

ACTION PLAN FOR THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGY

**PHASE 1: PILOTING THE STRATEGY
(2008-2009)**

VERSION 1

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Note: This document should be read in conjunction with the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy¹.

¹ <http://www.undp.org.al/elib.php?elib.844>

1 Introduction

1.1 The scope of the Action Plan

1 The Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy defines the objectives and priorities to be achieved in the three key areas – programmes and legal and institutional frameworks - in order to achieve a more balanced development of the country and to reduce socio-economic disparities in Albania.

2 This Action Plan is primarily a task-oriented document which will comprise two phases:

- Phase 1 (2008-2009): outlines the steps needed to be taken in order to pilot the RDCS, establish the legislative and institutional framework, and to prepare Phase 2 of the Action Plan.
- Phase 2 (2010-2011): will address the first two years of full implementation of the approved RDCS.

3 Each phase of the action plan will provide a checklist of necessary tasks to be performed.

1.2 General objectives of the Action Plan – Phase 1 (2008-2009)

4 By the end of 2009 the following results will be achieved by this Action Plan:

- The two major programmes (National Programme for the Development of Counties and the Disadvantaged Areas Development Programme) will have been piloted in a limited number of counties.
- The draft Law on Regional Development will have been prepared, been the subject of extensive consultation and have been submitted to legislators.
- Secondary legislation will have been prepared and be ready for further action when the Law on Regional Development has been passed.
- The Department for Integrated Regional Development will have been established within the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy and will be capable of managing and coordinating the implementation of RDCS.

1.3 Reporting on the Action Plan 2008-2009

5 The Action Plan – Phase 1 (2008-2009) focuses on the actions and tasks that are in domain of the METE. For this reason its implementation will be managed by the METE itself, which will summarize the results achieved in Action Plan six-monthly progress reports. These reports will be circulated regularly to the interim, ad hoc National Partnership Council for Regional Development (until the full NPCRD is set up through legislation/regulation).

6 The Action Plan final report will be prepared at the end of implementation and submitted to the National Partnership Council for Regional Development.

7 On the basis of self-evaluation and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the new Action Plan for the period 2010-2011 will be elaborated.

2 The Actions

2.1 Action 1: Piloting the National Programme for the Development of Counties

Objective

8 The objective is to build development capacity at sub-national level across Albania. The CNPDC will make it possible to set in place a single national system for planning and development which will allow central government and all of the development stakeholders at county and wider region level to work together towards agreed socio-economic objectives and priorities.

Task 1: Piloting decentralised investment

Under the Government's 2005 and 2006 budgets there was a certain level of decentralisation of investment budget from central government to qark councils:

- Pre-university education: Directive of the Council of Ministers No. 632 (4 October 2004) "On approval of the document of policies of decentralisation in pre-university education" provides the basis for some decentralisation in education investment.
- Primary health care and public health protection: Decentralisation commenced in 2005: Law No. 9464 (28th December 2005 "On the state budget for 2006" provided that, in 12 counties, a special item, "The conditional grant for building and reconstruction of health centres and ambulances for the primary health service" was introduced.

However, under the 2007 national budget (see annex 3 to the budget law) both the decentralised investment schemes in health and education were replaced with a centrally managed competitive grant scheme. All state budget funds that are allocated to the line Ministries to fund projects that fall under Law 8652 "On the organization and functioning of Local Government" are considered as functions of the local government and are distributed, monitored, and controlled/evaluated in cooperation with the representatives of local government. The ministries award these funds to local government units based on a competitive system. These funds are foreseen in the "competitive grants" budget line in the state budget and are allocated to ministries and other institutions for capital investments and are linked with the functions of the local government units.

The Competitive Grant Scheme uses specified criteria (as shown in annex 3 of the 2007 budget law) in awarding support to local government units:

- The level of expected impact of the proposed investment on the social and economic development and the level of coherence with local/ regional/national priorities
- The level of impact on poverty reduction and improvement of access to basic services:
- Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries
- The level of cooperation between the units of local government
- The level of participation of the community in the decision making process and their contribution to the infrastructure projects (water works, roads,).
- The project is linked to the local contribution of an international donor

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- The project is on-going and there are contractual obligations
- The technical quality of the project proposal prepared by local government unit.

The distribution of the competitive grants is managed by a selection committee: this comprises 2 representatives from Ministry of Finance, representatives from the relevant line ministry, 2 representatives from the Ministry of Interior and 2 representatives of local government associations. For the evaluation and for drafting of the initial list of project the committees are supported by the Albanian Development Fund. The delivery of funds is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and is done following the decision of the respective committee, which specifies the title of the project, the total amount of the project and the approved fund for year 2007.

A co-financing contribution is also expected:

- 10% of the total amount of investment in the case of disadvantaged communes and mountain areas communes
- 15% for all other communes
- 20% for mountainous areas municipalities and municipalities in need
- 30% for all other municipalities.

The Competitive Grant Scheme has a significant negative impact on decentralisation and on regional development:

- Under the old scheme (only introduced in 2005) the qark councils had a direct role in working with the commune and municipalities as to how the funds should be spent in their qark: qark councils are now entirely cut out of the process.
- The communes and municipalities are invited to submit applications for an infrastructure investment grant: the competitive grant schemes have no selection criteria as to the level of disadvantaged of the qark, commune or municipality – so presumably this is not a factor in the selection. In fact some evaluation factors (Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries) would appear to favour urban over rural areas. Whilst co-financing requirements are less strict for disadvantaged communes this is only comes into force when a disadvantaged commune has an application approved.
- There is no prior support to disadvantaged communes/municipalities in preparing their applications: richer, more sophisticated communes/municipalities will obviously do better from a competitive scheme than smaller, poorer communes/municipalities.
- There is no real attempt to allow the qark to exercise its regional planning responsibilities (although these are a legal requirement): the evaluation criteria for educational investment does include a question „The inclusion of the project in the short term priorities of the regional development strategic plans (yes or no)”, but this clearly does not allow the qark council to prioritise its county requirements through this process.

METE is concerned that the overall basis for competitive grants is likely to increase regional disparities and reverse decentralisation trends and is contrary to the RDCS.

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METE therefore is In the interim the Government is seeking to pilot the decentralised investment approach in selected qarks and selected sectors.

It is proposed therefore to pilot the approach implicit in the RDCS by using decentralised investment in 2 or 3 sectors as a model pending promulgation of the Law on Regional Development. The decentralised investment pilot would initially cover only 3 or 4 qarks and would be aimed at utilizing financial investment resources from the national budget 2009.

The key actions required to be undertaken would therefore be to:

- Select – on a pilot basis – the 3 counties which will be supported to prepare sectoral decentralised investment plans and negotiate technical assistance support to help them in this task.
- the preparation of the national investment guidelines for the 2 or 3 selected sectors for the period 2009-2013;
- the preparation of the decentralised investment plans for the 2 or 3 selected sectors in each of the 3 target qarks;
- negotiate the agreement between the line ministries, the qark councils and the Ministry of Finance as to how the decentralised investment budget for the selected sectors is to be utilised in the target qarks for the 2009 National Budget.

The approach would be highly beneficial as:

1. The investment plans would be seen to be immediately useful as they would receive immediate initial finance under the 2009 National Budget.
2. The investment plans and pilot CDS would show the value of effective planning and would thus encourage the qark councils and the Government to move to the full CDS approach for the 2010-2013 period.
3. The national investment guidelines produced for the selected sectors would act as a model for other line ministries for 2010-2013.
4. Lessons learnt from the pilot could be incorporated in the wider national programme.

Task 2: Prepare the National Guidelines

- Prepare the National Guidelines for the preparation of the County Development Strategies and their Action Plans for the period 2010-2013. These will allow all the relevant stakeholders in the counties/regions to align local needs with national socio-economic priorities, including the definition of agreed national sectoral priorities for investment in the socio-economic development of the counties. The Guidelines will be prepared on a sectoral basis by Line Ministries, finalized by the METE and then reviewed by the National Partnership Council for Regional Development and approved by the Government as the national framework within which counties will be expected to operate.
- Dissemination of the National Guidelines (see also Action 7 “Communication Strategy”). This will require the preparation of easy-to-follow manuals and eventually training materials to assist the County Development Agencies in the preparation of the County Development Strategies (support will hopefully be provided through donor assistance).

Task 3: Support selected counties to prepare pilot County Development Strategies

- Pilot CDS would be prepared for the 3 qarks selected under Task 1.
- Support the establishment of interim County Partnership Councils to oversee the preparation of the County Development Strategies.
- Support the preparation of the pilot County Development Strategies

Task 4: Undertake an ex ante evaluation of the pilot County Development Strategies

- Undertake an ex ante evaluation of the pilot County Development Strategies and provide advice to the counties on their improvement where necessary (support will hopefully be provided through donor assistance).
- Give written feedback to each of the counties with government recommendations to improve the quality of their CDS in line with the national guidelines.

Task 5: Negotiate and monitor the pilot County Partnership Agreements

- Negotiate the pilot County Partnership Agreements between different sectoral Ministries and the counties. The County Partnership Agreement will be an agreement that line ministries will utilise an element of their existing national investment budget to help support investments foreseen in the County Development Strategy and which are in accordance with national investment priorities defined in the National Guidelines. The nature of the line ministry investment (direct investment, co-financed investment with a county or municipality/commune, or delegated control of funds to a county or municipality/commune for their implementation) will vary and be subject to negotiation and agreement between the line ministry, METE and the County. The level of support will vary depending on the "Degree of socio-economic development" classification of each county. The final agreement will be ratified in a County Partnership Agreement signed between the Government and the County setting out the agreement on funding for the next 5 years.
- Confirm the financial support that will be provided by METE for the operation of the County Development Agencies. The funding agreement to be confirmed in the County Partnership Agreement for each county.
- Draft the County Partnership Agreements for official approval and signature.
- Supervise (in cooperation with the MoF) that the agreed financial provisions for the next financial year are allocated accordingly in the relevant state budget (2010).
- The METE will then undertake the monitoring of the implementation of the County Partnership Agreement.

Task 6: Develop Government policy with respect to NUTS 2 Regions

- Develop Government policy towards the utilisation of NUTS 2 for the management of both government programmes and Structural Funds post-accession (support will hopefully be provided through donor assistance).

Task 7: Reporting on the National Programme for the Development of Counties

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- Evaluate and prepare an annual report on the implementation of the National Programme for the Development of Counties.

The institution responsible for the Action

9 The Department for Integrated Regional Development within the METE is in charge of the Action and implementation of the tasks.

10 While the METE will take the lead for the implementation of CNPDC, a number of other ministries and central institutions will also be involved – especially in the preparation of the National Guidelines:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Industry
- Ministry of Public Works
- Ministry of European Integration
- Other relevant institutions

11 The National Partnership Council for Regional Development will have an important coordination role.

12 The counties need to manage their development and to respond to government proposals as introduced in the National Guidelines and:

- Prepare County Development Strategies in accordance with the National Guidelines and submit these to the METE
- Participate in the negotiation of the County Partnership Agreement for their area and eventually sign the final County Partnership Agreement.

Financial provisions

13 The staff of the new Department of Integrated Regional Development will carry out the CNPDC tasks, but will be unable to do this until (i) staff numbers have been raised and (b) they have been extensively trained. Hopefully technical assistance and training will be provided by donors.

14 Funding is required to finance the establishment and operation of the County Development Agencies.

2.2 Action 2: Piloting the Disadvantaged Areas Development Programme

Objective

15 The establishment of a simple and integrated programme of support for all areas which are classified as “disadvantaged” under the Law on Regional Development.

Task 1: Analysis of root causes of inter-regional disadvantage and the determination of the nature of the required measures to alleviate such disadvantage

- Undertake an evaluation of all existing measures aimed at reducing regional disparity.
- Recommend which measures should continue, be restructured or be cancelled.
- Recommend what new measures should be introduced to alleviate regional disparity.

Task 2: Prepare the Government Plan for the Development of Disadvantaged Areas

- Prepare the Government Plan for the Development of Disadvantaged Areas 2010-2013 This will include proposals for (a) cancellation of existing measures, (b) maintenance of existing measures; (c) revision of existing measures; and (d) introduction of new measures with necessary justifications (expected cost-benefit).
- Ensure that adequate resources are identified for financing of METE’s Disadvantaged Municipality/Commune Support Facility.
- After the National Partnership Council for Regional Development and the County Partnership Councils have given their opinion, the METE will submit the Plan for the Government approval.

Task 3: Pilot the Disadvantaged County Support Element of the DADP

- Pilot the Disadvantaged County Support Element of the DADP with respective line ministries to ensure satisfactory conditions in national support schemes (weighting, co-financing, indicative budget) and to then monitor performance. It will be piloted in 3 qarks (to be selected).

Task 4: Negotiate the Disadvantaged Municipality/commune Support Element of the DADP

- Negotiate the Disadvantaged Municipality/commune Support Element of the DADP with respective counties to ensure satisfactory inclusion within the County Development Strategies of addressing the needs of disadvantaged municipalities (LAU2), confirm the support in the County Partnership Agreement and to then monitor performance. It will be piloted in 3 qarks (to be selected).

Task 5: Establishing capacity to manage the DADP

- Build capacity for managing development of the Disadvantaged Areas at national level (integrated within the HR development programme for the Department for Integrated Regional Development). Technical assistance will hopefully be provided through donor support.
- Build capacity for managing the development of the Disadvantaged Areas within the counties (integrated within the HR development programme for the County Development Agencies and County Partnership Councils). Technical assistance will hopefully be provided through donor support.

Task 6: Reporting on the DADP

- Evaluate and prepare an annual report on the implementation of the Disadvantaged Areas Development Programme.

Institution responsible for the Action

16 The METE is responsible for the implementation of the tasks.

17 While the METE will take the lead for the implementation of DADP, a number of other ministries and central institutions will also be involved:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Industry
- Ministry of Public Works
- Ministry of European Integration
- Other relevant institutions

18 The National Partnership Council for Regional Development will have an important coordination role.

19 The County Partnership Councils will be consulted before the Government Plan is submitted to the Government for approval.

Financial provisions

20 It is impossible to calculate at this stage prior to the definition of disadvantage and the determination of what measures will be supported.

2.4 Action 3: Establishing the Institutional and Consultative Structure for Regional Development

Objective

An established trained and competent institutional structure for the implementation of the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy supported by effective and appropriate coordination and consultation mechanisms ensuring informed, participative and consensus decision making for integrated regional development.

Task 1: Establishment of a Department for Integrated Regional Development within METE

21 In order to undertake all actions necessary for the programming and implementation of the RDCS, a new Department for Integrated Regional Development will need to be established. Its exact staffing complement and skills requirements will need to be defined. It will need to have the following skills capabilities:

Management

22 This means the responsibility for setting the overall policy direction, leading and coordinating the range of agencies involved, overseeing – and taking overall responsibility for - the entire policy life cycle process, including vouching for the work of other institutions involved in different stages of that cycle.

23 The managing body takes the lead in the ensuring effective consultation, as well as in negotiations with third parties such as the European Commission. Management assumes the responsibility for achievement of objectives and transparency of financial transactions.

24 Another important task is to set up and ensure a functioning monitoring and evaluation system.

Programming

25 This means the responsibility for preparing multi-annual strategic and operational documents as frameworks for translating policy directions and priorities into practical effect. This involves analysis, strategic reflection, prioritisation, building measures, identifying indicators, describing arrangements for implementation, delivery and monitoring – in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

26 The accomplishment of these tasks calls for a wide range of skills and competences. Those involved with programming are in frequent contact with beneficiaries, implementing bodies and wider stakeholders.

Implementation

27 This means the delivery of measures, schemes, forms of assistance to final beneficiaries. This requires a clear and transparent chain of transactions from training/briefing for all points along the chain, including awareness raising for potential beneficiaries, preparation of guidance and promotional material, launch of programme and individual measures/schemes, selection systems and process, project control mechanisms, reporting on activities.

28 Those involved in implementation include staff at central and county/local level involved in the actual delivery of measures in the programme.

Monitoring and Evaluation

29 This means the responsibility for setting in place and servicing arrangements for ongoing monitoring as well as evaluation (ex-ante, interim and ex-post).

30 In the case of **monitoring**, this entails setting up a monitoring committee comprising representatives from all relevant stakeholding groups based on partnership group model. The institutional demands include: - preparing reports on programme activities, collated from implementation activity reports; preparing agendas for monitoring committees, minutes and follow-up reports. These can be time consuming tasks – for six monthly meetings.

31 A central feature of an effective monitoring system is the IT system for data gathering and reports. In the context of managing EU Structural Funds, this usually involves putting in place a central monitoring system. It will be important to consider the need for compatibility of an IT monitoring system for regional development with that for the overall national planning system.

32 Effective **evaluation** requires capacity both outside and inside central government. In many cases, evaluation of programmes is carried out by independent entities, research institutes and professional consultancies. However, there is a need for central government officials to specify the requirement - format, sometimes methodology and standard. If evaluation is carried out by a functionally independent unit within government, this would most likely be a central unit – outside the Ministry responsible for the programme in question.

Financial Management and Control

33 This means responsibility for multi-year budget programming, coordination of co-financing, forecasting expenditures, setting in place systems and conditions for financial expenditures, managing payments, making sure beneficiaries receive payment quickly, reporting on expenditures, recovering unsubstantiated payments. In addition to a central unit (approximately 10-12 people, the overall system will require officials outside the direct line of command, to be trained in verification and certification of expenditures.

34 Financial control means the arrangements in place for ensuring correctness and eligibility of expenditures. These are usually carried out by internal audit units within central government but can also involve private companies. Internal audit teams verify the effectiveness of the existing financial management and control systems in place. At present, the system in place in the Croatian administration is embryonic.

Task 2: Development of appropriate structures, systems, tools and procedures within METE's Department for Integrated Regional Development

35 This will involve the development of adequate systems, tools and procedures. It will be necessary to specify lines of responsibility, communication and cooperation within the new sections of the new Department, between the Department and other Departments of METE and between the Department and other Central Government Institutions. The following steps need to be taken:

- Defining roles and responsibilities of the new Department of Integrated Regional Development, including the preparation of a staffing chart and job definitions
- Allocation of appropriate funding from the State Budget for the new positions within the new Department for Integrated Regional Development
- Nomination of the Head of the new Department of Integrated Regional Development

- Approval of new recruitment (in accordance with the staffing chart and job descriptions)

Task 3: Development of HR (job descriptions, training plan, etc) within newly established Department for Integrated Regional Development.

36 The specification and development of job descriptions for the key positions within the new Department for Integrated Regional Development will need to be undertaken. Based on that, it will be necessary to specify skills, competences and experience needed and develop a needs-based training programme for Department staff.

37 The following steps need to be taken:

- Develop job descriptions for all the positions
- Allocate current staff to the positions in accordance with new organizational structure
- Hire additional staff for the unfilled positions in accordance with new organizational structure
- Undertake a training needs assessment and on the basis of that, design and implement training programme (with donor support).

Task 4: Set up and develop the coordinating and consultative structures foreseen in the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy

METE will establish and support the development of the capacities of the National Partnership Council for Regional Development and its secretariat. This can only be done formally once the Law on Regional Development has been promulgated.

Task 5: Support the establishment of County Partnership Councils and accredited County Development Agencies

- Facilitate the establishment in all counties of a County Partnership Council as defined in the Law on Regional Development.
- When established, develop the capacity of the County Partnership Councils (e.g. strategic development planning, local and regional socio-economic development, collaborative decision making, partnership operation, etc.). Support will hopefully be provided by donors.
- Establish a process of METE-accreditation of the County Development Agencies and undertake the accreditation process.
- When accredited, develop the capacity (systems development, human resource development) of the County Development Agencies. Donor support will be sought for this purpose.

Institutions responsible for the Action

The METE is responsible for the development of the Department of Integrated Regional Development and the development of coordination and consultation structures.

The development of the county development agencies and county partnership councils will be undertaken by METE in partnership with regional and municipality/communes.

Financial provisions

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Main expenditures of this action are related to hiring of new staff for the Department for Integrated Regional Development.

All expenses related to capacity building, training and technical assistance will hopefully be forthcoming from donors.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION TASKS

Table below demonstrates the delivery of the tasks in a 2-year timeframe

Tasks		Establish the institutional and consultative structure for regional policy																								Institution responsible	
		2008												2009													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
1	Establishment of a Department of Integrated Regional Development within METE	█	█	█																						METE	
2	Development of appropriate structures, systems, tools and procedures within newly established Department for Integrated Regional Development.				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	METE	
3	Development of HR (job descriptions, training plan, etc) within newly established Department for Integrated Regional Development.				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	METE	
4	Establish and develop capacity of national coordination and consultation structures as defined in the RDCS																									On promulgation of Law on Regional Development	METE
5	Support the establishment of county partnership councils and accredited county development agencies																									On promulgation of Law on Regional Development	METE/ County/Municipality/Commune Governments

2.5 Action 4: The definition of the Legal Base for Regional Development

Objective

38 The objective is to have in place the legal basis necessary to allow the implementation of the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy.

Task 1: Drafting and consultation on the draft Law on Regional Development

39 It will be necessary to:

- Draft the Law on Regional Development.
- Submit the draft Law to an extensive process of consultation:

Task 2: Drafting of the secondary regulation in support of the Law on Regional Development

40 It will be necessary to draft the secondary decrees and regulations necessary for implementation of the Law on Regional Development:

- Regulation on the National Partnership Council for Regional Development and the County Partnership Councils. Detailed issues related to the membership and structure of the Partnership Council would be regulated by subsidiary regulation.
- Regulation on County Development Agencies. The conditions governing the activities and financing of the County Development Agency would be prescribed by subsidiary regulation.
- Regulation on the National Guidelines for County Development Strategies which provide the national policy framework for the preparation of the County Development Strategies.
- Regulation on the procedure and methodology for evaluation of County Development Strategies and the overall RDCS.

Task 3: Preparation of the rules of procedure of the National Partnership Council

- The rules of procedure for the National Partnership Council for Regional Development will need to be drafted.

Task 4: Submission of the draft Law on Regional Development to Parliament for approval

- Submit the draft Law to Parliament for promulgation once the process of consultation has been completed.

Task 5: Finalising the secondary regulation in support of the Law on Regional Development

- Make any changes in the secondary legislation in light of final version of the Law approved by Parliament.
- Submit the draft secondary legislation to the appropriate approval level.

Institutions responsible for the Action

The METE is responsible for the elaboration of the draft legislation and regulation prior to its submission to the Government approval procedure.

All relevant government institutions will be involved in preparation of the tasks.

Financial requirements

None. Technical assistance from donors will hopefully be provided with the task of drafting the legislation.

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 PHASE 1: COMPLETION OF THE STRATEGY (2007-2008)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION TASKS

Table below demonstrates the delivery of the tasks in a 2-year timeframe

Tasks		Legal basis for regional development																								Institution responsible
		2008												2009												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	Drafting and consultation on the draft Law on Regional Development	█	█	█	█	█	█																		METE	
2	Drafting of secondary legislation							█	█	█	█	█	█													METE
3	Preparation of the Rules of Procedure for the Partnership Councils and Committees													█	█	█										METE
4	Submission of draft Law on Regional Development to Parliament for approval																								METE	
5	Submission of secondary legislation to the appropriate approval authority																									

2.6 Action 5: Establishing the Reporting and Monitoring System for the RDCS

Objective

The objective is an effective and fully operational reporting and monitoring system for the RDCS.

Task 1: Improving the monitoring capacities of national, county, municipality and commune structures

- Develop the monitoring role of the National Partnership Council for Regional Development and its secretariat.
- Build internal capacity for the monitoring of the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy, pre-access regional development instruments and, post-accession, an integrated Operating Programme for Regional Development (as part of the HR development programme for the Department for Integrated Regional Development).
- Build capacity for the monitoring of the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy, pre-access regional development instruments and, post-accession, an integrated Operating Programme for Regional Development with the counties (integrated within the HR development programme for the County Development Agencies and County Partnership Councils).

Task 2: Establish a computerised reporting and monitoring system

- Design, develop and test a computerised monitoring system to manage the implementation of the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy, pre-access regional development instruments and, post-accession, an integrated Operating Programme for Regional Development. The computerised monitoring system must utilise the system architecture defined by the Government for the overall management or both pre- and post-accession EU support and allow simple transferability of data to the overall management authority for such funds. This should also include the definition of reporting interfaces for line ministries and counties reporting on implementation. Technical assistance support will be sought for this work.

Institution responsible for the Action

The METE is responsible for the implementation of the Action.

Financial provisions

The new computerised monitoring system will hopefully be designed and developed utilising donor resources.

2.7 Action 6: Establishing a Communications Programme for the RDCS

Objective

The objective is to ensure that the RDCS is communicated to all relevant stakeholders and that it is widely understood and accepted as an important unifying framework in managing the development of the regions in Albania.

Task 1: Design and implement a communications programme on the RDCS

- Design and implement a communications programme with the aim of building wide awareness of the RDCS (and its constituent programmes). This will include:
 - i design and production of publicity and informational materials (webpage on Ministry website, one-page information briefings and brochures, materials for presentations). The Ministry will prepare a FAQ document to clarify issues of concern to policy makers/managers;
 - ii organisation of briefing meetings on the RDCS for [a] Members of Parliament, government, political parties and other bodies linked to the parliament and government decision-making processes; [b] National Partnership Council for Regional Development and County Partnership Councils; [c] Academic/evaluation community;
 - iii Organisation of a series of information road shows across Albania.
 - iv Organisation of annual/biannual international conference on regional development
 - v preparation and presentation of Annual Reports;
 - vi arrange regular press briefings on the RDCS and its implementation.

Task 2: Integrate donor activities into the framework of RDCS (and its constituent programmes)

- Organisation of a donor conference to present the RDCS as Government's chosen vehicle for regional development – and encourage donor support.

Institution responsible

The METE is responsible for the implementation of the tasks.

Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination should be the partner when working with the donors.

Financial provisions

Technical assistance with the implementation of the communications programme will be sought, but a budgetary allocation will be required for publications, brochures, etc.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION TASKS

The table below demonstrates the delivery of tasks in a 2-year timeframe.

Tasks		Communicating the Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy																								Institution responsible
		2008												2009												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	Design and implement a communications programme on the RDCS																									METE
2	To integrate donor activities into the framework of RDCS																									METE

2.8 Action 7: Preparing Phase 2 (2010-2011) of the Action Plan

Objective

Task 1: Prepare the Action Plan covering the period 2010-2011

Institution responsible

The METE is responsible for the implementation of the task.

Financial provisions

No financial implications.

