



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

# GUIDELINES

on Institutionalizing Sector Working Groups

*June 2011*





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on Institutionalizing Sector Working Groups  
to Strengthen Policy and  
Donor Coordination at Sector Level



## FOREWORD

As part of the Integrated Planning System (IPS), in line with the Paris Declaration Commitments and Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), the Albanian Government continues to pay a special attention to the process of donor co-ordination with the aim of increasing effectiveness of external assistance in supporting the national / sector priorities as well as achieving country's objectives toward the European integration.

Significant part of co-ordination mechanism are the Sector Working Groups (SWGs) with donors. These groups represent very important forums both for the Government and the donor community for exchanging information on the pace of policies and projects, discussing sector priorities for financing and increasing external assistance effectiveness at the sector level.

These Guidelines have been developed in the framework of efforts undertaken by Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC) in collaboration with the Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS) to revitalize and / or strengthen the role of the SWGs. The Guidelines aim to support SWGs in organizing and managing their work and increase effectiveness of the dialogue between the government institutions and donors.

SWGs are intended to serve primarily as coordinating and supporting bodies, and they are not intended to substitute or to duplicate the functions of line ministries and/or donor agencies. SWGs are accountable to their host ministries and agencies, and the SWG Chair, as the Government's lead representative in a SWG, is therefore the sole decision-making authority in the SWG.

The guidelines will be jointly agreed by the Government and donors representatives, but it is important to notice that the list of tasks and organizational principles are not to be considered as mandatory and it will be necessary for each SWG to identify, prioritize and sequence its activities based on perceived needs, available resources and existing capacities. Taking this observation into account, this document provides practical tools, such as templates to be used for the day-to-day activities of the line ministries.

The Guidelines for “**Institutionalizing Sector Working Groups to Strengthen the Implementation of the Policy and Donor Coordination at Sector Level**” is a document prepared in the framework of the support of Integrated Planning System Project under the “**Component 07.07.01 CS supporting External Assistance Management Function**”<sup>1</sup>.

**Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination  
Council of Minister of Albania**

<sup>1</sup> The main objective of the component is to review the existing government internal procedures related to management of external assistance projects and strengthening the role of Sector Working Groups in line ministries as the main forum for policy and donor coordination.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
CoM	Council of Ministers
DCM	Decision of Council of Ministers
DoL	Division of Labour
DIP	Development and Integration Partners
DSDC	Department for Strategy and Donor Co-ordination
DTS	Donor Technical Secretariat
GMC	Government Modernization Committee
GoA	Government of Albania
GSBI	Group on Strategy and Budget Integration
HAP	Harmonization Action Plan
IPA	Instrument of Pre-Accession
IPS	Integrated Planning System
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEI	Ministry of European Integration
MF	Ministry of Finance
MIP	Ministry Integrated Plan
MIPD	Multi-Annual Indicative Planning Document
MTBP	Medium-Term Budget Program
NPISAA	National Plan for Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPM	Order of the Prime Minister
PAM	Performance Assessment Matrix
PBA	Programme Based Approach
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SCF	Strategic Coherence Framework
SWGs	Sector Working Groups
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
SPC	Strategic Planning Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference

## ESTABLISHMENT OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

- The IPS document and the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2007-2013 recognize the importance of joint dialogue and lays out relevant mechanisms to enhance joint Donor-Government dialogue, including but not limited to advisory groups and various Sector Working Groups.
- Since 2004, the Sector Working Groups (SWGs) have been a tool for coordination of external assistance at sector level. The groups initially concentrated on information exchange of on-going projects but gradually have become more forward-looking, discussing policy coordination issues, funding priorities, and monitoring the implementation of projects.
- In 2008, SWGs were reorganised to better reflect the changes that had occurred to the sector structure and over 30 SWGs were established by the GoA in priority sectors and respective donor focal points were nominated to facilitate the work of each group.
- A Harmonisation Action Plan was developed and endorsed during the Government-Donor Roundtable in November 2009, emphasising the functioning and role of the SWG as one of the main tools needed to reach the commitments of Paris Declaration.
- In addition, the European Commission (EC) requested its member states to implement a *Fast-Tracking Initiative of the Division of Labour*<sup>2</sup> in partner countries, including Albania. This directive resulted in the nomination of European lead donors for relevant sectors in support of Albania's EU integration efforts.
- DSDC in collaboration with the DTS have undertaken some important steps to support the institutionalization and functioning of SWGs, such as:
  - Reorganisation of SWGs based on the priority sectors of NSDI 2007-2013;
  - Preparation of the generic ToRs for the SWGs. The ToRs introduced additional roles that these groups should play on some important initiatives, such as the introduction of Programme Based Approaches (PBA) or Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp), preparation of the Harmonization Action Plan, addressing the recommendations of the Paris and Accra Agendas, reducing the number of PIUs;
  - Compiling a comprehensive calendar of SWGs meetings at the beginning of each year with a concrete action plan for their proceeding;
  - Requesting all line ministries to officially appoint the chairman of SWGs at the level of Minister or Deputy Minister, and later to appoint a SWG Focal Point at the level of the Head of Department for European Integration and International Cooperation.

<sup>2</sup> This process has been facilitated in Albania by the Italian Cooperation with strong involvement of the DSDC and DTS.

# SECTION 1

## INSTITUTIONALISING SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

- 1.1 OBJECTIVES OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS
- 1.2 ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS
- 1.3 THE STRUCTURE, COMPOSITION AND SIZE OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

# INSTITUTIONALISING SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

## 1.1 Objectives of Sector Working Groups

The aim of SWGs is to enable an effective policy coordination mechanism and dialogue among the Government institutions and its “Development and Integration Partners” at sector level. SWGs present Government and “donors” with an unprecedented opportunity to move forward collectively in order to live up to the commitments of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the implementation of Accra Agenda for Action.

The main objectives of the SWGs are to:

- Promote and support an effective implementation, regular monitoring and evaluation of progress of sector reforms within the context of NSDI.
- Encourage the sharing, analysis and dissemination of strategic information on progress and challenges amongst all stakeholders.
- Promote dialogue, coordination, harmonization and complementarities of donors’ interventions and its alignment with the country’s priorities.
- Maintain a database of stakeholder activities (who is doing what, where and when) and ensure that regular activity reports are shared with all stakeholders.
- Provide feedback to the DSDC/DTS/Development and Integration Partners’ meeting to ensure inter-sector coordination on cross cutting issues.

Donor engagement in SWGs will enable them to participate in monitoring sector performance against mutually agreed objectives, better align their assistance with countries’ priorities and improve co-ordination with other donor agencies.

## 1.2 Roles and functions of Sector Working Groups

SWGs are co-ordinating and supporting bodies to help line ministries retain full responsibility for assessing needs, designing policies to meet their needs, and managing their programmes to operationalise policies.

SWGs are a critical instrument to promote progress towards NSDI and sector goals, achieve greater aid effectiveness through the implementation of the HAP and facilitate effective cross-sector dialogue and policy decision-making at sector level.

## 1.3 The structure, composition and size of Sector Working Groups

The SWG as *sector’s management structures* are based on three *potential forums*:

- SWG meetings bringing together *national and international stakeholders* in each sector, preferably on a quarterly basis.
- *Thematic Working Groups*/Task Forces or sub-working groups for specific policies, legal and thematic issues to be dealt with.
- *Ad hoc meetings of SWG*.

## Box 1. Sector's management structure

Structure	SWG meeting	Thematic Working Groups	Ad hoc meetings / SWG
Objectives and frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share information and update about ongoing developments and challenges including Ministry work plan, MTBP and national and international funding allocation;</li> <li>- Agree on an annual action plan for the SWG in line with GoA's strategic priorities;</li> <li>- Establish thematic working groups and receive their updates on ongoing activities and developments;</li> <li>- Deliver presentations on important new policies, regulations, laws as well as structures related to the implementation of the strategies.</li> <li>- At least 3 meeting per year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides international expertise and best practices from the donor community to support the line ministry in addressing current and emerging challenges in the sector</li> <li>- Delivers policy, legal &amp; regulatory recommendations</li> <li>- Analyse the provision and use of public and donor funds.</li> <li>- Thematic Working Groups are time bound.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss emerging issues which require broader consultation but is not covered in the Action Plan.</li> <li>- Although depending on the issue, line ministries call ad hoc meetings or ad hoc SWG</li> <li>- The donor focal point may request a meeting from the line ministry on behalf of the donors as well the hold an ad hoc SWG.</li> </ul>

SWG Membership will be limited to key representatives of Government institutions and representatives of key donors that add significant financial and/or analytical value to the work of the group. The participation of the private sector and civil society institutions will be encouraged in the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action within the limits of SWG operational functionality.

The Sector Working Group is **composed of**:

- **SWG Chair<sup>3</sup>** representing the Line Ministry / Government;
- **SWG Co-Chair** representing the donor community / Donor Focal Point;
- **SWG Focal Point and Secretariat** from the line ministry or agency;
- **SWG members<sup>4</sup>** representing stakeholders in the sector;
- **DSDC and DTS** representative.

**Note:** Participation of representatives of the Ministry of European Integration (for IPA and EI agenda) and the Ministry of Finance (for MTBP) should be given a high consideration when deciding on the composition of the SWG or when the meeting are called.

<sup>3</sup> In order to have an institutionalised and efficient functioning of SWGs, all line ministries have officially appointed the chairman of SWG at the level of Minister or Deputy Minister, and the SWG focal point the Head of Department for European Integration and International Cooperation.

<sup>4</sup> An updated list of all SWGs members and their contact details is provided by DSDC at the beginning of each year, but it can be subject of modification during the year.

**Box 2. SWG composition, roles and responsibilities of members**

Composition	Members
<p><b>SWG Chair and SWG Co-chair</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWG is co-chaired by <b>two senior representatives</b> - one from the <b>Government</b> institution(s) in charge of the sector and one from the <b>donor community</b>. In the case of cross-cutting sectors, where more than just one line ministry is involved, e.g. VET, the Chair(s) may decide to act on a rotating basis.</li> <li>• The Government Chair should be a senior level official (Minister, Deputy Minister or a General Secretary).</li> <li>• The Donor Co-Chair or Donor Focal Point is nominated from a pool of donors contributing significantly to the sector. The Donor Focal Point is selected amongst donors based also on the settings agreed through the FTI-DoL</li> <li>• Donor Focal Point may have a function as the Head of Delegation, Head of Cooperation Office, Head or Deputy Head of Mission and Resident Representative of a development assistance organization</li> </ul>
<p><b>SWG Focal Point and Secretariat<sup>5</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general the Head of the Department for European Integration and International Cooperation or a similar department in the line ministry or agency.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> The SWG Focal Point act as the focal (contact) point with donors for all the projects of the line ministries and relevant agencies. They are officially appointed by the line ministry and agency upon a DSDC request. The heads of departments should be supported by their staff members in the line ministry or agency who can responsible to act as a SWG secretariat representative.

## Roles and responsibilities

- Manage the implementation of the SWG's ToR and an Annual Work Plan.
  - Act as the driving force of the SWG, promoting the principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, results and accountability.
  - Promote convergence between GoA priorities (as articulated in the NSDI, Government Programme, Sector Strategies and Action Plans) and donor commitments and contributions
  - Promote coherence and coordination between the relevant players in the area/sector (GoA and other national institutions, donors, international organizations, NGOs, private sector)
  - Ensure regular reporting of donors on external assistance progress in the sector
  - Encourage sharing of information on budget, drafting laws, strategies and sector guidelines to facilitate alignment.
  - The Donor SWG Co-Chair will consult with relevant donors before and after meetings to ensure they adequately represent their priorities and concerns, and present their inputs.
  - Assess, prepare and implement a capacity development program for their sector ministry/agency to fill identified capacity gaps;
  - Present SWG progress and key issues (conclusions, recommendations, and required follow-up) to the semi-annual Government-Donor Roundtable.
  - Prepare a calendar of field missions, diagnostic reviews and studies planned by donors participating in the sector/thematic area of the SWG.
- 
- Responsible for organisation of SWG meeting, including preparation of invitations, agenda and relevant documents, and following up actions needed after the SWG meetings. Drafts minutes of SWG meetings and finalizes them, securing input from SWG Co-Chairs, DSDC, and SWG members.
  - Responsible for communication and coordination with SWG members, including dissemination of documents.
  - Ensures regular reporting to the line ministry and DSDC on the SWG progress and relevant national sector strategies and plans implementation.
  - In consultation with DSDC, prepares updated donor commitments and disbursements per project/programme for the sector and distribute to the SWG meeting.
  - Ensures SWG members and other relevant parties are kept up to date with local development issues through briefings, regular updates, newsletters, evaluations and analysis as required.
  - Establishes and manages a depository of documents relating to the work of SWGs.
  - Provides support, whenever needed, to ensure that translation and interpretation is available

Composition	Members
<b>Donor Focal Point<sup>6</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Donor Focal Point is assisted by his/her staff members that are in charge of the respective sector</li> </ul>
<b>SWG members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWG members are different representatives of all relevant ministries and agencies as well as donors being active in the specific sector. They should be well informed, technically competent, and of a sufficiently senior level.</li> <li>• On a case-by-case basis, other representatives from trade unions, civil society, etc., may participate, if SWG Co-Chairs agree.</li> </ul>
<b>DSDC &amp; DTS representative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A representative from the DSDC &amp; DTS will participate in each SWG meeting.</li> <li>• He/she may provide on-demand support/advice on matters related to aid/policy management.</li> <li>• DSDC &amp; DTS may convene meetings for the Donor and Government Focal Points, where the latest will report about the SWG progress.</li> </ul>
<b>MoF &amp; MEI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from the MoF and MEI will participate in each SWG meeting.</li> <li>• They may provide support/advice on matters related to MTBP and EU integration</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> The responsibilities of the Donor Focal Point that are listed in this section are the administrative responsibilities in addition to the responsibilities as the Co-chair of the SWG.

## Roles and responsibilities

- Communicates and coordinates with the Line Ministry, and/or with the donors to organize the SWG meeting.
- Reconciles the comments with the donors on different sector strategies and other documents.
- Helps the line ministry mobilise financial or human resources that are needed to manage the SWG, including the needs for the SWG meeting room, photocopying and/or translating the relevant documents, and payment of interpreters.

- All donor engaged in financing projects within a sector will be expected to actively participate in the SWG. SWG membership will enable donors to participate in monitoring sector performance against mutually agreed objectives.
- Members representing a number of institutions, or donors, are expected to consult prior with relevant institutions to garner inputs, and ensure they represent their views and provide feedback after meetings.
- Consistently provides inputs to discussions, comments on documents, suggestions on policy.
- Reports on obstacles in project implementation on a regular basis and other activities.
- Regularly disseminates sector reports, evaluations and other relevant documentation.
- Aligns projects along aid harmonization initiatives in line with the NSDI, strategies sectors, Paris Declaration, and other relevant aid effectiveness principles and mechanisms.

- Responsible for guiding and/or coordinating the development and effective implementation of sector strategies and plans.
- Ensure that each SWG acts as an effective mechanism for aid alignment and co-ordination.
- Ensure division of labour through providing guidance on limiting the number of sectors in which each donor participates as a discrete donor.
- Liaises with relevant SWG counterparts on progress in their respective sectors and to ensure coherence of SWG work within overall coordination efforts and the GoA planning priorities in the broader sector covered by the SWG.

- Ensure the linkage between foreign investments and the MTBP as well as inclusion of foreign investments into the MTBP.
- Ensure that EU Integration priorities are included into the donors financed projects.
- Ensure that IPA programming and the assistance offered by other donors is coordinated

## Size of SWGs

Too many members in a SWG is not conducive to meaningful dialogue. It's suggested that:

- An optimum size to facilitate dialogue is to be about 10 - 15 persons.
- Where it is necessary to have a larger number of members, it would be useful to constitute a “core group” of not more than 10-15 persons which could meet more regularly and report to the plenary. Donor Focal Points in such core groups can keep other donors informed of progress and developments.
- It would also be useful to constitute small “sub-groups” within any SWG to address more detailed and technical issues, either on a time-bound or permanent basis.

## SWGs Support Structures

Significant investment is required if SWGs are to meet objectives and become “a process not an event”. Line ministries/agencies need to agree with partners on the best modalities to enable ministries to lead SWG process as part of the co-ordinated capacity development plan for the sector. Internal and external support mechanisms are required:

*Internally*, a well organized and properly led unit within the lead ministry or agency should organize meetings, keep records or minutes of the meetings of SWGs and subgroups, and conduct line follow-up with line ministries and agencies responsible for carrying out agreed upon actions. The unit will also produce SWG progress reports for dissemination, communicate issues to be resolved by DSDC and serve as the aid coordination focal point. To avoid adding new layers to the existing structure, this secretariat should be an integrated part of the host ministry or agency, being part of the Directory for European Integration and International Cooperation. The unit should also be designated contact point for the lead facilitator or other SWG members on behalf of the Co-Chairs.

*Externally*, some SWGs may need support in its role from the donor focal point aid coordination and SWG secretariat. The lead donor, but also other donors involved in the sector may provide technical support to the ministries or agencies on aid coordination and aid management issues based on need identified and support requested by the Chairs of the SWGs.

# SECTION 2

## MANAGEMENT OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

**2.1** SECTOR WORKING GROUPS CALENDAR

**2.2** INSTRUCTION FOR PREPARATION, ORGANISATION, AND FOLLOW-UP OF SWG MEETINGS

**2.3** SWGs MONITORING AND REPORTING

# MANAGEMENT OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

## 2.1 Sector Working Groups Calendar

Starting as of 2009, a SWGs calendar was established jointly between the DSDC and DTS. The calendar is now produced at the beginning of each year. The 2011 Calendar was introduced to line ministries and donor community in January. According to the calendar, the SWGs should meet at least quarterly. This practice has become obligatory.

Figure 1: Sample of a SWG Calendar Meetings for 2011

CALENDAR OF SWG MEETINGS														
No.	Strategic Priority Divisions (based on NSDI)	Sector Working Group (SWG)	2011											
			Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
1	Infrastructure	Energy												
		Transport												
		Water												
		Environment												
2	Economy & Finance	Economy (SME/Private Sector & Quality technology /Internal Market)												
		ICT				1W								
		Statistics												
		Public Finance		2w										
		Public Procurement *	27/01											
3	Social Development	Social Insurance												
		Social Protection & Inclusion												
		Employment & VET		25/02			20/05			16/09			07/12	
		Gender Equality and Domestic Violence		4W										
		Youth & Culture												
		Education (VET exclusive)					17/05				2 or 3W			
		Health			1W									
4	Justice & Home Affairs International Consortium (Donor Focal Point)	Justice: Legal Reform (including two subSWGs: Juvenile Justice & Prison Reform)												
		Witness Protection												
		Albanian State Police (Police & Organised Crime)			11/03									
		Integrated Border Management & Migration			14/03									
		Community Policing/ Crime Prevention												
		Training & Equipment Assistance			18/03									
		Information Management and Technology												
		Property rights												
		Anti-Corruption												
		Parliament, Elections and Civil Registry				25/04								
		Public Administration		10/02										
		Media and Civil Society												
		5	Urban, Rural & Regional Development	Decentralisation & Regional Development		08/02								
Agriculture, Food & Rural Development				22/02										
Tourism														
Spatial Planning & Housing														

After the publication of the draft calendar in January, the line ministry, agency and lead donor, should agree on:

- The calendar for planning meetings in which week, or even better the dates, when to organize the meetings, and the frequency of meetings.
- It is recommended the preparation of a SWG work plan for the full year. The SWG work plan should ensure that the SWG has an agreed substantive “product” to contribute to the NSDI, MTBP and sector strategies implementation process. Line ministry or agency analyzes the outcomes of the SWG and integrate follow-up at sector level in their work programme.
- The SWGs ToR should be developed and approved immediately for each SWG, in the case they have not been drafted yet. *A draft ToR is provided in Annex 1.*

### **Box 3. Steps to be undertaken to develop the SWGs Calendar**

Steps	Actions	Responsible
<b>Step I</b>	DSDC in consultation with DTS, donors, and line ministries prepare a draft calendar which is shared to all stakeholders.	DSDC & DTS
<b>Step II</b>	Line ministries, agencies and donors agree on the tentative weeks and dates, and frequency of meetings.	Line ministries & DSDC
<b>Step II</b>	Assess the different options in case more meetings are required. Assess if there is overlapping between proposed tentative meetings. By case, DSDC in consultation with other stakeholders, may decide to introduce a new SWG or sub-SWGs.	DSDC & Line ministries & DTS
<b>Step III</b>	Insert the information in the calendar to mark a specific week/month when a SWG meeting is scheduled. Include the specific date when it has been decided. Finalize the calendar and forward it to all Line Ministries and donors for final review and approval. Update the SWG calendar after each meeting has taken place. Publish the updated calendar in the DSDC website.	DSDC
<b>Step IV</b>	Use the calendar for information and monitoring in all SWGs. Make use of calendar to clearly plan other activities by line ministries and donors in order to avoid overlapping, and assure a successful implementation of the SWGs.	SWG members

*Communication and information sharing is very crucial for the success of the implementation of SWGs.* To promote the effective sharing of information between and within Government, and between Government and donors, and among donors, it is recommended the development of a more informative section on SWGs as part of the DSDC or Line Ministries websites that needs to present all the information on SWGs implementation and progress achieved. Currently, this function has been played by the DTS website ([aidharmonisation.org.al](http://aidharmonisation.org.al)), which has been publishing when the next SWG or Sub-Group meeting is scheduled, and has posted the agendas, minutes and relevant documentation from the SWG meetings. Stickiness in information flow and institutional memory are serious challenges within government. An important role may be played by line ministries, and agencies, which can develop a special section in their website on the implementation of SWGs. Sharing of information on progress of SWG with media is encourage, but as the SWG is a technical working group the media should not be part during the meetings.

## 2.2 Instruction for preparation, organisation and follow-up of SWG meetings

**SWG meetings shall be convened by the respective SWG Government Chairperson.** When announcing a meeting, the Chairperson shall always keep in mind the calendar of activities and the tentative date agreed. Careful preparation is needed to ensure the proper and effective operation of the meeting, with a focused agenda and clear plan of the outputs to be delivered after the meeting.

Based on the mandate of the SWG the following **standard instructions** shall be followed when organising SWG meetings. The instructions indicate deadlines which must be respected during the preparation, organization, and follow-up of a meeting. This will allow all the users to organize the meetings properly.

### **General instructions**

- SWG meetings will be usually held in Tirana, should not exceed two hours and preferably within the meeting room of the Government institution that chairs the SWG. Alternatively, the meetings can be held in a hotel conference room or other suitable venues identified by the SWG Co-Chairs.
- SWG Co-Chairs may decide to invite on an *ad hoc* basis other experts or representatives of other institutions/organisations as well as participants from the civil society or local government if they can provide useful input to the meeting. However, such invitations will be occasional and will not be considered as formal endorsement of membership.
- SWG members will limit their participation to one to two participants per department/ organization and will ensure qualified representatives (who can make decisions and actively contribute to the work of the group) attend meetings.

### ***Before a meeting***

A core team comprising of the Co-Chairs, the SWG Focal Point, the SWG Secretariat and DSDC will meet regularly (at least once between formal meetings) to review progress, possible bottlenecks and issues related but not limited to:

- The implementation of NSDI, Government Programme, relevant national and sector strategies and the support of external assistance.
- Donor commitments and disbursements per project/programme. With the assistance of the DSDC, SWG Focal Point will produce an update of donor commitments and disbursements for the sector three working days prior to the meeting and distribute it to all participants for further discussion at the meeting. The lead donor's responsibility is to help the line ministry to keep the information up-to-date and updates should be done at least linked with the bi-annual updating of the DSDC data base.
- The implementation of follow-up action from previous SWG meetings.
- The frequency of meetings and scheduling of upcoming meetings.
- The preparation of the meeting agenda three weeks prior to the anticipated meeting date. The agenda should be focused, reflect current priorities and concerns of both Co-Chairs and members, and contribute to the implementation of main national strategic documents. The SWG Focal Points (on behalf of the SWG Chair) will send the invitation and agenda by email two weeks ahead the meeting to all members and may post it in the ministry website, along with the relevant background documents. **In Annex 2 and 3 are provided templates for preparing SWG Meeting Invitation and Agenda.**
- The preparation and dissemination of any other relevant information two weeks ahead of a meeting.
- Planning meeting logistics including the need for an interpreter (Albanian-English) to ensure full participation of all members.
- All participants should send to SWG Secretariat any presentations or other relevant supporting documentation within three working days of the meeting.
- It is recommended the preparation of a calendar for planned meetings, missions, assessment and evaluations in the sector encouraging donors to provide the respective information and facilitating co-ordinated activities such as joint missions, if required.

### ***During a meeting***

The hosting institution will ensure the meeting room is ready (including technical requirements such as seating arrangements, projectors, and microphones) half an hour before the meeting.

- SWG Secretariat will ensure that a copy of the agenda is distributed to all participants and any supporting documentation that was not disseminated at least one working day before the meeting. Voluminous attachments will not be distributed if disseminated at least one day prior to the meeting. Members will be expected to have read such materials and prepared their comments prior to the meeting.
- The Co-Chairs will provide a brief introduction (10 minutes) to the meeting and introduce the agenda, asking members if they wish to add any other items, and approve the agenda.
- The Co-Chairs will refer to action points from the previous meeting (and any other relevant meetings such as those of related SWGs) and outline progress made. Points requiring further action will be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

- Based on the list of projects/programmes distributed by SWG Secretariat prior to the meeting, the Co-Chairs, SWG Focal Point, and donors will outline progress in relation to donor commitments and disbursements and national sector plans and strategies and ask participants for feedback and indications of future commitments.
- The Co-Chairs will ask members to provide new analytical materials (assessments, studies, reports) and information on recent or upcoming missions and new arrivals since the last meetings.
- The Co-Chairs will lead discussions on Program Based Approaches and Sector Wide Approaches and other aid harmonization initiatives as appropriate.
- The Co-Chairs will ask members to provide feedback on possible obstacles in project/program implementation.
- All participants should be provided with an opportunity to inform the SWG of important developments.
- The Co-Chairs will guide discussion on cross-cutting issues in particular gender, youth, disabled persons and any other issues that may cut across other sectors.
- The Co-Chairs will enforce time management of the meeting (two-hour maximum).
- The Co-Chairs will act as facilitators by providing sufficient room and opportunity for focused discussion to all members, asking prompting questions as needed, clarifying and summarizing issues as necessary. If consensus is not reached by all members on certain issues, differences in opinion will be recorded in the minutes. Wherever possible, the Co-Chairs should try to formulate action points with clearly assigned roles, responsibilities and timeframes.
- The Co-Chairs will wrap up the meeting by summarizing the agreed action points from the meeting (what, who, when). These action points will be recorded in the minutes.

### ***After a meeting***

- SWG Secretariat will produce the ***draft minutes*** in English and Albanian within ***ten working days*** after the meeting. Minutes of the meeting should be kept as concise as possible, should highlight essential information and capture key elements of the discussion, including if relevant, possible points of agreement or disagreement on issues discussed. The minutes should omit long introductory statements and the exchange of formal salutations. **A template for preparing minutes of a SWG meeting is provided in Annex 4.**
- The Co-Chairs, SWG Focal Point and all speakers should review the minutes within ten working days of receipt. If no comments are received by that date, the minutes will be considered final.
- SWG Secretariat will distribute the minutes and supporting documents to the larger group immediately and will post them, together with other documents of SWG meeting, on the line ministry's website within one working day.
- The Co-Chairs, SWG Focal Point, SWG Secretariat, and DSDC should follow up on action points from the meeting. If no visible action has been taken on the action points within one month of the meeting, SWG Secretariat should send a reminder to the Co-Chairs, SWG Focal Point and DSDC on action that needs to be taken.
- At the end of each year the SWG Secretariat should produce a short summary (two three pages maximum) in English and Albanian on the progress of SWG during that year. **A template for preparing SWG meetings progress report is provided in Annex 5. A checklist for aid coordination meetings is provided in Annex 7.**

## 2.3 SWGs monitoring and reporting

Timely and reliable reporting is important for effective planning, optimal allocation of resources, and performance evaluation of SWGs. In the spirit of enhancing these activities, the DSDC is requiring donors to provide biannual reports on disbursement and projections for all donor funding projects and programmes.

To alleviate the burden of data collection on Government institutions and donor officials, DSDC in collaboration with Ministry of Finance is leading the design and development of two information systems in support of its multi-faceted mandate for strategic planning, policy analysis, monitoring, evaluation and donor coordination: the Integrated Planning System Information System (IPSIS) and the External Assistance Management Information System (EAMIS) linked with the MTBP and Treasury systems. Representatives of line ministries and donors are expected submit timely aid flow data directly into EAMIS, which are going to be reviewed by DSDC. EAMIS will be also designed to assist SWGs strengthen the scope of their own analysis of aid flows at sector level.

In an effort to broaden the scope of this exercise, the Government of Albania shall also co-ordinate regular aid monitoring reviews with donors. The first objective of these reviews will be to give all donors an opportunity to assess both ongoing and recently finished projects, in terms of achieving outputs and expected outcomes. The second objective will be to assess the extent of implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda. These reviews are also expected to facilitate discussion on lessons learned from project implementation, and contribute to the HAP agenda to enable the Government of Albania to chart a way forward with donors.

Based on analysis from the previous sections, the main reporting responsibilities of SWG members are presented in Box 4.

#### Box 4. SWG composition and reporting responsibilities of members

Composition	Reporting responsibilities
<p><b>SWG Chair and Co-chair</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on the implementation of SWG Calendar and the Annual Work Plan.</li> <li>• Report on the SWG implementation progress, issues and follow-up actions required by specific institution, and identify those issues that may need to be taken forward for dialogue at higher-level forum as Donor-Government Round Table.</li> <li>• Ensure regular reporting of donors on external assistance progress in the sector.</li> <li>• Encourage reporting on the calendar of field missions, diagnostic reviews and studies planned by donors participating in the SWG.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SWG Focal Point and Secretariat</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures regular reporting to the line ministry and DSDC on the activities of the SWG and on the implementation of relevant national sector strategies and plans.</li> <li>• Ensures that SWG members are kept up to date with local development issues through briefings, regular updates, newsletters, papers, evaluations and analysis as required.</li> <li>• Offers support to the Chairperson in preparing different reports and documents.</li> <li>• Report on changes that may be provided by donors on progress in relation to donor commitments and disbursements and indications of future commitments.</li> <li>• At the end of each year prepares a short summary (two-three pages maximum) in English and Albanian on the progress of SWG during that year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>DSDC &amp; DTS representative</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for reporting on SWGs implementation progress, SWGs calendar and Annual Work Plan to GoA, and donors.</li> <li>• Reporting on coordination the effective implementation of sector strategies.</li> <li>• Ensure that each SWG acts as an effective mechanism for aid alignment and co-ordination;</li> <li>• Reporting on the division of labour among donors and harmonisation of their financing for sectors through limiting the number of sectors in which they are involved.</li> <li>• Reporting on implementation of aid effectiveness principles and mechanisms in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the NSDI, and sector priorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MoF &amp; MEI Representatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting on the inclusion of foreign investments into the MTB.</li> <li>• Reporting on the progress of IPA Program and implementation of the EU Integration priorities through donor-financed projects.</li> </ul>

# ANNEXES

**ANNEX 1.** TEMPLATE FOR GENERIC TOR OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

**ANNEX 2.** TEMPLATE FOR SWG MEETING'S INVITATION

**ANNEX 3.** TEMPLATE FOR SWG MEETING AGENDA

**ANNEX 4.** TEMPLATE FOR SWG MEETING MINUTES

**ANNEX 5.** TEMPLATE FOR PROGRESS REPORT OF SWG MEETING

**ANNEX 6.** TEMPLATE FOR LIST OF SWG MEMBERS

**ANNEX 7.** CHECKLIST FOR AID COORDINATION MEETINGS

**ANNEX 8.** LEGAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE SWGS

## Annex 1. TEMPLATE FOR GENERIC TOR OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

### ***Introduction***

In the spirit of the Paris Declaration for increased aid effectiveness in support to country's governance and development performance, the partner representative members of SWG engage in the establishment of mechanisms for coordination, harmonization and alignment of their work in the sector.

### ***Objectives of the Sector Working Group***

The goal of the SWG is to provide an opportunity for dialogue in addressing current and emerging challenges in the sector reforms so as to ensure effective coordination, collaboration and networking of all stakeholders.

### ***The main objectives of the SWG will be:***

1. To promote and support the implementation, regular monitoring and evaluation of progress in the sector reforms within the context of NSDI, in accordance with determined key outputs set out (including projects and programs).
2. To develop an overall framework within which to respond to the sector development challenges, ensure that assessments, missions, programmes designed, etc. fall within this framework and are in accordance with internationally accepted standards and best practices.
3. To encourage the sharing, analysis and dissemination of strategic information on progress and challenges amongst all stakeholders.
4. To advocate priorities on the Government agenda.
5. To promote coordination, harmonization and complementarities of donors' interventions and its alignment with the country's priorities.
6. To maintain a database of stakeholder activities (who is doing what, where and when) and ensure that regular activity reports are shared with all stakeholders.
7. To provide feedback to the DSDC/DTS/DiP's meetings to ensure inter-sector coordination on cross-cutting issues.

### ***Expected results and outputs***

1. Improved government leadership and coordination capacities.
2. Strategic issues are discussed.
3. Ministry priorities and funding needs are presented and discussed.
4. Joint assessment reports prepared and discussed wherever possible.
5. Terms of References for possible joint missions developed and participation therein.
6. Assessment reports disseminated and recommendations made.
7. Adequate advocacy for related issues to all stakeholders.
8. Information sharing and dissemination mechanism in place and operational.
9. Regular updates on sector issues shared the GoA and donors.
10. Improved/efficient programme implementation.

### ***Participants to the SWG***

1. Representation of Central Government
2. Representation of Donor Community
3. Representation of relevant government institutions and agencies
4. Civil society (whenever is needed).

### ***Management of the SWG - roles and responsibilities***

1. The lead of SWG is with the corresponding ministries and respective donor focal point.
2. The Agenda for SWG meetings is prepared by the line ministry, or government agency, in consultation with the donor focal point, DSDC/DTS.
3. Frequency: SWG meetings shall be organized in respect with the SWG calendar, set by DSDC and DTS, and agreed by between line ministries, or agencies, and donors. Technical Level Discussion on specific issues can be taken up in ad hoc working groups.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

The Survey on Monitoring Paris Declaration, as well as other monitoring & evaluation systems to be agreed by the SWG members.

### ***Revision of the SWG Terms of Reference***

This ToR can be modified at any time based on the recommendation and consensus of the SWG members. Its content can be modified to reflect the specific objectives of each SWG/sector. It will be open to review and addressed as an agenda item in the first meeting of the SWG each year.

## Annex 2. TEMPLATE FOR SWG MEETING`s INVITATION

Invitation of SWG is sent by email from the SWG Focal Point (on behalf of Government Chairperson) to all the SWG members. A draft email is provided below, but it can be modified according to the case.

**From:** "Email of the SWG Government Chairperson"/ or SWG Focal Point  
**To:** "Emails of the SWG Members"  
**Subject:** Invitation for Participation at SWG on "Name of SWG"  
**Attachments:** "Agenda"; "Other documents according to the topic of SWG"

Dear All,

On behalf of the organising group, I am pleased to invite you in the Sector Working Group on "**Name of the SWG**". The meeting will be held on "**date**", between "**include the timing**", hosted by the "**include name of line ministry or agency**".

The meeting will be co-chaired by the "**Name of the SWG Chair**", and the "**Name of SWG Co-Chair**", as a Donor Focal Point.

The meeting will take place at the premises of "**name of location and address**".

Enclosed, please find the agenda for this meeting. Main topics to be discussed during the meeting encompass "**including the main topics of agenda**".

Looking forward to hearing from you with a confirmation note.

With respect,  
"**Name of the SWG Chairperson**"

## Annex 3. TEMPLATE FOR SWG MEETING AGENDA

### ***Sector Working Group on “Name of SWG”***

Venue: “Name of Location”

“Date and timing”

#### AGENDA

- 10.00 - 10.05**    **Welcome Note** - Outline and goals of the meeting - Discussion on the Agenda  
*(SWG Chair)*
- 10.05 - 10.10**    Follow-up on actions needed and progress achieved from previous meetings  
Any comments to the minutes of previous SWG meeting  
*(SWG Co-Chair)*
- 10.10 - 11.20**    Topic 1. “Name of topic”<sup>7</sup>  
“Name of expert to present the topic”  
Discussion on Topic 1  
Conclusion and actions needed to follow up in the future
- Topic 2. “Name of topic”  
“Name of expert to present the topic”  
Discussion on Topic 2  
Conclusion and actions needed to follow up in the future
- Topic 3. “Name of topic”  
“Name of expert to present the topic”  
Discussion on Topic 3  
Conclusion and actions needed to follow up in the future
- 11.20 - 11.50**    Free discussions on related topics or other topics related to donor and policy coordination in the sector  
*“SWG members”*
- 11.50 - 12.00**    Closing remarks - next steps to follow up  
*“SWG Chair and SWG Co-Chair”*

<sup>7</sup> It is recommended to have a maximum two to three topics per meeting in order to have an efficient SWG meeting.

## Annex 4. TEMPLATE FOR SWG MEETING MINUTES

### ***Sector Working Group on “Name of SWG”<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Meeting “No.”***

<b>Venue:</b>	“Name of the venue”
<b>Date:</b>	“Date and timing of the meeting”
<b>Co-chaired by:</b>	“Name and surname of SWG Chair” and “Name and surname of SWG Co-Chair”
<b>Key note speakers:</b>	“Name and surname of the speakers for topic 1” “Name and surname of the speakers for topic 2” “Name and surname of the speakers for topic 3” Other key note speaker who may participate according to the case and topic

#### ***1. Opening and outline of goal of the meeting***

“A short description of the goal of the meeting, and any relevant statement from the SWG Chairperson”

#### ***2. Discussion on follow-up on actions needed and progress achieved from previous meetings***

“Please describe in short, if there is any discussion on the follow-up actions needed and progress achieved from previous meetings. At the same time can be mentioned if there is any comment made on the previous minutes of SWG meeting”

#### ***3. Topics in order of discussion during the meeting***

##### ***Topic 1. “Name of the topic”***

“A short description on the first topic discussed”

“A short briefing of the discussions made by other participants of the SWG, without focusing on the name of persons and the order of their discussions. An attention should be provided on making a summary according to the issues and ensuring a sequencing of presenting the issues.”

##### ***Conclusions and recommendations for follow up actions on the topic***

“A short description on the conclusions and recommendations for follow up actions on Topic 1”

“A short briefing of the conclusions and recommendations for follow up actions made by other participants of the SWG, without focusing on the name of persons and the order of presenting them. An attention should be provided on making a summary of conclusions and recommendations and ensuring sequencing and linkages between them.”

“Attention should be provided to presenting clear recommendations and follow-up actions linked with concrete names of institutions and individuals who need to be contacted or reacting on the actions and the timeframe.”

<sup>8</sup> SWG Secretariat will produce the draft minutes in English and Albanian within five working days after the meeting. Minutes of the meeting should be kept as concise as possible, should highlight essential information and capture key elements of the discussion, including if relevant, possible points of agreement or disagreement on issues discussed. The minutes should omit long introductory statements and the exchange of formal salutations.

***1. Free discussions on related topics or other topics related to donor and policy coordination in the sector***

“A short description on any other important discussion or conclusion provided during this session.”

***2. Closing remarks - next steps to follow up***

“A short description and approval on the main conclusions and follow-up actions needed until the next SWG meeting.”

**Annexes:**

Annex 1. SWG Meeting list of participants.

Annex 2. SWG Agenda of the current meeting approved by all SWG members.

Annex 3. Minutes of the previous SWG Meeting approved by all SWG members.

## Annex 5. TEMPLATE FOR PROGRESS REPORT OF SWG MEETING

### **Sector Working Group on “Name of SWG”<sup>9</sup>**

### **Progress Report covering the period 1 January - 31 December “YEAR”**

#### Introductory note

This reporting format tries to harmonize reporting on SWGs implementation progress. The format should be prepared by the SWG Focal Point and SWG Secretariat under the guidance of SWG Co-Chairs. The final version should be approved by all SWG members before is sent to DSDC.

The report should not exceed 2-3 pages and should be prepared in English and Albanian language.

The objective of this report is to provide the DSDC with a full picture of the activity carried out by the SWGs, as well as bring up to the attention on relevant issues which need to be taken into consideration from other institutions at central level and donors.

DSDC will also use SWG progress reports to monitor coordination of development and effective implementation of NSDI and sector strategies, effective external assistance alignment and coordination, division of labour among donors, implementation of IPS and Paris Declaration, and provide recommendations for further improvements.

#### **Introduction**

This section of the progress report will focus on the short presentation of meetings held during the reporting period, mentioning only the information on presenting the dates and number of SWG meetings held during the year and a sentence on the scope of each meeting.

#### **A. Summary of SWG activities and outputs**

“A short list of the SWG meetings held during the reporting period.”

<b>Date</b> (dd-mm-yy)	<b>Minutes</b> (y/n, if y pls attach)	<b>GoA participation</b> (no.+ top: m, dm, dir, gs)	<b>Donor participation</b> (donors by org/country)	<b>Other participants</b> (no. experts; no. NGO; no. NGO)	<b>Total no. participants</b> (no.)
e.g. 18.01.08	e.g. Yes	e.g. dm, dir, gs (MoEFWA, MoAFCP and DSDC)	e.g. WB, ADA, GIZ, KfW, OSCE, Netherlands, SDC, UNDP, USAID	e.g. SNV	e.g. 31

#### **B. Summary of SWG activities and outputs**

“A short description on the SWG activities per each meeting and outputs produced, based the main activities carried out by SWG, the minutes of meeting and agenda.”

<sup>9</sup> At the end of each year the SWG Secretariat should produce a short summary (two-page maximum) in English and Albanian on the progress of SWG during that year.

## **C. Summary of SWG main conclusion and recommendations**

### **1. Conclusions**

“A short description on the conclusions from the SWG meetings based on the minutes of meeting produced for each meeting”

### **2. Recommendations**

“A short description on the recommendations for follow up actions from SWG meetings based on the minutes of meeting produced for each meeting”

### **3. Overview of key issues for presentation at the Government-Donor Roundtable**

“This section should provide the basis for a brief summary on the SWG progress to be presented during the Government-Donor Roundtable on the key issues (conclusions, recommendations, required follow-up) that needed to be presented and discussed at the highest level of discussion between GoA and donors.”

## **D. Challenges and obstacles**

1. Challenges and obstacles to implementation against NSDI objectives at the policy, strategy, programme/project level (including legislative aspects)
2. Obstacles related to the Government of Albania
3. Obstacles related to the Donors specific activity in the country

## **E. New analytical material, as reports, diagnostic reviews, country or sector studies and strategies, country or sector evaluation, cross-cutting analytical work such as gender assessments, and donor progress reports.**

SWG will enlist and collect copies of the new analytical materials to be provided through a CD or via email to DSDC.

## **F. Recent and upcoming missions and events**

Country/ Agency	Field/sector of the mission	Objective of the mission	Arrival date	Final report available on

### **Annexes:**

Annex 1. Minutes of meeting for each SWG for the reporting period

Annex 2. List of SWG members for the reporting period

Annex 3. SWG Members attendance list for the reporting period

Annex 4. Copies of the new analytical materials to be provided through a CD or via email to DSDC.

# Annex 6. TEMPLATE FOR LIST OF SWG MEMBERS

Sector Working Group on “Name of SWG”  
List of the Members

Nr	Name of Representative	Institution	Position	Telephone	Mobile	Email
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						

## Annex 7. CHECKLIST FOR AID COORDINATION MEETINGS

BEFORE A MEETING	
<b><i>Core team (SWG Co-Chairs, SWG Donor Focal Point, SWG Secretariat and DSDC) meets regularly (at least once between two formal meetings) to review progress in:</i></b>	
The implementation of NSDI, Government Programme, relevant national and sector strategies and the support of external assistance.	
Donor commitments and disbursements per project/programme. With the assistance of the DSDC, SWG Focal Point will produce an update of donor commitments and disbursements for the sector three working days prior to the meeting and distribute it to all participants for further discussion at the meeting.	
The implementation of relevant follow-up actions from previous meetings.	
The frequency of meetings and scheduling upcoming meetings.	
The preparation of the agenda three weeks prior to the anticipated meeting date.	
The preparation and dissemination of relevant information 2 weeks ahead of meeting. The SWG Chair will send the invitation and agenda by email two weeks ahead the meeting to all members and may post it on the ministry website, along with the relevant background documents.	
Planning meeting logistics (include need for interpreter).	

30 MINUTES BEFORE THE MEETING	
Hosting institution to ensure meeting room is ready (sufficient seating, projector, microphones).	
SWG Secretariat to ensure agenda and relevant attachments are distributed to participants.	

<b>DURING A MEETING</b>	
<b>Co-Chairs to:</b>	
Provide brief introduction and present agenda.	
Present progress on follow-up actions from previous meetings.	
Outline progress in relation to donor commitments and disbursements.	
Ask members to provide new analytical materials and information on missions.	
Lead discussions on SWAP/PBA and harmonization initiatives.	
Ask members to provide feedback on possible obstacles in project implementation.	
Lead discussion on cross-cutting issues.	
Enforce time management.	
Act as facilitators, encourage discussion, summarize and clarify issues.	
<b>Wrapping up meeting</b>	
Co-Chair to summarize action points from meeting (what, who, when).	

<b>AFTER A MEETING</b>	
SWG Secretariat will produce the draft minutes in English and Albanian within ten working days after the meeting.	
The Co-Chairs, SWG Focal Point and all SWG members should review the minutes within ten working days of receipt. If no comments are received by that date, the minutes will be considered final and posted in the ministry website.	
The Co-Chairs, SWG Focal Point, SWG Secretariat, and DSDC should follow up on action from the previous meetings.	

## Annex 8. LEGAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE SWGS

### 1. Main legal framework regulating Sector Working Groups

The legal framework regulating the activity of SWGs includes:

- **DCM No.692, dated 10.11.2005 on the Integrated Planning System (IPS).** IPS ensures the coherence and the effective management of the Government strategic processes in respect of cooperation, coordination and efficient management of the medium-term budgeting and the orientation of external assistance, in line with the priorities of the country's development.
- **PM Order No.78, of 8.05.2006 for the establishment of the Groups on Strategy, Budget and Integration (GSBI)** in all line ministries. These working groups, are headed by the Minister, and are responsible for the implementation of the IPS in general, policies, domestic and external funding coordination in particular on issues related to the formulation of sector/cross-sector strategies, and in preparing Medium-Term Budget Program (MTBP). The GSBI is the main institutional framework that connects line ministries with the Sector Working Groups, donors and with the DSDC, through the IPS Coordinator (who is the General Secretary).
- **PM Order No.134, dated 12.06.2006,** clearly defines the main phases of consulting the NSDI, sector and cross-cutting strategies and relevant action plans. An important part of this process was enhancing consultations through the SWGs.
- **DCM No.342, dated 12.03.2008 on the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2007-2013,** which establishes the Government of Albania (GoA) medium to long term priorities and strategic goals for all sectors.
- **DCM No.775, dated 24.09.2010, on the Management of Foreign Financing in the Republic of Albania,** aims to ensure the management of foreign financing as an integral and/or reported part of the budget system of the Republic of Albania.

**Box 1. Specific provisions related to SWGs provided in above-mentioned legal documents**

Process	Specific provisions
<p><b>Integrated Planning System (IPS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSDC will serve as a point of reference for the donor coordination;</li> <li>• DSDC will closely collaborate with bilateral and multilateral donors in order to ensure that the external assistance projects are aligned to the government priorities, and that the donors’ requirements are effectively and expeditiously handled;</li> <li>• DSDC will conduct researches, assessments of the opinion of ministries and consultations with the CoM on each framework/strategy of donors requiring a governmental review;</li> <li>• DSDC will carry out the supervision and initial assessment of programs or projects related to the effectiveness of external assistance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Groups on Strategy, Budget and Integration (GSBI)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The General Secretary at each line ministry acts as coordinator for the IPS. She/he maintains regular contacts and informs DSDC on the progress of implementing IPS;</li> <li>• GSBI identifies the tasks within the departments of the Ministry in order to prepare proposals in accordance with relevant requirements to enable the use of external assistance, in the context of IPS;</li> <li>• GSBI provides strategic orientations regarding the formulation of sector strategies, in accordance with IPS processes and strategic documents, and in line with instructions issued by the DSDC;</li> <li>• GSBI co-ordinates the work on sectoral strategies listed in the Guidelines for the Preparation of the NSDI;</li> <li>• GSBI proposes to the Minister the establishment of working groups on sectoral/program level and elaborates ‘Terms of Reference’ for the functioning of these groups.</li> <li>• GSBI also suggests to the Minister donors who can be part of the SWGs;</li> <li>• On issues related to the formulation of sector/cross-cutting GSBI serves as the main link between the central institutions, the SWGs and DSDC;</li> <li>• GSBI proposes measures within the Ministry to draft the plan for foreign aid, in accordance with the sectoral strategy and will submit this plan to the Minister;</li> </ul>

Process	Specific provisions
<p><b>National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government is committed to enhancing transparency. Participation in the formulation of strategic plans will enable policy choices to be better informed. Accountability in the use of public resources is a fundamental step toward democratisation and improved governance.</li> <li>• The preparation of sector &amp; crosscutting strategies was seen as an opportunity for ministries to reshape their relationship with their donor counterparts. Advanced drafts of the sector and crosscutting strategies were shared with representatives of the donor community with an active interest in the respective policy areas.</li> <li>• Sectoral Advisory Groups will be active not only on preparation and review of sectoral strategies, but may act as a permanent advisory boards for the Ministry for long-term planning issues. GoA should consider introducing legislation to have a permanent advisory structure in each sector. This group will inform GoA on developments in the sector, will draw conclusions from the implementation of policies and submit recommendations. A regularly report on developments in the sector will be an important factor contributing to revisions and changes of sector strategies in the future.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Decision of Council of Ministers on the Management of Foreign Financing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSDC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of European Integration, co-ordinates the process of identification, discussion and selection of strategic priorities, through consultation with line ministries and other independent central institutions;</li> <li>• The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), through mechanisms and procedures defined in the IPS, guides the long- and medium-term external assistance programmes and approves the list of new priority projects in each sector. The list of priority projects approved in principle by SPC shall be further used by the Ministry of Finance and DSDC in their negotiations with lenders/donors for new financing</li> </ul>

## 2. Main Policy Framework and Institutional Structures Related to SWGs

### 2.1 IPS related processes and structures

**Integrated Planning System** is the key national decision-making system for determining strategic direction and the allocation of resources. The aim of the IPS is to provide a broad planning framework within which the Government's core policy and financial planning processes function in a coherent, efficient and integrated manner. The core IPS processes include:

- **The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI)**, which establishes the GoA's medium to longer term goals and strategies for all sectors. It synthesizes the strategic priorities defined in 38 strategies (20 sectoral and 18 sub-sectoral) prepared by the Line Ministries.
- **The Medium-Term Budget Program (MTBP)**, which requires each ministry to develop a 3-year plan to deliver program outputs to achieve its policy objectives and goals within the ministry's expenditure ceiling, as set out in the government's fiscal plan.
- **European Integration process.** National Plan for Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (NPISAA) is drafted with a specific goal: reflecting on and monitoring the obligations of Albanian institutions stemming from the Stabilisation and Association process

The **Strategic Planning Committee**, established under IPS, is an inter-ministerial committee chaired by the Prime Minister that reviews and endorses the government's policy and fiscal priorities. This involves: (i) setting the policy priorities and strategic directions within a sound fiscal framework at the beginning of the annual planning process; (ii) deciding on the cross-sector resource allocation (MTBP preparation ceilings) over the medium term; (iii) reviewing the draft MTBP prior to the preparation of the state budget; (iv) receiving regular reports on progress against key IPS commitments.

The **Government Modernization Committee** is an inter-ministerial committee that approves IPS methodologies and ensures that the technical elements of IPS will effectively and efficiently deliver the government's priorities.

The **Groups for Strategy, Budgeting and Integration (GSBI)** were established in each line Ministry since May 2006. GSBI manages, assures the quality, and monitors the implementation of IPS within the ministry. The Group is led by the Minister, and comprises the Deputy Ministers, the General Secretary, all General Directors and the Heads of the Programme Management Teams. Each GSBI has a technical secretariat and may create additional working groups at the sector or programme level for more focused work, for example, the Programme Management Teams used in the MTBP process.

The **General Secretary** is the IPS coordinator for the line ministry. The coordinator serves as the ministry contact point for DSDC at the Council of Ministers on IPS related issues.

## 2.2 Main Strategic Policy Documents Related to SWGs Operations

Main policy documents guiding the SWGs include:

### Main documents guiding the SWGs

- NSDI 2007-2013 and NSDI Annual Progress Report
- Government Programme
- MTBP, and Policy Priorities Note reflected in MTBP
- Performance Assessment Matrix reports and indicators
- Ministry Integrated Plans and Ministry Monitoring Plans
- Strategies, priorities & indicators falling within SWG
- External Assistance Orientation Document
- External Assistance Progress Report
- Sector specific project/programme list <sup>10</sup>
- Documents presented and issued during Annual Sector Monitoring Meetings
- Documents/tasks issued at the semi-annual Government-Donor Roundtable
- SWGs calendar
- A calendar of planned meetings, missions, assessment and evaluations <sup>11</sup>

### Other documents related to SWGs operations

- SAA and National Plan for the Implementation of SAA
- EC Progress Report
- Information on IPA projects within the specific sectors which cover a specific SWG area
- Strategic Coherence Framework <sup>12</sup>
- Annual IPS calendar
- Integrated Planning System Manual
- Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
- Harmonization Action Plan and its progress reports
- Memorandum of Understanding on Fast Tracking Initiative on Division of Labour
- Framework Agreement and Cooperation protocols with donors
- Millennium Development Goals reports
- Documents prepared by a specific SWG in previous meetings
- Other specific sector related studies, reviews, assessment and evaluation reports
- Legal documents related to SWGs (DCM No.692, dated 10.11.2005; OPM No.78, dated 8.05.2006; OPM No.134, dated 12.06.2006; DCM No.775, dated 24.09.2010)

<sup>10</sup> List should/could be used as reference for new studies, etc. to avoid overlaps and ensure that use of existing knowledge.

<sup>11</sup> Calendar should facilitate jointly carried out or coordinated activities to relieve the burden on the national stakeholders by to many donor activities.

<sup>12</sup> Subsequent to joint meetings with the European Commission in January 2010, the GoA agreed a work plan for the preparation of a Strategic Coherence Framework (SCF) and two Operational Programmes, respectively for IPA Component III and IPA Component IV. The work plan and the final version of SCF are expected to be sent to the Commission on June 2011. The SCF articulates a coherent linkage between relevant policies and strategies of the GoA and the IPA Component III and IPA Component IV potential areas of intervention.

As mentioned below at the documents describing the proceeding of SWGs, it is important to notice that all the above-mentioned documents and other important notes issued in the course of the year must be made available to all SWG members. Whenever possible all documentation should be copied on a CD disk and distributed to all SWG members, or attached as a separate file and distributed by E-mail. The file should be updated frequently. A master copy of the file should be kept by the SWG Secretariat.

### **2.3 Government - Donor Coordination Framework**

The Government has been increasing ownership and its role in coordination of external assistance since the establishment in 2005 of the **Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC)**. DSDC central coordination role is among others to ensure organic links between external assistance main policy and financial processes of the government.

The donor community - known as **Development and Integrations Partners (DIP)** in Albania - has reciprocated this effort through **Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS)**, which helps the Government to have streamlined communication with the donor community.

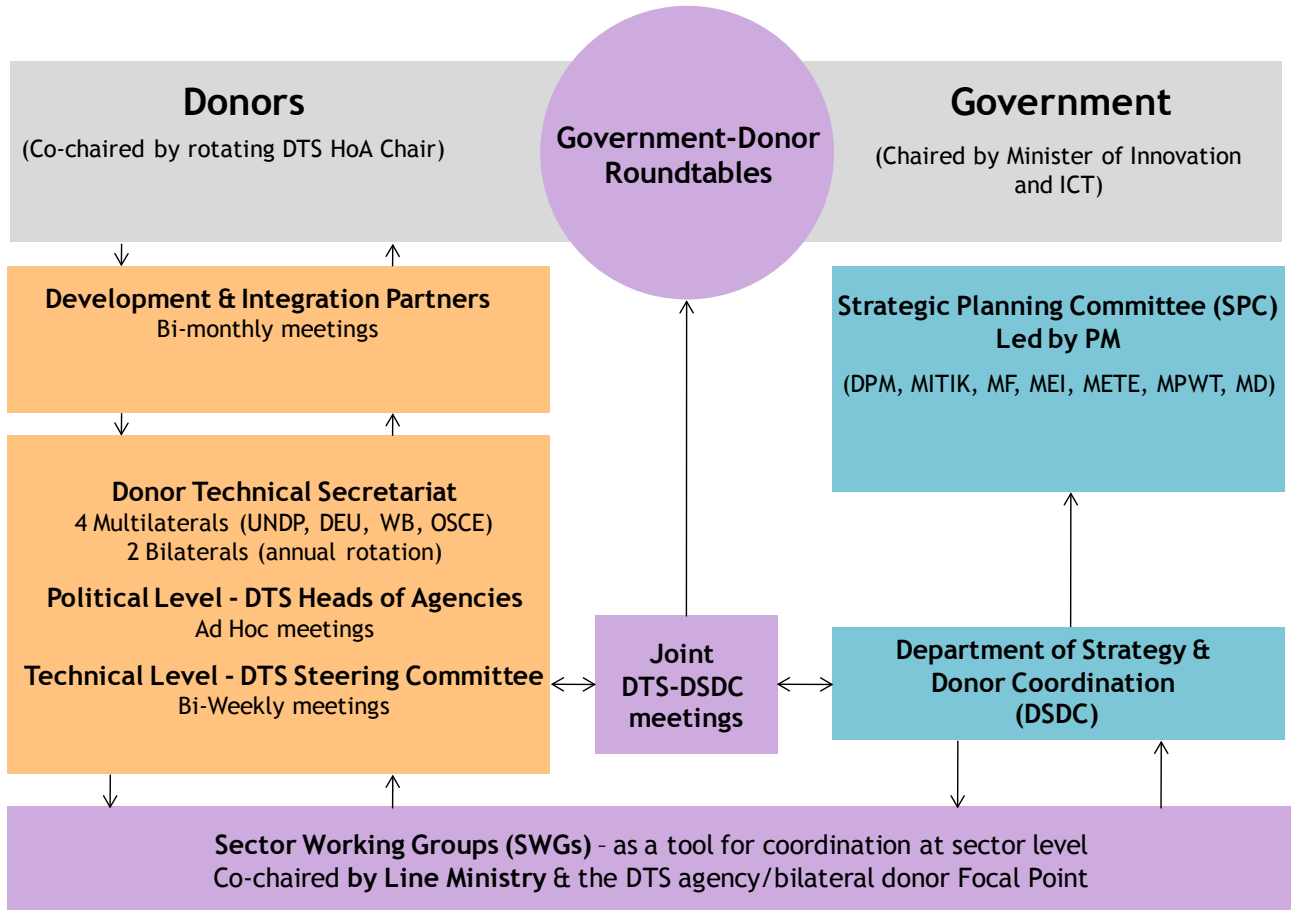
**Donor-Government Round Table**, is the highest level forum, organized by DSDC and DTS on semi-annual meetings to ensure that sector-based ministry-donor groups are effectively supporting the government's priorities and its external assistance strategy. The meetings represent the most important forum for the dialogue between the Government of Albania and donor community in addressing issues related to aid effectiveness.

**The Harmonization Action Plan (HAP)** to implement the commitments of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), has been prepared jointly by DSDC and DTS by June 2009 and endorsed by the Government and donors in November 2009. The HAP aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of external assistance, and is centred on the principles of supporting country ownership, aligning donor support to the government policy priorities, using government systems where feasible and where possible harmonizing and simplifying donors' own procedures.

The **Fast-Tracking Initiative (FTI) on Division of Labour (DoL)** amongst European donors in Albania, as an instrument of donor mapping and coordination, was introduced in Albania in February 2009. The FTI DoL intends to support the government in the process of implementing in-country division of labour with ultimate goal to achieve better development results through more effective aid. Main aim is to increase the coherence of the EU assistance, decrease overlap and transaction costs.

Below is given a schematic view of the Government-Donor Co-ordination structures in Albania.

## DONOR COORDINATION STRUCTURE



Note: DTS=Donor Technical Secretariat, DTS HoA=Donor Technical Secretariat Heads of Agencies, DEU=Delegation of European Commission, DPM=Deputy Prime Minister, MITIK=Minister of Innovation and ICT, METE=Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy, MPWT=Ministry of Public Works and Transport, MD= Ministry of Defence.





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