

Flag’s mission

is to encourage achievement of the most advanced standards in decentralized and democratic governance

To fulfill its mission the Foundation for Local Autonomy and Governance—Flag—supports the activities of Albania’s local authorities and community-based organisations, contributing thus to the development of Albanian society. Through its work, the Foundation disseminates the idea of civil self-governance, widely perceived as the fundamental form of democracy. In its endeavours, Flag complies with the principles of being non-political, independent, non-commercial, transparent, professional and responsive to needs. Flag aims at achieving sustainable results, excellence in performance and full customer satisfaction. Using up-to-date methodology and approaches, Flag offers to local government units (LGUs) services from its wide ranging expertise.

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PRODUCTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Foundation

is a non-profit organisation set up in January 2003, when it was registered with the Courts of Tirana. The initiative to set up Flag emerged from a core group of Albanian managers and experts who had worked together for the previous seven years (since 1996) in implementing Strengthening Local Government and Citizens' Participation (SLGCP) and Community and Public Administration Support Strategy (COMPASS) in Albania. **Flag's highest decision-making** body is the Board while the highest executive body is the Director supported by the Senate of Senior Councillors. The Foundation employs four full-time staff, including the director and vice-director. Three staff members are Albanian, with excellent command of English and Italian, while **the fourth member is English. Flag's strength**, however, rests in the large pool of experts developed over the past fourteen years, formed since before Flag was established. Many of the projects undertaken by Flag involve the citizens as much as possible, and at every level.

The total budget of COMPASS was € 2.6 million, of which the Flag executive directly managed € 646,000 and who were responsible for project management and monitoring, preparation of annual plans, compilation of project progress and financial reports, and drafting contracts for local experts as well as allocating the time. Budgeting was activity based and 44 local short-term experts were under contract to implement various activities in the programme.

Flag has subsequently implemented, or is currently implementing, a further **37 projects or programmes**. The budget of the projects implemented by Flag has grown considerably and has now exceeded € 1 million. During 2008 and 2009, respectively, 20 and 15 short-term experts were employed by Flag.




Ambicie mbi Vlera Ambitions in Values

DELTA

A Shared VISION A Shared FUTURE





Vizion i Përbashkët për të Ardhme të Përbashkët

FONDACIONI PER AUTONOMI VENDORE DHE QEVERISJE



Network of experts

Flag's organisational and technical expertise is supported and complemented by short-term inputs from top local and international experts in specialised disciplines. A group of 44 experts comprised the core of the COMPASS programme's local network. These experts underwent training for trainers courses and are well proven in implementation of specific projects or delivery of training courses. They comprise people with hands on experience who are capable of disseminating knowledge, managing processes and projects and encouraging sustainable change. In 2008, Flag's core group was complemented by a broader structure that included 20 professionals who were employed in the projects implemented by the Foundation. These experts have a background in various policy areas and are regarded as among the country's best in their areas of expertise. This core group has since been complemented by additional experts.



Flag's approach and methodology

Three major concepts describe the methodology Flag applies in implementing activities to fulfil its mission: process management; multidisciplinary and integrated approach; sustainable change.

Process management

Flag addresses management processes such as strategy formulation and performance improvement, and supports primary processes within Albanian organisations and LGUs. Its experts are very familiar with an approach to process management that involves as much as possible the ultimate beneficiaries from the process, at all stages. Through this approach the final achievements and results are accepted and embedded in the beneficiary organisation and environment much better than in its absence.

Multidisciplinary and integrated approach

Flag, through its established network of experts, offers possibilities to create effective links between management and primary and support processes. The Foundation is supported by management specialists from a wide range of disciplines including institutional development and strategic planning, while for primary processes it offers expertise in technical and non-technical issues such as social services, waste management, personnel management, tax collection, etc.

Sustainable change

Flag believes strongly in creating sustainable change. It therefore emphasises the importance of maximising the use of local capacities in the development trajectory. The Foundation tries to make best use of the resources available and of best examples from outside Albania while at the same time it tries to encourage the exchange of best experiences among Albanian institutions and foreign counterparts. Provision of training supports the process for the beneficiaries to consolidate and sus-

Flag's expertise areas

Flag's expertise extends from strengthening institutional capacities and collaboration, improving capabilities and performance of organisations, management and staff, to enhancing levels of coordination with beneficiaries and their primary target groups, mainly citizens. Naturally, there is much overlap across areas of expertise, but generally they fall into the following categories: citizen participation and information policy, decentralisation, environment, EU accession and regional development, institutional and capacity building, local economic development, and municipal management and services.

Flag's volume (€) in citizen participation and information policy



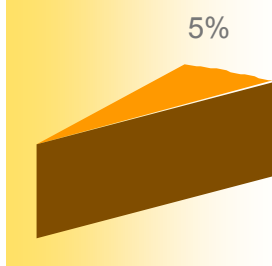
Citizen participation and information policy

Of crucial importance in the development of democracy and decentralisation and in the improvement of local government management and services is the concept of citizen participation. It is after all only with extensive and active participation of individuals in the governance of their community can such a system be regarded as fully democratic. Many of the projects undertaken by Flag involve the citizens as much as possible, and at every level.

This issue was a main focus of two Dutch-financed programmes *SLGCP* and *COMPASS*, and Flag has brought this experience to bear in *Establishment of citizens information centre and one-stop-shop in Dajç commune*, an extension to that project and another project to capitalise on the experience, as well as a cross border project *Promoting active citizenship at the local level in Albania and FYROM*.

In addition, the approach was fundamental in participatory local economic development (LED) strategic planning (*Developing Economies Locally through Techniques and Alliances*; *DELTA* and the current *DELTA follow-up project*, as well as all other LED projects implemented by Flag; cf. LED) and in the environmental project *Rehabilitation of the river embankment at Dajç Bregu i Bunës, Shkodër*.

Flag's volume (€) in decentralisation



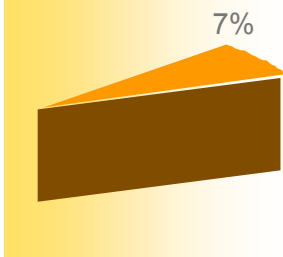
Decentralisation

Flag experts assisted in the compilation of Albania's decentralisation strategy and in its implementation at the local level. At the national level, assistance was provided under *COMPASS* to the *Task Force on Decentralisation*. A Flag expert was assigned as a permanent advisor to the Task Force and provided feedback on the policies that were drafted. Experts were also involved in organising round tables to obtain feedback from local authorities on the draft Albanian Strategy on Decentralisation in early 1999. During implementation of the strategy and compilation of several laws, Flag experts were involved in association building, developing organisational documents, making international contributions, LED, LGA development, and holding conferences, seminars, workshops, round tables and assemblies with local authorities on the proposed draft laws ('Functioning and Organisation of Local Government in Albania'; 'The Prefect'; 'Package on Taxes and Fees'; 'Urban Planning'). The round tables were organised in close cooperation with the Association of Albanian Municipalities (AAM) and recommendations submitted to central government on behalf of the AAM were drafted by Flag's team of experts.

At the local level, strategic plans, local economic development plans, a municipal and business profile, a tourism management plan and urban plans were elaborated by Flag experts assisted by a municipal working group that provided the basic local information and other input serving implementation of decentralisation.

Flag has since undertaken the following decentralisation projects: *Decentralisation and Regional Development in Albania*, *Accompanied self-assessment of Decentralisation and Local Development Programme (DLDP) partner LGUs*, *Local Government Leadership Programme*, *COMPASS extension* and *National Training Strategy for Local Government in Albania*.

Flag's volume (€) in environment

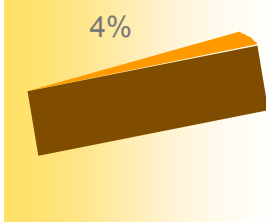


Environment

Flag believes strongly in improving the environment, both at a local, national scale and globally. In accordance with its views on the importance of creating and maintaining a healthy environment for Albania's citizens, Flag has formed a group of environment experts.

Flag is currently implementing with the local government unit the project *Rehabilitation of the river embankment at Dajç Bregu i Bunës, Shkodër*. Also it is providing expertise in the project *Strengthening Albanian Civil Society Organisation for an improved Environment* funded by Millieukontakt that aims to Prepare for Waste Working Group a Position paper to be communicated in media, to government and international institutions. Two other environmental projects that have been implemented with Flag support include *Feasibility Study: Management of Solid Waste in South-east Albania* and *Providing support to the Institute of Environment*. In addition, a waste management regulation template has been developed and been adapted up to now in at least ten LGUs.

Flag's volume (€) in EU accession and regional development

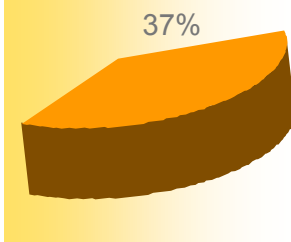


EU accession and regional development

Albania's preparation for European Union accession is closely tied to establishment of a novel institutional framework for implementing Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) assistance. Development of institutional capacity is crucial in this process as part of which the country's qarks (counties) will have to jointly plan and implement priorities. A number of needs for progress include adoption of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) into the budgetary process, strengthened democracy, governance and administrative capacity. Meanwhile, appropriate statistical (NUTS) division of the country is required.

As part of this movement towards EU accession, Flag has undertaken the following projects: facilitating the *Dibër Development Day Conference*, undertaking *Mid-term review of Support programme for Strengthening Local Governance in Dibër Qark*, providing *Technical assistance to support development of joint ADC/SDC regional development programme in northern Albania*, *Developing a SWOT analysis for Shkodra Qark*, undertaking *Donor Research in Albania* and *Finalising project proposal 'Support programme for strengthening local governance in Dibër Qark, Albania'*.

Flag's volume (€) in institutional and capacity building



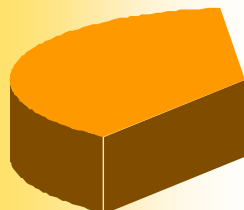
Institutional and capacity building

Just as important as involving citizens in decision making is providing them with institutions that can perform their functions, represent them at various levels and monitor their social and biological environment. Since it was set up in 2003, Flag has devoted much of its time to strengthening institutions in Albania, through providing *Support to the Albanian Association of Communes to broaden their membership base through institutional strengthening*, *Providing Support to the Albanian Association of Communes to broaden their membership base (Inception Period)*, *Developing the Albanian Association of Communes (DAAC)*, assisting *Cooperation towards a modern LGA* and *Provision of expertise in training on Role of Local Government Associations*. Recently Flag undertook capacity development needs assessment of Albania's consumer protection associations as part of the project *Support capacity development needs for Economic Governance Programme*.

Meanwhile, Flag experts was involved in the preparations for setting up a Solid Waste Management Association in the Korça Region and in delivering training or coaching countrywide to most Albanian municipalities and communes. During the COMPASS programme, Flag's core executive staff arranged delivery of 119 end-user courses throughout Albania, training 2,581 local government officials and some civil society representatives, making best use of the network of experts. Since then, Flag has coached eight municipalities and seven communes in local economic development and five municipalities and three communes in improving their standards of governance using Common Assessment Framework .

Flag's volume (€) in local economic development

38%



Local economic development

At the core of improving the living standards of the inhabitants of a village, town or city lies the direction taken by economic development. A stagnant or regressive economy is reflected in a poor quality of life. Flag has been very active in seeking ways to stimulate economic development at the local level in Albania through assisting and facilitating community-wide strategic plans for LED.

The *DELTA* (Developing Economies Locally through Techniques and Alliances) and *DELTA follow-up* projects have seen the elaboration, assessment and review of separate strategic plans for the local economic development of five municipalities in Albania (Berat, Durrës, Korça, Lezha and Shkodra). A business profile was also developed with and for one of these cities (Korça). The plans are published as books in Albanian and in English, while the business profile is a bilingual brochure, all of which are downloadable from the worldwide web (www.flag-al.org and lqi.osi.hu/documents.php?m_id=58). In addition, a documentary film on *DELTA* was made, copies of which are available from Flag (www.flag-al.org) or LGI, Hungary (lqi.osi.hu). An additional project undertaken by Flag was the development of a website to document and promote the methodology and techniques used during the implementation of *DELTA* in Albania.

The experience gained from *DELTA* was extended into assisting LED in other parts of Albania with the projects *Partnership with Administration for Effective Governance, Rubik Municipality, Integrated Informatics System for Management of the Activities of the LED Department, Korça Municipality and Develop Strategic Plans for three communes in Dibër Qark*. During 2008, the Foundation also undertook a SWOT analysis for Shkodra Qark, and its staff hosted a *study tour* to Albania undertaken by a group of LED stakeholders from Moldova.

Currently, Flag is providing international expertise in providing *Support to local government Kosovo* to enable LGUs in the new state develop strategic plans for LED.

Flag's volume (€) in municipal management and services

2%



Municipal management and services

Over the last few years, Flag staff have been responsible for publishing many manuals and guides concerning municipal management and services. The Foundation is currently implementing the projects *Supporting Inter Local Cooperation, Action Plan, Research Plan and outline Toolkit for IMC in Albania* and *Helping develop tools to encourage Inter-Municipal Cooperation bodies*. Flag was involved directly in improving such services through implementation of the project *Modernisation of Municipal Services in Selected Partner Towns*, in the towns and cities Berat, Elbasan, Kavaja, Korça, Kuçova, Lushnja, Maminas, Pogradec and Shkodra, and provided expertise in the project *Good Governance / Institution Building – Support for Municipal Administration in Kosovo (inception period)*.

The manuals and guides that Flag staff have published include the following:

Guide to Establishing a Local Government Association

Management of Local Taxes and Fees

Model Internal Regulation for Municipalities

Model of a Municipal Statute

Modern Human Resource Management

Guide on Issuing Building Permits

Study Cases – Juridical Disputes

Municipal Regulation on Waste Management (template)

Municipal Urban Planning

Organisation and Structure of Local Government in Albania

Public Information and Communications Office

Model Fiscal Package

Flag experts have prepared and delivered training and coaching on the following curricula:

Citizen's information centres

Citizens' commissions, partnerships with city council

City council internal relations

City council role and responsibilities

City council vision and mission

Financial management

Human resource management

Institutional capacity building

Land use and urban planning

Leadership styles, characteristics

Local economic development

Local government budgeting

Local taxation

Service delivery standards

Standards of governance

Strategic planning

TRAINING CURRICULA FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PROGRAME TRAJNIMI PER QEVERINE VENDORE



Flag's Services

Flag offers a range of services based upon its wide ranging and in-depth expertise. It provides services to individual LGUs, LGU networks and LGAs (Local Government Associations), including advice on policy and best practices.

Individual LGUs

For individual LGUs, Flag assists in the implementation of their own functions as part of the national decentralisation strategy, particularly in relation to infrastructure and public services, local economic development and public administration.

Infrastructure and public services

Flag was part of a team that undertook a *Feasibility Study: Management of Solid Waste in South-east Albania*, and has reviewed the waste management needs of 33 LGUs in Albania, serving 18 per cent of the municipalities, seven per cent of the communes and ten per cent of the Albanian population. It has developed a regulation on urban waste management, as well as a manual on setting up a compost facility, both of which will shortly be available from the on-line library.

Local economic development

Prior to 2007, Flag had assisted development of LED plans in 14 LGUs, covering twelve per cent of Albania's municipalities, two per cent of its communes and 20 per cent of the entire population. Within the *DELTA* project alone it accessed 15 per cent of the population, while it has also implemented the PAQE (peace) project with Rubik Municipality. Since then, the number of LGUs has increased to include another two municipalities, and seven more communes, in addition to those assisted during the activities of the DAAC project. The Foundation also specialises in developing community and business profiles, as well as training curricula concerning economic development. The Foundation has published a large amount of material, which is available from its on-line library.

Public administration

Flag has advised the administration of five LGUs on local tax management, covering two per cent of municipalities in Albania and seven per cent of the population, and created a manual on management of local taxes and fees available from its on-line library. It has also helped set up a civil registry for one LGU.

LGU networks

Inter-municipal cooperation

Flag has been involved in stimulating inter-municipal cooperation at two levels. At the local level it implemented with IU-IGIP the project *Feasibility Study: Management of Solid Waste in South-East Albania*. A component of this project involved bringing municipalities together to set up for the first time in Albania an Inter-municipal cooperation entity. This body was streamlined in terms of objectives, scope of work and legal basis. At the international level, Flag was responsible for the financial arrangements between the Municipalities of Obdam, Netherlands, and Rrëshen in their efforts to develop a twinning relationship. Very recently, Flag has been acting as consultant for LGI to develop a prescriptive policy paper and advocacy plan for Inter-Municipal Cooperation.



DELTA forum

During *DELTA*, a forum of Mayors was set up to facilitate sharing of experiences during local economic development strategic planning among five cities in Albania. The forum is continuing during the implementation of the *DELTA* follow-up project.

Local Government Associations

Flag has assisted two Albanian LGAs—Albanian Association of Communes (AAC) and Albanian Association of Municipalities (AAM)—and the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania (TALGA) on a number of issues. For AAC, Flag helped and continues to help set up procedures for endorsement of democratic values, while at the same time helping with its organisational, institutional and capacity building. For AAM, Flag has provided training on local tax management. Flag has advised on policy issues to TALGA, and served on the Best Practice Commission of the AAM. Flag provided its expertise in developing a training programme for LGAs, and has provided input into development of a prescriptive policy paper and advocacy plan for Inter-Municipal Cooperation.

Flag is affiliated with VNG-International (VNG-I) and its strategic partners are:

Albanian Association of Municipalities (AAM)

Albanian Association of Communes (AAC)

VNG-I Group members

Albanian LGUs

Flag has acted as local implementer of projects for :

Netherlands government,

VNG-I,

Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)

World Bank Institute

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Open Society Institute

Council of Europe.



Stimulate and support achievement of most advanced standards in democratic and decentralised governance

The MISSION...



Areas of expertise

Institutional and capacity building
 Project cycle management
 Training development and delivery
 Improvement of public service delivery

Flag's Summary of projects

Project	Aims Results	Donor and volume	Partners	Period mm-yy/mm-yy
Currently being implemented				
Capitalize on One-Stop-Shop experiences in Albania and dldp model, and support Dajç Commune establish OSSH monitoring system	Monitor status and performance of OSSH in Dajç, develop OSSH manual and information and communications package, and provide input into Dldp workshop on presenting such instruments at regional level	Swiss Cooperation Office Albania € 16,620	Commune of Dajç Bregu i Bunës, Shkodra; Swiss Intercooperation	07-10/01-11
Rehabilitation of the river embankment at Dajç Bregu i Bunës, Shkodër	Environmental awareness raised, damaging vegetation and waste removed, community involved in rehabilitation and maintenance, 3 km segment of dike repaired and resurfaced, path rehabilitated, 2 recreational (picnic) areas installed together with waste bins	Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands (through Regional Environmental Centre, REC) 4,121,000 leke (€ 30,000)	Commune of Dajç Bregu i Bunës, Shkodra	04-10/11-10
Support Inter Local Cooperation, Action Plan, Research Plan and outline Toolkit for IMC in Albania	As part of joint Programme <i>Reinforcing Local and Regional Government Structures in Albania</i> between CoE and Swiss Cooperation Office Flag is assisting with expertise all programme activities within IMC component	CoE € 4,100	CoE, AAC, AAM, Ministry of Interior	01-10/03-10, 08-10
Support to local government Kosovo	Municipal development planning	VNG-I € 6,000	VNG-I, Epitsa, EC	05-09/11-10
DELTA follow-up	Encourage and promote economic growth, while extending capacities in city governments and communities to develop, implement, assess and review SPLED and assess LED, while enabling evidence-based policy making for economic growth and development	LGI 213,772 USD	Municipalities of Berat, Durrës, Kavaja, Korça, Lezha, Shkodra	09-08/08-10, extended into 2011
Support capacity development needs for Economic Governance Programme	Undertake capacity development needs assessment of Albanian consumer protection associations	UNDP 320,000 leke (€ 2,320)	UNDP	07-10/08-10
Establishment of citizens information centre and one-stop-shop in Dajç commune project extension	Improve supply of information and communication between commune and citizens, improving transparency, efficiency and effectiveness; introduce new management and ensure quality service delivery	Swiss Cooperation Office Albania € 7,000	Commune of Dajç Bregu i Bunës, Shkodra, Swiss Intercooperation	09-09/04-10
Dibër Development Day Conference	Assist content, design and moderation of Dibër Development Day conference and fair to focus attention on development of Dibër Region, trust fund and capacity building, contributing to national dialogue on decentralisation and regional development	Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands € 11,525 Flag € 1,948	SNV	01-10/03-10

Project	Aims Results	Donor and volume	Partners	Period mm-yy/mm-yy
Completed in 2009				
Developing the Albanian Association of Communes (DAAC)	Enable AAC to play a role in reform of Albania's public administration , especially in strengthening its communes	Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) € 1,250,000*	SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions), VNG-I, AAC	09-05/12-08, extended to 12-09
Mid-term review of Support programme for Strengthening Local Governance in Dibër Qark	Reviewed programme efficiency and effectiveness, identified performance levels, achievements and lessons learned, and ascertained results for use in determining optimal strategies for programme continuation. Drafted recommendations for sustaining achievements of programme in framework of regional development and decentralisation	Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands € 5,331	Sef Slootweg	09-09/10-09
Help develop tools to encourage Inter-Municipal Cooperation bodies	This is a compilation of four different assignments related to development of Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) for countries in CEE and Caucuses and whose aims are to: 1) deliver training in IMC for professionals, trainers and LG representatives 2) help finalise and test training curricula on IMC toolkit 3) collect good practices on IMC in Albania 4) develop a prescriptive policy paper and advocacy plan for Albania	CoE, LGI, UNDP 11,223 USD	CoE, LGI, UNDP Bratislava Regional Center	10-08/10-09
				<p style="text-align: right;">Contact us at:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rr. 'Brigada VIII,'P. 6/2, K IV Tirana, ALBANIA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Phone / Fax: 355-42 270242 / 39611 E-mail: flag@flag-al.org www.flag-al.org</p>
Technical assistance to support development of joint ADC/SDC regional development programme in northern Albania	Provide overview on regional development and decentralisation strategies and challenges in N. Albania, identify challenges and achievements for EU integration and identify potential and elements for joint cooperation based upon participatory approaches and local ownership	Austrian Development Agency € 13,000	Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)	05-09/07-09
Strengthening Albanian Civil Society Organisation for an improved Environment	Prepare for Waste Working Group a position paper that will be communicated in media, to government and international institutions	Millieukontakt € 350	Millieukontakt	09-08/07-09
Establishment of citizens information centre and one-stop-shop in Dajç commune	Improve supply of information and communication between commune and citizens, improving transparency, efficiency and effectiveness; introduce new management and ensure quality service delivery	Swiss Cooperation Office Albania € 52,241	Commune of Dajç Bregu i Bunës, Shkodra, Swiss Intercooperation	04-08/02-09