

Ad Hoc Evaluation of the CARDS Programmes

Country: Albania

Sectors:

Justice and Home Affairs

**Administrative Capacity
Building**

**Economic and Social De-
velopment**

**Environment and Natural
Resources**

Civil Society Development

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The views expressed are those of COWI A/S and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.

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Sector Sheet

Projects selected for evaluation by individual cluster
<i>Justice and Home Affairs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Justice (EC Justice Assistance Mission, IV Joint Programme with COE, Renovation of two courts of appeal (Korca, Vlora), Pre-trial detention centre of Vlora, Support to HCJ and its Inspectorate - TA and Training, Commercial justice system (TA and Training), School of Magistrates (grant), General Prosecutors Office (twinning)) ▪ Asylum and Border Management (Integrated Border Management - LMT for border Police (twinning), Asylum and Migration Management, Master Plan for Investment into Border Management, Pre-screening of asylum-seekers and migrants, Centre for readmitting 3rd country nationals and Centre for Asylum seekers, PAMECA II)
<i>Administrative Capacity Building</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Administration Reform (Support to Public Procurement - TA, Support to INSTAT, PAR Encouraging Reform of Civil Service, TA for improving delivery of public service/ support to Training Institute of Public Administration, Integrated support for decentralisation – TA and training for local government services, Public Administration Reform - TA to the MEI, INSTAT Regional Offices)
<i>Economic and Social Development</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic Development/Internal Market (Standards and certification – TA, Trade regulation and promotion, Market surveillance system - TA, Support to standards, certification and accreditation – TA, Establishment of a National Food Authority – TA, Standardization and Accreditation) ▪ Education (Vocational Education Training) (Support to VET Reform 2002, Support to VET Reform 2003, Institutional Capacity Building for the National VET Agency and VET Council (twinning), Supplies & works, Support to VET, Labour inspection services and Regional Labour Offices)
<i>Environment and Natural Resources</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environment (Environmental legislation and awareness raising - TA, Strengthening of Environmental Monitoring System - TA for environmental monitoring, Environmental cleanup and disposal of hazardous material, Treatment of environmental hotspots - Fier fertiliser plant, Support for the implementation of the National Plan for Approximation of Environmental Legislation)
<i>Civil Society Development</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil Society Development (Democratic stabilisation, NGO Capacity Building, Support to Albanian media)

Justice: Assistance includes actions aimed to strengthen the performance and independence of key judicial institutions such as the High Council of Justice (CJ), School of Magistrate and the General Prosecution Office by strengthening the capacities of executive bodies responsible for implementation of the judicial reform such as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), enforcement system and establishment of a new system of juvenile justice. Furthermore, support of the enhancement of the judicial system in commercial matters, which will contribute to overall improvement of the investment climate, as well as interventions supporting the establishment of court for serious crimes and strengthening the penitentiary system.

Asylum and Border Management: Support covered the Integrated Border Management through Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania (PAMECA II), twinning support to the border police (CARDS 2001), and a Master Plan for Investments in Border Control Infrastructure (CARDS 2003). Assistance to asylum and migration as important parts of the integrated border management supported improvements of the administrative and financial capaci-

ties for implementing migration and asylum legislation and the corresponding national strategies.

Public Administration Reform: The PAR horizontal group concerns projects involving the overall administrative capacity building and reforms at central and local level administrations such as public administration reform, civil service reform, European Integration and decentralisation. The vertical acquis group includes projects addressing the implementation of the acquis in areas such as statistics, procurement, state aid, internal and external financial control.

Economic Development: Assistance in this cluster comprised key acquis areas such as: (i) support to the strengthening of quality infrastructure systems, focusing on standards, certification, accreditation, market surveillance, food safety; (ii) trade regulation and investment promotion improving the investment climate; and (iii) community development, focusing mainly on small-scale rural infrastructure investments.

Education (Vocational Education Training): Assistance to this sector centred on three technical assistance projects (Support to Vocational Education and Training 2002 (Phases I-III) from CARDS 2002, 2003 and 2004) supporting the Ministries of Education and Science and Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, a twinning project (Institutional Capacity Building for the National VET Agency and Council), and supplies and works to the vocational schools and training centres (Supplies and Works 2004).

Environment: CARDS has, in total, supported 23 projects within the environmental sector during 2002-2006 of which 7 were included in the evaluation. CARDS assisted in addressing key environmental objectives such as the need for strategic planning of the Government's overall environmental effort, projects on concrete clean-up of major hot spots, projects aiming to enhance the environmental monitoring system in Albania as well as approximation to EU framework legislation within selected sectors. Emphasis in the evaluation of this sector is placed on major technical assistance projects where MEFWA has been the main beneficiary.

Civil Society Development: The projects assessed were funded through the CARDS grant scheme for CSOs, which provided support to 19 projects within a total budget of € 750,000 under CARDS 2001 and 2005, and which has recently approved 15 projects under CARDS 2006. The Grant Schemes focus on democratic stabilisation, capacity building of the NGOs, and support to Albanian media.

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Preface

This ad hoc evaluation covers deconcentrated¹ CARDS assistance from 2001-2006 national programmes to Albania. The total CARDS allocation to Albania in the period was M€ 282.1, although by December 2007 only M€ 198.7² had been contracted.

This report was prepared by COWI A/S during the period from June to October 2008 and reflects the situation as of 16 October 2008, the cut of date for the report. The factual basis is the monitoring reports (ROM)³, project documentation and other evaluations. Other findings are based on analysis of Financing Agreements, formal programme documentation, strategic and planning documentation and other relevant published materials. The interviews with the main parties involved in the programming and implementation of this assistance took place in the period from July to September 2008. A self-assessment (as email survey) of the part of the sample which was not subject to interviews and/or desk research was carried out with a number of the main parties.

The report examines the progress of the programme towards the objectives stated in the formal programming documents, i.e. Financing Memorandum, Project Fiches, etc. It is intended to provide strategic and operation management information for the Commission Services, the Monitoring Meeting and the beneficiaries. It draws conclusions and puts forward recommendations and provides a judgement on sectoral and sub-sectoral (cluster) performance. Comments on the draft report were requested from the following parties:

Parties invited	Comments received
European Commission, DG Enlargement, Evaluation Unit (E-4)	Yes
European Commission, DG Enlargement, Albania Country Team	Yes
European Commission Delegation in Tirana	Yes
Ministry for European Integration	Yes
Strategy Office	No
Ministry of Interior	No
Ministry of Environment	No
Ministry of Justice	No

¹ All projects selected for evaluation are being implemented by the European Commission Delegation in Tirana. Projects implemented by the European Commission in Brussels are not covered by this evaluation.

² ToR Ad-hoc Evaluation of CARDS Programmes in Albania (14 December 2007) DG ELARG Evaluation Unit.

³ For those projects where these are available - works and supplies are in general not covered as well as grant schemes for civil society development.

List of Acronyms

BERIS	Business Environment Reform and Institutional Strengthening
CAFAO	European Union Customs and Fiscal Assistance Mission in Albania
CARDS	Community assistance to the countries of South-Eastern Europe
CCMIS	Court and Case Management Information System
CFCU	Central Finance and Contracts Unit
CJ	High Council of Justice
CMS	Coordination and Monitoring System
CoE	Council of Europe
CS	Civil Society
CSD	Civil Society Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DACH+	Germany, Austria, Switzerland + Lichtenstein
DFID	Department for International Development
DGoS	Directorate General of Standardization
DoPA	Department of Public Administration
DSDC	Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination
EAOD	External Assistance Orientation Document
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECD	European Commission Delegation
EI	European Integration
EIB	European Investment Bank
ELPA	Environmental Legislation and Planning
EU	European Union
EURALIUS	European Assistance Mission to the Albanian Justice System
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoA	Government of Albania

HCJ	High Council of Justice/High Court of Justice
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPS	Integrated Planning System
LEAP	Local Environmental Action Plan
LG	Local Government
LGU	Local Government Unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEFWA	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration
MEI	Ministry for European Integration
MIP	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme
MoEI	Ministry of European Integration
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MPWTT	Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications
MTBP	Medium Term Budget Program
NES	National Environmental Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
NSSSED	National Strategy for Social and Economic Development
NVETA	National Vocational Education and Training Agency
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
PAMECA II	Police Assistance Mission of the European community to Albania
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PCM	Project Management Cycle
REAP	Regional Environmental Action Plan
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
StEMA	Strengthening of the Environmental Monitoring System
TA	Technical Assistance
TIPA	Training Institute for Public Administration
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	The US Agency for International Development's
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

Scope and Objectives

The purpose of this ad hoc evaluation of CARDS in Albania 2001-2006 is to provide lessons learned and accountability for decision making on improvement of pre-accession aid and financial assistance to Albania. This report encompasses seven sector clusters: Justice, Border Management, Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical), Economic development/internal market, Education (VET), Environment, and Civil Society Development. The sectors are drawn from the five macro sectors and based on a sample of 40 projects which have been subject to interviews and desk research and 22 projects which were included in a self-assessment carried out as an electronic survey. The evaluation covers CARDS 2001-2006 and the sample is drawn from all six years on a representative basis.

Overall Evaluation Findings

The performance of CARDS assistance has overall performed better in acquis related areas than in public administration reform. The overall performance of the CARDS assistance has been acceptable and has met strategic objectives of the key CARDS strategic documents, but project design has been weak in some sectors, in particular in public administration reform due to, among others, a lack of sector strategies and in-depth needs assessments. CARDS has experienced delays in implementation and limited capacity for planning of assistance programmes as well as capacity for implementation. Results and outputs have been observed in many of the sectors/clusters evaluated. There have been important effects of CARDS in terms of development and strengthening of institutional and legal framework, and development of strategies in sectors such as border management, economic development and justice. The key concern with regard to CARDS assistance delivered is, however, the medium to longer term impact and potential sustainability as the capacity of the Albanian administration varies in sectors. Human resource development and turnover in staff pose signification problems for creating an effective administration. The overall rating is **moderately satisfactory**.

Performance rating⁴

Cluster	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability	Overall
Justice	S	S	MS	MS	MS	MS
Asylum & Border	S	S	MS	S	MS	MS
PAR	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Economic Dev.	MS	MS	S	MS	MS	MS
VET	S	S	S	S	MS	S
Environment	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Civil Society Dev.	S	MS	S	U	U	MS
Total	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS

⁴ Highly Satisfactory = HS; Satisfactory = S; Moderately Satisfactory = MS; Moderately Unsatisfactory = MU; Unsatisfactory = U; Highly Unsatisfactory = HU.

Key Evaluation Findings

The relevance of CARDS in the sectors evaluated has in general been satisfactory. Where it was less than satisfactory this was due to deficiencies in project design rather than poor targeting. The assistance provided under CARDS has been largely in line with the CARDS and Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) strategic documents available at the time. The strategies of the beneficiaries have only been able to impact the latter years of CARDS as these were only developed then. CARDS assistance to, for example, judicial reform and integrated border management has been very relevant and has progressed significantly in the period. Relevance is therefore rated as **satisfactory**.

Weak project design, including timing and planning of assistance, has impacted efficiency. Implementation efficiency of CARDS has been impacted by inadequate project design including too short implementation periods and lack of capacity for needs assessment in the beneficiary institutions. Delays have been registered in the implementation due to both lack of administrative capacity and staff being allocated to implement projects in the ministries, and in some cases to contractor performance, in sectors such as economic development. However, in general, many projects have been efficiently implemented, in spite of a difficult and changing programme environment. Efficiency is rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

Overall, the projects have delivered the planned outputs or are on the way to doing so, but beneficiaries lack capacity. The constraint to the effectiveness of CARDS has in many cases been the public administration institutions and these have in some cases not been able to implement a result. The weak and, in many cases, new institutional structures and uncertainty with regard to staff, resources and capacity are a concern for impacts in the medium to longer term. Many contractors, twinning partners and organisations have been effective in the delivery of outputs such as CARDS assistance to vocational education and training which has supported important strategic reforms, although further implementation of the reforms and large investments lie ahead. Effectiveness is rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

Impacts or likely impacts are detected in many projects at least in the short term, and the prospects for medium or longer term impacts depend on the further implementation of the results achieved as well as on Government and other donors providing the budget as substantial funding will be needed to ensure impacts in the longer term. The lack of basic capacity for legal and policy implementation of Ministries will limit the impacts of newly introduced legislation, as this often has not been part of the CARDS. This is, for example, the case in the environmental sector which has produced mixed results as both the first steps in acquis and investments in the sector have encountered institutional capacity issues. Impact is rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

The limited support to public administrative and civil service reform may have impacted sustainability in acquis sectors. The evaluation findings point to the key problem in securing impact and sustainability of CARDS being the lack of capacity of the administration, large staff turnover and limited structures for implementation and enforcement of legislation and policy. The lack of realistic assessment of beneficiary capacity is an issue which will impact the sustainability of the interventions. Support to public administration has been limited in terms of both the number of projects and project size, and a proper public administration reform and civil service reform have not been implemented. Sustainability is rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

Both direct and indirect support to civil society development has had limited effect. Support through CARDS to civil society development has been limited in terms of amounts and greatly focussed on service delivery rather than on promoting good governance and public transparency. The few projects in this field have been funded mostly through a small grant facility managed by the ECD. However, few of the projects have left any significant changes after completion as they have been too short-lived and expectations unrealistic in terms of ensuring sustainability or securing funding from other sources.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The relevance of CARDS has been good, but not consistently based on sector strategies and in-depth needs assessment. Weak project design has impacted relevance of assistance. The overall conclusion is that the CARDS assistance has been relevant and based on overall the objectives of the CARDS strategic documents available at the time. Even though the CSP had a limited strategic planning value, the MIPs made a good effort in aligning CARDS priorities to the rapid development of Albania in line with SAP, but especially with NSSED. However, only few strategies had been prepared for and by the Albanian Government at the beginning of the period, and due to lack of developed sector strategies and needs assessment, projects have suffered from inadequate project design or need assessment which has impacted the performance of CARDS.

Conclusion 2: CARDS projects have been largely efficient but institutional capacity or uncertainties have hampered implementation as has project design. The assistance under CARDS has largely delivered the outputs in a well-managed way, although exceptions and differences are seen in the performance between the sectors and types of assistance. CARDS has overall performed better in acquis-related areas than in support to public administration as such. In some sectors, project design has not taken the administrative and political situation into account such as the 2005 election period which resulted in large changes in the public administration in sectors such as justice, PAR and economic development.

Conclusion 3: CARDS has had effects and short-term impacts in particular on developing structures and strategies, but the effect on capacity building has been limited due to turnover of staff. Although CARDS assistance in general has had effects, such as supporting the development of new institutions, legal framework or strategies in a majority of the sectors, the effect of CARDS in capacity building of staff horizontally in the public administration has been limited. The training of staff in the administration has overall probably had less effect than the other activities mentioned above, as trained and experienced staff (at all levels) is no longer in place due to retentions especially after the 2005 elections.

Conclusion 4: Despite of positive immediate effects and impacts, longer term impact of the CARDS assistance in Albania are still pending. The longer term impacts of CARDS will depend on whether the effects, which have been observed in the vertical acquis and sectors such as border management and VET, economic development, are indeed maintained. Longer term impact is also diminished by domestic budgetary resources constraints to support of future requirements of reforms in some key sectors⁵. The impact of CARDS civil society projects is also assessed as limited due to the focus on service provision instead of institution building of the civil society activities of the CARDS programme.

⁵ In particular internal market areas, VET, judiciary, food safety, environment

Conclusion 5: The sustainability of CARDS depends on the overall reform process. Many projects have managed to support the development of legal and institutional frameworks in key sectors such as border management, environment, VET, international market, and judiciary. The lack of a proper public administration reform strategy and the non-implemented civil service codes are regarded as affecting sustainability of the results of the assistance so far. Sustaining the results of many of the projects in sectors will furthermore demand a significant investment from both the Albanian state budget and the donors.

Strategic Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Further integration of support to public administration reform and European Integration should be ensured in future programmes. EC assistance should continue to provide substantial support to public administration reform, which is a precondition for a successful EI process, and enforcement capacities. Future EC assistance should consider a higher level of support to decentralisation and to overall strengthening of local government capacities. The absence of a clear government strategy for civil service reform, further (much needed) support to this area in the future, without the right conditionality in place, would surely lower effectiveness or have a questionable relevance.

Recommendation 2: Technical assistance should be continued to the strategic planning level of the Albanian Government and strengthened at sector level. Supporting the Albanian Government's efforts in planning and budgeting support to the IPS would most likely help strengthen high-level political support for the process. While there is a need to improve coordination mechanisms at central level between MEI, DSDC and MoF, issues related to fully integrating assistance into the Government budget planning cycle should be given more attention at the sectoral level for each line ministry.

Recommendation 3: IPA assistance to approximation of legislation should cover the entire cycle of the legislative process. The future assistance should shift from supporting purely legal transposition of legislation to providing technical assistance to implementation and planning of legislative processes and regulatory framework, and enforcement. The future assistance should also include support to the development of parliamentary capacities (e.g., as twinning with other parliaments) as well as executing agencies and interested stakeholders, and provide assistance to a broader range of institutions, such as local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations involved in implementation of the acquis.

Recommendation 4: Increase and strengthen institutional assessment (needs assessment) as part of the programming and projects design in order to improve potential for sustainability. It is important that proper institutional assessment and functional review go hand in hand with acquis implementation in order to ensure that the assistance is timed and sequenced in a manner which reflects the development of the institutions and their capacity. More attention should be given to the development of impact assessment capacities in the Albanian administration. This should be included as a standard provision, if not a condition, in institution building projects.

Operational Recommendations

Recommendation 5: Administrative capacity for programme implementation should be supported with funding and capacity building both at central and local government levels. There has been too little capacity on the Albanian side and insufficient resources on the ECD side to

implement a large programme with both demanding and complicated technical and infrastructure projects. With the DIS implementation, the line ministries will take a stronger role in the implementation cycle of the EC assistance. Meanwhile, current implementation issues at all levels and institutions (both in government and ECD) should be addressed.

Recommendation 6: Ownership of the reform process and the future assistance should be increased especially in the implementation phase. Real sustainability of assistance must be ensured by focusing on increasing ownership of not only the CARDS and future IPA, but also of the reform process. Ownership of assistance should start at the political level and it is therefore crucial that key decision makers are involved in the planning and implementation of the assistance. Incentives should be created in the beneficiary institutions for improving the ownership of the reform processes by the recipients once the projects are completed. An important tool in increasing ownership would be to strengthen the role of national training institutions, such as TIPAs, in delivery of training programmes.

Recommendation 7: Supporting civil society development through different mechanisms. It should be considered to include national civil society institutions, foundations, or "think-tanks" in the administration of the CARDS grants scheme. It would capacitate the civil society institutions as well as the granting organisation itself. Due to lower administration costs, the scheme should be able to address more but smaller projects with simpler procedures, enabling new and smaller Albanian organisations to participate.

Recommendation 8: More resources and conditionality should be invested in establishing and sustaining institutional and staff capacities. Assistance, coupled with appropriate conditionality on institutional and staff sustainability, could provide a significant boost to the establishment of overall policies and central capabilities linked to existing resources for human resource management and training in the public service. It will also be necessary to introduce stronger conditionalities in relation to allocate domestic budget resources that will underpin sustainability of EC assistance.

Përmbledhje

Qëllimi dhe Objektivat

Qëllimi i këtij vlerësimi ad hoc të programit CARDS në Shqipëri 2001-2006 është që të paraqesë mësimet e nxjerra dhe përgjegjshmërinë për vendim marrjen në drejtim të përmirësimit të ndihmës së para-aderimit dhe asistencës financiare për Shqipërinë. Ky raport përfshin shtatë grupime sektorësh: Drejtësia, Menaxhimi i Kufijve, Reforma në Administratën Publike (horizontale dhe vertikale), zhvillimi ekonomik/tregu i brendshëm, Arësimi (VET), Ambienti dhe Zhvillimi i Shoqërisë Civile. Sektorët janë përzgjedhur nga pesë sektorë të përgjithshëm (macro) dhe bazohen në një vëzhgim të 40 projekteve të cilat kanë qenë subjekt i intervistave dhe punës kërkimore, si dhe 22 projekte të cilët ishin përfshirë në një vetë-vlerësim të zbatuar si një vëzhgim elektronik. Vlerësimi mbulon periudhën CARDS 2001-2006 dhe projektet janë përzgjedhur në bazë të gjashtë viteve mbi baza përfaqësimi.

Rezultat e Përgjithshme të Vlerësimit

Performance e asistencës së CARDS ka qenë e mirë në fushat e lidhura me acquis (legjislacionin e BE-së), në krahasim me reformën në administratën publike. Performance e përgjithshme e asistencës së CARDS ka qenë në nivel të pranueshëm dhe ka arritur objektivat strategjike të dokumenteve kryesorë të CARDS, por dizenjimi i projekteve ka qenë i dobët në disa sektorë, në mënyrë të veçantë në reformën në administratën publike si rezultat, ndërmjet të tjerave, i mungesës së strategjive sektoriale dhe vlerësimit të detajuar të nevojave. Programi CARDS është ndeshur me vonesa gjatë zbatimit dhe kapacitete të kufizuara për planifikimin e programeve të asistencës si dhe kapaciteteve zbatuese. Është bërë një vëzhgim i rezultateve dhe produkteve në shumë nga sektorët/grupet e vlerësuara. Programi CARDS ka sjellë efekte të rëndësishme në aspektet e zhvillimit dhe fuqizimit të kuadrit ligjor dhe institucional, dhe zhvillimit të strategjive në sektorë të rëndësishëm, si menaxhimi i kufijve, zhvillimi ekonomik dhe drejtësia. Megjithatë, shqetësimi kryesor lidhur me asistencën e ofruar nga CARDS është impakti afatmesëm deri afatgjatë dhe qëndrueshmëria e mundshme, pasi kapacitetet në sektorë të ndryshëm të administratës shqiptare ndryshojnë janë të ndryshëm. Zhvillimi i burimeve njerëzore dhe lëvizja e personelit shkakton probleme të mprehta për krijimin e një administrate efektive. Vlerësimi i përgjithshëm është **mesatarisht i kënaqshëm**.

Kategorizimi i performancës⁶

Grupimi	Relevanca	Efikasiteti	Efektiviteti	Impakti	Qëndrueshmëria	Vlerësimi Përgjithshëm
Drejtësia	K	K	MK	MK	MK	MK
Azil-Kërkimi & Kufiri	K	K	MK	K	MK	MK
RAP	K	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK
Zhvillimi Ekonomik	MK	MK	K	MK	MK	MK
VET	K	K	K	K	MK	K
Ambienti	K	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK
Zhvillimi i Shoqërisë Civile	K	MK	K	P	P	MK
Totali	K	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK

⁶ Shumë i kënaqshëm = SK; I Kënaqshëm = K; Mesatarisht i Kënaqshëm = MK; Mesatarisht i Pakënaqshëm = MP; I Pakënaqshëm = P; Shumë i Pakënaqshëm = SP.

Gjetjet Kryesore të Vlerësimit

Relevanca e CARDS në sektorët ë vlerësuar ka qënë në përgjithësi e kënaqshme. Atje ku ka qënë më pak e kënaqshme, kjo ka ardhur si rezultat më tepër i mangësive në formulimin e projekteve se sa i vlerësimit të tyre si të dobët. Asistenca e ofruar nga CARDS ka qënë në një masë të madhe në të njëjtën linjë me dokumentët e gatshme të asaj kohe: CARDS dhe Marrëveshjen e Stabilizimit e Asociimit (MSA). Strategjitë e përfituesve kanë mundur të japin impaktin e tyre vetëm në vitet e fundit të CARDS, pasi u zhvilluan më vonë. Asistenca e CARDS, për shembull në reformën e drejtësisë dhe menaxhimin e integruar të kufijve, ka qënë shumë relevante, dhe ka pasur progres të ndjeshëm gjatë kësaj periudhe. Relevanca si rezultat është vlerësuar si e **kënaqshme**.

Formulim i dobët i projekteve, përfshirë afatet kohore dhe planifikimin e asistencës, ka sjellë ndikim në efikasitetin e tyre. Zbatimi efikas i CARDS është ndikuar nga formulimi i papërshtatshëm i projekteve përfshirë periudha shumë të shkurtra zbatimi dhe mungesë kapacitetesh për vlerësimin e nevojave në institucionet përfituese. Vonesat janë regjistruar në zbatim si rezultat i mungesës së kapaciteteve administrative dhe i stafit të ngarkuar nëpër ministri, dhe në disa raste, si rezultat i performancës në sektorë të tillë si zhvillimi ekonomik. Megjithatë, në përgjithësi, shumë projekte janë zbatuara në mënyrë efikase, pavarësisht nga një ambient programi i vështirë dhe në ndryshim. Efikasiteti vlerësohet si **mesatarisht i kënaqshëm**.

Në përgjithësi, projekte i kanë, ose janë duke i lëvruar produktet e planifikuara, por përfituesit kanë mangësi kapacitetesh. Problemet përsa i përket efektivitetit të CARDS-it në shumë raste janë të lidhura me institucionet e administratës publike dhe ato, në disa raste, nuk kanë qënë në gjendje që të zbatojnë programme me rezultatet e pritshme. Stukturat e dobta institucionale, e në disa raste të reja dhe paqartësitë lidhur me burimet, kapacitetet dhe stafin, përbëjnë një shqetësim për impaktet në periudhën afatmesme e afatgjatë. Shumë kontraktorë, partnerë binjakëzimi dhe organizata kanë qënë efektive në lëvrimin e produkteve të tilla, si asistenca e CARDS për arsimin profesional dhe trajnimin, të cilat kanë mbështetur reforma të rëndësishme strategjike, megjithëse përpara shtrihen zbatime të mëtejshme të reformave dhe investimeve të mëdha. Efektiviteti vlerësohet si **mesatarisht i kënaqshëm**.

Ka pasur impakt apo deri diku impakt në shumë projekte, të paktën në planifikimin afatshkurtër, dhe perspektivat për impakt afatmesem apo afatgjatë varet nga zbatimi i mëtejshëm i rezultateve të arritura, si dhe nga Qeveria e donatorët e tjerë që sigurojnë burime shtesë në buxhet, që nevojiten për të siguruar impaktin afatgjatë. Mungesa e kapaciteteve bazë nëpër Ministri për zbatimin ligjor dhe të politikave do të kufizojë impaktin e legjislacionit të prezantuar, i cili shpesh nuk ka qënë pjesë e CARDS. Kjo është, si për shembull, në rastin e sektorin të ambientit i cili ka prodhuar rezultate të përzjera, pasi si në hapat e para të përputhjes së legjislacionit, edhe në investime në këtë sektor, janë ndeshur probleme që kanë të bëjnë me kapacitetin institucional. Impakti këtu kategorizohet si **mesatarisht i kënaqshëm**.

Mbështetja e kufizuar për reformën e administratës publike dhe shërbimit civil mund të ketë ndikuar në qëndrueshmërinë në sektorin e acquis. Gjetjet e vlerësimit theksojnë problemin kyç në sigurimin e impaktit dhe të qëndrueshmërisë së CARDS, që është mungesa e kapaciteteve të administratës, lëvizjet e mëdha të stafit dhe strukturat e kufizuara për zbatimin dhe vënien në zbatim të legjislacionit dhe politikave. Mungesa e vlerësimeve realiste të kapaciteteve të përfituesve është një çështje e cila do të ndikojë në qëndrueshmërinë e ndërhyrjeve. Mbështetja në administratën publike ka qënë e kufizuar, si në aspektet e numrit të

projekteve, dhe nga pikëpamja e madhësisë së tyre, dhe reforma në administratën publike nuk është zbatuar siç duhet. Qëndrueshmëria kategorizohet si **mesatarisht e kënaqshme**.

Si mbështetja e drejtpërdrejtë, edhe ajo e tërthortë ndaj shoqërisë civile ka pasur efekte të kufizuara. Mbështetja nëpërmjet CARDS për zhvillimin e shoqërisë civile ka qenë e kufizuar në terma financiarë dhe me një përqëndrim më të madh në ofrimin e shërbimeve se sa në nxitjen e qeverisjes së mirë dhe transparencës së publikut. Disa projekte të vogla në këtë fushë janë financuar nëpërmjet një instrumenti ndihmës në formën e granteve të vogla menaxhuar nga Delegacioni i Komisionit Evropian. Megjithatë, disa nga këto projekte nuk kanë lënë ndonjë ndikim të ndjeshëm pas përfundimit të tyre, pasi janë zbatuar në afate kohore shumë të shkurtra dhe pritshmëria ka qenë jo-reale në aspektet e sigurimit të qëndrueshmërisë së sigurimit të financimeve nga burimet e tjera.

Konkluzione

Konkluzioni 1: Relevanca e CARDS ka qenë e mirë, por jo përherë në përputhje me strategjitë sektoriale dhe me vlerësimin e thelluar të nevojave përkatëse. Hartimi i dobët i projekteve ka ndikuar në impaktin e relevancës së asistencës. Konkluzioni i përgjithshëm është se asistenca e CARDS ka qenë relevante dhe bazuar në objektivat e përgjithshme të dokumenteve strategjike të CARDS që kanë qenë të vlefshëm në atë kohë. Edhe pse Dokumenti Strategjik për Vendin (CPS) mbart një vlerë të kufizuar përsa i përket planifikimit strategjik, Plani Indikativ Afatmesem ka bërë një përpjekje të mirë për të lidhur prioritetet e CARDS-it me zhvillimin e shpejtë të Shqipërisë në të njëjtën linjë me atë MSA-së, por në mënyrë të veçantë me SKZHES. Megjithatë, vetëm disa strategji ishin përgatitur nga Qeveria Shqiptare në fillim të periudhës, dhe si rezultat i mungesës së strategjive sektoriale dhe vlerësimit të nevojave, pati hartime projektesh të papërshtatshme apo vlerësim nevojash që ndikuan në performancën e CARDS-it.

Konkluzioni 2: Projekte e CARDS kanë qenë në një shkallë të gjerë efikase, por kapacitetet institucionale ose paqartësitë kanë penguar zbatimin e tyre, ashtu si dhe hartimi i projekteve. Asistenca nën CARDS-in ka lëvruar në një masë të madhe produktet në mënyrë të mirë-menaxhuar, megjithëse janë parë përjashtime dhe diferenca në performancën ndërmjet sektorëve të ndryshëm dhe llojeve të asistencës. CARDS është zbatuar në përgjithësi më mirë në fushat që kanë pasur të bëjnë me acquis – përafrimin e legjislacionit, sesa në mbështetjen e administratës publike. Në disa sektorë hartimi i projekteve nuk ka marrë parasysh situatat administrative e politike, si për shembull, periudha zgjedhore e vitit 2005, e cila rezultoi në ndryshime të konsiderueshme në administratën publike në sektorë të tillë si drejtësia, PAR dhe zhvillimi ekonomik.

Konkluzioni 3: CARDS-i ka pasur efekte dhe impakte afatshkurtra në veçanti në zhvillimin e strukturave e strategjive, por ndikimi në ngritjen e kapaciteteve ka qenë i kufizuar për shkak të ndërrimit të stafit. Megjithëse asistenca e CARDS-it në përgjithësi ka pasur efekte, si për shembull, mbështetja e ngritja e institucioneve të reja, kuadri ligjor apo strategjitë e ndjekura në shumicën e sektorëve, ndikimi i CARDS-it ka qenë i kufizuar në ngritjen e kapaciteteve të stafit në mënyrë horizontale në administratën publike. Trajnimi i stafit në administratë në kuadrin e përgjithshëm ka pasur ndoshta më pak efekte sesa veprimtaritë e tjera të përmendura më sipër, pasi është larguar stafi i trajnuar dhe me përvojë (në të gjitha nivelet) pas zgjedhjeve të vitit 2005.

Konkluzioni 4: Pavarësisht nga efektet e impakti i menjëhershme pozitiv, ende mbetet pezull impakti më afatgjatë i asistencës së CARDS-it në Shqipëri. Impakti më afatgjatë i CARDS-it do të varet nga fakti nëse efektet, që janë vëzhguar në acquis-in (vertikal) dhe sektorët e tillë si menaxhimi i kufijve dhe VET e zhvillimi ekonomik, kanë arritur faktikisht që të ruhen në vijim. Impakti më afatgjatë gjithashtu është zbehur nga kufizimet në burimet buxhetore vendase për të mbështetur kërkesat në të ardhmen të reformave në disa sektorë kyç⁷. Impakti i CARDS në projektet e shoqërisë civile vlerësohet gjithashtu si i kufizuar për shkak të përqëndrimit në sigurimin e shërbimeve dhe jo në ngritjen institucionale të veprimtarive të shoqërisë civile në kuadrin e CARDS-it.

Konkluzioni 5: Qëndrueshmëria e CARDS-it varet nga procesi i përgjithëm i reformave. Janë menaxhuar shumë projekte për të mbështetur zhvillimin e kuadrit ligjor e institucional në sektorët kyç, si menaxhimi i kufijve, mjedisi, VET, tregu ndërkombëtar dhe gjyqësori. Mungesa e një strategjie të duhur në reformën e administratës publike dhe në kodet e pazbatuara të shërbimit civil konsiderohen se kanë ndikuar në qëndrueshmërinë e rezultateve të asistencës së deritanishme. Qëndrueshmëria e rezultateve të shumë projekteve në sektorë do të kërkojë gjithashtu investime të konsiderueshme si nga buxheti i shtetit shqiptar, edhe nga donatorët.

Rekomandime Strategjike

Rekomandimi 1: Në programet e ardhshme duhet të sigurohet një koordinim dhe integrim i mëtejshëm ndërmjet reformave në administratën publike dhe integritet evropian. Asistenca e KE-së duhet të vazhdojë të sigurojë mbështetje themelore për reformën në administratën publike, që përbën një parakusht për një proces të suksesshëm të integritet evropian dhe forcimin e kapaciteteve. Asistenca e KE-së në të ardhmen duhet të konsiderojë një nivel më të lartë mbështetjeje për decentralizimin, dhe në përgjithësi fuqizimin e kapaciteteve të pushtetit lokal. Mungesa e një strategjie të qartë të qeverisë për reformën në shërbimin civil do të bëjë që mbështetja e mëtejshme (shumë e nevojshme) për këtë fushë në të ardhmen, do të ketë pa dyshim një efektivitet më të ulët apo një relevancë të diskutueshme nëse nuk vihen kushte e duhura për zbatim.

Rekomandimi 2: Asistenca teknike lidhur me nivelin e planifikimit strategjik të Qeverisë shqiptare duhet të vazhdojë dhe të fuqizohet në nivelin sektorial. Mbështetja e përpjekjeve të Qeverisë shqiptare në planifikim, si dhe mbështetja në buxhetimin e Sistemit të Integruar të Planifikimit kanë premisa që të ndihmojnë në forcimin e mbështetjes së nivelit të lartë politik për procesin. Ndërsa ka një nevojë për të përmirësuar mekanizmat koordinuese në nivel qëndror midis Ministrine e Integritet, Departamentin e Strategjive dhe Koordinimit të Donatoreve dhe Ministrine e Financave, duhet tu kushtohet më shumë vëmendje në nivel sektorial për çdo ministri të linjës çështjeve që kanë lidhje me asistencën e plotë integruese në ciklin e planifikimit buxhetor të Qeverisë.

Rekomandimi 3: Asistenca e IPA-s për përafrimin e legjislacionit duhet të mbulojë ciklin e plotë të procesit legjislativ. Asistenca në të ardhmen duhet të zhvendoset nga mbështetja vetëm e transpozimit ligjor të legjislacionit në dhënien e asistencës teknike për zbatimin e planifikimit e vënien në zbatim të proceseve legjislative e të kuadrit rregullator. Asistenca në të ardhmen duhet të përfshijë edhe mbështetjen për zhvillimin e kapaciteteve parlamentare (p.sh., binjakëzime me parlamentet e tjera), si dhe agjensitë zbatuese e aktorët e tjerë të interesuar, e

⁷ Në veçanti fushat e tregut të brendshëm, VET, gjyqësori, siguria e ushqimit, mjedisi.

të sigurojë asistencë për një gamë më të gjerë institucionesh, si autoritetet lokale e rajonale e organizatat jo-qeveritare që janë të përfshirë në zbatimin e acquis.

Rekomandimi 4: Rritja dhe fuqizimi i vlerësimit institucional (vlerësimi i nevojave), si pjesë e programimit e hartimit të projekteve me qëllim përmirësimin e potencialit për rritjen e qëndrueshmërisë. Është e rëndësishme që vlerësimi i duhur institucional e analiza funksionale të ecë paralelisht me zbatimin e acquis me qëllim që të sigurohet që asistencë të jepet në kohën e duhur e të ndahet në mënyrë të tillë që të reflektojë zhvillimin e institucioneve e kapacitetin e tyre. Duhet t'i kushtohet më shumë vëmendje zhvillimit të kapaciteteve për vlerësimin e impaktit në administratën shqiptare. Kjo, nëse nuk përfshihet si kusht, duhet të përfshihet si një dispozitë standarde në projektet e ngritjes së kapaciteteve institucionale.

Rekomandime Operative

Rekomandimi 5: Kapacitetet administrative për zbatimin e programit duhet të mbështetet me financime e ngritje kapacitetesh si në nivelet e qeverisjes qendrore, edhe në atë lokale. Ka pasur kapacitete të kufizuara nga ana shqiptare dhe burime të pamjaftueshme nga ana e Delegacionit të KE-së për të zbatuar një program të gjerë ku të përfshiheshin projekte kërkuese e të ndërlukuara teknike e infrastrukturore. Me zbatimin e DIS(*Sistemi i Decentralizuar i Zbatimit të Asistencës*), ministritë e linjës do të marrin një rol më të fortë në ciklin e zbatimit të asistencës së KE-se. Ndërkohë, duhet të merren në konsideratë çështjet e zbatimit aktual në të gjitha nivelet e institucionet (si në qeveri, edhe në Delegacionin e KE).

Rekomandimi 6: Zotërimi i procesit të reformës dhe i asistencës në të ardhmen duhet të rriten veçanërisht në fazën e zbatimit. Qëndrueshmëria reale e asistencës duhet të sigurohet duke u fokusuar në rritjen e zotërimit jo vetëm të CARDS-it e të IPA-s që vijon, por edhe të procesit të reformës. Zotërimi i asistencës duhet të fillojë në nivelin politik, dhe bëhet pra thelbësore që vendim-marrësit kryesorë të përfshihen në planifikimin dhe zbatimin e asistencës. Duhet të krijohen stimuj në institucionet përfituese për të përmirësuar zotërimin e proceseve të reformës nga përfituesit me përfundimin e projekteve. Një mjet i rëndësishëm në rritjen e zotërimit të programeve do të jetë forcimi i rolit të institucioneve vendase të trajnimit, si TIPA, në sigurimin e programeve të trajnimit.

Rekomandimi 7: Mbështetja e zhvillimit të shoqërisë civile nëpërmjet mekanizmave të ndryshëm. Duhet të konsiderohet përfshirja e institucione kombëtare të shoqërisë civile, fondacione apo "think-tanks", në skemen e administrimit të granteve. Gjithashtu, duhet të rriten kapacitetet e institucioneve të shoqërisë civile, si dhe të vetë organizatës grantdhënëse. Për shkak të shpenzimeve më të ulta nga ana administrative, skema duhet të jetë në gjendje të përfshijë më shumë projekte por me shumë më të vogla, me procedura më të thjeshta, duke mundësuar kështu edhe organizatat e reja e të vogla shqiptare që të jenë pjesëmarrës.

Rekomandimi 8: Duhet të investohen më shumë burime e vendosjen e kushteve për krijimin dhe mbështetjen institucionale e kapacitetit të stafit. Asistencë, bashkë me kushtëzimet e duhura në lidhje me qëndrueshmërinë institucionale e të stafit, mund të japin një shtytje ndrejt krijimit të politikave të përgjithshme e kapaciteteve qendrore të lidhura me burimet ekzistuese për menaxhimin e burimeve njerëzore e trajnimin në shërbimin publik. Gjithashtu, do të jetë i nevojshëm prezantimi i kushtëzimeve më të forta në lidhje me burimet vendase buxhetore që do të përforcojnë qëndrueshmërinë e asistencës së KE-së.

1 Introduction

1.1 Objectives and Scope of Evaluation

1. The purpose of this ad hoc evaluation of CARDS in Albania 2001-2006 is to provide lessons learned and accountability for decision making on improvement of pre-accession aid and financial assistance to Albania. The evaluation questions were established in the Terms of Reference. Indicators to be used for this evaluation were developed for the inception report and are included in Annex 3.

2. The evaluation of CARDS in Albania is based on a sampling of projects. The sample was established based on a reclassification of projects carried out in the period from 2001-2006 into the following five macro sectors: Justice and Home Affairs, Administrative Capacity Building, Economic and Social Development, Environment and Natural resources, and Civil Society Development. In these 5 macro sectors, 7 clusters or sub-sectors were established and from these the sample of projects was selected. The clusters of this evaluation is outlined below.

Table 1 - Scope of evaluation

Macro Sector	Sub-sector/ Cluster	Projects evaluated			Total CARDS M€
		Interviews/ Desk	Survey	CARDS M€	
Justice and Home Affairs	Justice	8	2	18.62	121.00
	Asylum and Border management	6	1	18.20	
Administrative Capacity Building	Public Administration Reform (PAR) (horizontal and vertical)	7	5	15.75	47.10
Economic and Social Development	Economic Development/Internal Market	6	7	27.00	88.50
	Education (Vocational Education and Training)	5	2	10.40	
Environment and Natural Resources	Environment	5	2	14.18	36.00
Civil Society Development	Civil Society Development	3	3	6.90	8.50
Other		-	-	-	3.2
In total		40	22	111.05	282.10⁸

⁸ The total amount given in the Terms of Reference.

1.2 Clusters/Sub-sectors Description

3. The initial chapter of this report provides an overview of the 7 sectors subject to this evaluation as well as the CARDS assistance provided to the sectors.

Justice

4. *At the initial stage of CARDS assistance, the Albanian judicial system was moving from an emergency situation and entering into a consolidation phase.* Efforts were required to focus fundamentally on the proper implementation of the existing legislation, strengthening the independence of the judiciary and implementation of human rights⁹. Strengthening of the judicial system's independence and performance parallel with increasing the capacities of the executive bodies to effectively implement the legislative and institutional judicial reforms have been the key issues during the entire transition phase.

5. *CARDS assistance has been amongst the most significant in the overall external assistance provided.* Assistance to institutional and capacity building includes actions aimed to strengthen the performance and independence of key judicial institutions such the High Council of Justice (CJ), School of Magistrate and General Prosecution Office; strengthen the capacities of executive bodies responsible for implementation of the judicial reform such as Ministry of Justice (MoJ); enforcement system and establishment of new system of juvenile justice. In addition, assistance has been focusing on supporting enhancement of the judicial system in commercial matters that contribute to overall improvement of the investment climate. Other interventions include support for establishment of court for serious crimes and strengthening the penitentiary system. A large amount of support has been provided to improvement of infrastructures in judiciary with investments in the court buildings and pre-detention centres.

Asylum and Border Management

6. *Border management has been an important priority for fighting organised crime and trafficking as well for promoting a legitimate trade regime.* The Albanian border control and management was in the programming period an area of concern, as the Albanian borders served as transit routes for criminal activities such as smuggling of drugs and trafficking in human beings. Furthermore, a large number of Albanians attempted to immigrate to the EU via Greece and other borders. Integrated Border Management encompassing all authorities involved at the border such as police, customs, veterinary and phytosanitary control was introduced in the programming period. In this evaluation, the main focus has been on the support provided to the border police¹⁰ or to the border crossing point as such for common use by the authorities responsible for the border as well as Asylum and Migration. The Ministry of Interior is responsible for the Albanian State Police. The Ministry of the Interior (Department for Migration) is responsible for the implementation of the national migration strategy. As of the beginning of 2008, the border police is a separate directorate under the Albanian State Police.

7. *The CARDS support to border management has been focused on Integrated Border Management and Asylum and Migration.* In the period support covered the Integrated Border Management through the large Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Al-

⁹ PHARE programme provided some infrastructure upgrade (Rehabilitation of the Lezhë Prison) and some technical assistance under the so-called "joint programmes" with the Council of Europe (support to the School of Magistrates, training on human rights, etc.). CARDS continues the combined approach, but with greater emphasis on technical assistance.

¹⁰ Support provided to customs and tax, CAFAO, is covered in another evaluation focused on regional programmes including Albania.

bania (PAMECA II) (CARDS 2004)¹¹, support to the border police as part of the overall support to the Albanian police, a twinning project supporting the border police (CARDS 2001), and a Master Plan for Investment into Border Control Infrastructure (CARDS 2003). In addition to these projects, there have been a number of equipment and works projects supporting the border crossing points and the overall border management infrastructure. Asylum and migration are an important part of the integrated border management and there has been a need for improving administrative and financial capacities for implementing the migration and asylum legislation and the corresponding national strategies. The CARDS assistance has focused on the development and subsequent implementation of a national migration strategy and a screening system for asylum seekers and migrants.

Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)

8. ***The public administration in Albania is still weak and institutional capacity and administrative systems are far from European standards.*** The European Partnership for Albania¹² identified as priorities for the government to ensure the sustainability of reforms, increase in capacities and professionalism across the public administration, and introduction of a results-oriented management system. The law of 1999 on Public Official Status created a mixed civil service system, mainly based on the position model, combining it with elements of a career system. However, the implementation of the Civil Service Law in Albania has been problematic and a full public administration reform strategy is still being developed. The government's coordination is provided through the Department of Public Administration (DoPA) located at the Ministry of Interior, while the Training Institute of Public Administration (TIPA) provides training to Albanian civil servants. The Government is still in its very preliminary phase of adopting a result-oriented management system. More in this respect is expected under implementation of the Integrated Planning System, where result-oriented monitoring issues are also in primary focus.

9. ***GoA implemented a national strategy of decentralisation and local autonomy.*** The strategy was developed in 1999 and the discretionary fiscal authority of regional councils, municipalities and communes has been increasing. The revenue autonomy (the proportion of local government revenues raised either by local governments or through central government unconditional transfers) increased from 6.5 % in 1998 to almost 60 % in 2007. Nevertheless, outstanding issues remain such as the establishment of clear procedures for delegated functions, including decisions on investments.

10. ***CARDS allocated assistance within Administrative Capacity Building for horizontal public administration reform projects, and vertical reform projects.*** The horizontal group concerns projects involving the overall administrative capacity building and reforms at central and local level administrations such as public administration reform, civil service reform, European Integration and decentralisation. The vertical acquis group includes projects addressing the implementation of the acquis in areas such as statistics, procurement, state aid, internal and external financial control.

Economic Development/Internal Market

11. ***Rebounding from the financial collapse of 1997, Albania has sustained high rates of economic growth.*** Economic activity recovered and real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates accelerated to an average annual rate of 7 % over the period from 1999-2005, al-

¹¹ This evaluation primarily evaluates the border management part of PAMECA II

¹² European Partnership for Albania - issued by the European Commission in 2007

lowing Albania's per capita GDP to approach the average for middle income country levels. Since its transition, Albania's growth has been driven primarily by improvements in the allocation of resources from low-productivity sectors, firms and activities (e.g. subsistence agriculture) to high-productivity ones (e.g. export manufacturing). Future challenges include support to a fair business environment to promote SME development, exports and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and to build consumer protection systems.

12. CARDS assistance to economic development has been concentrated in three main components; (i) support to strengthening quality infrastructure systems, focusing on standards, certification, accreditation, market surveillance, food safety; (ii) trade regulation and investment promotion; and (iii) community development, focusing mainly on small-scale rural infrastructure investments. Allocations of CARDS 2005 and 2006 have decreased to almost half of the contributions of 2001-2003. This is due to a decrease in allocations for "local community development programmes", which received around 60 % of funds supporting economic development.

Education (Vocational Education and Training (VET))

13. The VET system in Albania is regarded as weak and having limited resources. Lack of infrastructure, a low level of human resources, and old curricula and management methods have been impacting the sector. VET in Albania is composed of initial VET¹³ under the Ministry of Education and Science, and continuing VET under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. At the moment 17 % of secondary education are vocational education. There are currently 40 VET schools and 9 regional VET training centres. The VET sector in Albania should be a key part of the economic development and EU Integration and, at the same time, the regional and international development, especially in the European Union (EU), for example, "Copenhagen Process" and "European Qualification Framework".

14. CARDS assistance has provided continuous support to this sector in the period. Assistance to the sector has centred on three technical assistance projects (Support to Vocational Education and Training 2002 (Phase I-III) from CARDS 2002, 2003 and 2004) supporting the Ministries of Education and Science and Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, one twinning project (Institutional Capacity Building for the National VET Agency and Council), and supplies and works to the vocational schools and training centres (Supplies and Works 2004).

Environment

15. Environmental problems relate in particular to poor air quality in urban areas, severe water pollution from industrial activities, inter alia from oil extraction, lack of infrastructure. Neglected investment in municipal waste water treatment and solid and hazardous waste management, the latter leading to uncontrolled dumping and burning of waste, poses environmental and health risks. A number of 'hot spot', sites of urgent environmental concern, are the result of the above problems and are still of concern. In the area of nature protection, illegal logging and hunting are still a problem and efforts to improve chemical management still need to be made. There is a lack of enforcement procedures in every field of environmental protection. Although Albania has made some effort to transpose EU's environmental acquis and has adopted the National Environmental Strategy (NES) and incorporated it into the National

¹³ Initial VET equals a 3-year course providing access to employment and a 5-year course for technical or access to tertiary education.

Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI), further steps on actual implementation still need to be taken.

16. *The CARDS projects within the environmental sector have been either in the form of major technical assistance projects mainly targeting MEFWA, or in the form of clean-up of environmental hot spots.* The vision has been to act as a catalyst for additional funding from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank (WB), or other bilateral funding. CARDS has, in total, supported 23 projects within the environmental sector during 2002-2006: Nine of these projects were major projects while the others were preparatory projects¹⁴. Emphasis in the evaluation of this sector is placed on the major technical assistance projects where the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (MEFWA) has been the main beneficiary. Additional comments and recommendations are made concerning the hot spot projects. Altogether seven environmental projects have formed the basis for the assessment.

Civil Society Development (CSD)

17. *Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Albania play an important role in social service delivery to supplement the limited public services.* In the context of CSOs as watchdogs of the public sector and a vehicle for democratic debate, the sector is less developed and very much Tirana based. The actual size of the civil society (CS) in Albania varies depending on the specific subject area. Some research put the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country at 3000, most of which operate outside Tirana. However, it is largely believed that only about 800 organizations are active, and of these no more than 100 are considered well-established organisations¹⁵. The Albanian civil society is still very 'donor-driven', meaning that it exists largely due to external project support.

18. *Support to CSOs has a very limited role in CARDS and is mostly directed towards supporting service delivery or establishing a national CS register.* The projects assessed in this chapter were funded through CARDS grant scheme for CSOs, which provided support to 19 projects within a total budget of € 750,000 under CARDS 2001 and 2005, and which has recently approved 15 projects under CARDS 2006. Whereas CARDS 2001 focussed on civil society only, CARDS 2005 had three categories, CSO, Media and Gender, where five projects within each category have been selected for support. The grants were within the range of € 30,000 to € 100,000 and were distributed through an application process undertaken by the European Commission Delegation (ECD) itself, albeit supported by experts from Albanian think tanks. The grants provided through CARDS 2001 grants were all distributed in 2003 or 2004 and executed during 2004-2006, whereas the grants provided through CARDS 2005 were only disbursed in July 2008 and therefore had not yet started at the time of this evaluation.

¹⁴ Based on information (Project List) provided by the ECD on 28 August, 2008.

¹⁵ Report on Civil Society Need Assessment in Albania, UNDP, Civil Partnership for the MDGs and the National Strategy for Social and Economic Development (NSSED) 2002-2004.

2 Overall Performance of CARDS

2.1 CARDS assistance has reflected the needs in all sectors

19. The assistance provided under CARDS has been largely relevant with the CARDS and Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) strategic document available at the time. The strategies of the beneficiaries have only been able to impact the latter years of CARDS as these were only developed then. Implementation issues and capacities have impacted the speed of implementation and thereby the relevance of the original design of projects. Realistic assessment of beneficiary capacity has been an issue which will impact the sustainability of the interventions.

Justice

20. *Assistance provided to the Justice sector has been very relevant to EC and Albania's strategic priorities and JHA have been the highest priority in all EC strategic documents¹⁶ on Albania.* The Country Strategy Paper (CSP)¹⁷ states that CARDS assistance in the judicial sector is the central response of the EC strategy for supporting the implementation of rule of law and international agreements in Albania. Reform in the Justice sector has been a high priority also in all strategic documents of the Albanian Government¹⁸ over the years. CARDS projects supporting the Justice sector were well designed¹⁹ based on a systematic and participatory needs assessment process including the beneficiaries actively and in consultation with other key donors involved in the sector. It should be noted that assistance design has provided a good combination between institutional building and infrastructure support. Support to infrastructure has been properly guided by Master Plan for Judicial Infrastructure prepared by the Government with CARDS support.

21. *Donor coordination mechanisms at sectoral level continue to function properly. In the framework of Donors' Technical Secretariat the EC Delegation has the lead in coordinating the donors' assistance to the sector and over years CARDS has been used as an efficient framework for coordinating donors' assistance.* While coordination of donors' assistance has been effective at the programming phase, the level of coordination and information sharing during the implementation phase was limited. With the establishment of Department for Strat-

¹⁶ CSP, all EC Annual progress reports on Albania, Multi-Annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs), European Partnership documents.

¹⁷ Country Strategy Paper, section 6.2.1.1. pg. 24

¹⁸ Government Programmes, NSSD, Albanian Action Plan for European Integration, NSDI, National Plan for SAA Implementation

¹⁹ Conclusion supported also by project monitoring reports

egy and Donors Coordination in 2005, the Government institutions are showing a higher commitment in coordinating the assistance to this sector also.

22. The CARDS assistance to this sector with regard to relevance is rated *satisfactory*.

Asylum and Border Management

23. ***Integrated Border Management was a key priority in the CSP.*** Following the EC Guidelines on Integrated Border Management, a strategy had to be developed for the border police, the existing strategy, needed to be upgraded, reflecting the work and responsibilities of a number of ministries and agencies (border police, customs, phytosanitary and veterinary control). Throughout the period, border management has developed and the projects supported by CARDS have been very relevant in this respect. The projects have focused on strategy (Integrated Border Management Strategy), legislation and institution building (PAMECA), training and capacity development (PAMECA and Twinning project), as well as on developing a strategy for the infrastructure at the borders. Support was also provided by the PAMECA II project to the design and management of the process related to the equipment supplies, which provided important coordination between supplies and technical assistance (TA). The design of the support and projects has reflected the needs of the sector, and these have been targeted to the institutional development needs.

24. ***Asylum and migration are major challenges for Albania since 20 % of its population left the country to seek work abroad during the late 1990s.*** Asylum management was also an important issue at the time of the above-mentioned project, where instability remained, especially at the border to Kosovo. The project on pre-screening of asylum seekers focuses on improving infrastructure at border posts to enable an appropriate handling and pre-screening of asylum seekers, interception of trafficked persons as well as illegal immigrants in search of employment or - more likely - a way to get into a neighbouring EU country. In terms of migration management, the original rationale for the EC funding focussed on managing the influx of foreign immigrants. However, as the migration strategy developed, it became increasingly clear that the key focus should be on emigration from Albania²⁰, and on enhancing contact with the Diaspora, facilitating their lives abroad and their return to Albania, as well as getting the remittances that they send back, which amount to 15-20 % of the GDP, into controlled channels through, e.g., the banking system.

25. ***Donor coordination in the sector has been carried out, it is however difficult to judge if this has been effective throughout the period and across all the themes covered.*** With many donors active in the overall sector of Integrated Border Management there have according to observers been overlaps of assistance provided by the donors. The overlaps, in e.g. supply of equipment, have to some extent been addressed at project and implementation level, especially by the major donors responsible for large project interventions. Against this background in particular and the described policy towards EU integration, the relevance must be considered **satisfactory**.

Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)

26. ***There can be no doubt that CARDS assistance to support the establishment of an effective and transparent public administration has been highly relevant.*** CARDS support fully reflects Albanian Government policy and priorities. It lies well within a variety of Government

²⁰ Between 1995 and 2000, an estimated 7-800,000 people left Albania. It is estimated that 60 % of these now live in Greece; 20 % in Italy and 10 % in other EC countries.

policy documents²¹ such as the Government Programmes, National Strategy for Social and Economic Development, National Strategy for Development and Integration, and National Plan for SAA Implementation. Administrative capacity building as a priority is fully in line also with policy priorities stipulated in EC documents on Albania such as Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006, different European Partnership documents covering the period 2004-2007, and EC annual progress reports on Albania.

27. CARDS has provided very limited support to development of institutional capacities for the management of the civil service reform. The civil service reform has only benefited directly from a CARDS 2003 project at the amount of € 750,000, which seems to be very modest compared to the needs. The World Bank has been active with support in this area, but there is a general feeling that CARDS assistance has been absent in this area during this period when civil service reform has been a priority of the Albanian Government. More focused EC support to this area could positively have influenced the introduction of a public administration reform strategy, which to date has not been developed.

28. CARDS has focused little on decentralisation and local capacity development (a priority high on the GoA agenda). CARDS support to this sub-sector has provided little funding until 2005, while a major allocation under CARDS 2006 - aimed to support fiscal decentralisation - has not started its project design phase. The CARDS assistance to the sector is rated **satisfactory**.

Economic Development/Internal Market

29. The aim of the GoA is commitment to ensuring that future growth takes place increasingly in the formal economy, so that Albanian business can compete on European markets. Developing effective economic institutions and incentives is therefore the second broad strategic priority in the NSDI. This area covers support to development of internal market standards compatible to those of EC, focusing on promotion of national economic development and the establishment of trade, investment and quality infrastructure systems. Almost all EC documents on Albania place strong emphasis on improvement of internal market regulation and systems to meet European standards²². There is no doubt that CARDS support provided to overall quality infrastructure, standardization, certification, accreditation, market surveillance, food safety, trade regulation and promotion is highly relevant to Albanian needs and priorities²³. The same can be said for CARDS investment support to develop rural infrastructure²⁴.

30. While overall relevance cannot be questioned, a broad concern often observed is poor design of project objectives and results. Several projects have suffered implementation problems due to poor design at the start. The worst example is the 2002 project supporting Market Surveillance, where it was deemed necessary to radically change the Terms of Reference (ToRs) in the middle of project implementation. Some of the project's design focused mainly on establishing the proper legal and institutional framework, but disregarded the significant need for training of local staff. There were projects, where beneficiaries perceived the assistance as very intensive and too optimistic and often beyond local absorption capacities. The most evident case of this was the CARDS 2002 project supporting trade regulation and promo-

²¹ Albanian NSSED 2002-2004 and NSDI 2007-2013.

²² Internal market regulation is a priority in all EC European Partnership Documents on Albania as well as Annual Progress Reports.

²³ National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013.

²⁴ Projects supporting "local community development programmes" are not in the focus of this evaluation.

tion where beneficiary institutions (i.e. Albinvest or Ministry of Economy) could not respond to the assistance provided in the very short time allocated for the project. Overall, the relevance to the sector is rated **moderately satisfactory**.

Education (Vocational Education and Training)

31. *The assistance to the VET sector reflected the urgent needs.* At the beginning of the programming period, the VET sector had suffered a serious setback, schools were deteriorating and even closing in the preceding period, and assistance was assessed as crucial in order to improve conditions in the sector as well as to further develop the sector towards EU standards. This is reflected in the SAAs at the time of programming and in Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

32. *The CARDS assistance provided in the sector has been addressing key objectives in the sector* and has targeted the strategic level (VET strategy, action plan and legal framework), and the institutional structures of the sector by setting up the VET council and the National Vocational Training Agency. The VET strategy²⁵ reflects a consensus on the reassessment of traditional VET policies and methods in order to develop new concepts regarding reform functions and sustainability. The VET strategy focuses on developing a national VET Qualification Framework, modernising curricula to reflect the labour market needs, developing the institutional framework, capacity development (teachers and trainers) and infrastructure improvements. CARDS has also targeted the operational level by supporting the VET schools and labour market centres and by developing the national qualifications framework and supporting the schools and centres with training, infrastructure improvements and equipment.

33. *The quality of the project design and quality of documentation have improved over the period, reflecting the needs and project management cycle.* The beneficiaries found that project design in the beginning of the period did not fully reflect the Albanian situation, and therefore had to be readjusted in the implementation phase. In the more recent projects, however, the needs had been better assessed and the beneficiaries had also been more actively involved in the design. The CARDS assistance to the cluster is well organised and all projects are linked through a common steering committee for all ongoing projects. Furthermore, according to most stakeholders, the sector is very well coordinated between donors and donor projects through the donor group DACH+²⁶. The CARDS support in the sector has functioned as a reference point for the other donors. With regard to relevance, the assistance to the sector is regarded as **satisfactory**.

Environment

34. *There is general consensus between the stakeholders interviewed that the projects in the environmental sector have all been highly relevant* and are in line with the Government's priorities, the SAA process and the priorities for the sector. The projects have, in general, been designed according to the pressing needs of the Albanian environmental sector both in terms of technical assistance projects and relevant hot spots projects. Thus, CARDS assisted in addressing key environmental objectives such as the need for strategic planning of the Government's overall environmental effort, projects on concrete clean-up of major hot spots, projects aiming to enhance the environmental monitoring system in Albania as well as approximation to EU framework legislation within selected sectors. The CARDS Country Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 stressed the need for further harmonisation of Albanian environmental laws with EU leg-

²⁵ Strategy of Vocational Training and Education Training in Albania (Draft) January 2006.

²⁶ Donor group originally consisting of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

isolation, strengthening of the major environment-related institutions particularly at policy formulation level, as well as strengthening of monitoring systems and enforcement capacity in Albania, with a specific sector focus on air, water and waste. These priorities were well in line with the 2001 Albanian Government's Policy Agenda for Socio-economic Development and the main objectives set for the environment sector.

35. *Projects were designed, to a varying degree, in cooperation with the key stakeholders.* One CARDS project for the construction of a landfill for the disposal of hazardous waste was never implemented, irrespective of its relevance, due to strong opposition from the local community on the selected site. Some stakeholders claimed this was due to lack of coordination and insufficient public involvement, as public consultations in reality only commenced after all decisions had been made. The initial allocation of funds was thus allocated to an alternative solution (in situ clean-up). As a result of this, there is still a need for constructing a hazardous waste landfill in Albania. The process of consulting the public and carrying out awareness raising as a basis for site selection and later implementation needs to be thoroughly addressed when preparing future EC investment projects.

36. *Coordination with the EU programming could be improved in order to ensure better synergies in the sector.* EC assistance was seen more as an entity on its own than as part of the donor group. Some stakeholders also pointed out that the EC funding should not continuously be spent on the remediation of polluted sites. Both the Ministry and the EC should take a stronger role in coordination.

37. *The quality of the Terms of Reference and the project documentation on the major technical assistance projects were generally of a good standard,* whereas, e.g., project preparation for clean-up projects seemed to be fairly superficial, and later project implementation would have gained from a more thorough project preparation. For example, the projects prepared for Rubik copper smelter plant and Fier nitrate fertilizer plant had held only one working group meeting with the Ministry of Economics, Trade and Energy, and there seemed to have been no involvement of MEFWA in the process. In sum, relevance was rated as **satisfactory**.

Civil Society Development

38. *Civil society is a relatively new feature in Albania and to a high degree Tirana-based and donor-driven and with a very limited, albeit slowly increasing local funding base.* The organisations receiving international support have developed skills in project formulation and implementation along international standards and claim a certain outreach. However, the degree to which the sector really has taken root in the local populace is debatable. According to the Country Strategy 2002-2006, the activities should result in an increased number of NGOs active in the country, increased co-operation amongst the NGOs, and a regular dialogue between governmental and non-governmental bodies.

39. *The focus projects have been loyal to the strategy focusing on establishing networks, forums and institutions to foster dialogue between civil society and local authorities outside Tirana.* The focus on activities outside Tirana was very timely, since the civil society is especially weak outside Tirana and perhaps a few major towns. Also, the focus on fostering dialogue and thereby attempting to reduce tensions and promote understanding and cooperation is valid. The level of involvement of local stakeholders and organisations in project design varies between the projects. However, since the applicants are all professional, Tirana-based institutions or organisations, a certain top-down approach can be detected. The projects are all based upon criteria for support established through the Guidelines for Grants Applications for CS

projects. The criteria are quite broad and include general capacity development of CSOs; increased cooperation with government agencies at national and local level and support to achieve increased financial independence from foreign donors.

40. *The 2005-2006 Multi-annual Programme expands the focus on civil society to also include support to improving freedom of expression in the media.* The programme will strengthen the capacities of journalists and increase awareness of European Standards. The focus on enhancing the transparency and accountability of Albanian media, improving its professionalism and ensuring better protection of journalists is also very relevant in a country where press freedom is secured and media with all observations flourish - but where the quality of reporting and the working conditions and security of journalists leave much to be desired. Hence, the scope of this support is also very timely.

41. In conclusion, the relevance of the CSD and media component can be considered **satisfactory** as the projects in the cluster address key elements in developing a pluralistic and accountable society.

2.2 Project efficiency has been good, but is affected by lack of institutional capacity

42. As mentioned under relevance, the overall delays in implementation and assessment of the administrative capacity may have impacted the efficiency of the projects. However, in general, many projects have been efficient with varied capacity of beneficiaries, in spite of a difficult and changing programme environment. Many contractors, twinning partners and international organisations have performed well in spite of this.

Justice

43. *Projects in the Justice sector have managed to produce outputs on time and within the budget.* While the assistance has been generally efficient in delivering outputs, it should be noted that especially in legislative processes, institutional or political conflicts²⁷, have in several cases delayed adoption of legislation developed with CARDS assistance. In addition, the Ministry of Justice has suffered from shortcomings in internal communication and continued weak capacities in the Codification Department which has also affected performance, especially in the EURALIUS project.

44. *For judicial infrastructure building, projects are implemented in compliance with and according to the Master Plan for Judicial Infrastructure.*²⁸ There have been no substantial delays during the implementation phase of works projects. The fact that the MoJ has had the possibility to use publicly owned land for construction of new court houses or pre-detention centres has in time addressed the property ownership issue²⁹ often noted in infrastructure pro-

²⁷ Especially conflicts between Ministry of Justice and High Council of Justice. Albania's parliamentary crisis, notably related to the February 2007 local elections, has paralysed various legal initiatives and caused delays in the implementation of several activities foreseen within the EURALIUS project

²⁸ Investment under CARDS focuses on upgrading the penitentiary and court infrastructure (prisons of Fushë Kruja and Korça, courts of appeal of Vlora and Korça, court of Serious Crimes)

²⁹ Several delays were faced in the past in infrastructure projects due to disputes of ownership over the land. Few programmes funded by different donors were cancelled due to lack of government capacity to address the property issue in time.

jects. The government's financial contribution has been provided on time, secured by a well-functioning planning system in the MoJ. In terms of efficiency, the sector is rated *satisfactory*.

Asylum and Border Management

45. *The projects in the cluster have been implemented efficiently and well managed.* The activities of the PAMECA II project have been implemented efficiently, securing the participation of key beneficiary groups and coordinating with other relevant projects and activities. Training courses were transferred to recipients' training structures already during project implementation, thereby securing transfer of ownership and longer term impact and sustainability. The same has been noted for the twinning project. Also, Asylum and migration projects have generally been well managed. The projects have also managed to produce the expected outputs within the budgets and even been capable of extending the activities due to savings accrued during implementation. This has allowed, e.g., additional training, additional construction work etc. Overall efficiency and the use of resources of the projects have been regarded as good.

46. *In spite of the good management and delivery, a number of projects have not been implemented in time as planned.* The Implementation of the Migration Strategy met with some delays due to internal discussions within the GoA on where to anchor the implementation of the strategy as well as its funding. However, the situation seems to be settling, as a new Coordination Unit for Migration is in the process of being established in the Labour Ministry and the project on implementing the migration strategy is hence taking off. The implementation of the Integrated Border Management Strategy and Action Plan was initially delayed due to institutional constraints, lack of commitment at the management level and lack of inter-institutional cooperation (customs, phytosanitary and veterinary). However with changes at the management level in the border police the implementation of the strategy has progressed as planned.

47. *Project allocations foreseen in the Financing Memorandum for 2001 and 2003 seem not to have been implemented.* Due to high turnover of task managers in the ECD (especially in this area), it has been difficult to trace these allocations as well as assess why these allocations were not developed into projects and contracted. In spite of this, the assistance which was delivered in the sector is assessed as efficient and is rated *satisfactory*.

Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)

48. *PAR projects were affected by inadequate project design and problematic communication with beneficiaries.* In some cases, team leaders were replaced in the middle of the implementation phase (the project supporting civil service reform had the team leader changed twice in its lifetime). Relations with contracting firms were reported to be difficult. Poorly designed ToRs and lack of proper communication with the beneficiary in the project supporting public administration and civil service reform led to reengineering of project outputs and input in the middle of the implementation period. The projects supporting the Ministry of European Integration (MEI) have exhausted most of the projects' resources (70 %) during the first half of the implementation period, thus substantially lowering the level of interventions in the second half. The project supporting service delivery at local government, despite delays due to a difficult start, managed to put in place a functioning coordination and delivery mechanism³⁰. Only the

³⁰ Efforts are being made to ensure excellent integration and interlinks with the licensing system at central level (supported by MCA and BERIS projects (Business Environment Reform and Institutional Strengthening)).

project supporting the TIPA in establishment of a government training system was well implemented.

49. *In spite of implementation problems caused by institutional turbulence, most PAR projects delivered their outputs.* Significant changes (staff) in some government institutions after the elections of mid-2005 were an important factor in lowering efficiency in implementation. However, in spite of this, the projects in the PAR cluster have overall produced the outputs as expected, and within the deadlines. In conclusion, the efficiency is considered **moderately satisfactory**.

Economic Development/Internal Market

50. *In the economic sector, implementation delays were caused by low capacity and weak design.* It is noted that some projects suffered implementation delays due to the Albanian elections in 2005 which resulted in a change of Government as well as reshuffling of some beneficiary institutions. Project efficiency was also influenced by the low capacity of beneficiaries to respond to an increasingly demanding process³¹. Many projects were prolonged and half of the projects scored their best performance³² in the extension period³³. In the projects it is difficult to assess whether the need for extensions came as a design deficiency or due to inefficient implementation. Anecdotal evidence indicates that both reasons are relevant, but certainly poorly designed projects had inevitable efficiency problems. Better efficiency is noted in the project supporting standardisation and establishment of food authority (ongoing). In general, efficiency is considered **moderately satisfactory**.

Education (Vocational Education and Training)

51. *VET Project (3 phases) and VET Twinning have produced the outputs as expected.* The time planning has partly been adapted to the circumstances, but overall the outputs have been produced on time. The deliveries of outcomes have improved over time (the VET project has 3 phases and started up in 2004 and runs until 2010). The initial VET (VETI) project faced implementation problems at start-up. Overall, all beneficiaries seem to be satisfied with the planning and implementation of activities and timely delivery outputs of the projects. Overall the projects have carried out the activities efficiently, in particular the VET projects have been highlighted as having a very good management and a flexible approach to delivery. The Twinning project was regarded as less efficient. The fact that the sector has received support from a limited number of projects - over a relatively long period of time from 2004-2010 - has ensured a very well-functioning project delivery, where projects are well coordinated and the various phases build on achievements and lessons learned from the previous. There is little doubt that this has supported efficient and continuous delivery. The CARDS assistance is therefore rated **satisfactory**.

Environment

52. *The environment projects have achieved planned outputs on time or with acceptable delays, in difficult circumstances.* To some extent, the lack of conceptual understanding of the EU approximation planning process, as well as gaps in the common understanding of possible objectives to be reached through the projects, had created overly ambitious expectations to the final outputs and outcome among the officials in MEFWA and related institutions. Measures in place to support implementation and delivery of outputs have, in general terms, been weak, if

³¹ Projects supporting trade regulation and promotion and project supporting market surveillance.

³² According to project reports and interviews with stakeholder.

³³ Projects supporting standardization, market surveillance project.

not entirely absent, such as the lack of staff and resources to implement the activities which, in several cases, hampered effective project implementation. Several projects have found it difficult to conduct Steering Committee Meetings and missed important feedback from the MEFWA due to this. In this regard, the technical assistance projects were perceived by the key stakeholders as being too large and too ambitious in design, and the attempt to embrace too many components simultaneously indirectly detracted focus from core issues.

53. *In some cases, project management was accused of not accommodating the wishes of the Albanian recipient institutions.* The recipient institutions stated that general control of projects by the EC during the implementation phase could be improved when compared to other donor projects. The project on hazardous waste from the nitrogen fertiliser plant in Fier was an example given by the beneficiary where project preparation had not been sufficiently thorough and where the size and complexity of the problem turned out to be much larger than originally anticipated. The MEFWA expressed a wish for greater involvement in the handling of hot spot projects rather than only in the Environmental Impact Assessments. In one particular case, the project on Strengthening of the Environmental Monitoring System (StEMA), the cooperation between the consultant and the Ministry has been complicated, and the project outcome is thus perceived differently by the various stakeholders due to issues which ought to have been addressed more efficiently during the cooperation process between the beneficiary, the consultant and the EC Delegation. If better and closer management structures had been established and effectuated, a more unified and positive viewpoint could have been achieved. In sum, efficiency was rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

Civil Society Development

54. *Outputs have been produced within reasonable time frames.* Delays have been experienced in projects executed in 2005 due to the general elections, which naturally upset other activities within local government and other stakeholders for an extended period. Also, there has been a considerable delay in spending the allocated funds so that projects approved in July 2008, to start implementation in October 2008, are funded under CARDS 2005.

55. *In terms of cost effectiveness, there is a considerable variance between the level of salaries proposed for local staff in the various projects, varying from a mere € 100 to € 600 per month.* These differences cannot be explained by different tasks but probably rather by different traditions in international organisations like Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (highest) to small national organisations (lowest). In conclusion, the efficiency is considered **moderately satisfactory**.

2.3 The CARDS assistance has had planned effects, but has been affected by lack of capacity and commitment

56. Overall, the projects have delivered the planned outputs or are on the way to doing so. Many contractors, twinning partners and organisations have been effective in the delivery of outputs. The main constraint to effectiveness of CARDS has been the Albanian institutions, which in some cases have not been able to receive an output.

Justice

57. *Effectiveness of the projects differs, and is highly dependent on the engagement and commitment of the beneficiary.* For the twinning projects for the High Council of Justice (HCJ) and MoJ in relation to the judicial system on commercial matters the finalisation of the proposed amendments will require a large consultation process, in particular with business

community. In general, conducting consultation processes for all the legislation developed by the MoJ has been a concern, as previous processes have been reported as being not transparent. In particular for legislation linked with judicial matters in the commercial sector, it is of paramount importance that the business community is engaged in the early stage of drafting the legislation. However, the new law on HCJ was adopted in March 2008. Proposals related to: a) disciplinary proceedings and the competencies of both Inspectorates; and b) HCJ internal administrative structure, have been developed. Training programmes are delivered according to the deadlines and with a good quality coordinated through the School of Magistrate³⁴.

58. *Of particular concern is the effectiveness of assistance delivered to support capacity building projects*, which are closely related in particular to the capacities of the MoJ to lead the process, as well as a still insufficient level of cooperation between institutions in the judicial sector. Changes in the leadership and high management level in this ministry have impacted also the effectiveness of the output produced. Effectiveness of assistance in this area is rated **moderately satisfactory**.

Asylum and Border Management

59. *The CARDS assistance has delivered very important outputs which will support the development border management*. The GoA adopted the Integrated Border Management Strategy (supported by regional CARDS assistance and PAMECA II), and very importantly the legislative and regulative support in the development of a new law on the Albanian State Police, which paved the way for the restructuring amongst other of the border police. At the time of the closure of the projects most of the legislation/regulations (State Border Control and Surveillance) or agreements supported were still pending adoption. They have mostly been approved or adopted now. The National Migration strategy was produced and is being implemented, although with some delays. An interesting element in the implementation is that a special Coordination and Monitoring System (CMS) has been devised in order to ensure that the activities proposed and decided also materialise. However, this system still awaits approval by the Inter-ministerial Council of Ministers. A new Law on Foreigners is also awaiting approval, which hampers the development of handbooks and guidelines on its implementation, although training is ongoing.

60. *Institutional reorganisation and human resources development have been key outputs there is however doubt to the effect especially of training*. Training and human resource development of border police have taken place throughout most of the project in this cluster: inter alia in integrated border management, Asylum Rights and Pre-screening, border control risk analysis, operating and maintaining specialised equipment. Due to very high turnover in staff, prior to the new state police law entering into force, the effects of the training in this preceding period is doubtful. Staff trained for specialised border police tasks were transferred to other parts of the police or left the police all together.

61. *The capacity developed for pre-screening in terms of training and especially facilities seems exaggerated*, given the very few asylum seekers entering Albania and the few persons intercepted as illegal immigrants or traffickers of people. In that sense, one can question the effectiveness of implementing a major project to address a small problem. However, this reflects the benefit of hindsight, since the situation was quite different prior to the independence of Kosovo. With the potential for conflicts in the sub-region, it is a suitable foresight to have

³⁴ Trainings include HCJ members, inspectors and administrative structure, courts staff and judges.

the asylum mechanism in place and border police well trained, provided some assurance can be given that they will still be posted at the borders.

62. Substantial amounts of equipment and infrastructure have been delivered not matching current needs. A large quantity of infrastructure investments and equipment has been delivered both by the different donors and projects in the sector. It is assessed that some border posts are better equipped than some EU members' and that this equipment is only partly used and needed. For example, for asylum and migration, two reception centres have been established around Tirana (capacity of 60 and well maintained), and temporary shelters have been established/rehabilitated at border posts, also posters, training and handbooks of high standards have been produced. The original project was hampered by considerable delays, primarily due to the limited technical capacity of the involved civil servants, which made it necessary to rewrite the programme draft several times. The assistance to the sector is assessed in relation to effectiveness as **moderately satisfactory**.

Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)

63. Overall, projects in the sector have produced the expected outputs in line with their objectives, and a number of projects have been successfully implemented. The projects supporting TIPA, public finance, competition, public procurement and statistics performed significantly better, while the project supporting public administration and civil service reform was below average. New management tools adopted along with the TIPA business plan strategy as well as introduction of the quality control system helped strengthen the overall organisation performance of TIPA. The introduction of the licensing system for local government is well coordinated with the ongoing licensing reform at central government level.

64. Projects supporting horizontal PAR and civil service reform have overall failed to be effective. The beneficiaries report that some of the outputs produced were good, but others either weak or too advanced compared to the situation of Albanian civil service. It should be mentioned that adoption of certain outputs is also linked to the low level of absorption capacities in the line ministries, and willingness to commit to new civil service reforms in respect to implementation of civil service law. The support to European Integration (EI) has produced effective outputs in relation to strengthening the overall coordination, reporting and monitoring of EI affairs as well as capacities for legal approximation. But CARDS has failed to produce any tangible output in relation to integrating the EI agenda with other development agendas of the Government under overall guidance of the Integrated Planning System (IPS). Another weak output of assistance so far is the link of EC assistance/Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) to the budget planning process.

65. In general, intra-project synergies and coordination in this area are relatively weak. The crucial link between support to public administration reform and support to European Integration and legal approximation has received little attention under CARDS. The development of structures and institutions for the management of EU affairs can only be successful in the context of an overall administrative development policy and system. The lack of integration between both types of CARDS projects has had a negative influence especially on the performance of projects supporting EI initiatives.

66. The effectiveness of projects under this cluster is rated as moderately satisfactory.

Economic Development/Internal Market

67. Overall, CARDS assistance to the sector has helped to establish an advanced legal and institutional framework in line with EU internal market requirements. In general, projects have produced the expected outputs in line with their objectives to a satisfactory level. CARDS assistance to the sector has helped to establish an advanced legal and institutional framework for a quality assessment system. Albania has made some progress regarding standards and certification and has adopted more than 80 % of EC standards. With CARDS support, an inter-sector strategy is produced for Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance focusing on finalising the relevant model of a Market Surveillance System. Relatively good results have been achieved under the export and investment components, but less so under the trade regulation component, most notably in modelling. Evident outputs have been a general equilibrium model for trade policy analysis, and a sector model for agricultural policy analysis; trade information services, phased support to eight private companies, and a strategy for the Export Promotion Agency. There are good reasons to believe that also the ongoing project supporting establishment of a food authority will produce all its expected results. Overall effectiveness of CARDS support is **satisfactory**.

Education (Vocational Education and Training)

68. The delivery of support to the VET strategy as well as institutional development and capacity building, including policy development to the ministries, has functioned well. The projects in the VET sector have delivered their outputs or are in the process of delivering the outputs until now (VET III - the third phase is just starting). The outputs are regarded very highly by the recipients at all levels and have been implemented or are being implemented by the recipient institutions. Furthermore, support to development of the VET system national qualification framework, curriculum and teacher development was implemented and supported the overall goal of the strategy. The Twinning project primarily supported the development of the legislation and the establishment of the VET council. The latter is functioning, but more is expected from its performance in the future, especially the participation of civil society (business sector).

69. Some of the key achievements in the sector have been the curriculum development for the VET schools and the labour market training centres. The pilot schools which received training and equipment seem to make good use of it within their existing facilities. They had also received additional government support to use the equipment supported by the training and curriculum development³⁵. The schools which had received support were clearly much more developed than those which had not. One stakeholder found that the projects had been too focused on capacity building and that equipment for the schools should have been increased reflecting the large investment needs. This was, however, not supported by other stakeholders. Against this background, the effectiveness of the support in this sector is rated **satisfactory**.

Environment

70. The operational objectives of the projects have been achieved, by and large, for the projects checked, albeit within the logical limits of the projects themselves. Representatives from the beneficiary stated that CARDS could improve its performance and that some projects did not have sufficient information flow, in some cases already from the tendering and start-up stages. Although the strategic planning documents produced during the technical assistance projects are directly or indirectly used for additional planning and project identification, these

³⁵ Three pilot schools were visited by the evaluation team

may not necessarily receive priority when requesting funding for future activities, e.g., in relation to the Government's Medium Terms Budget Programme (MTBP) process. Likewise, other outputs from the projects have still not been adopted, nor have steps been taken to implement them. The projects are generally seen as positive contributions to the overall objectives of CARDS, but problems remain in terms of implementing project results and recommendations.

71. ***Problems continuously arose during the implementation phase of technical assistance projects.*** These were related to the beneficiaries' absorption capacity and inability to act as daily counterparts in terms of follow-up procedures and decision-making processes. It should be noted that, in this respect, all technical assistance projects were of a horizontal (general) nature and were strategy-oriented, rather than looking at concrete implementation processes at vertical level. Some stakeholders, including representatives from MEFWA, claimed that although the process in relation to the NES had been fruitful, MEFWA now needs concrete demonstration projects on how to plan and ensure effective implementation at sector specific (vertical) level.

72. In total, this is rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

Civil Society Development

73. ***The civil society grants projects³⁶ have delivered most of their outputs foreseen*** in terms of seminars, workshops, networks and establishing local institutions. However, many of the activities tend to have been driven by other donors or international NGOs and had problems in mustering local involvement to the extent foreseen. A certain optimism bias appears in most projects in regard to what could reasonably be expected to be achieved with such a project with limited funding and a limited project period. Not all the optimistic expectations in terms of providing permanent change in attitudes, developing complex monitoring systems etc. have been reached. It can be argued that the ECD ought to have given some of the project proposals a "sanity check" before agreeing to their objectives and expected impact. However, whether the outputs will lead to the suggested long-term changes and impact remains a more open question. This ought to have been addressed in the planning phase of the projects and may reflect the fact that the grant-seeking organisations deliberately painted an optimistic picture of possible achievements, knowing that there would be little monitoring in place to gauge whether the objectives would in fact be reached. Balancing the size of the projects with the (short-term) outcomes, the effectiveness per se is rated as **satisfactory**.

2.4 Short-term impacts can be identified, medium to long-term are more uncertain

74. Impacts or likely impacts are detected in many projects at least in the short term. The weak, and in many cases new institutional structures and uncertainty with regard to staff, resources and capacity are, however, a concern for impacts in the medium to longer term.

Justice

75. ***Positive impact is noted with regard to the Magistrate School.*** The courses provided by the MS have increased the awareness of judges and prosecutors of the Albanian and EC Laws. A realistic assessment, however, could be made in the medium term, when a suitable performance evaluation system for judges and prosecutors is in place. The role of the HCJ has improved and transparency of the activity of the HJC has increased. The capacity of the Office

³⁶ This evaluation has only assessed in-depth a few of the projects under the grant facilities

for the Administration of the Judiciary Budget has improved. Impact of infrastructure support is notable, especially in prison infrastructure and court houses. The administration of two centres³⁷ visited by the evaluation team highlighted that working conditions have substantially improved in the court and pre-detention centre.

76. However, the overall impact of assistance to judiciary is lower than expected. The judicial proceedings remain lengthy, poorly organized and lack transparency. The long-term conflict between the MoJ and HCJ over the inspection function remains an impediment. New proposals on the roles, responsibilities and coordination between the HCJ and MoJ Inspectorates may produce some good results in the judiciary system provided that there is commitment and political will to implement them. Human resource capacities of the MoJ to lead the legal reform remain weak and highly dependent on external technical assistance. Failure in making fully operational the Court and Case Management Information System (CCMIS) has negatively impacted the proper functioning of the courts and transparency. Corruption remains a large problem, negatively impacting public confidence in the system. Enforcement of judicial cases remains weak. Impact of assistance in this area is rated **moderately satisfactory**.

Asylum and Border Management

77. The implementation of the new law on the Albanian State Police has had immediate impacts on the border police. The legislation paved the way for developing the border police into a separate directorate of the State Police, thereby changing the status of the border police, which was formerly part of regional police units. It is now an autonomous police service with its own hierarchy. This development is regarded by observers as a very important step for the border police in terms of human resource and capacity development. The master plan is now being turned into investments in border infrastructure (a delayed tender has now been completed) amongst other the joint border crossing point with Montenegro.

78. Impacts of the support to the performance of the sector have already been noticeable for the last years. A clear increase in drugs seizures and detecting trafficking victims has been noted and this at a time where the number of people crossing the border has increased substantially. The development of border crossing procedures and regional cooperation has improved the speed and efficiency at the borders reducing corruption and corruption possibilities at border crossing point. Also the very much improved cooperation with customs supported by the Integrated Border Management Strategy has contributed to this.

79. The impact of the projects on asylum and migration has been substantial in terms of establishing a well-functioning system of pre-screening of asylum seekers etc. - albeit not much used; physical facilities which are kept in good condition - although not very much used for their original purposes - but put to other meaningful use by the border police and asylum authorities assisted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

80. The National Migration Strategy and Action Plan enable the government to enter into a dialogue with the Albanian Diaspora, helping them to deal with the authorities of their host countries and eventually to return to Albania. The strategy has also developed methods of assisting Albanians contemplating going abroad by re-focusing the regional employment centres on emigration issues, and devising a strategy for monitoring remittances and attempting to devise proper ways for Albanians abroad to make investments at home. Implementation of the strategy will also demonstrate the responsibility that GoA takes for its own expatriates and in-

³⁷ Pre-detention centre in Vlora and Vlora Court of Appeal

cludes attempts to influence their behaviour abroad. Having said this, certain reservations must also be noted: Despite good donor support and coordination and training, implementation of the Action Plan is hampered by a possible limited political commitment as demonstrated in the pending approval of the CMS and the Law on Foreigners and is also influenced by frequent changes in the relevant ministries.

81. All in all, the impact of the project is regarded **satisfactory**.

Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)

82. ***CARDS projects supporting administrative capacity building will certainly have an impact, at least in the short term.*** Good results have been achieved mainly as improvement of the management capacity of TIPA and some improvements in the management and functioning of the Civil Service Commission. TIPA has become more efficient and proactive. The commitment of TIPA staff to implement the new systems produced by the projects on training curricula development and quality mechanisms has had positive impacts. However, it should be noted that the overall lack of human resources management policies in the Albanian Government institutions hampers training being a useful tool for improving the performance in civil service. Lack of vision and capacities in this respect is a threat to the impact of results achieved with CARDS assistance.

83. ***The impact on supporting the civil service reform has been very limited.*** The new career-based salary system was never implemented. The implementation of the civil servants performance management system is far from satisfactory. Here it should be noted that the progress of the civil service reform goes well beyond the influence of a project. Interviews indicate that there is a clear unwillingness on the side of Albanian institutions to implement a performance-based system of incentives.

84. ***Legal and regulatory framework produced with support of CARDS projects is well implemented by government institutions.*** Even though the project is still under implementation, there are good reasons to believe that the impact of the new licensing system at local government level will be positive. Obviously, the will of local government units to implement properly the new licensing system still needs to be tested. Already completed projects, such as, public procurement agency, the state aid unit at the Ministry of Economy, public finance internal and external control, are judged to have a good impact, at least in the short term. Legal and regulatory framework produced with support of these projects is well implemented by government institutions. In conclusion, the impact is considered unsatisfactory for the project supporting civil service reform, moderately satisfactory for the project supporting Ministry for European Integration (MEI), and satisfactory for the rest of projects. Overall, this sector is **moderately satisfactory**.

Economic Development/Internal Market

85. ***The impact of CARDS assistance supporting internal market elements has been positive in terms of establishing needed legal and regulatory frameworks,*** especially on the functioning of quality infrastructure systems³⁸. However, it should be noted that poor efficiency of some projects³⁹ performance in the first half and delayed reaction from the contractors or beneficiaries severely hampered progress and reduced the expected impact on the sector. Especially

³⁸ Especially the evident positive impact of the project supporting standardization, certification, accreditation should be mentioned

³⁹ Market surveillance and the project supporting trade regulation and promotion

the project supporting trade regulation and promotion where, despite some tangible achievements, two years after project completion, questions still remain about the ability of the beneficiary institutions⁴⁰ to implement and monitor the associated legislative and regulatory measures supported by the project. A comprehensive policy and institutional framework for a sustainable business and trade development are still lacking. On a wider scale, the country still requires a long-term trade policy that may be followed, irrespective of political changes. There is reason to believe that also the ongoing project supporting establishment of a food authority will produce a positive impact. Overall the impact of CARDS assistance to this sector could be scored as **moderately satisfactory**.

Education (Vocational Education and Training)

86. *The support to the VET sector is a clear priority of the Albanian Government in the education sector.* The Government has set the very ambitious goal that in 2009, 40 % of the students in secondary education in 2009 should be in the VET sector. Achieving this goal is questioned by some, not only due to the fact that this would need substantial additional investment, but also because the demand amongst students for vocational education may not be this high. The GoA has also set the goal that education should be the first item on the budget reaching a level of 5 % of GDP (in 2009)⁴¹. The support provided in the sector has started important reforms which will improve the system and deliver better and more adequate vocational education in the future. Major reforms at the operational and school levels are still pending.

87. *The legislative and strategic framework for VET has been agreed upon by the involved parties* and the institutional framework is functioning. In the programme period, the NVETA and VET council has been established and the VET strategy and action plan have been approved by the Government. Furthermore, an implementing agency for the VET has been established by the Ministries of Education and Science and Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and is functioning. The qualifications framework is already now impacting the development of new curricula and thereby the development of a more market-oriented education. Short-term impacts in selected areas are definitely visible and the VET sector support has the potential for considerable medium-term and longer-term impacts on the education and labour market, which are so crucial for Albania. A key part of the development of the VET sector is to get the business sector actively involved in defining the needs for the sector. This has been the weakest point in the development of the VET sector to date and although the business sector is represented at the VET Council, the emergence of a business sector which can act as partner in this sector is still missing. At local level, labour market training centres are beginning to dialogue with the business sector, but this is only in the early stages. Against this background, the impact is therefore rated **satisfactory**.

Environment

88. *Several, if not all, projects in the sector will have a major impact on the environment per se.* However, some, due to their more indirect strategic character, will have an effect on medium and long-term development and the concrete measurable impacts will only be visible in the distant future. If the MEFWA uses the outputs and recommendations from the Environmental Legislation and Planning (ELPA) project, it will form a solid basis for the CARDS 2006 project and following projects on additional approximation. Several stakeholders found it disappointing that the Ministry had not used the opportunity to hold a donor conference after

⁴⁰ According to the interviews several legal or regulatory initiatives produced with the assistance are not yet implemented

⁴¹ Strategy of Vocational and Education Training in Albania

the ELPA project, and saw this as a missed opportunity for obtaining additional funding. With regard to creating a system to monitor short and medium-term impacts, the Government has established an overall monitoring mechanism for implementing the NSDI, which will, in future, also address accomplishments within the environment sector. As for the TA projects, even though the achievements for most projects are considered as satisfactory by both recipient institutions and the Government institutions involved, the real impact will depend on the recipient authorities' ability to follow up and implement the strategies and action plans elaborated. The impact is thus still to be seen and is rated **moderately satisfactory**.

Civil Society Development

89. *The civil society projects will generally have a limited long-term impact in the communities* where they have been implemented. They will all require additional efforts and additional external funding to ensure that the outcomes in terms of increased networking, cooperation CS-LG etc. will have a long-term effect. Most likely, only one or two of about 12 Civil Society Development Councils, Forums or similar local institutions are likely to survive when the foreign funding subsides. The outputs of most of the projects have been various kinds of training, mainly in planning, prioritising and other management issues as well as establishing platforms for dialogue between local politicians and civil society. In several cases, local action plans for important sectors (economy, environment, social) have been produced through the support. However, it seems that there has generally been limited follow-up on the implementation of the plans after the end of the projects and hence a limited impact. Against this background, the impact of the projects is rated **unsatisfactory**.

2.5 Further development of the Public Administration is an important prerequisite for the sustainability of CARDS

90. *The prospects for sustainability are uncertain due to the programme environment* and are as such outside the direct influence of the projects and the direct beneficiaries, but could have been addressed more in the design of the projects. The beneficiary institutions depend on both staff resource and budgetary investment resources to secure the implementation, and this is uncertain in the short to medium term.

Judiciary

91. *Staff turnover and low level of motivation in the Ministry of Justice threaten the long-term sustainability of capacity building in the sector.* For years the Ministry of Justice has suffered high rates of staff turnover which has diminished the sustainability of assistance significantly. Staff changes have not been a critical problem amongst judges and prosecutors. The Magistrate School capacities to provide training to judges and prosecutor are substantially improved. The ownership of the school of the process has been high, and could be considered one of the best examples. The longer term sustainability of assistance to the school will depend on increasing the support from the domestic budget for the training programme. The HCJ is well functioning and more efforts are made to implement the performance evaluation system for judges and prosecutors.

92. *The legislative packages adopted during the project life ensure the sustainability in the short term, but the important legislation related to judicial matters in commercial cases has not been adopted yet.* A project phase-out strategy must be developed indicating the beneficiary responsibilities to implement the outputs after the project is over. This will increase the ownership of the beneficiary over the project's outputs and results. Enforcement of legislation related to judicial matters in commercial cases will require intensive trainings. Attention

should be given to the proper functioning of the probation system and finding alternatives to detention in the area of juvenile justice. Further support is required for creation of a network of professionals specialized in the treatment of minors in conflict with the law.

93. *Sustainability of infrastructure support is questioned due to insufficient provisions for operational and maintenance budget and staff.* Ministry of Justice does not have a clear strategy for maintenance of court systems and local budget is not sufficient to ensure proper function of the courts and IT service systems installed⁴². This is a critical problem for long term sustainability of investments provided to the sector⁴³. A new court and case management system requires trained and capable IT staff to maintain the system, while further training of judges and court administration in its proper use is highly needed.

94. Sustainability of assistance in this area is rated **moderately satisfactory**.

Asylum and Border Management

95. *The sustainability of the support provided to the border police is assessed as mixed.* The border police has experienced significant organisational and structural changes and very good progress has been noted with the border police. But high turnover in staff makes the effects on training and institutional development limited and may indeed jeopardise the sustainability. It is noted, though, that in this cluster projects have either already started to or will in subsequent projects focus more on training-of-trainers and setting up training structures also for the border police. The capacity lift which the border police and related service has experienced will, however, be a good step in the direction of EU standards within the border police. The impact of the sustainability of the reforms that the legislation has introduced depends on a number of issues, but it has started key reforms and developments in the Albanian state police which seem to root themselves, albeit slowly. As the budget for the police in general has been increased in the later part of the period, this should eventually also be reflected in the salary levels of the police and border police and thereby in the possibility of retaining staff.

96. *The focus on migration has met with substantial support also from other donors.* Although not foreseen in the project document, it seems clear that several parts of the action plan will require external funding. Enhanced training and development of communication and information material should further benefit the target groups, ranging from citizens overseas to those returning to Albania and requiring re-integration services. In terms of pre-screening of asylum seekers, the present modalities in terms of equipment, training and information material seem appropriate provided that no major conflict breaks out which will produce flows of refugees across the borders, and provided that it is possible to retain key trained staff in the border police service. In total, the sustainability of the activities is regarded as **moderately satisfactory**.

Public Administrative Reform (horizontal and vertical)

97. *Sustainability in this sector is linked closely with the development of the institution responsible for driving the PAR reform process.* The institutions receiving the assistance are functioning, but there have been frequent changes in staff and in particular in senior management. After elections in mid 2005, there was a major reorganisation of a number of institutions

⁴² The team visited the Appellate Court of Vlora and noted that, due to lack of proper maintenance, two years after the building was put to use, on rainy days flooding has caused much damage

⁴³ The maintenance issues are more present in the court system and less evident in prisons and pre-detention centers

in the Albanian government also supported under CARDS projects. Transfer of DoPA from Council of Ministers to the Ministry of Interior is certainly believed to be a factor that has substantially lowered the profile and authority of this institution. Along with replacement of key staff, the sustainability of any previous technical advice provided to strengthen its capacities is questioned. Failure to adopt proper human resources policies, amongst other factors, has resulted in frequent staff turnover throughout the administration.

98. ***The sustainability of the new licensing system that is being introduced at local level is satisfactory seen from the project's point of view***, but maintaining it for long would really depend on the political will of Albanian local government administration. Considering the large number of local government units in Albania and the low level of absorption capacities at this level⁴⁴, a follow-up assistance is needed to ensure proper sustainability of this undertaking.

99. ***The sustainability of the projects (vertical) supporting public procurement is weakened by the high turnover in staff in these institutions after the projects were completed***. Whereas for the projects supporting statistics, internal and external auditing the sustainability has been satisfactory. In total, the sustainability of the activities is regarded as **moderately satisfactory**.

100. ***Ownership of the process has been higher at programming level, but weakened in the project design and the implementation phases***. There are indications in different EC reports that ownership in the programming phase of CARDS has increased constantly especially from CARDS 2004 and onwards. The degree of ownership in the project design phase has been low⁴⁵. Seen as part of sustainability, ownership has been questionable especially in relation to legal approximation processes, where in most of the cases legal drafting is carried out by the assistance teams. Main examples would be introduction of some important pieces of legislation in public procurement, competition and auditing, where there has been little involvement of beneficiaries or local expertise in development of legal initiatives.

101. In total, the sustainability of the activities is regarded as **moderately satisfactory**.

Economic Development/Internal Market

102. ***The institutions receiving the assistance are functioning, but there have been frequent changes in staff and in particular in senior management***. Gradual enhancement of coordination between all interested parties and stakeholders in quality infrastructure areas is subsequently contributing to sustainable capacities in the sector. High sustainability is noted especially in the project supporting standardization. The Directorate General of Standardization (DGoS) is now internationally recognized in the field of conformity assessment. The CARDS assistance has laid a good basis for strengthening the beneficiary's capacity and revenue generating activities. Assistance has contributed a great deal to strengthening the capacities of the Market Surveillance Department and General Inspectorate.

103. ***Sustainability is very questionable in the area of trade and investment promotion***. A comprehensive policy and institutional framework for a sustainable business and trade development is still lacking, and most of the beneficiary institutions do not have sufficient funds or capacities to provide sustainable trade and investment support. Many staff supported and

⁴⁴ Only 22 Local Government Units (LGUs) are receiving assistance at this stage. The total number of LGUs in Albania is close to 500, including all three levels.

⁴⁵ Confirmed by most beneficiaries interviewed.

trained by CARDS assistance left their positions after the project's completion, thus skills and capabilities have been lost.

104. Sustainability of assistance in some areas is seriously reduced by limited national budgetary capacities. This is evident in support for market surveillance activities. The same can also be said for the assistance provided to food safety issues. There are many areas where more domestic investment will be required, ranging from laboratory equipment/accreditation to border post facilities to inspectors' transport/communication capabilities, while allocations in the domestic budget of 2008 and 2009⁴⁶ are very limited.

105. Ownership of the process by beneficiaries has been low. There is evidence⁴⁷ of higher ownership in the preparation phase in the areas supporting standards, trade and investment promotion, but lower in market surveillance and food safety. In implementation, generally in those areas that required substantial legal improvements the ownership of the process remained mainly with external expertise.

106. Overall, CARDS assistance is scored as **moderately satisfactory**.

Education (Vocational Education and Training)

107. Key structures in place for sustainability of VET but dependent on future funding levels and input from the business sector. The support to the sector has provided a legal and strategic framework, an institutional set-up and key outputs such as qualification framework and curriculum development. The NVETA is in a key position to drive the process and also has resources to continue the work developing the sector. The ownership from the side of the administration is there - however the missing engagement (ownership) mentioned earlier by the business community, especially at overall level, is a concern as the inputs from the business sector (not very active in the VET Council) are vital for insuring that the VET sector provides the qualifications needed by the business sector. At the delivery level, until now, only the schools supported by the project and pilot schools have received support in terms of financing and staff and the various outputs are having an impact at the delivery level at these selected schools. Many schools do not, however, receive support from the project and the investment needs in the sector are substantial.

108. Crucial restructuring of the sector is also needed in order to be able to afford further development - too many small schools and schools which may be providing education which is not requested by the labour market. As mentioned above, the GoA has a goal to increase spending in the education sector over the coming years. In addition to this, it is, however, also important to underline that the VET sector, in addition to support, needs urgent reform and restructuring. The cost of a student in the VET sector is 3 times the cost⁴⁸ of the secondary student. Some of the needed financing should therefore be found in a more efficient implementation of the VET system, ensuring that schools, which are not viable and not providing needed skills and education, are not further developed. Systems are in place to push forward the reform of the sector, but the financing of the reform will have to be drawn both from the government and external sources. The rating of the sustainability of the support to the sector is **moderately satisfactory**.

⁴⁶ Draft budget submission of Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumers Protection.

⁴⁷ Anecdotal interviews with beneficiaries

⁴⁸ Albania: Secondary and Tertiary Education Policy Brief no. 1 - Labour Market and Education. Draft March 2008. Ministry of Education and Science and the World Bank.

Environment

109. *Sustainability of projects is uncertain due to limited management capacity in key institutions.* For the technical assistance projects, the sustainability of the projects and continued funding for the sector depend on the effort made by the MEFWA in terms of following up on their implementation. In the environment sector, ownership has been present to a varying degree. Some projects are felt as being truly owned by the recipients, others more like appendices which have not reached the optimal anchorage in the recipient institutions. Management structures in the MEFWA are weak and thus there are no mechanisms to support implementation of the outputs. So far, the Government has taken no substantial steps to ensure sufficient capacity in MEFWA, and the Ministry lacks the ability to draw on foreign assistance due to insufficient staff involved in project preparation within the identified national priorities. Coordination between the MEFWA and other ministries and local governments is weak, inter alia the MEFWA does not have an active role in cleaning up hot spot projects or in the preparation of environmental infrastructure projects.

110. *Further strengthening of key environmental institutions needs to take place.* The strengthened coordination at central level through the NSDI, the MTBP and Programme Expenditure and Investment Plans processes need also to be implemented at the sector level. It is important that the EC supports environmental sector institutions in generating project proposals "bottom up" both of sufficient quality and sufficient number in order to draw on the remaining CARDS and future IPA funds, as well as funds from other international and bilateral donors. Future EC funds may thus assist in enabling the MEFWA to cooperate with the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications (MPWTT) in determining the investment needed and the preparation required for long-term investment planning efforts. If national environmental project priorities are not funded at Governmental level, despite being regarded as high priority to the country, it is even more important that the relevant project proposals generated are of sufficient quality to attract other funding via international or bilateral donors. If this is not appropriately addressed, the Government will fail with respect to this challenging task. Thus, sustainability could only be rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

Civil Society Development

111. *Under the present circumstances in Albania, financial or other sustainability of civil society is a long-term vision.* There is very limited capacity for local fundraising, partly due to the limited local funding available, partly due to lack of tradition in Albania for this kind of engagement/charity. It is likely to be a long-term process to change this and obtain any other kind of sustainability than finding another foreign donor to take over or extend the activities once the present funding expires. The Albanian civil society is still very 'donor-driven'. As a consequence, the CSOs have well-established management structures and policies, but their financial situation is not sustainable except perhaps for a few major CSOs in Tirana.

112. *Projects aiming at establishing institutions of certain permanence seem to be destined to fail when the project ends,* simply because the typical project period of 15-18 months is too short to enable any kind of institutionalising of such institutions in the local environment. Furthermore, the present socio-economic situation in Albania, especially outside Tirana seems to favour projects that deliver something of more tangible and concrete value to the stakeholders. The projects assessed were all anticipating continuation after the project period expired, either through local funding taking over or through other donors. However, local funding has not been obtained and only one of the projects did secure funding for continuation from other donors (at a reduced level). Given this, the sustainability of the projects assessed must be regarded as **unsatisfactory**.

3 Thematic and Cross-cutting Findings

113. Having examined the different clusters and the overall performance of CARDS, this section will look at the cross-cutting evaluation questions towards the key thematic areas of the assistance to Albania. Indicators for these questions have been included in Annex 2.

3.1 CARDS supporting institutional capacity of the Albanian administration

114. The first thematic cross-cutting criterion has been to assess whether CARDS in practice addressed the strengthening of State-building, good governance, administrative and judicial reform, Rule of Law and reconciliation in Albania. Has progress been visible in the overall capacity and governance of the Albanian administration, the judiciary and the process towards EU integration?

115. *As noted in the evaluation of public administration reform support to the horizontal public administration reform, there has been rather few projects in support of the overall public administration reform and civil service development* both at central and local government level. These projects have not only been few, but also small in size and impact and the effect of these have been rather limited. Most of the support in the area has been provided by other donors (World Bank and DFID).

116. *By not focusing on the horizontal public administration reform, the risk is that efforts in the vertical acquis sectors (internal market, environment, border management inter alia) will have limited effect.* As seen in some of the cluster analyses (internal market areas, justice and environment), good efforts and progress have been witnessed in actual alignment of legislation, but both the development and the implementation of this are jeopardised as ministries do not have adequate planning and management systems as well human resources (including strategies and development). The sustainability of many of the projects subject to this evaluation depends on that a modern public administration is functioning and capable of implementing the strategies and initiatives developed under the projects.

117. *Civil service reform is key in this respect - with dramatic turnover and changes in staff in the ministries and agencies responsible for implementing the reforms promoted under CARDS impact and sustainability are key concerns.* The support to this area has been limited under CARDS in the period. As both this and the reform of the public administration are prerequisites for both reforms in key policy areas as well as in acquis implementation, these areas should be the focus of support maybe even before or at least in combination with acquis-related support.

118. ***The role of CARDS assistance in the overall Government policy coordination mechanism has been limited.*** The Albanian Government is implementing the IPS, which requires that the core central institutions (i.e., the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of European Integration) coordinate their interactions with each other and with line ministries. Although CARDS (through MIPs) placed more emphasis on policy coordination and policy-driven approaches, especially in the second half of its programming period, EC assistance did not provide significant support to IPS design and, later, implementation. CARDS may have been a missed opportunity to support the administrative reform and ensure that the European integration agenda was fully supported by government policy and budget processes.

119. ***The CARDS assistance for improving the justice system and strengthening rule of law in Albania has been very significant in the overall assistance provided to this sector since 2000.*** Assistance has been comprehensive, combining both investments for improving judicial infrastructures and institutional building support. While assistance has produced some results in terms of improving overall judicial functioning, its overall impact is diminished by frequent staff changes in the executive bodies⁴⁹ and limited absorption capacities.

120. ***Despite some progress, judiciary continues to function poorly due to shortfalls in efficiency, independence and transparency.*** Some efforts were made to improve judicial efficiency through new administrative re-organization of courts⁵⁰. The Magistrate School continues to provide training for judges, prosecutors and court administration. However, efforts to increase human capacities and re-organise the administrative system and proper functioning of court systems are not supported by a fully developed court operating system and infrastructure. The civil case management system is not fully functioning in all the courts and procedures remain slow and lacking transparency. The court buildings continue to lack adequate space for courtrooms, filing and equipment. Clear division of competences between the inspection of HCJ and MoJ despite some progress made, is not yet in place, and this area always remains a source of conflict between the executive and judicial power. Status of court administration is not yet defined.

3.2 Support to Civil Society

121. The second thematic cross-cutting theme is whether the CARDS support has assisted in the development of civil society through the various interventions.

122. ***The limited size of the funding available for CSOs reflects the limited role that civil society has so far had in Government strategies.*** However, the GoA is increasingly acknowledging the importance of civil society in national development and is in the process of establishing a national foundation which is intended to provide funding to CSOs. The preliminary amount to be set aside per annum will reportedly be around M€ 1.2.

123. ***The CARDS support to the civil society development itself has in the programme period been very limited in scope (and funding) and most probably not very effectual.*** With many pressing social and economic priorities, lack of tradition for CSOs in Albania and extremely limited public funding, it can be questioned if the time is ripe to initiate projects aiming at democratic development. Perhaps – as suggested by interlocutors - efforts should be focused on more daily needs such as economic development and job creation? However, democratic over-

⁴⁹ Ministry of Justice, General Enforcement Department etc.

⁵⁰ A new administrative organization of the district courts reduced the number of courts from 29 to 21.

sight and whistle-blowing have an important role in ensuring that whatever limited funding and opportunities are available locally will be put to the best use for local development - including job creation. A corrupt and non-transparent local government is unlikely to provide good services.

124. *Projects not specifically aimed at civil society development have in some limited way supported the development of civil society.* In the VET sector, for example, the projects have actively attempted to support the inclusion of civil society (business community) in the development of vocational education and training. The efforts are there, but results are limited, although in some areas beginning to show. The role of the civil society organisations has been more visible in the project in the area of justice. Few think tank organisations active in the area of judicial reform are invited during the process of consultations for legal drafting. Some involvement of the NGO sector in the programmes of the Magistrate School has been supported, but to a limited extent.

3.3 Implementation Mechanisms and Tools

125. The third cross-cutting issue which has been looked at is the use of various implementation mechanisms for implementing CARDS assistance in Albania. The assistance to Albania in the programme period has been implemented via a number of mechanisms such as technical assistance, twinning, works and supplies, and grant agreements with international organisations.

126. *In the justice sector or public finance, the use of twinning was an efficient tool for delivering the assistance to beneficiaries.* In particular the twinning projects in the judicial sector were considered very appropriate by the beneficiaries. Establishment of direct contacts between institutions and exchange of information and experience have proven to be more effective. However, when the twinning is used to develop or adjust primary legislation and related procedures, it is crucial that not only international expertise but also local expertise is involved in the process. A higher deployment of twinning mechanisms in delivering EC assistance should be given a priority in the case of Albania. There is a relatively low level of use of twinning projects overall in CARDS, but especially in the areas of administrative capacity building in Albania.

127. *Assistance implemented through grant agreements to international organisations as well as contracts with EU Governments for large projects in key areas* (EURALIUS and PAMECA) has been used. UNHCR, IOM and others have been implementing projects in areas such as asylum and migration. UNDP and UNICEF have implemented projects in areas such as economic development and justice. Many of these implementing agencies have been effective in implementing the projects and have been able to use their specific expertise in the implementation.

128. *Some works and supplies projects seem to have been implemented outside the framework of either a technical assistance or a twinning project* which could support the implementation and/or use of the equipment or the infrastructure projects. This is in particular the case in a sector such as environment and border management where equipment has been delivered and works carried out, but in some cases the users were not trained at the time to use or implement this.

3.4 Donor Coordination

129. The third cross-cutting theme is whether CARDS has strengthened the effectiveness/efficiency of the donor coordination in Albania.

130. *The quality of the donor coordination varies in the sectors included in this evaluation.* Some sectors have been well coordinated and with a clear understanding of who does what in the sector. The role of CARDS and the level of active engagement of the ECD vary from sector to sector. In some instances (such as support to civil service reform, IPS implementation), it is felt that the EC, as a very large and important donor, has not been visible and active enough. However, in the evaluation, some areas were identified where CARDS assistance has constructively assisted in improving donor coordination such as VET and border management.

131. *A large joint effort for donor coordination is supporting measures that contribute to public administration reform* and an efficient and transparent administration where a number of donors active in Albania⁵¹ are involved. The establishment and management of a Trust Fund with more than USD 7 million to support the IPS of the government. This fund is expected to support especially strategy and policy development capacities and public finance management in the central and line ministries. CARDS support has furthermore been important in strengthening the capacities of the MEI to deal with coordination of foreign assistance. Through different projects, CARDS has provided training to line ministries on programming of external assistance, which has contributed to creation of staff more familiar with the subject.

132. *The government has mandated the Department of Strategies and Donor Coordination (DSDC) at the Council of Ministers to improve donor coordination.* The DSDC has improved communication flow with donors, and quarterly round-table meetings are organised with donors to discuss key issues on the government reform agenda. Despite this, a frequently updated reliable aid database does not exist in Albania making it difficult to assess the aid flow for each sector⁵². DSDC intends to develop new procedures for aid management in line with already existing public investment management procedures. A mid-term External Assistance Orientation Document (EAOD) was prepared by the Albanian Government by early 2008. EAOD outlines the national and sector needs and priorities to be supported by external assistance over the period 2008-2013, as they are highlighted in the NSDI.

⁵¹ External Assistance Orientation Document 2008-2013 (January 2008).

⁵² There is an excellent information package updated sporadically by the donors' secretariat. It mainly records the projects under execution, but the information is not always accurate.

4 Overall Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

133. This chapter will focus on the overall findings on the performance of the CARDS support in Albania. It is important that lessons are learned at this point in time in order to improve the future IPA assistance to Albania. Taking in lessons about the programming and implementation of the CARDS assistance is key to strengthening the IPA assistance. This section highlights the overall findings, the key conclusions found in the previous analysis, underlines lessons learned and makes recommendations in key areas which can have an impact on the IPA programme in Albania and in other IPA countries.

4.1 Overall Findings

134. This section summarises the key evaluation findings of the cluster assessments, the cross sectoral themes and includes additional observations and findings. The additional observations may not directly be linked to one specific cluster or project, but are observations made by the evaluators during interviews and assessment of report, evaluations and other documentation on the programming and implementation of CARDS.

Relevance

135. *CARDS assistance has been relevant in relation to the EC strategic documents, but their strategic planning value has been limited.* The MIPs, however, made an attempt to define, detail and adopt CSP broad priorities to the rapidly evolving situation in Albania. The EC Country Strategy Paper for Albania outlines a very general strategic framework and sets out the objectives and priority fields for cooperation and support. During the period, the CSP was not revised to reflect the changing political, institutional or economic environment in the country. The lack of a systematic rolling policy review mechanism somehow questions the approach as well as the relevance of the CSP over time. The MIPs provided the details for a multi-annual time period (i.e. 2002-2004 and 2005-2006), highlighting the objectives, expected results, programmes of intervention and conditionalities in the priority fields of co-operation of the CSP. The MIPs priorities were a relevant response to the Albanian needs outlined in key strategic documents⁵³, most of which did not exist at the time CSP was prepared. However, it should be noted that objectives set in both CSP and MIPs lack measurable indicators. While the MIPs include some indicators, they are difficult to monitor without indications of measures, actions, costs and timing to reach the indicated policy objectives.

136. *The degree of beneficiaries' participation and ownership in the programming process has been varied over the period* as well as from sector to sector. Overall, ownership of Alba-

⁵³ Such as EC progress reports, NSSD, or some sectoral strategies existing at the time

nian institutions (under the leadership of MEI) in the programming phase has increased, especially from CARDS 2004 annual programme onwards⁵⁴. Earlier evaluations and interviews indicate that in many cases, stakeholders participated actively in the pre-project identification of needs. Interviews in several sectors have, however, pointed to limited capacity in some line ministries⁵⁵ for the programming and project preparation process. The EC annual progress reports 2004 and 2005 indicated a need for an increased role and ownership of MEI in programming of CARDS and there is evidence of increased engagement and ownership of central institutions in the process due to a strengthening of the centrally managed EU approximation process and increasing understanding of the challenge in the EU approximation. Civil society involvement in planning has been limited due to lack of experience and tradition for including civil society sector, but also to institutional procedures of involving civil society in these undertakings. The fact that there are no civil society umbrella organisations which could act as coordinator for the third sector also limited the possibility for involving civil society.

137. Varied quality of project design, due to lack of real needs assessment, has made assistance less relevant at the time of implementation, and some projects have experienced large changes during implementation due to inadequate or untimely project design. Real and detailed needs assessments have not been carried out in many sectors (Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Environment⁵⁶) leading to wrongly or overly ambitious designed projects due to overestimation of the beneficiaries' absorptions capacities. Sustainability considerations are not included in the project needs assessment and design and often not addressed until the end of the projects where impact and sustainability becomes key issues. In some sectors, works and equipment have been designed without complementary training and capacity building. The sustainability of these supply and equipment projects risks becoming limited without an assessment of the capacity of the institutions to use the equipment after delivery (costs of maintenance, spare parts). The overall assessment of relevance is **satisfactory**.

Efficiency

138. Administrative capacity has been rather limited and has often hampered implementation of projects. The implementation of CARDS assistance in Albania has suffered from significant turnover in the staff of the Albanian administration. The administrative resources set aside in ministries to deal with project implementation is very limited and today only a few ministries have an adequately staffed programme management unit or other structures focused on implementing CARDS assistance⁵⁷. This has resulted in serious delays in implementation and loss of institutional memory. The 2005 parliamentary election was followed by radical changes in Government institutions especially at top level but also at operational levels throughout the administration. A large number of staff, most of them trained continuously through CARDS assistance projects, has left and in some ministries these have not been replaced.

139. The overall assessment is however that the project outputs were delivered, in general in a satisfactory manner taken into consideration the difficult environment with lack of staff and

⁵⁴ EC annual progress reports 2004-2005 recognise the increase of ownership of MEI in leading the process of CARDS programming

⁵⁵ E.g. environment

⁵⁶ For instance, the need for proper project preparation has sometimes been underestimated in the environment sector, which in one case concerning the construction of a landfill led to opposition to the implementation of the project which could then not be implemented

⁵⁷ Some ministries are also struggling with implementing basis tasks, not only CARDS assistance

delays in Government's adaption of procedures. Cost efficiency and quality of project management have, however, varied considerably between projects and sectors. Tangible outputs were produced in all sectors, but timely implementation has been problematic in quite a few of them⁵⁸. Apart from delays in the contracting phase and late start⁵⁹ for the majority of projects, delays were caused also in some cases by poor project design⁶⁰, or in any case also inadequate staffing in beneficiary institutions. Contractors, twinning partners and suppliers overall have performed well according to beneficiaries.

140. *The project length and time line of implementation have in many cases weakened performance of CARDS.* With limited absorption capacity in certain institutions, too short a time-frame (for the type of intervention) has been planned for some projects⁶¹. Especially one year (or in some cases even two) projects involving significant institutional establishment or major legal initiatives have suffered from this. Quite a number of these projects⁶² were granted a time extension and managed to produce their core outputs only during this period. It is, however, not evident whether the choice to have successive projects (delivered under time constraints) supporting the same objectives (but under different contracts) is a result of circumstances or a fragmented planning approach. In any event this is perceived as a shortcoming that lowered the performance of concerned CARDS projects⁶³.

141. Overall assessment is rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

Effectiveness

142. *The effectiveness of training is very mixed between horizontal and vertical acquis.* On the horizontal level, training projects have been of limited effect⁶⁴ in the absence of clear civil service development policies, in particular human resource development policies. Relatively large amounts of funding were provided for training, in particular in the fields of public administration. While lack of well-qualified local trainers is arguably⁶⁵ an issue, the projects would have been more sustainable, if these had applied a training of trainers approach through TIPA (School of Public Administration), instead of relying mainly on international trainers. TIPA was not involved in delivery of training activities in most of the projects, despite the fact that due to CARDS direct assistance, the capacity of TIPA has increased over the years. In many of the vertical acquis sectors, the effect of training has been positive. For example, in border police training, the project's efforts to hand over the training to the local institution already during the project have been highlighted by observers. The overall assessment of the effectiveness is **moderately satisfactory**.

⁵⁸ e.g. projects in the cluster public administration, economic development

⁵⁹ On average most of projects have started with between two to three years delay. CARDS 2002 and 2003 suffered significant delays also due to the deconcentration process from DIS under Phare to the centralised system of CARDS.

⁶⁰ A number of projects under PAR and economic development were redesigned completely in the middle of the implementation phase

⁶¹ Projects are supporting competition, public procurement, market surveillance, local government licensing

⁶² Standardisation, market surveillance, trade regulation support, environment

⁶³ whether it is due to general delay in the political decision-making processes or a consequence of bad project preparation

⁶⁴ This observation applies especially to projects supporting public administration reform, but to a lesser extent to projects directly supporting other sectors

⁶⁵ An important point raised by the beneficiaries interviewed

Impact

143. *Immediate or short-term impacts have been observed in the majority of projects.* The prospects for medium or longer term impacts depend on the further implementation of the results achieved under CARDS to date as well as on Government providing the budget (or donors), supporting the process and thereby the impact of the projects. It is a general concern for the clusters assessed that the impacts are limited due to the lack of capacity (number of staff, and capacity of staff, and the fact that trained staff has left) and the resources (budget) available for continuing a certain activity or implementing outputs.

144. *The support to acquis-related areas may in some cases have been premature or not adequately prepared* and this will create problems for the impact of this assistance. Some outputs delivered in the past and current projects may have been premature as it has not been ensured that the necessary basic capacity for legal and policy implementation was in place to be able to benefit from acquis-related assistance such as approximation of legislation. For instance in the environment sector, the strategic planning projects were almost too large and too ambitious compared to what was realistic in the Albanian context, where it could be argued that a vertical approach for a limited number of areas within the environment going through all the steps from implementation planning to investment planning and actual implementation would perhaps have had better demonstration value to the authorities responsible. A preparatory phase to most acquis-related projects has not been part of the project design, entailing that ministries do not have the prerequisite structures (planning and budget) and capacity (staff to carry out and monitor) to implement an acquis project. Some improvements in terms of capacities in certain ministries for the institutional change or reforms needed have been reported. Institutions have benefited from the acquis-related support which has helped to push institutional reforms and initial strategic changes to the implementation and enforcement in the ministries (VET and economic development). But there is little doubt that the capacity to implement and enforce the EU acquis is currently limited.

145. *Reforms are introduced bottom-up and not necessarily met with a top-down approach.* Outputs resulting from the projects are likely to result in the impact expected in those projects where policy objectives were clear and support for their implementation evident at senior level, or where assistance complements ongoing beneficiary efforts. More complex projects that promote intra-institutional change or wider reform agendas faced greater challenges in delivering impact (especially the justice sector where cooperation with institutions has often been problematic⁶⁶). The overall assessment of the impacts is **moderately satisfactory**.

Sustainability

146. *The sustainability of CARDS assistance primarily depends on administrative resources and capacities of individual institutions* which have the administrative capacity to sustain the results and outputs delivered through the past assistance. In the assessment of the implementation of the current assistance, the capacity in the implementing institutions has not been rated positively - neither in quantity, nor in durability. High staff turnover has very damaging effects on sustainability and dilutes the impact of the assistance as key outputs and knowledge may be lost or training may have no or little effect on the institution when the trained staff are no longer there. Although neither equipment nor works have been a particular focus of this evaluation, it is an issue in some sectors that equipment has been delivered, but is either not used due to lack of training or funds to maintain and utilise. The problem of bringing the pro-

⁶⁶ Example cooperation between Ministry of Justice and High Council of Justice related to judicial inspectorate, or often relations of justice institutions and executive bodies

jects identified to the implementation stage still exists, as it, for instance, the case in the environment sector.

147. **Overall strategies are in place in the Government's reform agenda and reflected in the government strategies** (NSDI) and planning tools (IPS). This is an important prerequisite for the sustainability of the assistance and, as assessed under relevance, most of the assistance is relevant, and, although not part of a national strategy from the outset, is now fitting. It is therefore assessed that there is will at the strategic level to ensure the sustainability of the CARDS assistance. However, although strategies are in place at the overall level, sustainability will also depend on the lower level strategies and action plans for reforming a policy area. In a number of areas (such as VET), sector strategies and action plans have been developed to guide the sector.

148. **An important step in the right direction in the GoA's effort to improve strategic planning is the Integrated Planning System (IPS)** adopted in November 2005. The IPS constitutes a broad planning and monitoring framework designed to ensure that the GoA's core policy and financial processes function in a coherent, efficient and integrated manner. The two key outputs of the IPS are the NSDI⁶⁷ 2008-2013 and the MTBP. These require each ministry to develop a three-year plan with an expenditure ceiling in order to achieve policy objectives as intermediate steps to the achievement of the NSDI goals. The aim is to fully align the (so far) parallel planning processes under EI agenda, the National Plan for the Implementation of the SAA⁶⁸.

149. Due to this, our overall rating of Sustainability is **moderately satisfactory**.

Other observations

150. **The ROM reports constitute an important source of information regarding the project implementation of CARDS in Albania.** As there have been large institutional changes - both on the Albanian and ECD side - the ROM reports are a very important source of information - institutional memory - about the CARDS projects in the period 2001-2006. Most technical assistance project were covered by the ROM system and for these projects 1-3 assessment reports were available to the evaluators. It is regrettable that investments (infrastructure and equipment) have not been covered by the ROM system as much less information is available about these projects. As the ROMs are monitoring reports made during implementation, the reports naturally focus and are strongest on relevance (project design), efficiency and to some extent effectiveness. Impact and sustainability are often assessments of the likely impacts and assessment and made up to more than 6 months before project end.

151. **Programme implementation has suffered significant delays and a large part of the programme has still not been implemented** - ultimo 2007, only about 2/3 of the programme 2001-2006 was under implementation (this rate has only to some extent improved; at present only 3-4 projects from 2006 are under implementation), and shortly IPA 2007 will be available for contracting. The significant delays in implementation of the projects of the programme have in some cases had as result that the projects were no longer as relevant at the time of implementation compared to when they were identified. It also results in fund reallocation and cancellation of components and full projects (border management part of 2001 and 2003 allocation have

⁶⁷ Published in March 2008

⁶⁸ National Plan for the Implementation of SAA, launched in April 2005 and revised on a yearly basis

either been cancelled or reallocated)⁶⁹. As the programme has been implemented by the ECD in Tirana, the limited number of staff and large turnover in staff at the ECD Tirana seems to be part of this problem.

152. *It has in some cases been difficult to properly assess the effectiveness of assistance* due to consistent non-compliance of project design with the project cycle management format (PCM) and in particular the lack either of objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) or their sources of verification. In certain projects there is no clear evidence of needs or cost assessments as a basis for informed decision making before allocation decisions to each project. Despite this, concrete outputs in most of the projects were easy to identify and the outputs were being implemented or in the process of being implemented.

Performance ratings

153. The table below is a summary of the rating of the 40 projects included in the evaluation. The ratings per project have been included in Annex 3.

Table 2 - Performance rating

Cluster	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability	Overall
Justice	S	S	MS	MS	MS	MS
Asylum & Border	S	S	MS	S	MS	MS
PAR	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Economic Dev.	MS	MS	S	MS	MS	MS
VET	S	S	S	S	MS	S
Environment	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Civil Society Dev.	S	MS	S	U	U	MS
Total	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS

1=Highly Satisfactory (HS); 2=Satisfactory (S); 3=Moderately Satisfactory (MS); 4=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); 5=Unsatisfactory (U); 6=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)

154. In addition to the above-mentioned projects, the evaluation conducted a self-assessment of 22 additional projects. Beneficiaries, contractors and experts and a few ECD programme managers were asked to rate the projects they had been involved in according to the criteria. The respondents were asked a number of questions under each criterion (see Annex 4) and to rank these at scale from "fully agree - fully disagree (or do not know)". As the table shows, the self-assessment follows a similar pattern to the overall assessment, albeit somewhat more positive.

⁶⁹ It has not been possible for the valuation to find the information concerning these allocations though the ECD

Table 3 - Self-assessment of CARDS Programmes 2001-2006 in Albania (e-mail Survey) N=20⁷⁰

Cluster	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability	Overall
Justice	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.4	2.0
Asylum & Border	2.0	1.9	2.3	2.5	3.3	2.4
PAR	2.1	1.1	1.0	2.0	2.5	1.7
Economic Dev.	1.6	2.1	1.3	1.7	2.2	1.8
VET	1.7	1.6	1.0	1.8	2.3	1.7
Environment	2.7	2.2	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.6
Civil Society Dev.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1.6	2.6	1.5	2.7	2.1	2.1
Total	1.9	1.9	1.7	2.1	2.5	2.0
Verbal Rating	S	S	S	MS	MS	MS

Legend: 1 - Fully agree, 2 - Partly agree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Partly disagree, 5 - Fully disagree, 6 - Do not know - Notice: There were no answers collected in the sectors Civil Society.

4.2 Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The relevance of CARDS has been good, but not consistently based on sector strategies and in-depth needs assessment. Weak project design has influenced the relevance of assistance.

155. The overall conclusion is that the CARDS assistance has been relevant and based on overall objectives of the CARDS strategic documents available at the time. Even though the CPS had a limited strategic planning value, the MIPs made a good effort in aligning CARDS priorities to the rapid development of Albania in line with SAP, but especially with NSSD. Only few strategies had been prepared for and by the Albanian Government at the beginning of the period, and no integrated approach to setting priorities at sector level existed. Due to the lack of developed sector strategies and needs assessment (carried out at the time of project design), some sectors, e.g. public administration reform projects and most projects in supporting internal market area, have suffered from inadequate project design or needs assessment which has impacted the performance of CARDS. The problems concerning accurate needs assessment reflect both a lack of capacity, especially in the sector ministries for project design and development, and the fact that sufficient resources were not set aside for the preparation of projects neither by the beneficiary nor by the ECD. Ownership in the programming process was furthermore reported as weak at the line ministry level in the beginning of the period, which has also had an impact on the needs assessment and thereby the relevance of the assistance.

Conclusion 2: CARDS projects have been largely efficient, but institutional capacity or uncertainties have hampered implementation as has project design.

156. The assistance under CARDS has largely delivered the outputs in a well-managed way, although exceptions and differences are seen in the performance between the sectors and types of assistance. CARDS has overall performed better in acquis-related areas than in support to

⁷⁰ The response rate was overall 49% (after reminders) Beneficiaries 30% and Contractors/task managers 73.9%.

public administration as such. Many projects have been implemented in a very changing environment with large replacements of staff at all levels resulting in a lack of commitment and continuity. Delays have been registered in the implementation due to both lack of administrative capacity and staff being allocated to implement projects in the ministries, and in some cases to contractor performance. In some sectors, project design has not taken the administrative and political situation into account such as the 2005 election period which resulted in significant staff changes in the public administration in sectors such as justice, PAR and economic development. In this circumstance, many projects have been designed with a too short timeline resulting in many extensions, because the projects could not be implemented within the set timeframe.

Conclusion 3: CARDS has had effects and short-term impacts in particular on developing structures and strategies, but the effect on capacity building has been limited due to turnover of staff.

157. Although CARDS assistance in general has had effects, such as supporting the development of new institutions, legal framework or strategies in a majority of the sectors, the effects of CARDS in capacity building of staff horizontally in the public administration have been limited. The training of staff in the administration has overall probably had less effect than the activities mentioned above, as trained and experienced staff (at all levels) is no longer in place due to retentions, especially after the 2005 elections. The CARDS assistance has focused on direct training in a majority of the projects instead of training-of-trainers and developing training capacity. This approach has made capacity building vulnerable to staff turnover and movements. This is among other things reflected in the limited involvement of the government training institution TIPA in developing training capacity in other sectors supported by CARDS projects. It is recognised that the training-of-trainers approach would also have been difficult to implement, due to lack of trainer candidates, but only in a few cases⁷¹ have attempts been made in the project design or by the beneficiaries.

Conclusion 4: Despite of positive immediate effects and impacts, longer term impacts of the CARDS assistance in Albania are still pending

158. The longer term impacts of CARDS will depend on whether the effects, which have been observed in the vertical acquis and sectors such as inter alia border management, VET and economic development, are indeed maintained. Although new or reformed institutions have been supported in the before-mentioned sectors, the generally weak public administration with large staff turnover, and thereby problems with securing trained staff for key functions, will have problems sustaining all the effects created by the projects and turning these into impacts. Longer term impact is also diminished by domestic budgetary resources constraints to supporting future requirements of reforms in some key sectors⁷². Not only the public administration will face issues regarding longer term impact due to lack of capacity and human resources. The impact of CARDS civil society projects is also assessed as limited due to the focus on service

⁷¹ For example, border management and VET

⁷² In particular internal market areas, VET, judiciary, food safety, environment

provision instead of institution building of the civil society activities of the CARDS programme.

Conclusion 5: The sustainability of CARDS depends on the overall reform process

159. Although many projects have managed to support the development of legal and institutional frameworks in key sectors such as border management, environment, VET, internal market, and judiciary, it is difficult to judge whether the institutional, legal and strategic work prepared will be fully sustainable. The further development of the administration in terms of staff numbers and competences, as well as the top level in the ministries engaging in the reform processes will be prerequisites for sustainability. The lack of a proper public administration reform strategy and the non-implemented civil service codes have been seen to impact the sustainability of the results of the assistance so far. Sustaining the results of many of the projects in sectors such as, e.g., border management, VET, economic development and environment will furthermore demand a significant investment from both the Albanian state budget and the donors. Some of this assistance is already included in the IPA programmes 2007-2009, but substantial budget and other donors funds will be needed to continue the investments in key infrastructure.

4.3 Lessons Learned & Recommendations

160. To address the key findings and conclusions of the evaluations, the following actions are recommended in respect of pre-accession assistance (IPA) planned for a future candidate country. There are two groups of recommendations; strategic and operational. There are four strategic recommendations which are based on a number of problems that emerged during the evaluation and that should be addressed when programming future assistance to Albania and other potential future candidate countries. The second group are operational recommendations, which could be taken into account when implementing the remaining CARDS and future IPA assistance.

Strategic Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Further integration of support to public administration reform and European Integration should be ensured in future programmes

161. EC assistance should continue to provide substantial support to horizontal public administration reforms, which is a precondition of a successful European integration process, and enforcement capacities. High-quality European integration management structures can only be developed in the context of a well-functioning public administration. Future EC assistance should consider a higher level of support to decentralisation and to overall strengthening of local government capacities. In the absence of a clear government strategy for civil service reform, further (much needed) support to this area in the future, without the right conditionality in place, would surely lower effectiveness or have a questionable relevance.

Recommendation 2: Technical assistance should be continued to the strategic planning level of the Albanian Government and strengthened at sector level

162. Supporting the Albanian Government's efforts in planning and budgeting support to the IPS, in particular, would most likely help strengthen high-level political support for the process. Ongoing and future assistance to MEI or other central institutions should be aligned closer with IPS implementation. Future EC assistance should focus on fully integrating the EU Integration agenda into overall Government policy and budget coordination mechanisms, more specifically streamlining the requirements of SAA Implementation Plan into the sector strategies, NSDI and MTBP. While there is a need to improve coordination mechanism at central level between MEI, DSDC and MoF, issues related to fully integrating future assistance into the Government budget planning cycle should be given more attention at the sectoral level for each line ministry.

163. Particular focus should be given to increasing the participation and the role of MEI in the framework of the IPS Coordination Group⁷³, SPC⁷⁴ and especially the GSBIs⁷⁵ in line ministries. The establishment of the Central Finance and Contracts Unit (CFCU) for managing IPA funds is expected to improve substantially, the channelling of EC assistance through the national treasury system.

Recommendation 3: IPA assistance to approximation of legislation should cover the entire cycle of the legislative process

164. This entails developing a balanced approach between the provision of technical assistance to drafting of legislation, implementation and law enforcement. The future assistance should shift from supporting a purely legal transposition of legislation to providing technical assistance to implementation and planning of the legislative processes and regulatory framework and enforcement. The future assistance should also include support to the development of parliamentary capacities (e.g., as twinning with other parliaments) as well as executing agencies and interested stakeholders should receive more priority in future EC assistance to Albania. IPA should furthermore strive to provide assistance to a broader range of institutions, such as local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations involved in implementation of the acquis.

Recommendation 4: Increase and strengthen institutional assessment (needs assessment) as part of the programming and projects design in order to improve potential for sustainability

165. It is important that proper institutional assessment and functional review go hand in hand with acquis implementation in order to ensure that the assistance is timed and sequenced in a manner which reflects the development of the institutions and their capacity. It is vital to the effects of the assistance (and thereby impacts and sustainability) that sequencing of legal approximation work is well planned and that the calculation of implementation cost (including human resources) has been carried out in the planning and needs assessment phase. More attention should be given to the development of impact assessment capacities in the Albanian

⁷³ Headed by General Secretary of Government and composed of representatives of DSDC, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Integration

⁷⁴ Strategic Planning Committee, headed by Prime Minister and composed of key ministers

⁷⁵ Groups for Strategy, Budget and Integration established in each line ministry

administration. This should be included as a standard provision, if not a condition, in institution building projects.

Operational Recommendations

Recommendation 5: Administrative capacity for programme implementation should be supported with funding and capacity building both at central and local government levels

166. There has been too little capacity on the Albanian side and insufficient resources on the ECD side to implement a large number of projects with both demanding and complicated technical and infrastructure projects. New structures are being set up in the Albanian Ministry of Finance for future decentralised implementation of IPA. Experience from other countries in the region shows that building this capacity is a lengthy and resource demanding process. With the DIS implementation, the line ministries will take a stronger role in the implementation cycle of the EC assistance. Meanwhile, current implementation issues at all levels and institutions (both in government and ECD) should be addressed. Future IPA assistance under components III, IV and V of IPA should focus more on strengthening capacities of regional and local authorities in order to prepare these for future funding.

Recommendation 6: Ownership of the reform process and the future assistance should be increased, especially in the implementation phase

167. Real sustainability of assistance must be ensured by focusing on increasing ownership of not only the CARDS and future IPA, but also of the reform process. Ownership of assistance should start at the political level and it is therefore crucial that key decision makers are involved in the planning and implementation of the assistance. It is a classic problem in assistance programmes that the assistance is provided at a low level in the ministries to beneficiaries who do not have the mandate or power to implement the institutional changes needed to ensure that the outputs have the expected impacts. While ownership to overall programming seems satisfactory thanks to the increasing coordinating role of MEI and DSDC, future assistance should pay more attention to increasing ownership of beneficiaries in the implementation phase. Incentives should also be created in the beneficiary institutions for improving the ownership of the reform processes by the recipients once the projects are completed. An important tool in increasing ownership would be to strengthen the role of national training institutions, such as TIPAs, in delivery of training programmes. This should be in general horizontal training programmes for civil servants as well as training programmes in key acquis-related areas. The use of local trainers, i.e. staff of the ministries trained as trainers, increases the ownership of the process and at the same time strengthens and enhances the government training capacity.

Recommendation 7: Supporting civil society development through different mechanisms

168. It should be considered supporting the administration of the CARDS grants scheme by using the assistance of national civil society institutions, foundations, or "think-tanks" for project appraisal and monitoring of projects. This has several advantages to the present situation where even small grants are administered by over-burdened desk officers at the ECD. Giving the Albanian civil society a greater say in allocation of support would not only alleviate ECD from work. It would also develop the civil society institutions involved in the granting scheme itself. By lowering administration costs, the scheme should be able to deal with more, but smaller, projects. This in turn would enable new and smaller Albanian organisations to participate.

169. Future civil society interventions should be divided into two types 1) small, local projects with a specific and directly useful outcome such as improved social services or mechanisms for public oversight of the local government which could establish trust among citizens and local politicians. These projects could have a limited budget and a duration of 1-2 years, 2) projects aiming at establishing new institutions, centres or other structures. Such projects should have a duration of at least three years, preferably more, in order to get established and become a part of useful daily life and hence eventually become included in local government budgets or funded through other local sources. Such projects should have a clear exit strategy included from the start, focussing on the possibilities of long-term funding through either local government, local or national sponsors or, eventually, further international donor support.

Recommendation 8: More resources and conditionality should be invested in establishing and sustaining institutional and staff capacities

170. Future assistance should involve the national training institutions and in general adopt a stronger training of trainers approach rather than delivery of training by EU-based training institutions or individual consultants as mentioned under Recommendation 6. Such assistance, coupled with appropriate conditionality on institutional and staff sustainability, could provide a significant boost to the establishment of overall policies and central capabilities linked to existing resources for human resource management and training in the public service. Also, introducing stronger conditionalities in relation to the response and readiness of the beneficiary institutions, especially in projects where support to institutional capacity building could significantly support sustainability. Use of conditionality in order to secure allocation of domestic budget resources which will enable sustainability of EC assistance should be considered further.

4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations Table

Issue	Conclusion	No.	Recommendation	Ref.	Action by	Deadlines
Relevance/sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The further development of the administration in terms of staff numbers and competences as well as on the top level in the ministries engaging in the reform processes will be a prerequisite for sustainability. ▪ The lack of a proper public administration reform strategy and the non-implemented civil service codes has been seen impacting the sustainability of the results of the assistance so far. ▪ In overall CARDS support to strengthen institutional capacities for strategic planning has been weak. 	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance should continue to provide substantial support to public administration reform, which is a precondition for a successful EI process. ▪ Future EC assistance should consider a higher level of support to decentralisation and to overall strengthening of local government capacities. ▪ Emphasis on the public administration reform process in the Albanian EU integration process. 	26 83 116 154 158	ECD, MEI, DOPA	
Relevance/efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The relevance of CARDS has been good, but not consistently based on sector strategies and in-depth needs assessment. ▪ CPS had a limited strategic planning value, the MIPs made a good effort in aligning CARDS priorities to the rapid development of Albania in line with SAP, but especially with NSSED. ▪ Sectors have suffered from inadequate project design or need assessment which has impacted performance of CARDS. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting the Albanian Government's efforts in planning and budgeting through support to the IPS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance to MEI or other central institutions should be aligned closer with IPS implementation. ▪ EC assistance should focus on integrating the EU Integration agenda into overall Government policy and budget coordination mechanisms, ▪ Streamline the requirements of SAA Implementation Plan into the sector strategies, NSDI, MTBP. ▪ Particular focus should be given to increasing the participation and the role of MEI in the framework of the IPS Coordination Group, SPC and especially the GSBIs in line ministries. 	10 26 48 114 115 154 155	ECD, MEI, sector ministries	
Efficiency/effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Despite of limited CARDS assistance to the area, the so far missing public administration reform strategy and the poorly-implemented civil service law are seen as impacting the 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EC assistance should continue to provide substantial support to public administration reform, as a precondition for a successful EI process, and enforcement capacities. ▪ Better co-ordination and integration between support to public ad- 	27 64 116 155	ECD, MEI, DOPA	

	<p>effectiveness and sustainability of the results of the assistance so far.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CARDS has overall performed better in acquis-related areas than in support to public administration as such. 		<p>ministration reform and European Integration should be ensured in future programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA assistance to approximation of legislation should cover the entire cycle of the legislative process, shifting from supporting purely legal transposition of legislation to providing technical assistance to implementation and enforcement of legislative processes and regulatory framework Future EC assistance should consider a higher level of support to decentralisation and to overall strengthening of regional and local government capacities. 	156		
Efficiency/effectiveness/impact/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inadequate needs assessment reflects that there is a lack of capacity especially in the sector ministries for both programming and project design and development. Weak project design has impacted relevance and in overall performance of CARDS. 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper institutional assessment and functional review go hand in hand with acquis implementation. More attention should be given to the development of impact assessment capacities in the Albanian administration. This should be included as a standard provision. More effort should be put on project design phase, which should be based on thorough analysis of the situation and needs as well broader consultations of the stakeholders involved. More space should be given to external stakeholders, such as civil society or other interest groups, in consultation on programming and design phases. 	8 46 53 64 155 156	ECD, MEI, DOPA	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays have been registered in the implementation due to lack of administrative capacity and staff allocated to implement projects in the ministries. 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New structures are being set up in the Albanian Ministry of Finance for future decentralised implementation of IPA. As is known from other countries in the region, building this capacity is a lengthy and resource demanding process. Meanwhile current implementation issues should be addressed. 	48 49 52 54 155	ECD, MEI, MoF,	
Relevance/impact/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership in the programming process was furthermore reported as weak at the line ministry level, in the beginning of the period, which has also had an impact on the needs assessment and thereby relevance of the assistance. While ownership to overall programming seems to be satisfactory, thanks to the increasing coordinating role of MEI and DSDC, future assistance should give more attention to increasing ownership of benefici- 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real sustainability of assistance must be ensured by focusing on increase in ownership not only of the CARDS and future IPA but also of the reform process. Incentives should be created for the reform processes to be properly owned by the recipients once the projects are completed. Horizontal training programmes for civil servants as well as training programmes in key acquis-related areas. The use of local trainers, i.e. staff of the ministries trained as trainers, to increase the ownership of the process and at the same time strengthens and enhances the government training capacity. 	67 84 85 92 116 154 157	ECD, MEI, sector ministries	

	aries in the implementation phase.					
Efficiency/effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of civil society projects is also assessed as limited due to the focus and implementation mechanisms of the civil society activities. 	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should be considered delegating the administration of the CARDS grants scheme to one or a few national institutions, foundations or organisations within clear guidelines and with final approval of projects by the Delegation, rather than – as is the case today – having the granting schemes managed directly by overburdened desk officers at the ECD. Future civil society interventions should be divided into two types 1) small, local projects with a specific and directly useful outcome such as improved social services or mechanisms for public oversight of the local government which could establish trust among citizens and local politicians. 	18 54 73 121 157	ECD, MEI	
Effectiveness/impact/sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff (at all levels) is no longer in place due to replacements generally in the administration (especially after the 2005 elections). Sustaining the results of many of the projects in sectors will furthermore demand a significant investment from both the Albanian state budget and the donors. Some of this assistance is already included in the IPA programmes 2007-2009, but substantial budget and other donors funds will be needed to continue the investments in key infrastructure. 	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing stronger conditionalities in relation to the response and readiness of the beneficiary institutions, especially in those projects where support to institutional capacity building could significantly support sustainability. Use of conditionality in order to secure allocation of domestic budget resources which will enable sustainability of EC assistance should be considered further. 	49 83 157 158	ECD, MEI, MoF,	

Annex 1 Scope of Evaluation - List of Projects (desk study and interviews)

Programme/ Project number	Programme Year	Programme/Project Title	Allocation
Justice			
08.01	2002	EC Justice Assistance Mission	4,5
08.01	2002	IV Joint Programme with COE (internal training)	1,0
02.01	2003	Renovation of two courts of appeal (Korca, Vlora)	3,5
02.01	2003	Pre-trial detention centre of Vlora	1,5
02.03.01	2004	Support to HCJ and its Inspectorate - TA and Training	0,67
02.04.02-05	2004	Commercial justice system (TA & Training)	1,0
3.1.6	2005	School of Magistrates (grant)	0,4
3.1.7	2005	General Prosecutors office (twinning)	0,8
Asylum and Border Management			
02.01.03	2001	Integrated Border Management - LMT for border Police (twinning)	0,75
02.01.05	2001	Asylum and Migration Management	1,0
02.03	2003	Upgrading of green border management, border crossing points and border posts	4,0
02.04	2003	Pre-screening of asylum-seekers and migrants	2,0
11.01	2004	Centre for readmitting 3rd country nationals and Centre for Asylum seekers	2,95
3.3	2005	PAMECA II	7,0
Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)			
09.01	2002	Support to Public Procurement - TA	2,5
09.03	2002	Support to INSTAT (Albanian Institute of Statistics)	1,0
03.01	2003	PAR Encouraging Reform of Civil Service	0,75
03.01.01	2004	TA for improving delivery of public service/ support to Training Institute of Public Administration	1,0
3.5.1	2005	Integrated support for decentralisation – TA and training for local government	1,2
3.4.2	2005	Public Administration Reform - TA to the MEI	2,0
3.5.4	2005	INSTAT Regional Offices	0,8
Economic Development / Internal Market			
02.01.01	2001	Standards and certifications - TA	2,0
10.01	2002	Trade regulation and promotion	2,0
04.01	2003	Support to standards, certification and accreditation	1,2
04.01	2003	Market surveillance system - TA	0,8
4.2.1	2005	Establishment of a National Food Authority - TA	2,5
4.2.1.1	2006	Standardisation and Accreditation	0,8
Education (Vocational Education Training)			

10.03	2002	Support to VET Reform	1,5
04.03	2003	Support for VET Reform	1,5
03.02.01	2004	Institutional Capacity Building for the National VET Agency and VET Council (twinning)	0,9
03.02.03-05	2004	Supplies and works	1,6
4.5	2006	Support to VET, Labour inspection services and Regional Labour Offices	3,0
Environment			
11.01	2002	Environmental legislation and awareness raising - TA	2,5
05.02.01	2004	Strengthening of Environmental Monitoring System - TA for environmental monitoring	1,775
05.01.01	2004	Environment al cleanup and disposal of hazardous material	3,1
4.4.2	2005	Treatment of environmental hotspots - Fier fertiliser plant	0,9
4.4.1	2006	Support for the implementation of the National Plan for Approximation of Environmental Legislation	2,0
Civil Society Development			
12.01	2002	Democratic stabilisation	1,0
2.1.1	2005	NGO Capacity Building	0,3
2.2	2005	Support to Albanian media	0,35

Annex 2 List of projects (e-Survey)

Programme/ Project number	Pro- gramm e Year	Programme/Project Title	Allocation
Justice			
02.04.01	2004	Juvenile justice TA & Training	0,75
3.1	2006	Support to Justice and Home Affairs – Development of a modern justice system in Albania (Euralius) Grant	4,5
Asylum and Border Management			
03	2003 ⁷⁶	Master Plan for Investments in Border Control Infrastructures in Albania	0,5
Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)			
09.01	2002	TA to Public Procurement Agency	2,5
03.03	2004	Upgrading of Ministry of Finance District Offices	1,0
03.02	2004	Development of external audit	1,0
3.4.3	2005	PIFC II (grant)	1,0
3.5.2	2005	Pilot Regional Development Plans (services)	1,0
Economic Development / Internal Market			
10.01	2002	Trade regulation and trade promotion	2,0
04.01	2003	Metrology	1,3
04.01	2003	Monitoring the health of small ruminants	2,2
04.01	2003	Mollusc production and monitoring	1,0
04.01	2003	Strengthening veterinary / phytosanitary inspection	0,5
04.02	2003	Local community development programme	7,5
4.1	2005	Improving the investment climate in Albania	3,2 ⁷⁷
Education (Vocational Education Training)			
4.5	2005	Social Insurance support programme	1,0
04.02.01	2004	Support to Vocational Education and Training Reform in Albania (twinning)	0,9
Environment			
05.04	2004	Construction of waste water treatment stabilisation ponds in Vlore	3,0
4.4.2	2005	Treatment of environmental hotspots - Fier fertiliser plant (Phase II)	0,9
Civil Society Development			
05.01	2003	Updating of civil registry	2,5
06.01	2004	Support to civil status registry system	2,5
2.1.2	2005	Trade Unions	0,25

⁷⁶ Both year and amount is estimate from information form the ECD - not in ECD lists

⁷⁷ Not in ECD project lists

Annex 3 Performance rating per cluster

Cluster/Criterion	Relevance	Efficiency	Effective-ness	Impact	Sustain-ability	Overall
Justice						
EC Justice Assistance Mission (2002)	S	S	MS	MS	MU	MS
IV Joint Programme with COE (internal training) (2002)	S	S	S	S	MS	S
Renovation of two courts of appeal (Korca, Vlora) (2003)	HS	HS	S	MS	S	S
Pre-trial detention centre of Vlora (2003)	HS	HS	S	S	S	S
Support to HCJ and its Inspectorate - TA and Training (2004)	S	S	MS	MU	MS	MS
Commercial justice system (TA and Training) (2004)	S	HS	MS	MS	MS	S
School of Magistrates (grant) (2005)	S	S	HS	MS	MS	S
General Prosecutors Office (twinning) (2005)	S	HU	HU	NR*	NR*	MU
Total	S	S	MS	MS	MS	MS
Asylum and Border Management						
Integrated Border Management - LMT for border Police (twinning) (2001)	S	S	MS	MS	MU	MS
Asylum and Migration Management (2001)	HS	S	MS	HS	MS	S
Master Plan for Investment into Border Management (2003)	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Pre-screening of asylum-seekers and migrants (2003)	S	MS	MS	MS	HS	S
Centre for readmitting 3rd country nationals and Centre for Asylum seekers (2004)	HS	S	MS	S	MU	MS
PAMECA II (2005)	S	S	S	S	MU	MS
Total	S	S	MS	S	MS	MS
Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)						
Support to Public Procurement - TA (2002)	S	MS	MS	MU	MU	MS
Support to INSTAT (2002)	S	S	S	S	S	S
PAR Encouraging Reform of Civil Service (2003)	S	U	U	U	U	MU
TA for improving delivery of public service/ support to Training Institute of Public Administration (2004)	HS	S	S	S	S	S
Integrated support for decentralisation – TA and training for local	HS	MS	S	S	S	S

government services (2005)						
Public Administration Reform - TA to the MEI (2005)	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
INSTAT Regional Offices (2005)	S	NR*	NR*	NR*	NR*	S
Total	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Economic Development / Internal Market						
Standards and certification – TA (2001)	HS	HS	S	S	S	S
Trade regulation and promotion (2002)	U	MS	S	U	U	MU
Market surveillance system - TA (2003)	MU	MS	S	MS	MS	MS
Support to standards, certification and accreditation – TA (2003)	S	S	HS	HS	HS	HS
Establishment of a National Food Authority – TA (2005)	HS	S	HS	S	MS	S
Standardization and Accreditation (2006)	HS	MU	MS	S	MS	MS
Total	MS	MS	S	MS	MS	MS
Education (Vocational Education Training)						
Support to VET Reform (2002)	S	S	MS	MS	MS	MS
Support to VET Reform (2003)	S	S	S	S	MS	S
Institutional Capacity Building for the National VET Agency and VET Council (twinning) (2004)	S	MS	MS	S	MS	MS
Supplies & works (2004)	S	S	S	S	MS	S
Support to VET, Labour inspection services and Regional Labour Offices (2006)	S	S	S	S	MS	S
Total	S	S	S	S	MS	S
Environment						
Environmental legislation and awareness raising - TA (2002)	S	S	S	MS	MS	S
Strengthening of Environmental Monitoring System - TA for environmental monitoring (2004)	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Environmental cleanup and disposal of hazardous material (2004)	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Treatment of environmental hot-spots - Fier fertiliser plant (2005)	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Support for the implementation of the National Plan for Approximation of Environmental Legislation (2006)	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Total	S	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Civil Society Development						

Democratic stabilisation (2002)	S	MS	S	U	MU	MS
NGO Capacity Building (2005)	S	MS	S	U	U	MS
Support to Albanian media (2005)	S	NR*	NR*	MU	MU	MU
Total	S	MS	S	U	U	MS

* Projects under implementation

Annex 4 E-survey on CARDS 2001-2006 in Albania

E-survey on CARDS Programmes 2001-2006 in Albania									
Question	Justice	Asylum & Border	Public Adm.	ED	VET	Environ ment	Civil Society	Other	Total
Relevance of projects and project activities to EU, national strategic documents and institutional needs and priorities	1,7	2,0	2,1	1,6	1,7	2,7	0,0	1,6	1,9
1. Is/was the project objectives relevant to the needs and priorities of EU and national strategies?	1,1	1,8	2,3	1,5	1,7	1,0	0,0	1,8	
a. The project objectives were /are relevant in relation to the European Partnership or EU Strategic Documents	1,0	3,5	2,8	1,2	1,0	1,0		1,0	
b. The project objectives were/are relevant in relation to the Country Strategy Paper	1,3	1,0	2,8	1,8	3,0	1,0		1,0	
c. The project objectives were/are relevant in relation to the national strategies	1,0	1,0	2,5	1,5	1,0	1,0		3,5	
2. Have the stakeholders been involved in the needs assessment for the project?	1,7	1,4	1,8	1,3	1,6	1,0	0,0	1,3	
a. The project has been targeted to the priorities of the institution and/or sector	1,5	1,0	1,0	1,5	1,0	1,0		1,0	
a. The project objectives are aligned to the sectoral priorities or strategies	1,3	1,0	2,5	1,0	3,0	1,0		1,5	
b. The project activities have been identified as needs in the institutional strategy and plans	1,5	1,0	1,0	1,3	1,0	1,0		2,0	
c. The project activities have been integrated and coordinated with other initiatives in the sector	1,5	2,0	2,3	1,7	2,0	1,0		1,0	
d. The project activities have been coordinated with other donor programmes in the sector	2,5	2,0	2,0	1,2	1,0	1,0		1,0	
3. Is/was the project designed to meet relevant needs and priorities of the sector and institution?	2,4	2,8	2,3	2,1	1,8	6,0	0,0	1,8	
a. Project recipients/ beneficiaries have been involved in the project identification and needs assessment	1,5	1,5	2,3	1,2	1,0	6,0		1,0	
b. Implementing institutions have been involved in the project development (writing terms of references)	3,0	3,0	2,3	2,2	1,0	6,0		1,0	
c. Other stakeholders (civil society) have been consulted in the planning of project activities	3,3	3,5	3,8	2,3	3,0	6,0		3,5	
d. The project has been well designed and the documentation is of high quality	1,8	3,0	1,0	2,7	2,0	6,0		1,5	
Efficiency of the project: To what extent has the project delivered the expected outputs ?	1,8	1,9	1,1	2,1	1,6	2,2	0,0	2,6	1,9
4. Were/are the project outputs delivered and has time planning been fulfilled?	2,4	2,3	1,2	1,7	1,7	2,3	0,0	3,0	
a. The project was/is successful and has delivered the outputs (1 n/a)	1,8	1,5	1,0	1,4	1,0	2,0		2,0	
b. The project activities have been implemented according the time-plan	2,5	2,0	1,0	1,4	2,0	1,0		2,0	
c. The recipient/ beneficiary institutions had the resources and staff to implement the outputs during project implementation (1 n/a)	3,0	3,5	1,7	2,2	2,0	4,0		5,0	
5. Has/will the project delivered value-for-money ?	1,3	1,5	1,0	2,5	1,5	2,0	0,0	2,3	
a. The project had good project management, ensuring the effective delivery of outputs (1 n/a)	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,3	2,0	1,0		1,0	
b. The project has delivered unplanned or extra outputs or results (1 n/a)	1,5	2,0	1,0	3,6	1,0	3,0		3,5	
Effectiveness of the project	1,9	2,3	1,0	1,3	1,0	3,0	0,0	1,5	1,7
6. Has/will the project achieved its objectives ?	1,9	2,3	1,0	1,3	1,0	3,0	0,0	1,5	
a. The project has/will achieve the results	1,8	1,5	1,0	1,3	1,0	1,0		1,5	
b. The projects output has/will contribute to the objectives	1,3	2,5	1,0	1,2	1,0	3,0		1,5	
c. The project results has been/will be implemented or used by the intended recipient organisation as planned	2,8	3,0	1,0	1,4	1,0	5,0		1,5	
Likely impact of the project	2,1	2,5	2,0	1,7	1,8	2,0	0,0	2,7	2,1
7. Has or will the project have an impact?	2,1	2,5	2,0	1,7	1,8	2,0	0,0	2,7	
a. The project has had/will have had impact on the objectives in the short term	2,0	1,5	1,0	1,2	3,0	1,0		1,5	
b. The project has had an positive impact on the institution or sectoral development in the short-term	1,8	2,0	1,8	1,2	1,0	2,0		1,0	
c. The project has not yet had an impact, but will have an impact on the sector in the medium term	1,8	4,0	2,3	2,4	2,0	3,0		3,0	
d. The project has not yet had an impact, but will have a wider socio-economic impact in the long-term	2,8	3,0	3,0	2,5	2,0	3,0		5,5	
e. The accession process of Albania in the sector has improved as a result of the project	2,3	2,0	1,8	1,2	1,0	1,0		2,5	
Sustainability	2,4	3,3	2,5	2,2	2,3	3,0	0,0	2,1	2,5
8. Is or will the project outputs and results be sustainable?	2,4	3,3	2,5	2,2	2,3	3,0	0,0	2,1	
a. The project outputs has/will be integrated into the recipient organisation	1,8	2,5	2,3	1,2	1,0	1,0		1,5	
b. The recipient and beneficiary organisation have the financial resources to continue the activities after project end	2,8	3,0	2,8	3,7	4,0	4,0		1,5	
c. The recipient/ beneficiary has the capacity and human resources to use the outputs and implement the results	2,3	3,5	2,5	2,2	2,0	3,0		2,5	
d. The recipient/beneficiary institutions have good management systems to manage and integrate the outputs and result of the project	3,0	4,0	2,5	1,8	2,0	4,0		3,0	
Total	2,0	2,4	1,7	1,8	1,7	2,6	0,0	2,1	2,0

Legend: 1 - Fully agree, 2 - Partly agree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Partly disagree, 5 - Fully disagree, 6 - Do not know

Annex 5 Evaluation Questions and Indicators

Level 1 Assessment of key issues	Level 2 Specific evaluation questions	Level 3 Indicators	Main data sources
Relevance	R.1 To what extent do the programmes/projects address the needs and priorities identified in the SA agreements, strategy papers, Partnerships and sectoral strategies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CARDS is focused on the objectives of pre-accession strategy (discreet) - A high level of consistency between Programme objectives and the needs assessment in strategy papers (relative) - The allocation of resource to different macro sector areas and projects reflects the strategy (discreet) - The programmes have a high quality (qualitative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Strategic documentations (other) - Albanian CARDS Programme documents - Progress reports - CARDS Evaluations
	R.2 To what extent have the stakeholders in Albania been involved in the needs assessments and contributed to the design of the programmes/projects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation processes are/were in place at the time for involvement of stakeholders in needs assessment and programming (discreet) - Key recipient stakeholders have been involved in needs assessment and programming (relative) - Civil society has been consulted and involved in the planning of the activities (relative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation on programming process (incl. programming documents) - Survey and interviews - Evaluations - Consultation procedures
	R.3 To what extent have the beneficiaries been ready to absorb the CARDS funding and have the pre-conditions for implementing the projects been in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The public administration system is prepared to implement project and securing resources (managerial, human and financial) for implementation (qualitative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessments of institutional capacity (i.e. organigrammes) - Programming documents - Survey and interviews - Monitoring and evaluation

Level 1 Assessment of key issues	Level 2 Specific evaluation questions	Level 3 Indicators	Main data sources
	R.4 Did the CSPs of Albania provide sufficient orientation and effective guidance on Planning documents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CSP and programme documents are consistent (discreet) - Resource have been directed and redirected to the necessary tasks and activities (Relative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSP - Programming documents - Survey and Interviews - Evaluations
	R.5 To what extent were the programmes designed in a manner relevant to the needs and problems identified in the partner countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The programmes are based on national (recipient county) strategic and planning documents (national development plans, poverty reduction strategies etc.) (Relative) - Programme alignment with other (donor) needs assessment and coordination ensured complementary between CARDS programme and other programmes (Relative) - Quality of programme/project documentation, log-frame, objectives, indicators etc. (Qualitative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programming documents (log-frames etc). - Albanian strategic and planning documents - Project documentation - Other donor documentation - Interviews - Evaluations
Efficiency	EFI.1 To what extent have the outputs of the projects been produced, and have they been produced in time as planned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The projects are successfully completed and outputs delivered (Relative) - The key stakeholders consider the outputs and activities satisfactory (Qualitative) - The project activities are implemented timely (Discreet) - Measures in place to support implementation of projects and delivery of outputs (Qualitative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documentation - Survey and interviews - Monitoring and evaluations

Level 1 Assessment of key issues	Level 2 Specific evaluation questions	Level 3 Indicators	Main data sources
	EFI.2 To what extent have the output been produced efficiently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs are reasonable compared to equivalent programmes in comparable regions/countries (Qualitative) - Quality of project management - reaction adaptation? to changes and risk in implementation (Relative) - Did the project achieve unplanned results (Discreet) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documentation - Other donor/programme documentation - Survey and interviews
Effectiveness	EFE.1 To what extent have the operational objectives of the programmes/projects been achieved or are in the process of being achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actual outputs corresponds to planned outputs (Discreet) - The programmes outputs are assessed to contribute to the overall objectives by key stakeholders (Relative) - The project results are being implemented/used as intended/planned (Relative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme and project documentation - Survey and interviews - Monitoring
Impacts and likely impacts	<p>I.1: To what extent have the impacts contributed to the achievements of the objectives?</p> <p>I.2 To what extent have the projects (outcomes and results) had an impact: short, medium and long term?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The achievements of the project (short-term) is rated positive by recipients (government institution and other beneficiaries), member states??, and donors (Relative) - The impacts have contributed to the achievements of the objectives (short-term) (Qualitative) - Systems and institutions in place for implementing results and securing impacts (short to medium term) i.e. government institutions are in place and have been involved in needs assessment, programming and project development (Qualitative) - Systems in place for monitoring global impacts in the longer term (Relative)) - In the long-term the accession process has been improved as a result of the programme (Qualitative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme and project documents - progress reports and country reports - Survey and Interviews - National strategic documents - reports on assessment of public institutions in country

Level 1 Assessment of key issues	Level 2 Specific evaluation questions	Level 3 Indicators	Main data sources
Sustainability or likely sustainability	S.1 Are the results and impacts of the programmes/projects likely to continue after EU funding ends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measures have been put in to place to secure/increase sustainability of activities including methods to assess pre-conditions for sustainability. (Discreet) - The project forms part of the overall priority of the organisation/beneficiary and is identified in sector strategy (Relative) - The beneficiaries have been involved in preparation of the project (ownership) (Relative) - The intervention integrate well in to the beneficiary organisation/institution (Qualitative) - The beneficiaries have the financial and human resource to use the intervention (Discreet and Qualitative) - The organisation have the proper management system to integrate the intervention in the organisation (Qualitative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National strategies - Sectoral strategies and assessments - Reports on assessment of public institutions in country (in general and in specific) - Interviews and survey results
Thematic and Cross-cutting questions	C.1 The extent to which CARDS support strengthened the State-building, good governance, administrative and judicial reform, rule of law and reconciliation in Albania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The thematic issue were directly or indirectly included in projects - These project have had an impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the criteria above - Programme and strategic documentation - Progress reports - Interviews and survey - Monitoring and evaluation

Level 1 Assessment of key issues	Level 2 Specific evaluation questions	Level 3 Indicators	Main data sources
	C.2 The extent to which CARDS support strengthened the development of civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects in place to support civil society - Measure incorporated in CARDS projects in general to support civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the criteria above - Programme and strategic documentation - Progress reports - Interviews and survey - Monitoring and evaluation
	C.4 Were the tools such as twinning, TAIEX, technical assistance, grants etc for implementing the programmes appropriate and have the resources in each tool been well used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The adequate and relevant implementation tool or measure were used to implement CARDS projects -The CARDS programme in Albania has been using the tools at its disposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the criteria above - Programme and strategic documentation - Progress reports - Interviews and survey - Monitoring and evaluation
	C.5 The extent to which CARDS support strengthened the effectiveness /efficiency of donor coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A donor coordination process is in place where CARDS as activity supported in programming and implementation - Measures/structures in place for aid effectiveness funded/supported by CARDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the criteria above - Programme and strategic documentation - Interviews and survey - Monitoring and evaluation

Annex 6 List of Interviews

Name of Institution	Name of person/position	Date
DG ELARG E4	Goran Segerlund, Head of Unit	May
DG ELARG E4	Alessandro Budai, Desk Officer	May
DG ELARG C1	Sanda Blanco Barbeito, Desk Officer	May
DG ELARG C1	Linda Boros, Desk Officer	May
ECD Tirana	Giovanni Serritella, Coordinator	July
ECD Tirana	Mark Reilly, Programme Manager Internal Market	July
ECD Tirana	Giulia Agrosi, Task Manager - Infrastructure	July and September
Ministry for European Integration	Patris Kraja, Director	July and September
Justice		
ECD Tirana	Lora Ujka, Task Manager – Justice	July and September
ECD Tirana	Ardian Metaj, Task Manager - Judicial Infrastructure	26.09.2008
Magistrate School	Arjana Fullani, Former Director of the Magistrate School	17.09.2008
Council of Europe	Laurela Mucaj, TM for the judicial system	17.09.2008
OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe)	Frank Dalton, Head of Rule of Law and Human Right Department	15.07.2008
Spanish Cooperation Agency	Irene Cabrera Rodaa, project Manager	14.08.2008
Ministry of Justice	Fatos Bundo, Head of the MoJ PIU	13.09.2008
Ministry of Justice	Enkeljdi Hajro, Director General of Court Administration Department	19.09.2008
Ministry of Justice	Mirjan Kopani, Director of Codification Department	19.09.2008
Ministry of Justice	Martin Winner, TL of the Twining Project Enhancing Judicial System in Commercial Cases	22.09.2008
High Council of Justice	Valbona Vata, High Inspector	22.09.2008
High Council of Justice	Eugenio Turko, TL of the Twining Project	23.09.2008
GTZ	Blerina Raca, Project Coordinator	23.09.2008
Appellate Court of Vlora	Aneta Dhefto, Cancelor of Cort of Appeal of Vlora	26.09.2008
Pre-trial detention centre of Vlora	Sokrat Feinaj, Director	26.09.2008
EC Monitor	Arian Hoxha	24.09.2008
Asylum and Border Management		
ICITAP	Darien Guri	16.09.2008
ECD	Guilia Agrosi	17.09.2008
ECD	Stefano Failla	18.09.2008
PAMECA	Richard Bone	18.09.2008
Border Police	Pellumb Nako, Deputy GD	18.09.2008 & 28.10.2008
OSCE	Klaas Los, Internal Borders Controls	22.09.2008

Ministry of Interior	Genc Merepeza, Green Border	22.09.2008
	Shyqyri Dade (Former Director of Economy in the Ministry of Interior)	22.09.2008
TACTA	Pellumb Dervishi and Vito Malanga	23.09.2008
ECD	Lora Ujka, Asylum and migration	15.09.2008
UNCHR	Hortenc Balla and Mirela Perjo	16.09.2008 17.09.2008
Ministry of Interior	Drita Avduli	17.09.2008
IOM	Nicoletta Giordano and Teuta Grazhdani	19.09.2008
Project Monitoring Group	David Jackson and Arian Hoxha	19.09.2008
Border Police	Krenar Muco, Director of Operational Services	28.10.2008
General Police Directorate	Diana Caro, Head of Project Coordination Unit	29.10.2008
PAMECA II	Borut Erzen, Border Police Adviser (former)	06.11.2008
PAMECA II	Nikos Hatzis, Border Police Adviser (former)	24.11.2008
Public Administration Reform (horizontal and vertical)		
ECD Tirana	Ledia Muco, Economic Advisor	24.08.2008
Association of Albanian Municipalities	Fatos Hodaj, Executive Director	17.09.2008
EPTISTA	Albert Brojka, TL of the project TA for improving service delivery at the local level	18.09.2008
DoPA	Blerta Selenica, Head of DoPA	18.09.2008
DoPA	Enkelejda Dudushi, Head of Salary Unit, DoPA	18.09.2008
DoPA	Nora Malaj, Head of HRM Unit, DoPA	18.09.2008
TIPA	Fatmir Demneri, Head of TIPA	18.09.2008
ICS	Artan Hoxha, Local expert of the project Support to TIPA	25.09.2008
Ministry of European Integration	Arbert Gajo, Deputy Minister	23.09.2008
Ministry of European Integration	Patris Kraja, Director of EC assistance	26.09.2008
Ministry of European Integration	Arben Kashahu, Secretary General	26.09.2008
Ministry of European Integration	Alfred Kallerman, team Leader - SMEI Project	24.09.2008
Ministry of European Integration	Steven Blockmans, Expert - SMEI Project	24.09.2008
Ministry of European Integration	Silvana Rusi, Local Expert - SMEI Project	20.09.2008 24.09.2008
Department of Strategic and Donors Coordination	Albana Vokshi, Director	18.09.2008
Institute of Statistics	Godiva Rembeci – former head of statistics forecasting	18.09.2008
PPA	Behar Zeneli, former head of PPA (2002-2005)	17.08.2008
World Bank	Evis Sulko, Project Officer	20.09.2008
Economic Development / Internal Market		
ECD Tirana	Mark Reilly	August and September
ECD Tirana	Llazar Korra	September

Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	Anila Jani, Director of Market Surveillance Department	22.09.2008
Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	Philippe Dengler, TL of project Support to Market Surveillance	22.09.2008
Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	Arben Nati, General Director of Standardisation	23.09.2008
Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	Agim Manxhaku, Director of Accreditation	24.09.2008
Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	Bashkim Sykja, Director of Business Development	23.09.2008
Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	Anila Tanku, Director Industrial Zones	23.09.2008
Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	Viola Puci, Head of Albinvest	26.09.2008
UNDP	Diana Leka, TM on trade programmes	18.09.2008
Ministry of Agriculture	Merita Petushi, General Secretary	20.09.2008
Ministry of Agriculture	Albert d'Adesky, Team Leader, Establishment of Food Authority	20.09.2008
Education (Vocational Education Training)		
GOPA VET Office	Herman Sonnenwelt, Team Leader	17.09.2008
ECD Tirana	Arben Ilirani, PM VET	15.07.2008
National VET Agency	Ilia Paluka, Director	16.07.2008
Adult Education Project (PARSH)	Sokol Avxhiu	17.07.2008
Ministry of Education	Sotir Rrapo, Head of Unit for Professional Education	15.07.2008
Ministry of Labour	Stravri Lako, Advisor0	16.07.2008
Public Vocational training Centre, Shkodra	Jani Jovani, Director	19.09.2008
Forestry Vocational School, Shkodra	Zhuljeta Fresku, Director	19.09.2008
Veterinary Vocational School, Shkodra	Salvator Kici, Director	19.09.2008
World Bank	Gentiana Sulo, PO for Education	22.09.2008
Austrian Embassy Technical Cooperation	Florenc Qosja	17.07.2008
Environment		
ECD Tirana	Llazar Korra, Sector Manager, Agriculture and Environment	27.08.2008
Council of Ministers	Migena Dako, Coordinator in charge of environment	15.09.2008
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	Bajram Mejdiaj, Head of the Legal Office	15.09.2008
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	Klodian Ali, Head of Section, EIA Department	15.09.2008
Dutch Embassy	Ardi Stoios-Braken, Deputy Head of Mission	16.09.2008
ELPA project	Sabah Sena, DTL	16.09.2008

REC Albania	Mihallaq Qirjo, Country Director	16.09.2008
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	Pellumb Abeshi, Secr-Gen.	17.09.2008
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	Auron Meneri, Director of Cabinet	17.09.2008
ECAT	Marjeta Mima, Executive Director	17.09.2008
DCDS, CoM	Valbona Kuko	18.09.2008
World Bank	Drita Dade, PO for Environment	18.09.2008
UNDP	Vladimir Malkaj, Project Officer	18.09.2008
Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania	Zamir Dedej, President	18.09.2008
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	Taulant Bino, Deputy Minister	19.09.2008
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	Shpresa Mezini, PIU Daniella Godo, Head of Unit, PIU	19.09.2008
Agency of Environment and Forestry	Etleva Canaj, Director Zamira Dana Ada Koda	19.09.2008
CARDS 2006 Project Approximation of Environmental Legislation	Narin Panariti, DTL	19.09.2008
Civil Society Development		
Dutch Embassy	Ardi Stoios Braken, First Secretary	16.09.2008
OSCE	Hartmut Puerner	16.09.2008
SEDA	Genc Myftiu	17.09.2008
MJAFT/AGENDA	Arbi Mazniku	17.09.2008
PARTNERS Albania	Juli Hoxha	17.09.2008
ECD	Dritan Tola	18.09.2008
NGO small business	Ida Kostaj	18.09.2008
Institute for Contemporary Studies	Artan Hoxha, Elira Jorgoni, NGO capacity building, Media project	18.09.2008
CSDC – Vlora Centre	Aleksander Mita, Coordinator	26.09.2008
SOROS	Mimoza Gjika, Head of OSFA program for NOSA	19.09.2008

Annex 7 List of Documents⁷⁸

No	Title	Published by/author	Year
1	The National action plan for the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement	Council of Ministers, Republic of Albania	June 2006
2	National strategy for socio-economic development. Medium-term Program of the Albanian Government "Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy"(GPRS 2002-2004)	Council of Ministers, Republic of Albania	November 2001
3	Progress Report on Implementation of the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development during 2004. Objectives and long-term vision Priority Action Plan 2005-2008	Ministry of Finance, Republic of Albania	June 2005
4	National Strategy on Integrated Border Management	Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Albania	November 2006
5	The National Migration Strategy and Action Plan	Government of Albania in cooperation with IOM and EU-CARDS	July 2005
6	Government Policies and Priorities for a Mid-Term Period	Government of Albania	n/a
7	2001 Albanian Government's Policy Agenda for Socio-economic Development	Government of Albania	n/a
8	Strategjia Ndersektoriale e Mjedisit 2007 (National Environmental Strategy) (only in Albanian)	Ministry of Environment, Republic of Albania	n/a
9	Programi Buxhetor Afatmesem 2009-2011 (Medium Term Budget Programme) (only in Albanian)	Republic of Albania, Ministry of Finance	2008
10	Donor dialogue Monthly E-briefing Issue No. 5 + Proposed list of donor projects for NSDI	Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination in Albania and the Donor Technical Secretariat, Republic of Albania	March 2007
11	External Assistance Orientation Document	Council of Ministers, Republic of Albania	January 2008
12	Strategy of Vocational Training and Education Training in Albania, draft	Working Group for the Development of VET Strategy, Republic of Albania	January 2006
13	National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013	Council of Ministers, Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination, Republic of Albania	October 2007
14	Albania: Secondary and Tertiary Education. Policy Brief No. 1 - Labour Market and Education,	Ministry of Education and Science, Government of Albania and the World Bank	March 2008
15	Consultation on EU IPA 2007 project proposals	Delegation of the European Commission in Albania	17.04.2007
16	Questionnaire all CARDS 2001-2005	European Commission	2006
17	Support Programme for Albania 2001	European Commission	n/a

⁷⁸ ROM reports for individual projects are not included as well as individual project documentation

	Support Programme for Albania 2002 Support Programme for Albania 2003 Support Programme for Albania 2004 Support Programme for Albania 2005 Support Programme for Albania 2006		
18	Albania Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006	European Commission	30.11.2001
19	Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2002-2004	European Commission	2001
20	Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2005-2006	European Commission	n/a
21	Albania Multi-annual indicative planning document 2007-2009	European Commission	n/a
22	Multi-annual indicative financial framework for 2009-2011	European Commission	06.11.2007
23	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006-2007	European Commission	2006
24	Key findings of the progress reports on Kosovo and the potential candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia	European Commission	06.11.2007
25	Albania 2005 Progress Report Albania 2006 Progress Report Albania 2007 Progress Report	European Commission	09.11.2005 08.11.2006 06.11.2007
26	Regional Strategy Paper 2002-2006 + Annex: Multi-annual indicative programme 2002-2004	European Commission	n/a
27	Report from the Commission to the Council On the work of the EU/Albania High Level Steering Group, in preparation for the negotiation of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania (2001)	European Commission	2001
28	Stabilisation and Association Report Albania 2003-2004	European Commission	2003-2004
29	The Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe 2002. First Annual Report The Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe 2003. Second Annual Report The Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe 2004. Third Annual Report	European Commission	03.04.2002 26.03.2003 30.03.2004
30	Evaluating EU Activities - A practical guide for the Commission service	European Commission	July 2004
31	Phare Interim Evaluation Guide, Part I: Approach, Procedures, Methodology and Reporting, Phare Interim Evaluation Guide, Part II: Annotated Report Template Country Summary	European Commission	December 2004
32	DG ELARG Evaluation guide	European Commission	March 2008
33	Guidelines for Grants Applications	European Commission	n/a
34	Public Administration Reform. A Rethink for the Broader Approach of Governance and Public Sector Reform - a Discussion Paper	European Commission	October 2007

35	European Partnership for Albania	European Commission	06.11.2007
36	Second Action Plan for the effective functioning of the judicial system in Albania	European Commission and Council of Europe	n/a
37	Second Evaluation Round. Evaluation Report on Albania	Group of States against Corruption GRECO, Council of Europe	18.03.2005
38	Court of Auditors Special Report No. 5/2007 on the Commission's management of the CARDS programme together with the Commission's replies	European Court of Auditors	2007
39	Interim Agreement on Trade and trade-related matters between the European Community, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part	Council of the European Union	22.05.2006
40	Council decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2006/54/EC	Council of the European Union	2006
41	Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part	Council of the European Union	22.05.2006
42	Evaluation of the assistance to Balkan Countries under CARDS regulation 2666/2000, Vol. I-III	Development Researcher's Network Consortium (Commissioned by the European Commission)	June 2004
43	Sectoral Interim Evaluation of the European Union Pre-Accession Assistance, Croatia, Internal Market, Competition and Agriculture	MWH Consortium (Commissioned by the European Commission)	25.03.2008
	Sectoral Interim Evaluation of the European Union Pre-Accession Assistance, Croatia, Justice and Home Affairs		10.04.2008
44	Study on the Use of Cost-effectiveness Analysis in EC's Evaluations	Centre for European Evaluation Expertise (Commissioned by the European Commission)	20.07.2006
45	Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) for the CARDS/Western Balkan countries. Annual Report 2006	INTEGRATION International Management Consultants (Commissioned by the European Commission)	n/a
46	Mid-term and/or Final Evaluation of Selected PHARE/CARDS Projects in Albania	ECORYS and CESO CI (Commissioned by the European Commission)	December 2005
47	Albania: Public Expenditure Management System	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) (Commissioned by the European Commission)	June 2007
48	Evaluation of Ongoing Projects/Programmes 2006. Modernisation of the Agricultural and Food Sector and its approximation to the EU, Albania	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH	28.12.2006
49	Albania Country assistance evaluation 1998-2004	The World Bank	13.09.2005
50	Albania Country Fiduciary Assessment	The World Bank	August 2006

51	World Bank Financing to Albania	The World Bank	March 2005
52	Joint IDA-IMF staff advisory note on the Poverty reduction strategy paper. Third annual progress report	The World Bank	11.01.2006
53	Country Assistance Strategy for Albania for period FY06-FY09	The World Bank	10.01.2006
54	Conduction quality impact evaluations under budget, time and data constraints	The World Bank	2006
55	Measuring Social Capital	The World Bank	2004
56	Albania: Growth, Migration and Poverty Reduction	The World Bank	2007
57	Rural Development Strategy. Underpinning Growth and Sustainable Development	The World Bank	20.08.2002
58	Albania: A Public Expenditure and Institutional Review. Volume II: Background Chapters	The World Bank	14.07.2006
59	Albania - Trends in poverty and inequality 2002-2005	The World Bank/Albanian Institute of Statistics	December 2006
60	2006 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration. Overview of the Results	OECD	2007
61	Desk Review of Social Exclusion in the Western Balkans	Department for International Development (DFID)	28.07.2006
62	Albania: Country Strategy Paper 2000-2004	Department for International Development (DFID)	January 2001
63	Regional Assistance Plan for the Western Balkans 2004/05-2008/09	Department for International Development (DFID)	September 2004
64	Outcome Assessment of the Development Cooperation Strategy for Albania	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)	July 2007
65	Country plan for development co-operation with Albania 2006-2008	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)	15.12.2005
66	Country plan development co-operation with Albania 2007	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)	31.01.2007
67	Country plan for development co-operation with Albania 2005-2007	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)	11.01.2005
68	Sida Country report 2004 Albania Sida Country report 2005 Albania Sida Country report 2006 Albania	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)	July 2005 May 2006 March 2007
69	Country strategy Albania September 2004 - December 2007	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)	2004
70	Migration and Pro-Poor Growth in Albania - An Integrated Economic Analysis	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)	November 2006
71	Corruption in Albania. Perception and Experience. Survey 2008	Institute for Development and Research Alternatives (IDRA) (Commissioned by USAID)	2008
72	Juvenile justice in Albania. An analysis of the system of juvenile justice and juveniles situation in Albania	UNICEF	n/a

73	Juvenile delinquency in Albania. Analysis of factors and causes of juvenile delinquency in Albania	UNICEF	n/a
74	Report on Civil Society Need Assessment in Albania	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	n/a
75	CARDS Social Sector Studies: Country Report. The functioning of the social sector administration in Albania	n/a	January 2005

Annex 8 Dissenting views

Reference in final report	Dissenting Views from the European Commission Delegation in Albania	COWI Response
Conclusion 3	The report mentions that key reforms such as public administration reform have not been sufficiently supported. The CARDS 2004 project Support to Public Procurement System SPSS project contributed a new draft public procurement law which was developed, submitted to the Public Procurement Agency, passed by Government with some alterations, submitted to Parliament and approved in November 2006. The assistance to the sector comprised CARDS 2001 2.3M, CARDS 2002 2.68M, CARDS 2003 1M, CARDS 2004 5 M, CARDS 2005 4.19 M of which three were successful Twinning projects: Public Internal Financial Control 1 and 2 and Support to the Supreme Audit Institution. Hence I don't quite agree to the negative angle under which the CARDS assistance in this sector has been presented in the report.	The conclusion reflects that the support to horizontal public administration reforms has been limited in size and number. Horizontal public administration projects such as support to a public administration reform strategy and the conditions for civil service reforms are important for the European integration process as it supports the overall administration in terms of structures, organisational development and overall human resource development. It is the assessment of the evaluators that not enough focus was placed on supporting the public management aspect of PAR activities in the CARDS programmes in the period. There has been some support to procurement, financial control and audit which are also key areas, but without the overall PAR framework, this risks becoming no more than fragmented support and difficult to implement across the administration.
Paragraph 120-123	I agree with the overall analysis of the evaluators on Civil Society. Maybe a little comment to the fact that the report mentions that CARDS assistance has concentrated on development of CSOs as service providers and that the role of Civil Society as advocacy and whistle blower has not been a priority. This is true but the situation has started to change under CARDS 2005 and CARDS 2006 where more attention and funds have and will be spent on capacity building of CSOs ad advocacy actors. There is however a reason why advocacy has not been a priority in Albania in the earlier days of the CARDS programme. This is because Civil society groups still lack of organisational experience, financial resources and advocacy skills and, thus, capacity necessary to influence decision-making. As I said the situation is now a bit more mature and more efforts are channelled in this direction.	The assessment of the CARDS projects in the period 2001-2006 is that these primarily supported service delivery. The evaluation does recognise that the allocations under 2005 have a different focus, but projects under these allocations have not yet been selected, funded or implemented, and it is therefore not possible for the evaluation to reflect the new focus and thereby effects.
Reference in final report	Dissenting Views from the Ministry for European Integration	COWI Response
Recommendation 2	"better coordination and integration between support to public administration reform and European integration should be ensure in future programmes" Improvements have been done and pointed to the fact the SPOs (Sectorial Programming Officers) shall be appointed under the DIS preparations in January in all line Ministries.	The evaluation covers CARDS and can therefore only to a limited extent reflect the very recent changes made in connection with IPA. The evaluation found that horizontal public administration reform projects and European integration projects were not very closely coordinated, and that design and planning of assistance projects to the two areas under CARDS did not reflect a coordinated approach. However, the recent developments in Albania with regard to the preparation for implementation of IPA have been reflected in a limited rephrasing of the paragraph.
Conclusion 3	With view to the loss of capacity when trained people leave the administration, it is the opinion that it is not an overall loss when they stay in the public administration as it is often the case.	The concern expressed to the evaluators in a number of sectors was that specially (targeted expertise) trained staffed had left and had either not been replaced or had not been replaced by trained staff. So for the particular area/sector, this was/is a concrete loss of capacity. This is particularly relevant in relation to acquis implementation as this often requires specialised training and knowledge for example in the environmental sector.
Reference in final report	Dissenting Views from the Albania Desk	COWI Response

report		
Conclusion 3 and 4	It seems that this conclusion is focusing a lot on the capacity building and rightly points to the limited effect due to the many turnovers in staff. It is just slightly mentioned that there have been effects with view to the designing of new structures and legal frameworks. In the body of the paragraph it only says effects, while in the heading it refers in this context more to short-term effects. Wouldn't strategies, legal frameworks and laws not having more a medium to long term effect?	The issue mentioned are addressed in Conclusion 4 which focus on the medium- to longer-term aspects of the strategies, legal frameworks and laws. The evaluation assesses that there is potential, but also constraints "Although new or reformed institutions have been supported in the before-mentioned sectors, the generally weak public administration with large staff turnover, and thereby problems with securing trained staff for key functions, will have problems sustaining all the effects created by the projects and turning these into impacts. Longer term impact is also diminished by domestic budgetary resources constraints to supporting future requirements of reforms in some key sectors".
Recommendation 2	Maybe to add to the heading "Support should be <u>continued provided</u> to the strategic planning level of the Albanian Government <u>and strengthened to the administration on sector level</u>	There is no evidence in the evaluation that support has been provided by CARDS to the IPS process. However, IPA will be providing support through the IPS trust fund aimed at the strategic planning level, why the suggested amendment has been included in the final version.
Recommendation 7	This conferral of powers to a national entity is under the current IPA implementation system in the CENTRALISED system NOT possible. As mentioned above the DIS (even with ex-ante visa) will still need some years to come. The only possibility would be maybe an implementation through INDIRECT CENTRALISED MANAGEMENT, whereby the ECD can sign a delegation agreement with a Member State agency such like the GTZ.	The recommendation has been amended to reflect that the full implementation of the IPA DIS lies a few years into the future.