



COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGY
AND DONOR COORDINATION

Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination



A message from DSDC Director

Dear readers,

Year 2010 marks the 5th anniversary of creation of Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination. DSDC, today, consists of a dynamic team of highly educated, young and ambitious professionals. From the day of its creation, DSDC has cherished the vision to become the first 'port of call' for Donors and Government institutions. Five years ago we committed ourselves to co-ordinate the first national strategy that would combine development policies with NATO and European Integration agendas. Today, Albania has a coherent and integrated policy framework thanks also to the crucial leading role of the DSDC in co-ordinating the overall design and government-wide implementation of the Integrated Planning System (IPS). The Department has provided effective leadership and methodological guidance in the preparation of the National Strategy for Development and Integration: 2007-2013 (NSDI), which consolidated into a single document over 38 sector and cross-cutting strategies. As part of monitoring process of NSDI implementation, DSDC is leading two new processes: a results-based monitoring and reporting system to gauge progress towards the implementation of sector strategies and policy impact assessment. Our aim is to forge a partnership with Donors to maximize the contribution of external assistance in achieving national and sector priorities. In 2008, DSDC produced the first External Assistance Orientation Document, which links national and sector priorities to external assistance needs, improving the framework for dialogue with donors. This was followed by the publication of External Assistance Progress Report in 2009 and will continue with the annual progress reports. DSDC has facilitated the negotiations and signing of several framework agreements with donors, successful organisation of the regular high-level Government-Donor Roundtables, and have closely worked with donors to strengthen and operationalise dialogue at sector level through Sector Working Groups. Yet, our way ahead will remain challenging as DSDC tries to further promote partnership and dialogue that produce tangible results for greater effectiveness, transparency, and accountability. We are looking forward to continuing to help shape the future of external assistance in our country and continuing our partnership in this notable and gratifying effort.

Sincerely,




Our Mission

The mission of the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination is to assist the Government of Albania in ensuring that policy coordination, at the strategic level, occurs within the Integrated Planning System framework, leading to greater effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

Toward a fully Integrated Planning System

DSDC lies at the heart of the Government's modernization reforms. In December 2005, Council of Ministers of Albania (CoM) formally established the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC) as an integral part of its organisational structure. The Department was established with the primary aim of ensuring that (by the time) fragmented strategic planning and budgeting processes of the Government were coherent and effectively managed and the external assistance was targeted towards national priorities. The main key feature of these reforms became the linkage between the medium- to long-term national strategic priorities and the budgeting and resources allocation process, ensuring that external assistance is targeted towards Government priorities. In the view of establishing the Integrated Planning System, DSDC was the main driver on the redesign and harmonisation of these core processes based on the assumption that their quality and coherence will greatly affect the Government's ability to achieve its policy objectives and keep its promises to the public. Through its central role in the implementation of IPS, DSDC is mandated to ensure that the Government's priorities and the requirements for EU integration are fully reflected in all core government policy and financial planning processes and communicated to all stakeholders. DSDC prepares and facilitates the proceedings of the Strategic Planning and Government Modernization Committees in line with the annual IPS calendar. It works with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the Medium-Term Budget Programme and the annual budget reflect Government's strategic priorities, and with the Ministry of European Integration to guarantee that European Integration priorities are an integral part of all government processes. DSDC led the preparation of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2007-2013, which entailed a broad consultative process involving key stakeholders from government, private sector, civil society and donors. Along with the preparation of the NSDI, DSDC coordinated the process of developing sector and cross-cutting strategies by line ministries. These strategies provide the main input for the NSDI. Introducing a monitoring mechanism on the implementation of the NSDI/sector and crosscutting strategies, and the policy impact assessment process is a new challenge for DSDC. The new monitoring tools will supplement the annual NSDI Progress Report,




which reports on the yearly basis results achieved against a series of high level indicators set by the NSDI. The Department provides guidance and orientation to line ministries in the development of the Ministry's Integrated Plans and Ministry Annual Reports.

DSDC Aid Co-ordination Unit provides a 'one-stop shop' for donors with respect to strategic matters related to external assistance. As such, DSDC is responsible for organizing major co-ordination activities such as the Government-Donor Roundtables and the IPS Support Group, which is a policy-level advisory board. The Department, in cooperation with the Donor Technical Secretariat, has already established a donor database, which comprises data about all active donors that have been working since 1994, including information on external assistance disbursements. Together with the Ministry of Finance, DSDC co-leads negotiations with donors on policy-based conditions for loans/credits and participates in negotiations led by the Ministry of European Integration on IPA programming. In co-operation with donors and line ministries, the Department established 33 Sector Working Groups, whose aim is to ensure that external assistance is effectively co-ordinated, and supports national and sector priorities.

Managing for results

DSDC has been increasing its leadership in co-coordinating the IPS implementation process. Key outputs of DSDC activities include:

- Finalization and approval by Council of Ministers Decision of the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013; Implementation of NSDI 2007-2013; and identification of the national priorities beyond 2013.
- NSDI Progress Report 2006-2007 and 2008;
- Ministry Integrated Plans and Ministry Monitoring Plans for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 in co-operation with line ministries;
- Preparation of External Assistance Orientation Document in 2008 linked to NSDI priorities; and External Assistance Progress Report for 2008;
- Finalization of IPS Communication Guidelines 2009-2013
- Finalization of Harmonization Action Plan for Albania in co-operation with the Donor Technical Secretariat
- Finalisation of Memorandum of Understanding on Fast Tracking Initiative on Division of Labour; plays the leading role in its implementation
- Finalisation of the Framework Agreement and Cooperation protocols with donors;
- Finalisation and approval by Council of Ministers of the Decision no. 775, date 24.09.2010 on Administration of External Assistance in the Republic of Albania;

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- Organisation of bi-annual government-donor roundtables; periodic Strategic Planning Committee meetings, several IPS support group and other meetings with donors at the sector level;
 - Conducting 2006 and 2008 OECD DAC Survey on Monitoring Paris Declaration, in co-operation with the DTS; Participation in 2010 OECD DAC Survey+
 - Participation in the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2008; coordination of the Government and donor efforts toward meeting the commitments deriving from the Accra Agenda for Action;
 - Participation in the annual Donor Co-ordination Conferences organised by European Commission in Brussels;
 - Organisation of the Conference on Donor-Coordination in Western Balkans and Turkey on 2-3 April 2009 in Tirana;
 - Active participation in Sarajevo Workshop on Sector-Based Approaches on 22-24 March 2010;
 - Active participation in several international conferences;
 - Participation in the One UN Programme as one of eight pilot countries.

Challenges Ahead

DSDC embodies the core values of the Albanian civil service, such as: accountability, transparency, professionalism, partnership, flexibility and innovation. DSDC is striving to add value to the quality of Government decision-making by accomplishing:

- a better harmonised and functioning integrated government planning and monitoring systems;
- updating the national strategy beyond 2013
- a full interface of NSDI/sector and crosscutting strategies and European Integration agenda to the MTBP;
- a full interface of external assistance to the MTBP;
- an effective external assistance management process in support of government priorities;
- a successful monitoring and evaluation system, as an essential component;
- an effective decision-making process and institutional set up, ensuring increased transparency and accountability.

Publications

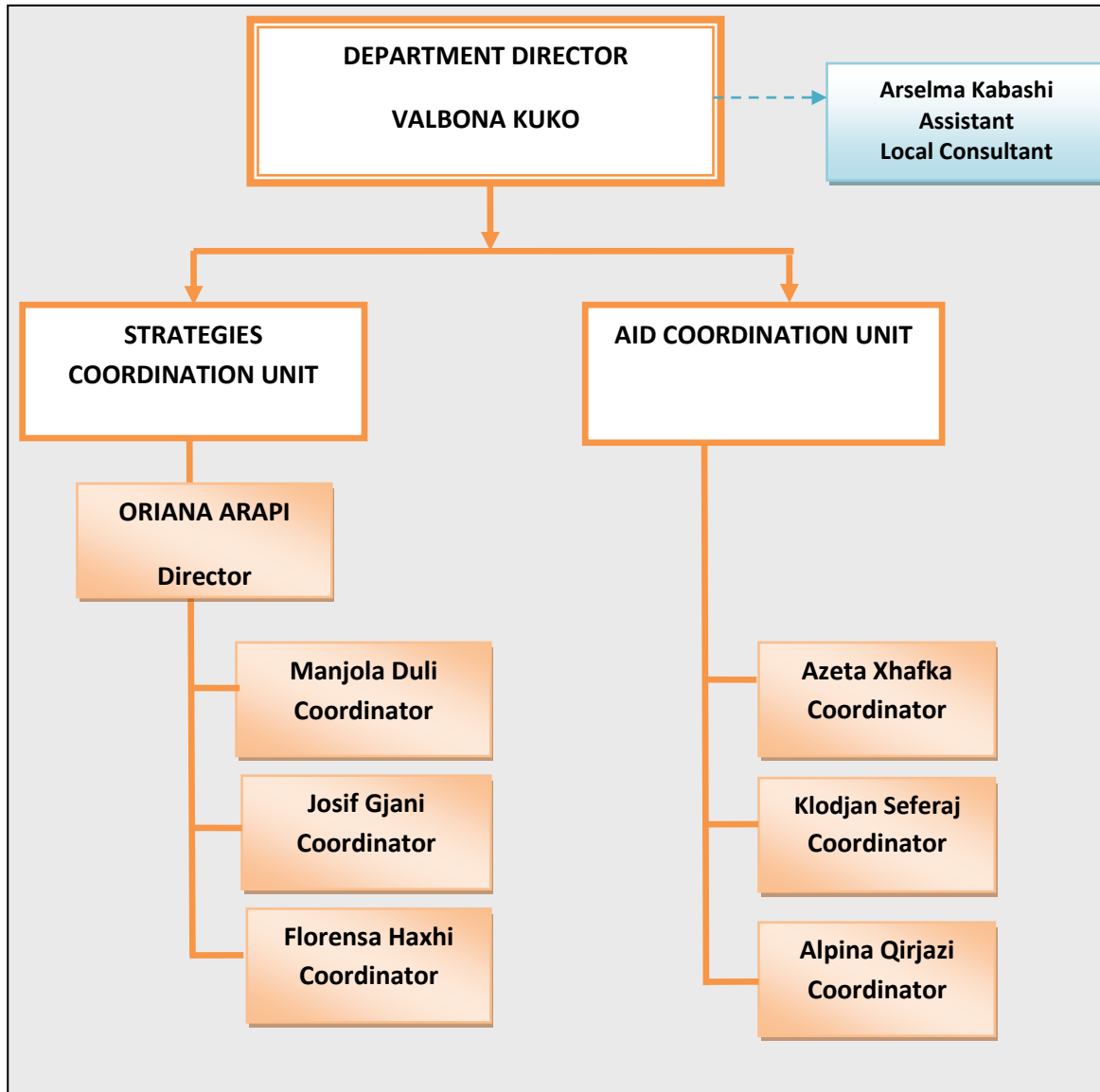
DSDC has published several documents and reports:

- National Strategy for Development and Integration;
- External Assistance Orientation Document
- NSDI Annual Progress Reports;
- Annual External Assistance Progress Reports;
- Annual IPS calendar;
- IPS Handbook
- IPS Communication Guidelines 2009-2013
- Harmonisation Action Plan for Albania and HAP Progress Reports
- NSDI Monitoring Reports
- Monthly newsletter “Government-Donor Dialogue”- jointly produced by DSDC and Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS);
- DSDC website, bilingual, is an information portal on both GoA and donor activities in Albania.



Our organizational structure

The Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination comprises of two units: the NSDI Co-ordination and the Aid Co-ordination Unit, each having three coordinators and the head of NSDI unit.





Meet our team


Mrs. Valbona Kuko is the DSDC Director. She joined DSDC in 2006 and has been the Head of the Aid Co-ordination Unit for two years. Mrs. Kuko ensures that DSDC effectively co-ordinates the external assistance to directly support the Government's priorities and that related information is shared between ministries and donors. She holds an MBA degree from University of Nebraska and University of Tirana, Faculty of Economics. Her working experience for the last 15 years has been primarily linked to donor coordination and European Integration issues.

Mrs. Oriana Arapi heads the NSDI Unit since May 2010. She started working at DSDC as a coordinator for the NSDI in 2007. Her work focuses on supervising the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NSDI; policy co-ordination, analysis and monitoring reports concerning several sectors. Principal areas of expertise cover policy and strategy formulation, analysis and reporting, strategic planning processes, social-economic and urban development, decentralization and regional development. She holds a Master Degree in European Studies from Danube University, Austria.

Mrs. Manjola Duli is a DSDC coordinator for the NSDI unit since October 2009. Both her education and experience background are in social sciences and public administration. Previously she has been managing projects for preparing urban and social implementations plans and city and neighbourhood development strategies. Mrs Duli has strong experience in participatory planning, gender issues, youth education, Roma community integration as well as research experience in social issues and infrastructure development. At DSDC she is responsible for sectors like: economy, public finance, health, property rights etc.

Mr. Josif Gjani joined DSDC in November 2009 as IPS Coordination Local Consultant, acting as DSDC Focal Point for Sector Working Groups and Fast Tracking Initiative on Division of Labour (FTI/DoL). In September 2010 he was appointed as a coordinator and is mainly responsible for implementation of EU/IPA programmes, establishment of sector approaches in different NSDI priorities. He holds a Bachelor Degree in: "Development Economics and International Cooperation" at the Faculty of Economics, University of Florence (Universita' degli Studi di Firenze), Italy and, a Master of Science in Advanced Economic Development: Major in International Economics, at the above mentioned University.

Ms. Florensa Haxhi started working for DSDC as a coordinator for strategies, in June 2010. Both her educational background and experience are mainly focused on administration/coordination and finance. Previously she has worked in the private higher education sector, as a coordinator for postgraduate studies, and as a team leader for the management of



various projects. Ms. Haxhi holds a (Dual Major) Bachelor in Business Administration and Finance from the State University of New York, USA, and an MBA degree with concentration in International Finance from the Ecole Supérieure de Gestion, Paris, France.

Mrs. Azeta Xhafka has worked as an external assistance coordinator since 2007. She holds an M.A. degree in International Business with a specialisation in International Finance from the International Business School at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, USA. Her main responsibility is to coordinate several donors activities such as World Bank USAID, Greece, Netherlands, Turkey, DfID (UK), France, Poland, and Canada. Her work includes monitoring and evaluating the progress of various project components as well as coordinating line ministries priorities with the donor community assistance.

Mr. Klodjan Seferaj joined DSDC in June 2009 as IPS Coordination Local Consultant, while from February 2010 he started working as a coordinator for external assistance. He holds a Bachelor Degree in Economy from Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest, Romania, a Master Degree in Finance from Economic Faculty of Tirana, and is a PhD candidate for Public Financial Management. His experience focuses on financial management, project coordination and management, sector-wide approach, and donor coordination and is responsible for several donors, such as Italy, Swiss Cooperation Office, EBRB, EIB, CEB, OFID, OSCE.

Mrs. Alpina Qirjazi started working for the Department as IPS Coordination Consultant in June 2009, after 16 years of experience with several government and donor organizations on various and evolving development issues. Since July 2010 she works as donor coordinator and is responsible for the UN agencies and One UN Programme, Sweden, Spain, Japan, China, etc. She is graduated in Finance and Mathematics and holds an MPA degree from University of Nebraska and University of Tirana, Faculty of Economics. She has expertise and experience in finance, programme coordination, management, monitoring and evaluation.

The department is also supported by international and local experts.

Council of Ministers
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