



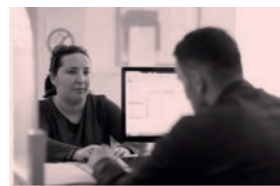
Adrian Maître
Swiss Ambassador in Albania

Switzerland is engaged in supporting decentralization and local governance in Albania since more than 20 years. Decentralization is a state reform which aims to improve effectiveness of public administration and efficiency of delivering services to the citizens. Local governments are also closer to the population and in this sense, able to respond to their priorities and concerns considering the local realities. Decentralization wouldn't be complete without local governance, this means encouraging municipalities to be accountable toward citizens and transparent in the management of their financial resources, ensuring that no one is left behind. A proper decentralization goes together with a stronger democratisation.

Albania engaged in this ambitious agenda since 2000, including a far reaching territorial administrative reform. Switzerland has been supporting the country in this long way through a multi-tier approach: strengthening capacities of municipal governments and councils for assuming their roles and responsibilities but also contributing to the reforms at national level and coordinating its work with other development partners. I take the opportunity to thank in particular our international partners CoE, UNDP, USAID, our implementing partner Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and local organisations. We are glad to present you today some of the most important results Albania has achieved with the Swiss long term support.

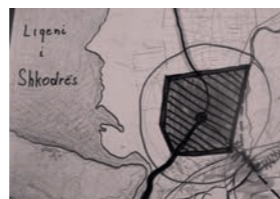
Decentralization and democratization are living processes. Albania made important steps in this direction, steps that are at the same time relevant for its European integration. Even if the road is still long, let's continue to advance on it together, side by side, citizens, private sector, authorities and development partners!

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



Administrative services through One Stop Shops

Five municipalities in Northern Albania, including Shkodër, Lezhë, Vau i Dejës, Mat and Klos, reengineered the practice of managing and delivering administrative services to its urban and rural core, by digitalising 109 services and making them available through the One Stop Shops.



Public financial management

A shift was induced in the institutional mindset in public financial management as municipalities were supported with the processes of strategic planning and assisted with knowhow and capacity development to shift from poor short term budgeting and planning practices to medium-term budget programs and strategic development plans.



Human resource management

Local governments were supported with modern human resource management (HRM) techniques and mechanisms such as www.administrata.al, a platform that introduces a new culture of communication through Information and Communication Technology and transparent and simplified recruitment management and vacancy planning processes.

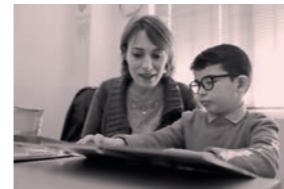


Women in Politics Network

The Women in Politics Network was successful in bringing together Women Councillors and establishing 33 local alliances country-wide from across the political spectrum, in advocating on pressing local issues, in various municipalities such as Tiranë, Lezhë, Vlorë, Fier, Mat, Korçë, Shkodër, Klos, Durrës, Elbasan, Cërrik, Lushnje, Malësi e Madhe, Kukës, Has and Tropojë.

“SWITZERLAND PROMOTES A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO DECENTRALIZATION TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL AS WELL AS THE LIFE OF CITIZENS THROUGH A BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY”

Social care services



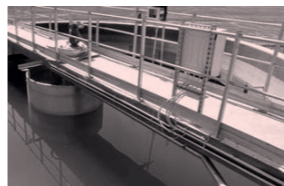
Municipalities were, for the first time, enabled to start offering social care services as foreseen by law, beyond the usual cash-pay-out-only practice. Social Care Plans were developed through a participatory approach in 16 municipalities, of which 8 approved by the Municipal Councils and currently under implementation.

Solid waste management



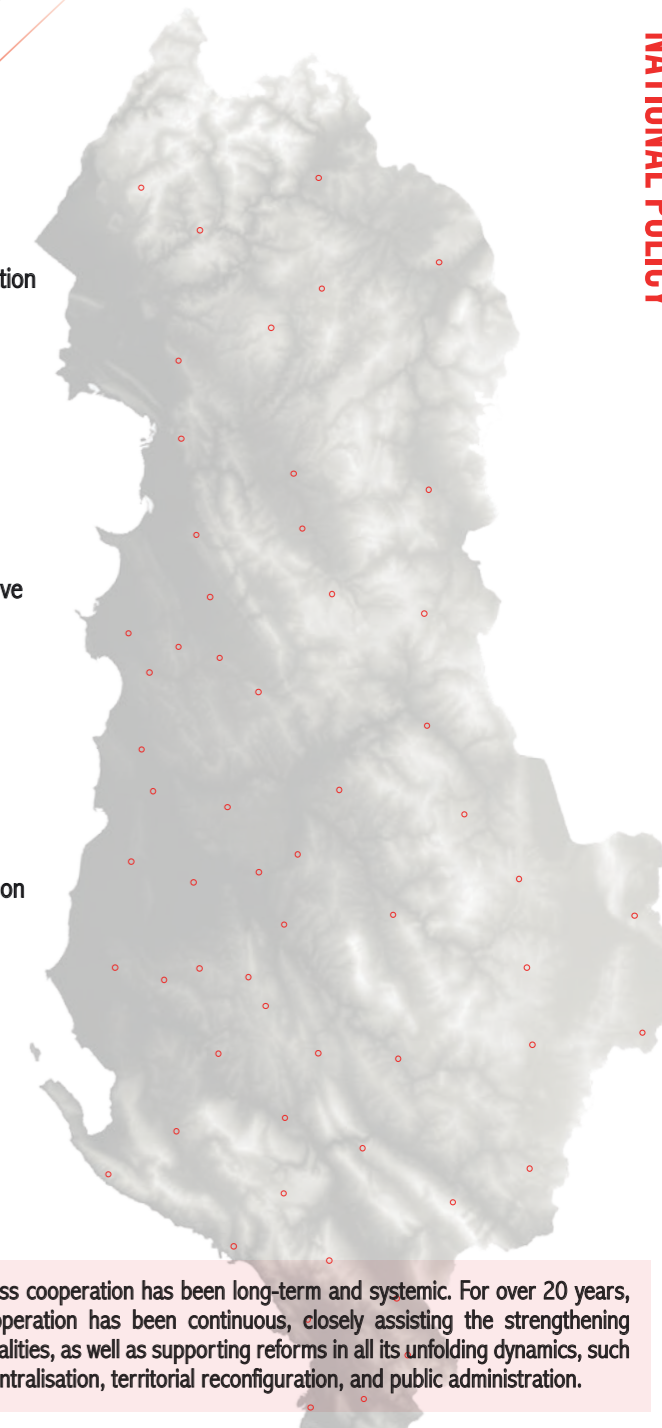
From a fragmented, ad hoc approach to solid waste service delivery, all supported municipalities reengineered the way they plan, budget, deliver and monitor this service. 18 of them developed and implemented Local Integrated Waste Management Plans, and 7 out of 18 municipalities, were enabled to offer this service for the first time.

Water supply and sewage



There has been a paradigm shift in the way a municipality perceives and deals with the water utility company: from costs and benefits being internalised to water utilities operating as self-sustainable companies. The Water Utility of Lezha is a good example, managing to provide uninterrupted 24 hour water supply to over 55,000 citizens.

- Decentralisation Reform
- Territorial Administrative Reform
- Public Administration Reform
- Services



NATIONAL POLICY

The Swiss cooperation has been long-term and systemic. For over 20 years, the cooperation has been continuous, closely assisting the strengthening municipalities, as well as supporting reforms in all its unfolding dynamics, such as decentralisation, territorial reconfiguration, and public administration.

CITIZENS

WOMEN IN POLITICS

The Women in Politics Network made public resources and politics on a local level gender sensitive, supporting significant increase of women engaged in politics and improved policymaking.



50 % quota for women

35% of municipal councillors are women, an increase from 12% prior to the reform. Efforts to meet the 2015 Electoral Code provisions of 50% quota for women.

WATER SUPPLY

A local community of app. 55,000 citizens in the city of Lezha gained access to safe, reliable, quality and affordable water and sewerage services during 24 hours/day, compared to an average of 12 hrs/day in 2010.



50 %

Consumer satisfaction was increased by at least 50% as complaints were reduced from approx. 2000 per year to approximately 200 per year.

SOCIAL CARE

People with disabilities and Roma are informed on their rights and entitlements to social services, and are encouraged to participate in public consultation mechanisms and advocacy.



300

school children from at least 190 families from the Roma community, were supported to return to school and pursue their education.

WASTE MANAGED

Citizens in 7 municipalities, especially those living in rural remote areas of Shkodër and Dibër municipalities, away from the urban centre of the municipality, were for the first time provided with the service of solid waste management, estimated at app. 172,000 persons.



57%

of the territory is covered now with service, compared with only 24% of the territory in 2008.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The local business community operating in the tourism sector in the *qark* of Gjirokastrë, were supported in improving coordination and dialogue within the business community itself and with the public authorities.



The establishment of the One Stop Shops proved an instrumental step in achieving important tangible results on a citizen level. The citizens, of whom a good part, living in the highly fragmented, remote and mountainous areas of five northern Albania municipalities, gained (for the first time) access to a varied range of at least 109 municipal services.



From the outset, the Swiss support has adopted a multilayer - multi actor perspective on several levels factoring women's role in politics, by creating enabling mechanisms and instruments such as the Women in Politics Network, that lead to increased gender considerations and engagement of women in policy making in local level.




The mothers and families of at least 166 children with special needs, were for the first time offered specialised support.

www.administrata.al

While facilitating the work of the local level institutions, the new platform **administrata.al** enables the Commissioner for the Oversight of Civil Service to have timely access and monitor Human Resource Management practices, and the Department of Public Administration is enabled to prepare accurate and timely reports on public administration reform as part of EU progress report for Albania.

2020 marks five decades of diplomatic relations between Albania and Switzerland, and two decades of Swiss support to strengthen local democracy in Albania, and further the process of decentralising power from the central government to the local one, ultimately contributing to Albania's preparedness for the EU integration process.

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



The support to public finance management dates back to 2006 and was focused in Northern Albania. With the Swiss support, 29 municipalities were supported in the elaboration of strategic and financial planning documents.



The Law no. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services in the Republic of Albania" created the possibility for a system of integrated services for vulnerable families to be set up, as well as the Social Fund as a separate budget line to finance such services.

If you would like to read more about the Swiss support over the past 20 years, you can view and download the full report by scanning the QR code or visit: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/albania/en/home/international-cooperation/publications-multimedia.html>
www.eda.admin.ch/albania www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyAlbania



2000

The start of the decentralization process, as Albania developed a local government system based on the European Charter of Local Self Government, ratified in 1998.



2007

The focused support on solid waste management dates back to 2007 having initially started in the rural, under-developed remote area of Fushë-Arrëz, to be followed by Dajç, Velipojë and Guri i Zi. The support tackled the problem of poor service delivery, both in terms of capacities to plan and manage the service and infrastructure.

Following several years of work, some municipalities, as is the case of Shkodër, have managed to cover the service cost almost entirely through the tariff (95%-100%), as opposed to the initial baseline (65%).

2010

The first lot of One Stop Shop desks were initially established in the local government units of Shkodër, Lezhë, Dajç, Kallmet, Velipojë and Shëngjin, between 2006 and 2013. The problem at the core of this support concerned limited coverage of municipal service delivery, limited access to services, high response time, poor transparency in service provision management, etc. In the process, basic municipal functions were identified and subsequently converted into services.

2014

The Territorial Administrative Reform initiated by the Government of Albania in 2014 was an important milestone for deepening and consolidating the decentralization process. As the reform entailed political decision making for both territorial amalgamation as well as functional and fiscal decentralization, for Swiss it was important to both provide timely support as well as allow for multi-stakeholder informed policy making.



Support to the Territorial Administrative Reform

The Government of Albania, through joint efforts by the US and Switzerland, committed to further decentralization through the "Cross-cutting Strategy on Decentralisation and Local Governance 2015-2020" and related legislative framework concerning the role, functions and organisation of the local self-government, as well as important aspects on public finances.

2016

The Network recommendations for the new legal framework on local self-government and local finances, imposed the setup of strategic gender quota issues: 30% of municipality and community structures are women; 30% of programme management teams should be women; the Mid-Term Budget Planning should include the objective of gender balance.



In the case of the Water Utility, the success of the Lezhë Water Utility Enterprise, inspired the government of Albania to launch a far-reaching water sector reform that includes a scheme to award performance improvements of water utilities with financing of investment measures from Albanian state budget across the country. This reform was launched at the end of 2017 and produced significant results from the outset.

2020



Local businesses operating in the field of tourism increased exposure to tourism demand and improved promotion through the online platform of www.visit-gjirokastra.com.

 50 years of diplomatic relations
Switzerland - Albania
1970 - 2020