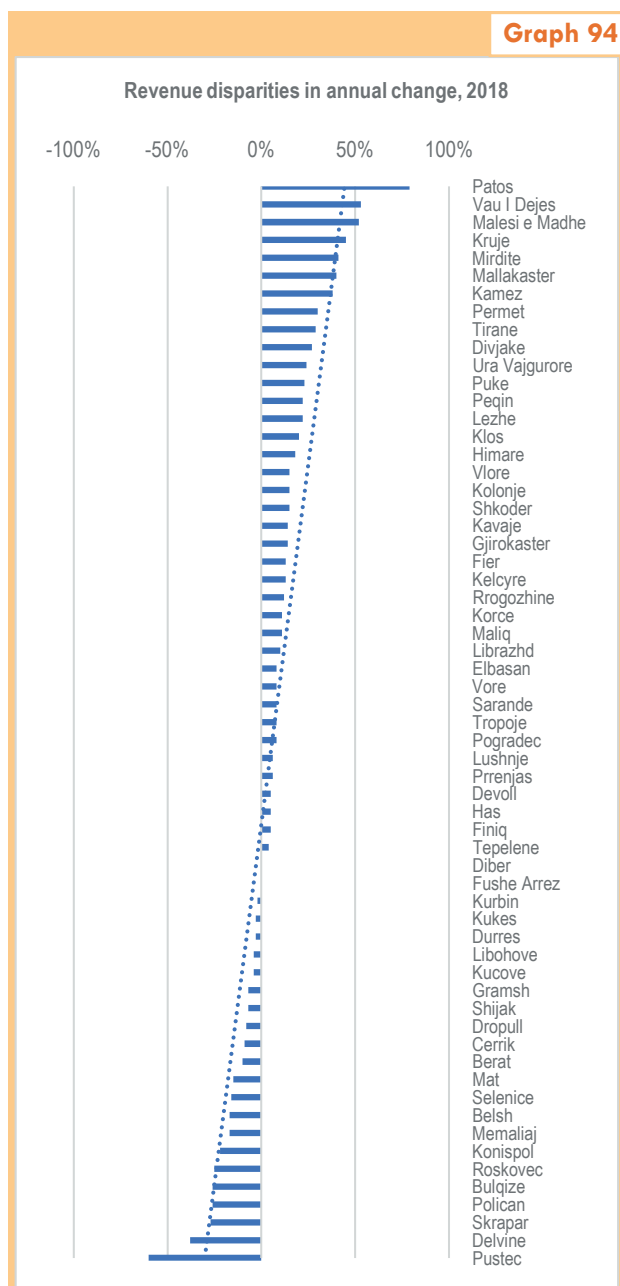
in any training on climate change.

Slow progress is made towards local capacities building regarding the effective management of forest and pastures fund and afforestation of degraded areas through recycling in the destination of forest resource revenues. Around 33% of the municipalities haven't developed any operational plan for the management of forest and pastures fund. The municipalities' number of staff for this function was 65%, on average, in 2018 compared to the forest specialist standard. Concerning the database of private entities with activities in the management of the forest and pastures fund of the municipality, around 25% of the municipalities didn't have such database operational at the end of 2018.

4.12. Chapter 32: Financial Control

The 2018 annual budget including the local government own revenues, the unconditional transfers, and conditional transfers were 49.6 billion Albanian Lek or 10.4% of the State Budget or 3.1% of the GDP. The 2018 local budget was 7% higher than that of 2017. The pool of the unconditional transfer increased to 23,4 billion Albanian Lek in 2018. The RDF continues to be the single most important source of funding large infrastructure projects at the local level; 2% of the personal income tax collection was pending in 2018; changes to the regulatory framework on the property tax (a value-based system) regarding the tax on buildings is important for the own source revenues of the municipalities, but it is still not functional.⁷⁰

MoFE has implemented the Financial Planning Tool, which is an instrument that has brought harmonization of the classification of municipal expenditures according to budget programs, including harmonized tables and reporting templates, while the help-desk provided to LGUs by the MoFE and training activities on the PFM have improved technical capacities of the local administration during 2018.



Local government revenues from local taxes and fees have increased by 19% at the national level compared to 2017, although there are still disparities among the individual performance of the municipalities. About one-third of the municipalities have collected less revenues in 2018 compared to 2017, whereas 50% of the municipalities have experienced a revenues decrease from 15% to 60% less than in 2017 (municipalities small in

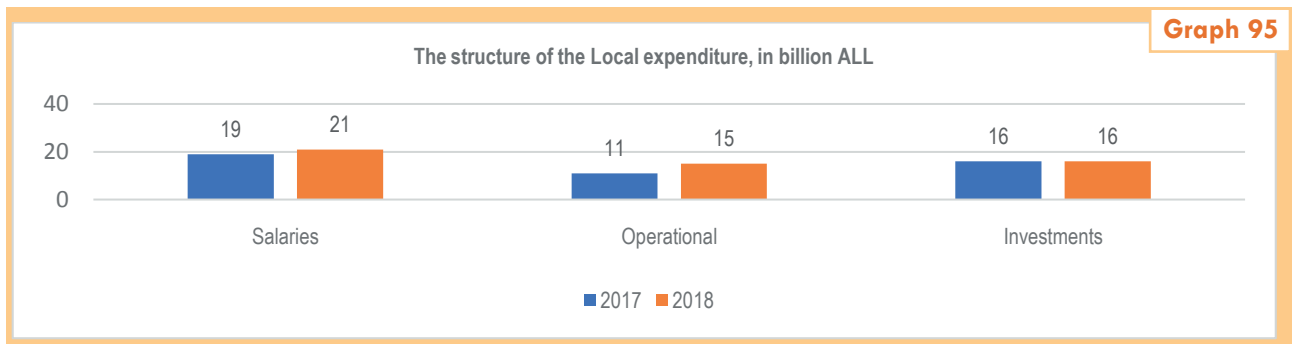
70 MTR NCCSDLG (MFE and dldp supported)

size and population). About two-thirds of the municipalities have collected more revenues in 2018 compared to 2017 ranging from 10% to 79%. Part of this increase and decrease comes from the infrastructure impact tax, which is linked with the requests to build in the territory of the municipality.⁷¹

Local Government own revenues were 23.8 billion Albanian Lek in 2018 compared to

After a three-year decline period, 2009-2012, the local government expenditure has increased in moderate terms in 2012-2015. Following the TAR implementation and the transfer of new functions (2016), the local government expenditure in 2016 increased by 28%, followed by an increase of 7% in 2017 and 2018⁷².

The staff expenditures were around 42%

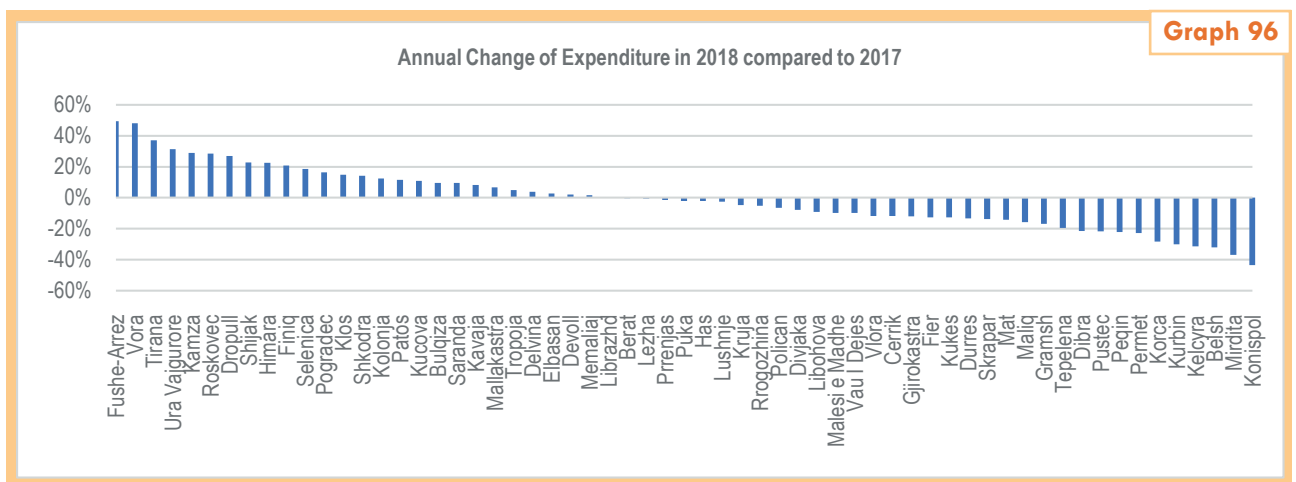


20.3 billion Albanian Lek in 2017.

Shared taxes: 1.3 billion Albanian Leks in 2018 compared to 1.2 billion Albanian Leks in 2017.

Unconditional and conditional transfers: 24.8 billion Albanian Lek in 2018 compared to 21.9 billion Albanian Lek in 2017.

of the total expenditure, which includes the salaries of the staff transferred in relation to the five new functions including: education, irrigation and drainage (agriculture), rural roads, forest and pastures management, firefighting and rescue centers. Operational expenditures have slightly increases in 2018



The revenues for the Small Business Tax were at the same level in 2018 compared to 2017 (0.3 billion Albanian Lek) – this tax has undergone more reforms than any other local government tax.

compared to 2017 (29% of the local government expenditure). Expenditures for subsidies or other uses to cover other important local functions have undergone some minor changes.

71 Source: 2018 Annual Report on Local Public Finances
 72 Source: 2018 Annual Report on Local Public Finances

Capital expenditure has amounted to 14.2 billion Albanian Lek or 29% of the local government expenditure (or 2 billion Albanian Lek less than in 2017).⁷³

Problems and challenges

- Municipalities should plan in the long-term period based on their strategic development documents.
- Insufficient fund for large infrastructure projects.
- Limited financial resources to settle the arrears with third parties,
- Limited human and professional capacities for regular internal audits and controls by the municipal council.

One of the problems faced when drafting this report was the high discrepancy between the data reported by the municipalities and the data reported by the Ministry of Finance and Economy in the annual local government financial report. This shows again the insufficient capacities of municipalities to maintain and report the data, combined also with the lack of accountability of the municipal departments to pay attention and get actively involved and support European Integration Units colleagues during the reporting process. The part of financial control was also the place where such problems were persistently noted at the municipalities' data reporting.

CONCLUSIONS ON FINANCIAL CONTROL

The human and technical capacities of the local administration have been improved in regard to the public expenditure management including budget planning capacities and budget execution. The local government revenues from local taxes and fees have increased by 19% at the national level compared to 2017, but there are disparities among the individual performance of the municipalities. About one-third of the municipalities have collected less revenue in 2018 than in 2017; two-thirds of the municipalities have collected more revenues in 2018 compared to 2017 ranging from 10% to 79%. The local government expenditure in 2018 increased by 7% compared to 2017.

73 2018 Annual Report Local Public Finances

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

EU integration is challenging and requires many efforts from central and local administration. The second annual edition of the report “Municipalities in the EU Integration Process of Albania” represents a snapshot of how Albanian municipalities are doing in fulfilling responsibilities as defined by the existing policy and legal framework, and reforming process and also related to the accession process of the country.

In this framework, the following report aims to provide some recommendations on findings of 2018 mapping report “*Municipalities in the EU Integration Process of Albania*”, which is based on the self-assessment performance of municipalities for each indicator. These recommendations will help local and central government to face the challenges arising from the European integration process as well as donors to prioritize areas for their presence and assistance in Albania. It is time to raise LGUs awareness about the importance of local government in the EU integration process in order to fulfill the membership criteria in which local government is responsible within the framework of the functions established in law 139/2015 “On Local Self-Government”. The report is organized through chapters according to the “*Municipalities in the EU Integration Process of Albania*” report.

A. POLITICAL CRITERIA

RECOMMENDATIONS ON DEMOCRACY

Strengthening local government capacity - Trainings:

- To conduct frequent Training Needs Assessment in order to tailor the really needs and gaps of the administration for training.
- To design specific training curricula and training programs tailored to the needs of administration at each level (leadership, managerial and executing level). Trainings should also include the Municipal Councils’ members, especially at the beginning of new mandate of the mayor and council.
- The approach of trainings to be not only theoretical, but also on the job training.
- To develop E-learning training modules as an effective tool to reach all local administration
- Municipalities must plan relevant funds in their Medium term Budget Program for staff training in order to increase their capacities.
- Donors and other relevant structures should provide sufficient budget for the implementation of these trainings.

- Strengthening the meritocratic system in local administration through:
 - Strengthening transparent recruitment procedures and employee performance evaluation based on certain indicators.
 - Strengthening human resource management through further trainings and manuals, continued assistance to municipalities that face difficulties in applying human resource procedures and assistance to municipalities that still have not absorbed the use of the human resource platform.

Increasing the accountability of the local government - Requests / complaints mechanisms

- Municipalities and Administrative Units should be supported in the consolidation of OSS system as an important mechanism that records each request / complaint and monitors the entire flow of procedure until the moment the citizens' request are properly addressed.
- Municipalities should also provide other mechanisms for citizens in order that they have different forms of access / communication channels to address their concerns (requests/complaints). These mechanisms should be accessible in an unrestricted manner for any person that has to address a complaint.
- Every mechanism created should be monitored in order to fully meet citizen's expectations in terms of addressing their complaints.
- It is also important to strengthen political will, because it is critical for the successful implementation of a complaint mechanism.
- In order to have an increased accountability the municipalities have to ensure the

accountabilities linkages. Vertical accountability – Top down between central institutions, horizontal accountability between other involved institutions such as courts, ombudsman, anti – corruption agencies, local government council etc., and bottom up accountabilities, ensuring the involvement of citizens, media and civic organizations.

- Also municipalities need to strengthen their internal control mechanisms, in order to raise their accountability level.

Increasing the transparency of the local government

- Municipalities should strengthen their capacities to use public hearings and address properly all the relevant citizens recommendations when making a decision. Municipality should address the following three issues:
 - How to ensure broad participation of all groups and stakeholders at public hearings?
 - How to inform participants and the broader community about the issues that will be discussed?
 - How to demonstrate that the public recommendations are addressed properly?
- Municipalities need support to find successful ways to engage citizens in policy-making and shaping communities. The involvement of community in decision-making should be a process with geographical disperse, in order to give access also to citizens living in remote areas to raise their voice.
- Increasing cooperation between local civil society organizations and municipalities in order to increase citizens' participation and motivate them to be part of the local decision making.
- It is recommended to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, such as Municipal Council,

Community Structures and Civil Society Organizations in order to ensure the addressing of all relevant recommendations during public hearings.

- Public hearings should go through several phases, in order to be effective, because as a legally required mechanism, the majority of municipalities formally respect them without actually considering the requirements of the community. These phases are:
 1. Identification of different target groups and their problems / requirements;
 2. Evaluation of submitted requests, in order to harmonize them with medium-term strategies and development vision of municipalities;
 3. Selection of requirements / issues to be addressed in municipality planning documents;
 4. Involvement of their requirements in planning and development documents;
 5. Monitoring the implementation of community recommendations / requirements. This phase implies the establishment of monitoring structures with representatives of interest groups and municipalities.
- In addition to public hearings, in the framework of transparency and accountability, one of the instruments that can be used by municipalities is the creation of a standardized and unified database that may include various statistics relevant for citizens and all stakeholders and publish them periodically.

One Stop Shop Offices

- Given the importance and benefits of OSS offices, it is recommended to continuously support and strengthen local capacities in order to provide efficient services and to build trust in the administration and citizens as well as to consolidate OSS procedures as daily practices.
- It is important to consolidate OSS office as

a structure within the municipalities by reviewing their organizational structures and drafting internal regulations by adapting the OSS procedures as internal practices.

- Review of administrative services (especially the protocol phase, which is a crucial phase that would facilitate the digitalization of services and would bring paperless approach) in order to facilitate them further and review of their legal basis in order to consolidate their implementation in OSS system.
- To provide assistance in hardware infrastructure in order to increase the efficiency of OSS system, because there is a lack of infrastructure in most of LGUs.
- It is recommended to ensure the full functioning of all Administrative Units as OSS service points and to increase their capacities in absorbing the system and the new administrative procedures to better serve the citizens.
- Standardization and unification of administrative procedures for the provision of services at the local level. Re-optimization of work processes with the aim of facilitating them, reducing bureaucracy and increasing service delivery efficiency.
- To strengthen local administration capacities in order to fully understand the OSS functionalities and operation and implement it properly:
 - Front office employees, as the first point of contact should have a broad knowledge about all local services. They also should improve ethics and have a sustainable and continuous communication with citizens to better respond to their demands.
 - Back office employees in the absorption of new administrative procedures and in facilitating the use

of the system

- Once the OSS system is implemented, there should be a possibility to integrate services at the local level (OSS model) and services at the national level (ADISA model) into one place (office) to better serve to citizens. All services will be easily accessible by citizens, as well as their quality and standard will be increased.

Improving the municipality capacities of reviewing the Ombudsman reports

- It is necessary to strengthen Ombudsman cooperation with municipalities and to create “binding” mechanisms that the municipalities and all other public institutions take into consideration these important recommendations. Effective institutional cooperation on the level of implementation of recommendations is a good indicator of respecting the principles of good governance at the local level.
- It is recommended that besides the level of cooperation, the Government of Albania should strengthen the monitoring role of the Albanian Parliament to systematically monitor the implementation level of the recommendations.
- Municipalities should increase their capacities in drafting formal responses to the Ombudsman Institution at the required level.
- A reporting mechanism or a unified online system should be established to ensure the collection of accurate and detailed information from the municipalities.

Consolidation of the civil society at local level

- To strengthen civil society at the local level in most of municipalities, in order to increase their watchdog role for local governments, to advocate, to promote and to address better different local issues for different groups, especially in the small and medium

size cities where CSO are not present.

- Government and donors should encourage grassroots local CSOs through different projects and financial instruments to be more active in playing their role and increase the civil society’s awareness of the influential power it has in local politics.
- It is necessary to find inclusive mechanisms, to increase the confidence of civil society and its activism in local decision-making, along with increasing their capacities in order to enable them to communicate their concerns and the concerns of community in an effective and credible manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON RULE OF LAW

- Drafting Local Anti-Corruption Plans for each municipality, as an objective envisioned in the 2015-2020 Cross-cutting Anti-Corruption Strategy in order to identify specific areas subject to corruption in the municipality, the drafting of the code of conduct and corruption reporting not only from municipal employees, and to bring a vision for combating corruption within the municipality. It is important to engage municipalities by allocating special budget items for the implementation of these plans, in order to ensure their effectiveness.
- Building the capacities of municipalities for drafting Anti-Corruption Local Plans. The capacities should be built through relevant trainings from Ministry of Justices.
- Municipalities should build a system to report, to track and to solve corruption cases. They should also establish some internal rules to follow on corruption risks at local level as well as establish some sanctions for administrative violations in order to reduce corruption cases.
- Strengthen local administrative capacities through trainings/workshops on anti-corruption issues and legislation in force.
- Local CSOs should increase their role on the fight against corruption; increase their

knowledge and capacities in monitoring and raising awareness on community and local administration about anti-corruption issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

- Increasing knowledge and awareness on the human rights standards for local public officials through various trainings/workshops.
- Increase the cooperation of municipalities and CSOs that have a focus on human rights.
- Development of residential centers for urgent cases and provision of social housing for individuals in need, ensuring the right of housing for every person.
- The following issues need to be addressed to enable their institutional solution, reflecting the increased responsibility of the Albanian government:
 - Increasing citizen's trust in the human rights protection referral system, because however there is a good and functional system, it has been often noted formal responses and deviations from institutional competences.
 - There is a high number of issues of public interest that are represented before the domestic courts, the Constitutional Court and the Strasbourg Court, related to: human rights violations for water, the provision of adequate health care, a clean and healthy environment, non-discrimination and equality, the right to vote, the right not to be subjected to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to compensation in cases of natural disasters, the right to information, public consultation, etc.
 - Violation of transparency principle and open government, due to implementation level of the law on public notification and consultation by institutions at central and local level, failing to respect the requirements for public consultation deadlines and procedures. This means those public institutions have yet work to do in implementing all the law requirements.

B. ECONOMIC CRITERIA

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE EXISTENCE OF A FUNCTIONING MARKET ECONOMY

- The municipalities' role in economic development should be supported not only by General Local Plans which is mainly focused on planning and regulating: ensuring the livability of an area by regulating where, when and how business activities can occur; but also by Sectoral Local Plans, in order to support the development of the local economy and its business base through programs and services that help firms do better and facilitating investments into the local area. There is a huge need for assistance in designing such plans that goes beyond territorial planning, but instead integrate economic development with other sectors, such as industry, enterprises, agriculture and agro-processing, tourism etc. within one territory.
- Municipalities should establish an agenda for tourism development, as this industry is one of the few current viable strategies for economic development, especially in rural areas. Tourism may be also considered an option for the local development of an area, either alone or complementary with other economic activities.
- All municipalities should draft the Tourism Development Plans with clear orientations and measures, supported by short and mid-term actions, aiming to address prominent challenges, as well as guide and coordinate sustainable tourism development from a land use planning perspective within an area.
- Municipalities should find instruments to encourage new business start-ups, local initiatives and business incubators. Municipalities should also use social fund to integrate groups in need and involve them in local development initiatives. The social fund is a new financial mechanism that guarantees social services in each municipality.
- Municipalities should find local mechanisms in order to strengthen the engagement of local business sector with municipal council on business issues as well as with other key stakeholders.
- Municipalities should create a more supportive and competitive business environment via leadership and policymaking. They should also promote various pro-business initiatives.
- Investing in basic infrastructure that will reduce the cost of business and increase the ease of doing business.
- Improving local services for business community by facilitating the administrative procedures through OSS systems.
- Municipalities with culture heritage monuments and places must be supported to carry out mapping of the culture heritage monuments by assessing the situation in each of the culture heritage sites in terms of facilities serving to tourists' needs and services in order to attract more tourists and enable them to provide quality services;

C. ABILITY TO ASSUME MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

General recommendations regarding to the EU integration process:

- Support LGUs to increase their capacities to benefit from EU funds in particular to mid-size and small municipalities by means of training and hands on support throughout the cycle of EU-funded projects.
- Evaluation of the performance of the municipalities in the framework of the European integration process.
- Strengthen the capacities of the new EU Integration office and support them to effectively carry out information dissemination campaign on the EU integration process at local level (both with local administration and citizens) in order to increase knowledge and to awareness about the responsibility in this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- To accelerate the transfer of all functions and competences from the former Agricultural Directorates to the structures created for the agriculture sector in the municipalities, according to the law of local self-government.
- Strengthening the structure of the agriculture sector in the municipality and organizing them with specialists of relevant education in this field.
- Increase access to information that the municipality has to provide in relation to the agricultural sector by using information tools for all categories of population implicated in this sector.
- Implementation of an information system for agricultural information and agricultural advisory offices for farmers. Creating a database for the agricultural sector would not only assist the municipality in monitoring the sector but would also reflect the situation more clearly, enabling valuable fore-

casts and strategies for finding and orienting markets in favor of farmers and groups of interest.

- Neighboring municipalities should be coordinated in the implementation and maintenance of agricultural infrastructure by ensuring coherence and prioritization in infrastructure interventions according to the impacts they will have on the territory of two or more municipalities.
- Increasing capacities regarding to the administration of grant financial schemes by conducting trainings/workshops for specialists in the agricultural sector in the municipality.
- Municipalities should regularly inform all farmers and groups of interest on the grant funding schemes, ensuring equal access for all interested parties, along with coordination with the central government in order that assistance and support is provided to them for successfully applying to the grant 'schemes.
- Raising awareness of farmers, groups of interest and associations that work on agriculture sector to be more active and to participate in municipal decision-making.
- To develop criteria for asymmetric decentralization in different issues in interest of central government related to agriculture and rural development in order to better execute this function.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FOOD SAFETY, VETERINARY AND PHYTOSANITARY POLICIES

- Municipalities should undertake campaigns in order to raise awareness and to orient costumers towards monitored and licensed markets.
- Identification of informal markets, strengthening of controls by municipal structures and reconciliation with relevant state structures as state police for these informal mar-

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kets in order to improve trading conditions, promote fair competition and contribute to the process of local economic development.

- Creating as many opportunities for traders as possible, for example, the creation of movable and temporary or daily markets where traders can sell their products according to a defined calendar and specific areas. This will be a greater opportunity for traders to sell their products and an opportunity for shoppers to have more access to markets. It may also contribute to lower tax evasion and increase municipality revenues.
- Conducting trainings/workshops by experts in this field in order to increase the knowledge of municipal inspectors about food control.
- Municipalities need to identify (through the undertaking of a proper study) the production capacities (businesses) that operate in their territory in order to support the central initiative of Albanian Government in facilitating import-export.. It has been evidenced by Albanian businesses the necessity of signing bilateral agreements with the countries of the region for the bilateral unification of agricultural certificates for different products. Certainly, this policy should be undertaken by the central institutions but will be reflected in the strengthening of the control competences of the municipalities.
- To develop criteria for asymmetric decentralization in different issues in interest of central government related to food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policies in order to better execute this function.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRANSPORT POLICY

- Determination of priority road axes according to the benefits they bring to citizens and intervening in the rehabilitation or construction of these road segments.
- Municipalities should promote competition between transport operators, thus promoting the achievement of the highest quality standards in public transportation.
- Application of strict penalties for adminis-

trative violations that can be carried out by the operators of the transportation lines.

- It is important that the Ministry responsible for transport undertakes an initiative to set some standards for drafting urban transport maps in the same format in each municipality.
- Encourage of municipalities to publish bus schedules on any bus station and transport maps in order to increase the knowledge of the citizens and to influence the quality of private urban companies.
- Development of multi-modal stations as foreseen in the General Local Plans approved by each municipality.
- To develop criteria for asymmetric decentralization on transport policies in interest of central government to better execute this function.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENERGY

- Municipalities should undertake informative campaigns for the citizens regarding to energy efficiency, by raising awareness and encouraging the adoption of more efficient energy consumption models.
- Application of soft loans and other financial schemes to help citizens to intervene in their homes in order to increase energy efficiency.
- Application of facilitating fiscal policies for private entities that undertake their intervention costs to increase energy efficiency and use of alternative sources of energy.
- To develop criteria for asymmetric decentralization on different issues related to energy in interest of central government.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON TAXES

- Identifying tax system weaknesses and identifying opportunities for improvement.
- Strengthening, improving and clarifying local tax revenue administration and policies.
- Identifying mechanisms how to promote effective, efficient and legitimate local government tax systems and tax administrations.

- Increasing local government fiscal autonomy, which means more autonomy to local governments in raising own-source revenues. The ability of local governments to raise local own-source revenue through taxes provides increased accountability to citizens.
- Revenue raising of LGUs should be concentrated on four robust and efficient broad-based taxes:
 - personal income, assessed on a more comprehensive basis;
 - business income, designed to support economic growth;
 - rents on natural resources and land; and
 - private consumption.
- Local government needs to be more transparent on whether the local taxes are being used to finance expenditures that are responsive to the needs and preferences of citizens.
- Reviewing and redefining the legal framework for local taxes and tariffs especially property tax, urban land tax, value based tax on buildings, etc.
- The gradual increase of the percentage of GDP of the unconditional transfer allocated to LGUs from Central Government as a need to increase the financing to Local Government.
- Review of the allocation of the conditional transfer from the state budget to increase the efficiency and financing of local strategic projects.
- The government should establish more transparent means of dealing with community ideas about the tax system by extending their websites and further developing its use.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SOCIAL POLICY AND EMPLOYMENT

Staff and Trainings

- Municipalities should provide sufficient staff under the legislation in force to

meet all the needs of the groups in need and should increase their capacities through continuous trainings for the various target groups' problems in order to offer social services with quality and efficiency.

- The employees of CPUs (Child Protection Units) in each municipality should be specialized and have adequate education and training in the treatment of children and families (social worker or psychologists) and should be trained on a follow-up of specific cases as well as referral system.

Social Plans

- Revision of the first Local Social Plans with the aim to harmonize social plans with the approved legal framework and national strategies.
- Identification and measurement of real needs for each marginalized group and involving all of these groups in the social plans, in order to draft realistic ones. Municipalities should also consider to address the problems/needs of their rural territories in the social plans.
- Revision of social plans during their implementation phases as social plans that have long-term objectives must be measurable and achievable as well as break down into activities and programs and focus on the services effectiveness.

Social Services

- Municipalities should also prioritize the possibility of strengthening the social competences of the Administrative Units as the closest unit to the community. Also, it should have a distribution of social services in all territories, in both rural and urban areas.
- Support municipalities in the establishment of direct services, so that different groups in need receive the right and quality social services. Also, it is necessary to define service standards and costs per unit.

- Creating a database for different indicators related to social services for different vulnerable groups as well as a database for all referral cases in order to manage local data efficiently and to address the right policies. It is important to evaluate the relevant indicators to be part of the database.
- It is also important to increase the quality and effectiveness of social services and to strengthen the referral and case management system.
- The establishment of shelters for the management of cases of domestic violence, cases of child abuse or potential victims of trafficking/ victims of trafficking in each municipality.
- The improvement of existing infrastructure as well as infrastructure construction for people with disabilities that will facilitate their movement and living conditions.
- Financing and setting up community centers for all the vulnerable groups in each municipality in order to receive services.

Protection of children

- The improvement of a monitoring system and the improvement of public services, legal, psychological, child protection services.
- The establishment of a specialized center for providing services to children who have experienced physical, psychological and sexual violence, and children who are neglected.
- Providing new programs and new policies for the employment of parents whose children have different problems (to work and also to care for their children).
- Raising awareness and mobilization of public and non-public institutions at central and local level to protect children from all forms of violence.
- Strengthen the capacities of child

protection structures at local level regarding implementation of legislation, child protection procedures, proactive identification and cross-sectorial cooperation.

- Ensuring and granting from all municipalities at national level intervention and reception services to assist children 24 hours a day.
- Establish cross-sectorial (multidisciplinary) groups, providing child services to each municipality and administrative unit.
- Establish working groups (from employee of institutions or local organizations) to identify children in street situation across the country.
- Monitoring and control of media that publish cases related to child issues (to preserve the principal of confidentiality and to avoid re-victimization of the child).

Employment

- The central and local government should ensure the promotion of current employment opportunities through effective labor market policies.
- Increasing capacities and definition of qualification programs in vocational education institutions according to the needs of the local labor market.
- Building and strengthening cooperation with businesses to support unemployed people with their expertise in order to be more qualified and to create employment opportunities and increase the possibility to hire groups in need.
- Promotion of social enterprises as one mechanism that ensure the protection and social inclusion of vulnerable groups through the provision of employment opportunities and the economic and social integration of vulnerable groups by promoting the spirit of responsibility, solidarity and cohesion in the community.
- In addition to the promotion of these enterprises, municipalities should support and implement social enterprise development policies under the legislation in force.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON JUDICIARY AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

- All municipalities should ensure trained and competent staff in order to have an effective Child Protection Unit according to the principle of protection of the best interest of the child.
- Better coordination between CPU (Child Protection Unit) and psycho-social service groups in schools (to reduce bullying, discrimination etc.).
- Despite the adoption of the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016 - 2020, it is recommended to approximate domestic legislation with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly with regard to legal capacity for the realization of legal actions. Also, Audiovisual Media Service Providers (national and local) should make progress in guaranteeing the use of sign language for people with hearing disabilities, in compliance with the obligation provided by the Law no. 97/2013 "On Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania".
- It's needed to take into consideration the adoption of the new law on the protection of minorities, drafted in accordance with the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities as well as concrete and effective measures are now needed especially to members of the Roma and Egyptian communities.
- There is a need for further public awareness initiatives and the implementation of the principle of independence and confidentiality regarding to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex or "hermaphrodite" (LGBTI) rights also the persons with HIV / AIDS, as the stigma to the community is high and their acceptance in society continues to remain at low levels.
- Enhance the protection of domestic violence victims through the proper functioning of the referral system. It is important to ensure the participation of Heads of local institutions in municipal meetings on domestic violence management policies.
- Municipalities should also work with the community especially in rural areas by raising awareness of cases of domestic violence since many cases of violence in rural areas in Administrative Units are not reported.
- To ensure the provision of the assistance for the identified cases of woman who are domestic violence victims as their right, because many municipalities didn't apply this right.
- Increase the number of the municipalities that allocate dedicated budget for children protection as well as have a gender sensitive budget/MTBP.
- Improving reporting and cooperation between municipalities and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination.
- Conducting awareness campaigns (in urban and rural areas) on the protection from any form of discrimination, gender equality issues, protection of the Roma and Egyptian Communities, as well as the recognition of minorities' rights and human rights.
- Improving road infrastructure in order to facilitate accessibility of PWD (People with Disability) as well as schools infrastructure that fulfill the standards for children with disabilities.
- Build flexible and easily accessible services for Roma and Egyptian communities to raise a trust and confident system for their integration into society (to have easily access to social services, health, promoting of education of Roma and Egyptian youth and to ensure and support for their employment and promote the positive models).

RECOMMENDATIONS ON JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY

- Strengthening the capacity of Local Public Safety Councils to function properly and to have a real impact on the safety of the municipality by involving representatives of local institutions directly concerned with security issues and representatives from civil society organizations, religious communities, the business community, schools, etc.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establishment of sustainable collaboration among all local stakeholders, including civil society, police, social services, etc., to identify local community challenges in terms of personal security and increase public safety.
- Increase the level of expertise in this field within municipality.
- Identification of factors that could have an influencing effect on the achievements of the local government in the fight against crime.
- Municipalities should increase and strengthen the integrity of public administration (transparency and declarations of assets).
- Drafting, implementation and monitoring of legal initiatives to prevent and reduce corruption at all levels, as well as increasing awareness on how to avoid forms of corruption, and on the other side, awareness on the increase of denunciations of corrupt acts by everyone.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Education:

- Improving kindergartens and pre-school education accessibility in rural areas. It is important to provide the necessary infrastructure and access in remote areas without pre-school education in order to improve educational opportunities for all the children within municipality territory.
- Improving schools infrastructure by planning and allocating more budget for this purpose.
- Drafting policies for equalizing the educational opportunities for children that are part of vulnerable groups.
- Designing an educational system of quality assurance (standards, internal evaluation etc.)
- Municipalities should take initiatives to increase social awareness about the significance of early education through different dissemination tools.
- Find local mechanisms to successfully build communication channels between parents,

teachers and municipality in order to increase knowledge and awareness about education as well as to raise voice about different concerns.

- Developing a local system (concrete actions) for social inclusion of disadvantaged children.
- Improvement of the monitoring system for school dropout cases, as official data do not correspond to the real situation in schools.
- Improvement of the schools infrastructure; Equipment with teaching laboratories; achievement of the standard for the number of children in the classroom; creation of friendly schools for children, parents and community.
- Establishment of youth centers for young people, who have almost no entertainment facilities in small towns.
- Building libraries/or making the existing ones functional; Building Sport fields.

Culture:

- Municipalities should draft Cultural Local Strategies providing necessary policies on supporting and strengthening structures responsible for cultural heritage management, aiming to develop, promote and conserve cultural heritage resources at local level.
- These strategic documents should be foreseen in the medium term budget programs in order to be effectively implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Coverage of the municipal territory with monitoring stations for water, air, soil or other environmental pollution sources like acoustic, telecommunication frequencies, radioactivity etc.
- Interpretation of indicators from relevant experts and regular publication of data for informing the

citizens about the environmental situation in the territory where they live.

- The municipality should publish an annual report with environmental monitoring data that are comprehensive and advisory for the citizens.
- Better use of funds for integrated urban waste management, as local government bodies continue to face inadequate funds and in some cases there are identified some violation by causing significant public space pollution, especially in river beds.
- To develop criteria for asymmetric decentralization in different issues in interest of central government related to environment and climate change in order to better execute this function.
- Strengthen the cooperation between the municipality and citizens to engage them in environmental protection actions as well as on actions aiming to monitor and influence the environmental pollution from economic operators, and put pressure on them to take measures to avoid pollution.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FINANCIAL CONTROL

- Increase of local capacities for efficient administration of local taxes and tariffs.
- Assessing the capacity of local administrations to achieve their potential by identifying the key constraints on local government tax collection capacity.
- Promoting greater revenue collections by increasing local capacity to collect as much local revenue as possible, to analyze their potential and to implement effective local revenue management. The capacity to collect potential revenues directly affects the provision of citizen services and doing investments.
- Designing and implementing a standardized integrated system in each municipality for the local tax and tariff system. The unified system will not only standardize the way of keeping data on local obligations but will produce accurate and real-time data, helping to increase revenue collection performance and contributing to internal control for the purpose of efficient and modern management of local taxes. This system will also help increasing the performance of OSS systems, as one of the key features of the OSS system is the integration with the local taxes system to check in real time whether the applicant (citizen / business) has paid his obligations or not. This will also increase the efficiency of service delivery by reducing the number of submitted documents, as it will not be necessary for the applicant to request a receipt for local payment and then submit it as a document during the application for a service in OSS system. This verification of data within the municipal institution can be accomplished by integrating the systems.
- Preparation and updating of strategic plans for all municipalities of Albania and preparation of MTBP based on these strategic plans.
- Prepare good and informative MTBP document that enable the municipal council and citizens easy understand where the budget is invested and what is going to be produced (delivered) in a each of the MTBP cycle.
- Drafting performance reports based on non-financial data (performance indicators) that explain budget expenditures for 61 municipalities as a need to analyze the municipality's performance and the percentage of realization of forecasts for the specified budget period.
- Realization of a simple and unique format for the 61 municipalities in drafting and executing the budget in order to facilitate the reading and analysis of the budget from the community.
- Increasing Local Governments' capacities in

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order to profit from donor funds or domestic borrowing policies for the financing of capital projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON REGIONAL POLICIES

- Review and clearly define local, regional and central competencies in order to avoid their overlapping and to have a harmonization of structures at each level
- Increasing knowledge and awareness on cooperation among municipalities over different local services and investments policies through good practices, guidebooks, brochures etc.
- Increase the cooperation of the Regional Council and other institution in central and local government for a better regional development.
- Strengthen cooperation between LGUs in the framework of regional and cross-border cooperation to increase opportunities to benefit from IPA funds.

