



USAID
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**LOCAL GOVERNANCE
PROGRAM IN ALBANIA**

SUCCESS STORY

Local Economic Growth Committees (LEGCs) provide a public-private forum for an open discussion and assessment of municipal economic growth strategies



Three members of the Fieri Local Economic Growth Committee drafting the economic growth action plan for their city.

The LEGCs in the LGPA's 10 target cities developed a strategic vision of future local economic growth potential in their municipality, and prioritized immediate actions within the context of a short-term local economic development action plan. This plan and subsequent implementation activities were a result of coordination between LGPA project staff, municipality staff, and other stakeholders active in the respective municipality.

The LEGC action plans have been successful in mobilizing resources for change: on average, five to six actions were implemented in each city during Year 1 of the LGPA.

USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA) is using a participatory process based on involvement of the local business community and civil society groups, working jointly with municipal officials and staff, to foster local economic growth and improve the quality of local governance.

Following the signing in January 2008 of *Memoranda of Understanding* with the ten target cities involved in the LGPA (Shkodër, Kukës, Lezhë, Fushë-Krujë, Gramsh, Pogradec, Korçë, Librazhd, Fier and Himarë), each municipality established a bi-partisan and broadly representative Local Economic Growth Committee (LEGC) to work with the LGPA over the remaining three years of the project.

The LEGCs were convened in February 2008. As their initial task, the committees evaluated and identified key factors that need to be addressed in order to coordinate and encourage local economic growth. Considerations included the availability of human and natural resources, economic status of the municipality, the city's cultural and social environment, as well as priorities for infrastructure and public service improvements. In addition, administrative reforms in the area of tax collection, budgeting, asset and financial management, and public procurement that will help create a 'business friendly' environment and attract new investment were also addressed during the action planning workshops. The initial series of action plan workshops was completed in March, 2008.

The committees will reconvene periodically to review progress achieved and, as needed, to revise the initial action plan. Individual members of the committee are also expected to take on responsibility for implementing significant elements of the action plan. Principal areas of intervention defined in the action plans include: branding and imaging of cities, tourism development, urban planning, agribusiness, participatory budgeting, tax administration, asset management, and public service improvement.

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