



POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS  
FOR THE  
UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND

UDF-17-774ALB – Tracking Campaign Promises in Albania

17 January 2023

## Executive Summary

The project was a laudable effort to support local organizations in Albania in promoting accountability of elected officials and enhancing citizens' participation in monitoring public budgets' expenses. As such, the project's relevance was highly tangible. To a good extent, the project succeeded in putting forward innovative tools to assess the extent to which elected officials deliver on their

achievements of the Outcomes. Reporting inaccuracies (detailing categories of participants in the activities and their total number, gender and minorities- oriented reporting , gaps in reporting the levels of achievements of some activities, and poor data recording systems) have been overlooked.

A key element to be considered for the limited impact is also the low level of willingness and commitment of citizens and the “civic apathy” to engage in such activities , which cast shadow on the extent to which the project’s achievements shall be effectively used by the citizens.

In addition to the pandemic restrictions, a nother externality was the unusual electoral campaign in June 2019. The opposition did not take part and there was only one candidate from the majority hence there was no real electoral campaign with ~~the~~ t-oni(gn)]TJ 3.40 s0 0.2 (j)-.0ts

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## I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This report is the evaluation of the project "Tracking Campaign Promises i

publish simplified versions of their budgets), and, as in the case of the Truth-o-

## II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY

### (i) Development context

The project “Tracking Campaign Promises in Albania” addresses the lack of effective accountability of public officials at the local and national levels over campaign promises. Officials, especially at the local level, lack the necessary transparency when it comes to the use of the municipal budget and the necessity of efficiency of investments.

International reports clearly stated the low performance of Albanian elected officials. The World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index 2017 – 2018 ranks Albania in the 68th position (out of 122 countries), with an unchanged Rule of Law Index compared to 2016– 2017.

The “Transparency Index 2018” (Transparency International) also ranks Albania 91st out of 110.



before and after the local elections of June 30, 2019. The approach foresaw increasing civic engagement in local governance by monitoring of local and national budget allocations to increase transparency, accountability and efficiency.

III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology is based on the UNDEF Evaluation Manual (2022) and the Evaluator's Launch Note (LN). The project's documents were shared with the Evaluator in September 2022. After the desk review of documentation (Annex

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IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) Relevance

Evaluation Question	Grading	Qualitative	Rationale
To what extent was the project suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	B	Good	Overall satisfactory, but there was room for improvements.

The project aimed at addressing the alarming distance between the constituents and the Members of Parliament (MPs), as per MP(h)-4.9.3 (e)0.7 (b)-1tu ,

This is due to several reasons, mainly linked to the cooperation with several international donor-funded projects and the pressure from various groups, in addition - |

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people from each municipality and media will consult the website” is not relevant to illustrate steps of the citizens to monitor the municipalities.

The ToC is accurate as concerns the 1<sup>st</sup> pillar on creating tools to track campaign promises, an issue that is intrinsically linked to the core concept of democracy-delegating power to officials so that the latter can deliver on their electoral programme. The proposed mechanism of change - the “Truth -o-Meter” - besides being very relevant is also an innovative tool as there are no indications that such tool (or a similar one) has been previously developed in Albania. The added value of this tool is not only the tracking of electoral promises but also the reports with findings which were foreseen to be published online (on a dedicated webpage), on the websites of the implementing partners, and on various social media accounts.

The promotion of this tool and of the relevant findings is as crucial as the findings per se. From this perspective, the promotional activities envisaged for the Truth-o-Meter were relatively basic and did not incorporate major public events with high level media coverage

- h 0 where the findings would be most effective



One activity was partially completed, and it was linked to developing partnerships with local media and 20 local reporters during the 2019 electoral campaign. According to the implementing partner, the reason was the unusual electoral campaign where the opposition did not participate, and no concrete promises being made. The team decided that this activity was obsolete, and funds were diverted to another activity under Outcome 2.

While it is true that this externality (the 2019 electoral campaign with a single candidate and absence of electoral promises) did occur, cancelling this activity and diverting resources to the 2nd Outcome was a missed opportunity to make the local media aware of the Truth-o-Meter and to increase the likelihood that this tool was used by the local communities.

Otherwise, the project failed to fully promote and communicate its produced outputs

adapt to the COVID-19 restrictions without losing focus from the project's objectives. The no-cost time extensions enabled the team to complete most of the activities.

The project's accountability was based on narrative and financial reports prepared by RDA Korcë, and external ones (Milestone Verification Reports (MVRs) and Audit Reports) prepared by third parties.

Internally, the two mid-term and final narrative reports depict a relatively clear picture of the implementation, challenges encountered, and the progress achieved. Despite the delays caused by the pandemic and the two no-cost extensions, the activities were implemented within the foreseen budget. In some cases, the project generated minor savings, and all activities were implemented by the existing staff without hiring additional personnel.

However, some deficiencies in the quality of reporting were noted. Although the reports indicate the percentage of women's participation in the activities, there is no mentioning of other categories such as youth, minorities, representatives from CSOs, nor is there a final classification of all participants according to the categories of target groups (communities, local government, CSOs, and media) for each municipality. Furthermore, the attendance sheets for the debates' groups and the focus groups discussions were kept in scanned PDF format which inhibits an efficient analysis of the categories of participants by external parties, including but not limited to the Evaluator.

Some inaccuracy issues in reporting the targets are also noted, as in the case of Output 1.3.1 on tracking electoral promises of 61 Mayors. Although this output is marked as "Achieved", the related narrative text explains that the activity was not fully implemented.

Externally, the Audit Report and the two MVRs were additional layers of oversight which provided for a satisfactory level of accountability. Findings from the Audit Report, conducted by an independent member firm of Moore Stephens International Limited, indicate that funds were used in accordance with UNDEF guidelines. On the other side, the two MVRs provide useful insights on particular activities under observation.

(v) Impact

Evaluation Question	Grading	Qualitative	Rationale
To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting CSO's role in contributing to democratization ?	C	Issues	There were issues which affected the impact.

Data from the KIIs, the FNR, and insights from the online survey's respondents indicate that



Satisfactory levels of impact are noted as concerns indicators 1.A and 1. B on increased measurability of electoral promises and on comparative data gathered and measured. All measurable promises of the 201 elected officials were gathered, compared, and referred to the Truth-o-Meter. By the end of the project, 1578 electoral promises had been identified (1424 promises were marked as accomplished whereas 154 electoral promises as not accomplished).

While the levels of accomplishment are important per se, the real impact achievements are a) the availability of this innovative instrument which can be accessed by all citizens, and b) a dataset of electoral campaigns which for the first time is available in the country. Insights from the field phase indicate that data o t

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be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?			for improvements.
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The latest figures from the portal/app indicate that this tool is still being accessed by the citizens even after the project ended. For example, during the period June-September 2022, the average number of single individuals visiting the portal and app was 1660. Furthermore, the RDA Korce plans to continue mai

Compared to other major donors, UNDEF has a limited portfolio of projects funded in Albania such as the project subject of this evaluation and few others linked to combatting hate speech in Albania, or the “Media, Transparency and Accountability in Albania” implemented in 2011.

Despite this limited presence, two are the main added values of UNDEF for this project compared to some approaches adapted by other donors:

1. Supporting two local organisations.

Following the re-granting approach adopted by several foreign donors over the past few years, more funds became available to local CSOs since 2017 through the deployment of sub-granting schemes implemented by local intermediary organizations. However, CSOs outside of Tirana continue to have limited absorption capacity and difficulties in accessing small-mid size grants. Despite the donors’ efforts, the “big” and well-established Tirana-based CSOs tend to be a favourite choice of the donors, especially for grants over 100.000 USD or Euro. By supporting two local CSOs through a mid-size grant of \$130,000, UNDEF provided an opportunity to local actors to engage in actions which helped to highlight accountability issues.

2. Supporting innovative approaches and tools.

As mentioned in previous sections, the Truth-o-Meter is an innovative tool to track and measure electoral promises which has not been previously applied in Albania by CSOs (or by other organisations). From this perspective, UNDEF has supported an interesting (although not fully explored) mechanism of accountability in Albania which has not been funded by other donors. Lack of coordination and sharing of information with other UN agencies in Albania somewhat shadows the above-mentioned added values.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONSd [(ONC)8.6 (L)r.6 (L)r591Ay/P /P <</M1ioven-veT A

conferences and/or round tables with all local level prior to suggesting to scaling concerned MPs, CSOs, communities, and media to discuss findings and generate public debates which would have had a substantialp substantial impact on the MPs' accountability.



## VI. LESSONS LEARNED

1. One of the main problems of this project was that its design robustness could have been reinfo

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix and Questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Limitations / Risks
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Relevance

To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?

Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? How did this project fit with the overall strategy and activities of the Implementi...



Coherence

How well did the project “fit”; i.e. to what extent was the project

Effectiveness

To what extent



Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<p><i>f</i> To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address?</p> <p><i>f</i> Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative?</p> <p><i>f</i> To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization?</p> <p><i>f</i> Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?</p>	<p>I.16 Assessment of the level of achievement of key impact indicators.</p> <p>I.17 Assessment and results of the quantitative and qualitative data.</p> <p>I.28 Identification of collateral effects (positive and/or negative ones).</p>	<p>Project document.</p> <p>Progress and Final Narrative Reports, M&amp;E data.</p> <p>Insights from implementing partners, and beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>Online survey</p>	<p>Limited number of respondents to the online survey.</p> <p>Local officials and journalists are not available to meet with the Evaluation Consultant.</p>
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<p><i>f</i> To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?</p> <p><i>f</i> Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?</p>	<p>I.19 Identification of indications of institutional, sustainability of results, and commitments achieved (formal and informal agreements, exit strategies, etc.)</p> <p>I.20 Stakeholder perception of the sustainability of results.</p> <p>I.21 Assessment on how contextual challenges might shape the sustainability of results.</p>	<p>Project document.</p> <p>Progress and Final Narrative Reports, M&amp;E data.</p> <p>Insights from</p>		

UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<p><i>f</i> What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc).</p> <p><i>f</i> Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?</p>	<p>I.22 Expert assessment and analysis of UNDEF's position in the donors' landscape in Albania and overview of modalities of funding mechanisms of different donors.</p> <p>I.23 Analysis of differences and similarities.</p>	Insights from implementing partners, and beneficiaries.	Desk review KIs	None
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Annex 2: Data Collection Questions (

still is) your experience with this app/website? (both for local media/CSOs and for local officials)

Did your organization/local media refer to it during the last 1.5 years? Kindly explain (in the case of local CSOs/media/journalists)

Did this Truth o Meter receive any kind of attention/reaction from the Mayor or municipal officials?

officials accountable, and how? (both for local media/CSOs and for local officials)		
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The other main outputs of the project was the Citizens Budget for your Municipality, how was (or still is) your experience with this instrument? (both for local media/CSOs and for local officials)

Did your organization/local media refer to it during the last 1.5 y



<p>municipality? (both for local media/CSOs and for local officials)</p>		
<p>Do you think this instrument had any positive and/or negative effect? If so, what is that? And what could have been done better or more from the RDA's side? (both for local media/CSOs and for local officials)</p> <p>What could have been done better or more from the local administration and local actors? (both for local media/CSOs and for local officials)</p> <p>As the new round of local elections is approaching, do you think the Citizens Budget can play any role in holding local officials accountable, and how? (both for local media/CSOs and for local officials)</p>		
<p>Any other suggestions? Comments?</p>		



#### Annex 4: Schedule of Interviews

30 September 2022
Head of RDA Korçë (Implementing Agency)
Head of Economic Intelligence Center, Korçë (Implementing Partner)
Korçë Municipality
3 October 2022
Bilisht Municipality
Maliq Municipality
3, 4, 5 October 2022
Rrogozhinë Municipality
Fier Municipality
Peqin Municipality
Has Municipality
Tirana Municipality
6, 7 October 2022
Project coordinator covering Berat Municipality
UN Resident Coordinator Office, Albania
UN Women, Albania Office
11, 12 October 2022
Project coordinator covering Shkodër and Lezhë Municipalities
14 October 2022
Rrogozhinë Municipality
17 October 2022

