

# RDP Northern Albania

## Final Evaluation

Round table

Shkodër, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015



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## Structure of the Presentation

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Accomplishments of the RDP to date
- ▶ Main findings and conclusions
- ▶ Discussion on lessons and scenarios for future programme interventions

# Introduction

## RDP at one glance

- ▶ **Title:** “Regional Development Programme (RDP) Northern Albania”
- ▶ **Donors:** ADA (lead donor – 67%) & SDC (33%)
- ▶ **Implementing consortium:** ÖAR Regionalberatung GmbH, Helvetas-Intercooperation, Co-PLAN
- ▶ **RDP team:** TL, DTL, Snr Progr. Officer, 2 Progr. Officers, Admin/Acc. Officer, international + local ST experts
- ▶ **Budget:**
  - € 2.0 m RDP Fund
  - € 1.3 m experts fees and travel expenses
  - € 0.7 m other project costs
- **Duration:**
  - Started: 31/1/2011
  - Inception/pre-implementation period ended: 31/12/2011
  - Effective implementation started: 1/1/2012
  - Due to be completed by: 31/12/2014 – **no cost prolongation 31/3/2015**

## The final Evaluation of RDP

- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Methodology & Work Plan
  - Desk research
  - Fieldwork (consultation meetings)
  - Analysis of information/Draft conclusions & recommendations
  - Roundtable
  - Report
- ▶ Duration
  - From January to end of February 2015



## Performance of RDP

<b>Overall objective</b>	RDP significantly contributes to equitable social and economic development in Shkodër and Lezhë regions
<b>Specific objective</b>	Equal access of citizens to quality public services and economic opportunities in the Qark of Lezhë and Shkodër, in particular in disadvantaged areas, is improved through strengthened Qark institutions
<b>Expected Results and Activities</b>	<p><b>ER 1: An effective institutional framework for decentralisation, which aims at equitable development outcomes, is supported</b></p> <p>Act 1.1: Elaboration of selected policy papers related to regional development with subsequent recommendations and support to sub-legal acts, if required</p> <p>Act 1.2: Supporting Qarks in the establishment and institutionalization of coordination mechanism at regional and central levels</p> <p>Act 1.3: Documenting and capitalizing the experiences related to RD</p> <p>Act 1.4: Contributing to national policy dialogue forums and platforms</p>
<b>[Sub-activities &amp; Indicators]</b>	<p><b>ER 2: Capacities of Qark for RD planning and delegated functions are strengthened</b></p> <p>Act 2.1: Support to Qarks in reviewing and improving its internal organization to fulfill its role and function to promote RD</p> <p>Act 2.2: Capacity development (mainly on the job training/mentoring and selected tailor made training sessions) to Qarks and RDA (and other selected stakeholders)</p> <p>Act 2.3: Organize exchange visits and study tours related to RD</p> <p>Act 2.4: Support Qarks and other stakeholders in the design and establishment of a Regional Development Agency (RDA)</p> <p><b>ER 3: Comprehensive RD planning and budgeting processes in Shkodër and Lezhë regions are developed and institutionalized</b></p> <p>Act 3.1: Setting priorities for interventions on regional scale</p> <p>Act 3.2: Contribute to generating development projects promoted by sub-regional partnerships</p> <p>Act 3.3: Setting up, monitoring and reviewing action plans feeding into the Qarks' annually revised three years' mid-term budget cycles</p> <p><b>ER 4: RD accelerated through project initiatives and effective implementation</b></p> <p>Act 4.1: Supporting the Qarks in establishing an information data base on funding opportunities</p> <p>Act 4.2: Providing technical assistance for project development</p> <p>Act 4.3: Establishing and supporting proper operation of the RDP Fund (RDPF)</p>

# Assessment ER1 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (1/2)

ER 1	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 1.1	Ind. 1.1: 1 policy paper on RD issues	<u>Assessment basing on the Progress Rep. 01-06/2014 and the paper:</u> The comprehensive paper “The Regionalisation of Albania – The governance, administrative, and territorial reform that Albania needs on a regional level” was elaborated	✓ fully achieved
	recommendations to be integrated into the emerging legal framework for RD and/or revised strategies	Proposal for the implementation of Territorial Administrative Reform to the Parliamentarian Commission	✓ fully achieved
Act. 1.2	Ind. 1.2: RD coordination mechanism established and institutionalised for strategic and financial harmonisation on RD	RD Commission established in both qarks SMT coaching meetings have contributed in strengthening RD coordination mechanisms	± partially achieved
Act. 1.3	Ind. 1.3: At least 5 engendered policy briefs are formulated and made accessible to public.	According to progress Rep. 01-06/2014 there have been 3 inputs to TAR, 3 inputs to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region: “Albania’s Regions in the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region” (February 2014) “The Regionalisation of Albania The governance, administrative, and territorial reform that Albania needs on a regional level” (March June 2014) Women economic empowerment related to decision making processes in the context of regional development	✓ fully achieved

## Assessment ER1 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (2/2)

ER 1	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 1.4	Ind. 1.4: A semi-permanent forum with a circle of stakeholders on regional development and regionalization has met twice until end of 2014.	<u>Assessment basing on Progress Rep. 07-12/2013, 01-06/2014:</u> Ongoing stakeholder involvement through Gov. initiatives with support from RDP, RDP supported and organized conferences on TAR and for the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) Semi-permanent forums established by Government of Albania (GoA)/Ministry of State on Local Issues (MSLI) through national Working Groups	✓ fully achieved
Act. 1.4	Ind. 1.5: One policy brief on gendered regional development processes published	1 Policy brief on gendered development: <i>Women economic empowerment related to decision making processes in the context of regional development</i>	✓ fully achieved

- ▶ In summary, from the vantage point ER1 has fully been achieved, with the slight difference that the interpretation of the activity of setting up RD coordination mechanisms has changed to the support of its establishment, due to changes in the government's position

# Assessment ER2 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (1/5)

ER 2	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 2.1	Ind. 2.1: Two Qarks have an organisational structure which allows for proper planning and implementation of regional development functions by end of 2012 (new structures in place like RD commission, new regulations on role of Qark as funding negotiators)	RD Commissions in place SMT and M&E teams in Qarks.	✓ fully achieved
Act. 2.2	Ind. 2.2: 60% of Qark/Local Government Unit (LGU) representatives as well as non state actors participating in Subject Matter Team meetings, trainings, workshops and forum discussions, are satisfied with the experts inputs and confirm that their understanding on regional development has increased significantly.	Review workshops with Qark representatives attest s general satisfaction with capacities put at the disposal. No clear source of verification for satisfaction of non-state actors.	± partially achieved
Act. 2.3	Ind. 2.3: 1 study tour in 2014	Third study tour financed to Burgenland (Austria) for national Government delegation, May 2014	✓ fully achieved
	total number of participants envisaged at 40-50. At least 30% of trainees are women	8 Participants 25% women	- not achieved

## Assessment ER2 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (2/5)

ER 2	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 2.4	Ind 2.4: Qark staff applies knowledge gained through trainings and study tours for managing RD processes, annual budgeting and action planning and monitoring of regional development strategies (gender disaggregated data)	<p><u>Assessment basing on Progress Rep. 07-12/2013 and 01-06/2014 and Progress Notes 10/2014:</u></p> <p>In July 2013, Shkodër decided to freeze efforts in establishing an RDA. By 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013, the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for Lezhë Qark was officially registered as Lezhë Regional Development Agency (LERDA) in the form of an NGO. The Statutes and the Foundation Act for LERDA have not been provided to so far.</p> <p>Critical mass of skills built, active organization of RD processes during coaching and regional workshops</p> <p>RD Coordination by Qarks through sub-regional Development Concepts and coordination/monitoring of W2 Projects</p> <p>Contribution of Qark staff/SMTs in re-designing Regional Development Strategies (RDS), identifying sectors for RD potential, sub-regional concepts and partnerships, identifying capital projects and linking them with Regional Development Strategies (RDS)</p> <p>On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014, the request to release parts of the RDA start-up package with the amount of EUR 18,484 had been approved by RDP and the funds were transferred to the bank account of LERDA.</p>	✓ fully achieved

# Assessment ER2 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (3/5)

ER 2	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act 2.5	Ind. 2.5: RDA sustainability is ensured through staff retention and financial support from Qark after 2014	<p><u>Assessment basing on Progress Rep. 01-06/2014 and Progress Notes 11-12/2014:</u></p> <p>Regional Development Agency (RDA) Lezhë staffing in place, financing secured by Qark, business plan drafted.</p> <p>By beginning of December 2014, RDP transferred the 2nd payment of the RDA Start-up Package for Lezha as requested by LERDA. Thus, RC Lezha has consumed the full amount of its 'RDA Start-Up Package' (35.000,- EUR). LERDA requested further funding of PCM training for its staff. ADA approved the financing through the RDP budget line for training.</p> <p>Shkodër decided to freeze efforts in establishing an RDA.</p>	± partially achieved
Act 2.6	Ind. 2.6: 3 Subject Matter Teams for planning, monitoring and budgeting are formally established through Qark decision by August 2013 and are functioning throughout the project as RD coordination group	<p><u>Assessment basing on the Progress Rep. 01-06/2014 and the interviews:</u></p> <p>SMTs established, fully operational and active</p>	✓ fully achieved
Act 2.7	Ind. 2.7: Business Plans for respective Regional Development Agencies (RDA) are formulated	<p><u>Assessment basing on the Progress Rep. 01-06/2014:</u></p> <p>Final Draft Business Plan submitted but lacks finalisation</p> <p>Memorandum of Agreement on use of Regional Development Agency Start-Up Package signed between Regional Development Programme (RDP) and Regional Council (RC) of Lezhë</p> <p>Shkodër decided to freeze efforts in establishing an RDA.</p>	✓ fully achieved

## Assessment ER2 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (4/5)

ER 2	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 2.8	Ind. 2.8: 60% of participants in PCM training and workshops are satisfied with the training on Project Design and Project Cycle Management	<p><u>Assessment basing on the Progress Notes 07/2014 and the workshop documentation:</u></p> <p>The following Project Cycle Management PCM trainings were organised:</p> <p>A) 25.02.2014 for staff members of the monitoring and evaluation teams</p> <p>B) 17.03.2014 for W1+W2 implementing agencies</p> <p>1) 17.06.2014, W3, 13 participants, main target, response rate=92% (12 from 13), score of training: excellent</p> <p>2) 18. 06.2014, W3, 17 participants, response rate=70% (12 from 17), score of training: excellent</p> <p>3) 23.06.2014 Study tour for W3 participants that took part in the PCM trainings on 17+18.06.2014, 9 participants, response rate=90% (9 from 10), score of training: excellent</p> <p>4) 19.06.2014, W1+W2, 37 participants, response rate=69% (27 from 39), score of training: good</p> <p>W3 PCM workshop participants were mainly CSO representatives</p> <p>W1+W2 PCM workshop participants were local government staff in charge of development programming coordination and project monitoring at qark, municipality and commune level along with staff of partner organizations (CSOs)</p> <p>6 Project Cycle Management (PCM) trainings were delivered, following at least 69% of the participants the participants response was predominantly “excellent”</p>	✓ fully achieved
Act. 2.9	Ind. 2.9: Process documentation of the revision of regional development strategies, considering procedures and capacities	<p><u>From Progress Rep. 07-12/2013:</u></p> <p>Initiated and on-going</p> <p><u>From Progress Rep. 01-06/2014:</u></p> <p>On-going</p> <p>4 regional workshop minutes = process documentation</p>	± partially achieved

## Assessment ER2 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (5/5)

- ▶ Following on the evaluation results of the MTE, RDP has achieved its activities related to capacity development and study tours, but difficulties have been encountered with the establishment of RDAs that were planned in both Qarks. In view of the findings above the ER2 can be conceived as fully achieved, provided that the build up of a LERDA can be interpreted as an acceptable deviation from the initial logframe.

# Assessment ER3 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (1/3)

ER 3	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 3.1	Ind. 3.1: Annual Agreement on updated thematic priorities for RD interventions by key stakeholders	Documentation of 2 <sup>nd</sup> regional Workshop details thematic priority areas identified.	✓ fully achieved
	Ind 3.3: List of flagship projects (W1) approved by the end of 2012	<u>Assessment basing on MTE:</u> Completed, see left columns	✓ fully achieved
Act. 3.2	Ind. 3.4: No. of sub-regional partnerships established with support by RDP by the end of 2012	<u>Assessment basing on the Progress Rep. 01-06/2014:</u> Sub-regional development areas were established for Shkodër and Lezhë in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> regional Workshop. Not by the end of 2012 but by the end of 2014 13 W2 projects resp. 13 Sub-Regional Development Concepts are going to be finalized.	✓ fully achieved
Act. 3.3	Ind 3.5 Qark annual mid-term plans (including budgets) are elaborated and approved in 2012 and 2013	Qark Annual Mid –Term plans (including budgets) for Shkodra Region have been elaborated and approved for 2013 and 2014 Qark Annual Mid- Term plans Incl budgets for Lezha have been elaborated and approved for 2013-2014.	✓ fully achieved

# Assessment ER3 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (2/3)

ER 3	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 3.3	Ind. 3.2: Revised ("distilled") and engendered RD strategies are documented in a report, implementation planning is considered in annual action plans for 2015 for both Qarks and monitoring systems are established for Shkodër and Lezhë	<u>Assessment basing on the Progress Notes 11-12/2014 and the Documentation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Workshop:</u> 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> (24.10.2014, 85 participants) Regional Workshop on RD Strategies took place. In the 4 <sup>th</sup> Workshop the, actions, projects and the monitoring (indicator) matrix were discussed and further elaborated for Shkodër and Lezhë. The Sub-Regional Development Concepts including the action plans and the monitoring systems for Shkodër and Lezhë are in elaboration but were not finalised until the end of December 2014. By end of December 2014, the first draft of the Sub-Regional Development Concepts Shkodër Region had been translated into English.	± partially achieved
	Ind. 3.6: Gender responsive budgeting in place by 2014 budget cycle	<u>Assessment basing on the interviews:</u> Gender responsive budgeting has been applied to the budgeting process	✓ fully achieved
	Ind. 3.7: Increased annual volume of funding obtained from sources outside RDP for projects identified through RDP planning process (e.g. national, EU pre-accession funds)	<u>Assessment basing on the interviews:</u> No increased annual volume of funding	- not achieved

## Assessment ER3 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (3/3)

ER 3	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 3.3	Ind. 3.8: At least 10 new project proposals on regional development for Shkoder and Lezhë regions are properly designed and ready for submission to national/international donors		± partially achieved

- ▶ As a result there is evidence of partial achievement of activities in ER3, but other activities such as the increase of annual volume of funding and the establishment of new project proposals ready for submission have not been completed.

# Assessment ER4 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (1/2)

ER 4	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 4.1	Ind. 4.1: Information base on national and international funding opportunities accessible on-line for Local Government Units (LGUs) and other local actors	<u>Assessment basing on the Progress Rep. 01-06/2014 and www.qarkushkoder.org:</u> The international funding database is still available under <a href="http://rdpnorthernalbania.org/rdp">http://rdpnorthernalbania.org/rdp</a> , but not reachable via <a href="http://www.qarkushkoder.org">www.qarkushkoder.org</a> . In the meantime (February 2015) all but one call is outdated.	✓ fully achieved
Act. 4.2	Ind. 4.2: Qark staff, RDA staff and other social actors are capable to develop projects and obtain funding from the national RDF or other funding sources by end of 2013	<u>Assessment basing on the Progress Notes and the project lists:</u> During the SMT and PCM trainings the participants were satisfied with, enabled the actors as good as possible to develop and implement projects. 29 sustainable projects (from the national RDF fund) were implemented.	✓ fully achieved
Act. 4.3	All of the projects funded through the RDP Fund (all three windows) are successfully completed by the end of 2014	<u>Assessment basing on the Progress Notes 11-12/2014 and project lists:</u> 4 W1 project contracts, 13 W2 project contracts and 12 W3 project contracts were signed between 27/11/2013 and 22/04/2014 A lot of good and sustainable projects were financed. Not all of them were implemented without problems. Four extensions (time, not budget) were signed, Further requests for extension are to be expected.	± partially achieved
	Ind. 4.4: 25% of the projects funded by RDP are targeted to and complemented for the disadvantaged areas in the 2 Qarks, in particular the mountainous areas	<u>From Progress Rep. 01-06/2014:</u> Allocation for disadvantaged areas: is applied in w1, w2 and w3 projects. Considering Shosh, Kelmend, Ungreij, Qerret, Orosh (w2) and Postrive, Qelez, Qerret, Orosh and rural areas Koplik (w3) as disadvantaged areas, approximately EUR 375,000 are allocated, equals 19% of the RDP Fund	± partially achieved

## Assessment ER4 Indicators planned and achieved for 2013-2014 (2/2)

ER 4	Planned for 2013/14	Achieved 04/2013-12/2014	Summary Assessment
Act. 4.3	Ind 4.5: 10% of the beneficiaries of projects supported by RDP Fund until 2014 are women	<p><u>Assessment basing on Progress Rep. 01-06/2014 and the RDP Grant Fund Project lists:</u></p> <p>Ensured, the evaluation criterion of proposals considered women as target group particularly under w2 and w3</p> <p>2 from 29 projects are addressed especially to women: “W3 Empowering women economic growth in Shkodër and Lezhë Regions through Economic Clusters Capacity Building Development” and “W3 – Economic Empowerment of rural women – a significant factor for development (in support of Postriba Commune Women)” In addition other projects address women as well.</p>	✓ fully achieved
	Ind 4.6: At least 5 projects from the portfolio of Window 3 (social projects) are targeted to vulnerable groups and in particular youth and disabled	<p><u>Assessment basing on Progress Rep. 01-06/2014:</u></p> <p>Ensured:</p> <p>4 projects target disadvantaged youth and 3 projects target people with disabilities</p>	✓ fully achieved

- ▶ In the light of these findings ER4 can be conceived as fully achieved.

## Main findings and conclusions

## Main findings from MTE (still valid)

- ▶ Accomplishments have been assessed in terms of **outputs** (activities carried out, papers delivered, etc)
- ▶ It is essential to see if they result in **outcomes** (impacts etc) vis-à-vis different objectives (general/cross-cutting)
- ▶ Factors influencing the translation of outputs to outcomes include the **“internal environment”** (discussed under management and steering) and **“external environment”** of RDP. The latter includes factors such as:
  - “The Albanian reality” (= highly centralised state & a long period of indecision on a Revision of Decentralisation Strategy)
  - Qarks with a vague role and limited financial resources, squeezed between a powerful centre and progressively stronger LGUs
  - No established domestic regional development policies; and no priority attached to RD by the EU
- ▶ **Long term** nature of outcomes and longer timescales for RDP-type interventions; sustainability challenge

# Capacity development of Qarks and the development of LERDA

*How can the kind of RDP support in capacity building of Qarks and build up of LERDA be assessed in view of future challenges for RD in Northern Albania?*

## Summary of findings

- ▶ high degree of satisfaction with the capacity development activities proposed by the RDP team; **triangle of RD Commission-SMT and M&E teams**, has been well received by Qarks.
- ▶ NARDA has failed; Lezha established own agency with assistance of RDP; Shkodra incorporated the function of an RDA within the Directorate of Project Implementation and Coordination
- ▶ RDP support for LERDA: Coaching the ‘Lezha RDA Team’ in the preparation of a roadmap for the RDA establishment through expert workshops ;Formulation of an RDA business plan; RDA Start-Up Package” under the RDP budget for financial support to RDA establishment.

# Capacity development of Qarks and the development of LERDA

## Assessment

- ▶ Other things equal, any institutions at intermediary level will have to be equipped with following capacities; **Administrative capacity for indirect management of IPA; Capacities to formulate mature projects.**
- ▶ establishment of Subject Matter Teams, the “distilling of sub-regional concepts” and the concept of sub-regional partnerships **as a replicable methodology for capacity building for RD priority setting on the Qark level.**
- ▶ **LERDA as a model for a politically accountable RDA;** may help to increase capacities for producing mature project proposals; they may however add little to existing capacities for RD management if they are not “**on system**” and help to develop concepts to be used at a sufficiently large scale.

# Capacity development of Qarks and the development of LERDA

## Conclusions

- ▶ severe delays in the institutionalization of capacities in the form of RDA >>> limited amount of approaches piloted in Shkoder and Lezhe could be fed in the national level and bought in by the central government.
- ▶ Future support for RDA need to find a way to combine **“on system” support** for emerging intermediary level and the provision of **“spaces of experimentation”** for bottom up local innovation.
- ▶ Uncertainty on how to capitalize on capacities built up in the future

## RDP Fund *effectiveness of RDP technical assistance ?*

### Summary findings

- ▶ 4 W1 project contracts, 13 W2 project contracts and 12 W3 project contracts were signed between 27/11/2013 and 22/04/2014.
- ▶ Organization of **Evaluation Process** (Evaluation Committees) and RDP **in-depth review of 91 project proposals**; Support in **preparation of project proposals** (70 meetings, 5 public seminars); Support to short-listed appl. to **improve proposals** (65 meetings); Hands-on support / coaching for **improving concepts and budgets** (for preparation of contracts, 78 meetings):
- ▶ Further the RDP Team has established **Information base on national and international funding opportunities accessible on-line for Local Government Units (LGUs) and other local actors**

# *RDP Fund effectiveness of RDP technical assistance ?*

## **Assessment**

- ▶ inherited serious delays from the first phase of the reporting period that could not be addressed successfully in the remaining program period; the “widely different aims of key stakeholders and not a rigorous management scheme”.
- ▶ Technical support for RDPF projects was generally positively assessed by the Qarks as main beneficiaries; however capacity gaps seem to have persisted until the end of the reporting period in certain areas e.g administrative procedures for implementing the fund projects
- ▶ administration of instruments created by RDP after the program completion? For instance there is uncertainty as to the maintenance of the funding database.

# RDP Fund *effectiveness of RDP technical assistance ?*

## Conclusions

- ▶ The process and technical assistance for the RDP Fund has not been managed successfully due to the widely different aims of key stakeholders and a not-rigorous-enough management scheme in the first phase of the reporting period. (MTE still valid)
- ▶ The reasons for these problems differ and are sometimes beyond the control of the Implementing Agencies, sometimes within.

# Contextual factors promoting and hindering the effective implementation of the RDP fund

## Summary findings

The implementation of projects worked as an “elk test” for the rules in force in the Albanian context.

- ▶ **Procurement law.**
- ▶ **Regulations for the reimbursement of VAT**
- ▶ **Territorial reform and the risk of capacity losses**

# Contextual factors promoting and hindering the effective implementation of the RDP fund

## Assessment

- ▶ a major need for addressing the legal constraints faced for project implementation, both as to concerns procurement issues and VAT reimbursement.
- ▶ without any legal change such procurement laws endanger conformity to the EU partnership principle.

## Conclusion

- ▶ Future interventions need to carefully assess the legal basis for project implementation. Including the legal basis of the donor set-up
- ▶ Legal issues need to be addressed with GoA

# Steering and management

## Summary findings

- ▶ issues had been pointed out with Steering part of the RDP program during the MTE.
- ▶ Change in GoA 2013- Change in team leader altered situation>>>less control by central government and micromanagement of project management/team leader
- ▶ Certain issues remain: flexibility of set –up , instruments; limited timeframe of intervention; lack of partnership agreement

## Steering and management

### Assessment & Conclusions

- ▶ systematic reporting to PSC/PCG
- ▶ Program should be founded on flexible basis, in order to better adapt to changes in the external environment.
- ▶ Monitoring and Evaluation to be adapted to performance → result centered evaluation (internal and external function of evaluation)

# Performance of RDP team and structure

## Summary Findings

- ▶ several changes have been recommended by the MTE both as to a) the internal governance of the RDP team and b) the targeting of expert knowledge
- ▶ the installation of a new RDP team leader. Fieldwork consultations have unanimously confirmed the perception of greater effectiveness of RDP operations as a result.
- ▶ Acceleration of implementation of activities on the backdrop of changing government priorities, and rigid logframe.

## Performance of RDP team and structure

### Assessment

- ▶ flexibility of the team leader and team in approaching work task, in the context of a composite, rigid and complex set of objectives
- ▶ a **lack of staffing** resources to perform the all the activities.
- ▶ The build up of strong relationships and networks of trust on the local and sub-regional level has been a major contribution of RDP program.

### Conclusions

- ▶ Need to capitalize on the existing partners
- ▶ Local expertise and know how should be better mobilized and funneled.

The account taken/mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, participation and environmental protection

## Summary Findings

- ▶ Account has been taken of cross-cutting issues such as gender in the selection and monitoring of RDPF projects, but also in the coaching and training sessions to support the internal governance of Qarks
- ▶ Focus groups have shown that NGOs generally better address the gender dimension. This clearly stems from an evaluation of W3 projects.
- ▶ Other cross cutting issues could only indirectly be addressed through other W3 projects

The account taken/mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, participation and environmental protection

## Assessment & Conclusions

- ▶ As has been repeated in many fieldwork consultations gendered aspects are stand-alone or added on interventions; in order to be addressed they need to be a) closely linked to the main objectives of the program b) and be equipped with a specific intervention framework.
- ▶ Implementing Agencies have applied different mechanisms to address gender mainstreaming and gender-balanced aspects>>> important challenges in rural areas



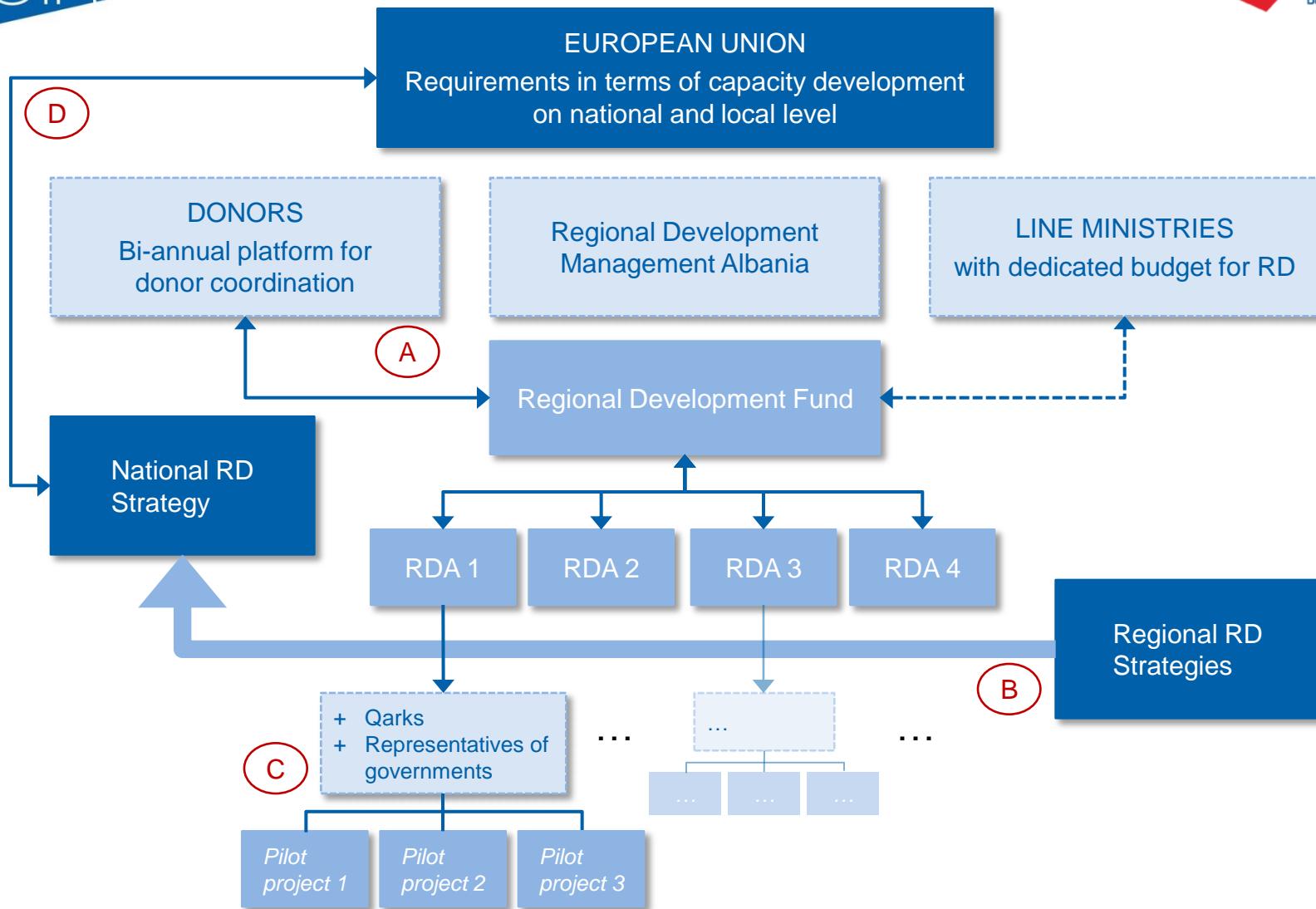
# Discussion

## The conformity with EU requirements

- ▶ has seen a decisive development with the granting of EU candidate status in June 2014 and the adoption of EUSAIR in October of the same year. Together with Croatia, Albania will be responsible for the coordination of the priority area “Sustainable Tourism”. The EC progress report for Albania from October makes the following suggestions for reform in the area of Regional development:
  - Further steps need to be **taken to secure Multi-annual sector programming and co-financing capacity** for EU projects at national and local level. Further administrative capacity is needed for indirect management of IPA at local and national level.
  - Institutional capacities in line ministries, especially for what regards **monitoring and evaluation** needs to be improved.
  - **Programming capacity** needs to improve, by creating a mature project pipeline on the national level as the capacities to formulate mature projects on the local level

# Current policy developments in Albania, development of the Administrative and Territorial Reform (ART)

- ▶ The creation of functional regions on the basis of economic, natural and **economic ties**: creation 4 to 6 development regions (North; South; Central-Tirana; West); respect for existing Qark boundaries, with approximately 3 Qarks per newly created region.
- ▶ **Setting up institutions & mechanisms for the governance of the intermediate level**: The creation of a Regional Management on the national level, whose main instrument Regional Development Fund. Creation of a Regional Development Agency (RDA) in every region; responsible for developing a regional development strategy and the oversight and management of three pilot projects; composed of representatives of the Qarks and Local Government.
- ▶ **Coordination of strategic processes for Regional Development**: A “bottom up” process for the creation of a national strategy for regional development, starting in September 2015; bi-annual meetings of Donor platform to coordinate donor activities towards RD in Albania.



## Priorities for future donor interventions

- (1) Continue capacity building through **sub-regional partnerships** based on a sound understanding of capacities and future competences, to determine absorption capacities – on regional level (**newly created RDAs, Qarks**) + **national level**.
- (2) Support regions to formulate **their own plan of activities** for RD that could be financed by donor interventions in the future
- (3) Working together with Regional Development Fund (RDF) on **budget, with conditionality**. Projects need to be driven by public actors and work on system
- (4) More efforts need to be given in developing **flexible instruments**. Promotion of impact results need to be promoted in a better way.

## Sustainable outcomes/RDP legacy

- ▶ On-going process of multi-sector regional partnership
- ▶ Qarks with capacity (knowledge, organisation, processes) to coordinate on-going process of national/regional + regional/local strategies
- ▶ Functioning RDA model, with project development and other capacities
- ▶ Functioning regional-level development fund model
- ▶ On-going national dialogue process forum on regional development and regionalisation

## Group Exercise – the RDP Albania of my dreams

## Scenario 1 – the living LEADER approach

- ▶ Strong basis of local development plans (based upon SWOT and broad participation of all population groups)
- ▶ Carried through by RDAs
- ▶ Binding element National RD Strategy (sum of all local RD strategies)
- ▶ Regional development Fund supporting actions stemming entirely from these strategies (strict bottom up)
- ▶ Donors and line Ministries agree upon the support of the suggestions

## Scenario 2 – the ERDF adopted approach

- ▶ RD as main element of central government steering
- ▶ Line ministries setting up RD programmes based upon SWOT and needs assessment conducted by themselves – Donor funds accompanying
- ▶ RDA as hinge function between national and regional/ local level – transporting downwards the objectives and expected achievements
- ▶ Regional/ local actors acting in accordance with the overall programme objectives → feedback and acceptance through participation rates in the OPs

