



ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

July 1st, 2017 – June 30th, 2018

Submitted in 16 October, 2018



Acronyms

AB	Advisory Board
AU	Administrative Unit
CfA	Call for Applications
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
GMS	Grant Management System
GFB	Grants and Fellowship Board
LA	LevizAlbania
LogFrame	Logical Framework
NPO	Non-for-Profit Organisation
OSFA	Open Society Foundation for Albania
PA	Partners Albania
ProDoc	Project Document
TAR	Territorial Administrative Reform
SEI	Strategic Enabling Instrument
YPO	Yearly Plan of Operations

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Project Snapshot

Country: Albania	Name of project: LevizAlbania
Goal	Albanian population benefits from an improved democracy at local level
Outcomes (<i>Project Objective, Purpose</i>)	Outcome 1: Civic actors influence local priority setting, decision-making and oversight of local authorities Outcome 2: Civil society actors initiate and support selected structural changes to improve democracy at local level
Project phase duration: July 1 st , 2015 – June 30 th , 2019	Reporting period: July 1 st , 2017 – June 30 th , 2018
Budget for the reporting period: July 1 st , 2017 - June 30 th , 2018	2,824,741 CHF
Information on contributions of partners and/or other donors (calculated in CHF) N/A	
Implementing organizations:	OSFA, Co-PLAN, Partners Albania
Main national partner: Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA)	Main international partners: N/A
Team Leader: Valbona Kuko	Project staff number: 10
Annual Report submitted to the Swiss Embassy on: 16 October 2018	

Executive summary

This report covers the activities implemented by LevizAlbania (LA) project in the period July 1st, 2017 - June 30th, 2018, based on Yearly Plan of Operations 3 (YPO), 2017 - 2018. In three years of project implementation, LevizAlbania's intervention approach had simultaneously addressed the overall enabling environment for local democracy, while fostering a robust cadre of demand-driven civic engagement in local affairs. Hence, the project is considered relevant by civil society actors as around 1,230 applications are received in five calls for applications¹.

There is evidence that LA has achieved tangible results at outcome levels, contributing even on meeting the indicators of the Outcome 3 of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy Albania 2018 - 2021, Democratic Governance² “*Citizen engagement: Citizens and civil society engage in decision-making and hold the government accountable*”. Some of the results achieved are³:

1. Improvement of legal framework at local/national level:

- Annulment of two draft laws aiming protection of the environment, such as the law on waste imports and conversion of agricultural land into peat land for energy;
- Proposing two draft laws to ensure the citizens' participation in decision-making such as, the draft law on improving the legal framework for public concessions on hydro power plants; and the draft law regulating the local referendums;
- Initiation of regulatory changes in licensing quarry extraction by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

Box 1: Albanian Institute for Election System Development⁴ contributed to the preparation of a draft law ensuring the citizens participation through local referendums. The project conducted a survey with professionals, academics, local government employees and citizens on organization of local referendums and found out that 62% of respondents consider necessary the organization of local referendums. A draft law “On local referendums” is prepared based on in-depth analysis of the legal framework and local referendum initiatives in Albania and wide public consultations with academics, members of the municipal councils, public servants in the municipalities and civil society in 6 municipalities: Durres, Elbasan, Korça, Vlora, Shkodra, and Tirana.

The draft law submitted to the ad hoc Parliamentary Commission on the Election Reform and addresses the procedure bottlenecks faced so far.

2. CSO litigating national/local decisions of public institutions:

- 4 strategic lawsuits filed by CSOs representatives and LA Legal Clinics against the constructions of hydro power plants (in Valbona River, Osumi River and in Vjosa River - Tepelena) and the incinerator of Fieri.

¹ The 36 grants under Call for Application No 5 have been contracted in August 2018.

² Domain 1: Democratic governance (SDC, SECO). *Indicator 3.1 Effectiveness of civil society initiatives*: no. of well-founded, concerted requests or proposals by supported CSOs, media or citizens to state authorities. Among those, number that represent the interests of women, vulnerable population groups and number that result in concrete measures. *Indicator 3.2*: no. of local authorities that inform citizens transparently, involve them in decision-making processes and consider their interests in local and regional development and budget plans, including specific measures for disadvantaged groups.

³ Please find in Annex 3 the detailed list of LA contribution under respective Outcome.

⁴ “Promoting and making functional the public participation mechanisms through the process of advocacy, lobbying and development of the legal basis on the organization of local referendums” implemented in the municipalities of Durres, Elbasan, Korça, Vlora, Shkodra, Tirana.

3. *Using innovative tools combining evidence-based data and investigative journalism:*

- Launching a multimedia platform (portavendore.al), with more than 25 independent professional in-depth analytic articles and enriched with detailed information about Local Government Unit (LGU) functions;
- A user-friendly open data platform (financatvendore.al) analysing the revenues/expenditures of the 61 municipalities.⁵ The financial profiles of 61 municipalities are in place;
- A platform on transparency of public contractors (www.opencorporates.al) covering all the 61 municipalities, largely used by media and civil actors.

4. *Establishing innovative tools ensuring public consultation:*

- A web-based platform⁶ (www.buxhetim.al) that ensures wide citizens' participation on annual budgeting, is successfully applied in three (3) municipalities (Durrës, Elbasan and Korça). More than 6000 citizens voted their priorities for the 2018's budget.

5. *Giving voice to the requests of citizens to allocate more funds on health services, art/culture and youth policies:*

- Increased local funds dedicated to primary health care services (nearly with 73,000 CHF in budget of 2018) and reconstructions of 4 healthcare centers in 5 municipalities (Ura Vajgurore, Gramsh, Kucova, Mirdita and Pogradec);
- Increased by 40% the local funds (in the annual budget 2018) dedicated to art and culture in three (3) municipalities (Himara, Vlora and Saranda).

Overall LA has supported 128 civil actors' initiatives (120 grants contracted in four calls for application and 8 rapid responses)⁷ and five (5) strategic enabling instruments are in place and largely being used by CSOs and media/journalists. The instruments developed and implemented under SEI, have proved to be necessary to induce an enabling environment for the civil society to enhance local democracy. During the reporting period one new SEI project has been approved and started the implementation by OSFA, "*Civic Innovation Lab Center*".

⁵ www.financatvendore.al

⁶ www.buxhetim.al

⁷ The data refers to the awarding grants from Call for Applications 1-4, as the Call for Application 5 is contracted after the reporting period.

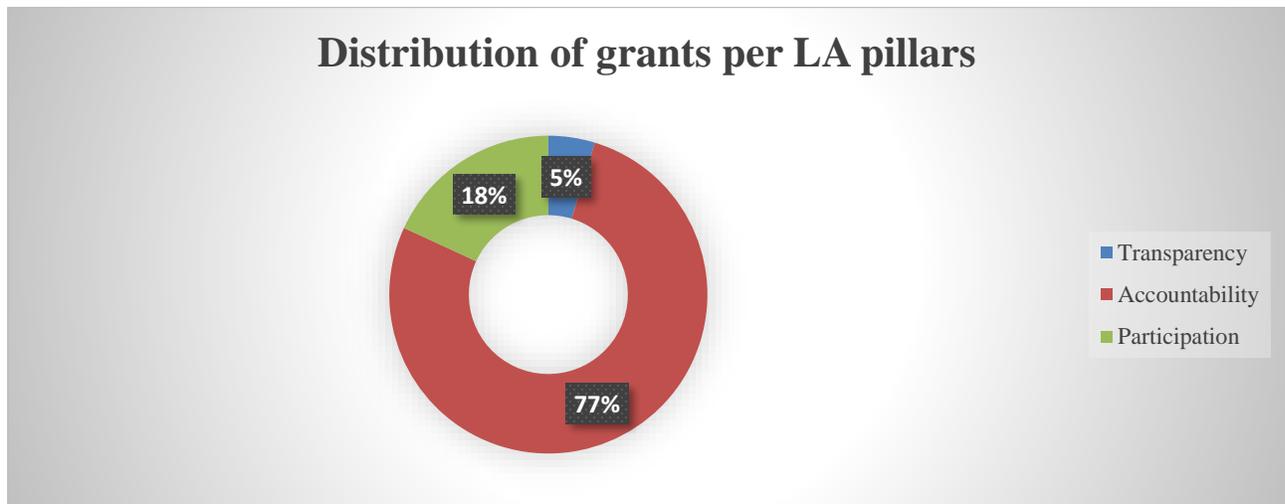
Chapter 2: Outcomes achieved during July 1st, 2017 - June 30th, 2018

LevizAlbania Outcomes are:

- Outcome 1:** Civic actors influence local priority setting, decision-making and oversight of local authorities.
- Outcome 2:** Civil society actors initiate and support targeted structural changes to improve democracy at local level.

As the project is entering in its last year of this first phase, tangible results can be reported from the grants and positive feedback from the community and local authorities they have worked with. The grants supported under demand driven instruments (grants, fellowships and rapid response assistance) and the SEI projects have impacted the overall goal of the project and the respective outcomes.

LA in four Calls for Applications (CfA) has contracted 128 projects (including the 8 rapid response projects), out of which 77 % of grants are focused on *enhancing accountability* of local elected and appointed officials. The majority of grants (67%) have advocated for improvement of the services, policies, laws, making use even of unconventional tools, such as media and art.



Whilst the grantees under CfA 4 are still implementing their projects, the grantees awarded under the first three calls (CfA 1, CfA 2 and CfA 3) are assessed to have contributed to the following impact/results:

- Concrete changes have been achieved in the life of communities through the bottom- up pressure initiatives supported. **Deficient public services in selected municipalities are improved** (*cleaning service and waste management in Kavaja and Tirana, improved public services in Kavaja, Shkodra and Vlora, social housing for vulnerable communities in Tirana, environmental management in Ura Vajgurore, upgrading of health centers in Mirdita and Ura Vajgurore, drainage and irrigation services in several AUs in Shkodra, improved sports infrastructure in one AU in Tirana, increased budget for art, culture and youth in Korca, improved the recoveries of the public money in the municipalities of Maliq, Prrenjas, Elbasan, Lushnja and Pogradec, through pushing for the implementation of High State Audit recommendations- estimated amount at 500,000 Euro*) contributing to build the self-confidence of communities that they can be change actors of their lives and can hold local governments accountable;

- **A significant contribution has been given in environmental protection** through i) *annulment of two draft laws respectively on waste imports (Box 2) and conversion of agricultural land into mining area for peat exploitation to generate electricity through public pressure and awareness on environmental damage*, ii) *suspension of a development project in Divjaka-Karavasta National park*, iii) *developing a medium and long term action plan to preserve and manage sustainably the low and high forests*, iv) *acting as catalyst for suspending licenses for quarry extraction at national level and initiating changes in legal framework on licensing quarry extraction*;
- **Strong contribution in building capacities of CSOs, communities and individuals in research and evidence-based interventions, in introducing innovative practices and approaches with a high potential to be scaled up at regional and national level. These practices have a high potential to become standard sustainable monitoring practices.**

Box 2: Annulment of the draft law “On some additions and amendments in the law no. 10463, date 22.09.2011, “On the Integrated Waste Management”

Alliance Against Waste Imports⁸ (Aleanca Kundër Importit të Plehërave – AKIP), a rapid response project contributed to the annulment of the draft law no. 92/2016 “On some additions and amendments in the law no. 10463, date 22.09.2011, “On the Integrated Waste Management”, which was re-sent to Parliament following non-decreeing by the President in October 2016. A series of protests in front of Parliament, active use of social media to raise awareness on waste imports and its associated hazards on environment and public health and a roundtable with civil society built up a mounting public pressure on Parliament to vote in favour of President’s decree and reject the law which re-included the articles on waste import for the second time following rejection supported by AAWI in 2013. This marks one of the significant successes of civil society in Albania.

Whilst, the strategic instrument developed under Outcome 2 have contributed toward an enabling environment. The open data platform on finances of local government (financatvendore.al) has contributed for a qualitative evidence-based analyses when it comes to the public finances at local level and the effects of the TAR in public debates including the media. The Local Law Centers has enhanced the possibility of the civil actors to litigate the wrongdoings of the public administration at local level.

Outcome 1: Civic actors influence the local priority setting, decision-making, and oversight of local authorities.

The main instrument of Outcome 1 is the demand driven grants. In the third year of project implementation, there is evidence that grantees have brought tangible changes in their localities. LA has reached out remote areas as it has supported CSOs initiatives in 55 municipalities or 82% of the municipalities ensuring that grant activities covered peripheral and rural areas/AUs by CSOs either based in Tirana or locally. Key results of the CfA 1-3 achieved vis-à-vis the targets of the indicators are:

1. *Improved public services or improvement through active engagement of civic actors (citizens, civic groups, media and public authorities), monitoring and evidence-based research.*
 - 23 grants⁹ (30%) contributed in improving access and quality of public services in 29 municipalities (infrastructure upgrading, social services, transport, environmental protection, social housing, agricultural services, public safety, art, culture and sports);
 - 22 grants¹⁰ (28%) have *made major contributions in making the voice of the community heard and accounted in the development plans and budgets of the respective municipalities.* The grants

⁸ “Albania has enough wastes Stop waste import” national coverage.

⁹ CfA 1: 7 grants in 9 municipalities and 14 AUs.

CfA 2: 7 grants in 7 municipalities.

CfA 3: 9 grants in 13 municipalities.

¹⁰ 5 in CfA 1, 5 in CfA 2 and 12 in CfA 3.

contributed to capacitate local communities to lobby and advocate for better public services and prioritize and include their needs in municipal budgets;

- 15 petitions were initiated and 8 of them yielded concrete results in improving access to public services at local level¹¹ (in seven cases) and annulment of the draft law “*On approval for changing the status of agricultural land of an area of 288.4 ha in mining area for peat exploitation to generate electricity*”.

2. *Public authorities at central and local level held accountable through advocacy, monitoring and evidence-based research.*

- Six (6) grants¹² put pressure on local governments and contributed to implementation of the provisions of the law on Local Self-Government, Right to Information and Public Consultation supporting transparency and public participation in decision-making. In particular, LA grants focused on monitoring and contributed in enhancing the transparency of municipalities by (i) *doubling the number of LGUs (40 vs. 22) that have a website*¹³, (ii) *publishing*¹⁴ *the Program of Transparency, the registry of complaints, appointing the Coordinator of Public Information in 8 LGUs*¹⁵, (iii) *publishing the budget on municipality website along with quarterly reports on status of budget expenditures*¹⁶(iv) *improved notification procedures for the meetings of municipal councils in three LGUs*¹⁷ and *publication of municipal councils decisions on the website*;
- Seven (7) grants¹⁸ monitored i) performance of local contractors (in three projects) provision of public services and ii) public private partnerships/concessionary contracts, public assets and public funds management, highlighting gaps in performance, transparency, financial effectiveness and discrimination in contract awards (in four projects).
- Two (2) grants¹⁹ introduced good models in holding accountable the elected and appointed local officials vs. their electoral promises, contributing to achievement of some progress in addressing electoral promises in one municipality and four (4) AUs;
- Seven (7) grants have contributed to environmental management with a major contribution in annulling two draft laws respectively draft law no. 92/2016 “*On some additions and amendments in the law no. 10463, date 22.09.2011, “On the Integrated Waste Management”* and draft law “*On approval for changing the status of agricultural land of an area of 288.4 ha in mining area for peat exploitation to generate electricity*” and suspension of the development project “*Tourism Resort*” in the Divjaka-Karavasta National Park with negative impacts on environment along with initiating regulatory changes in environmental protection.

3. *Innovative practices and methodologies established for (i) increasing public participation and (ii) monitoring and holding accountable public authorities at central and local level.*

Grantees have designed and implemented 5 public participation (PP) instruments and 9 monitoring tools with the potential to scale up and develop into sustainable practices of work by civic actors. Some of these instruments are:

- Web based tool for participatory budgeting www.buxhetim.al;
-

¹¹ Pogradec (Verdova river, clean-up, upgrading of water supply, city lightening, recreational areas, children playgrounds), Sharjah/Muriqan AU in Elbasan (provision of waste collection bin); Novosele AU in Elbasan (road paving to Akerni village).

¹² Three projects in CfA 1 and three projects in CfA 2.

¹³ Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) Albania.

¹⁴ Institute of Political Studies; Albanian Media Institute, INFOCIP, Engjellush Serjani, Institute for Public Policy and Good Governance.

¹⁵ Durres, Tirane, Vlore and Shkodra, Lezha, Tirana, Vora, Kamza.

¹⁶ Institute for Public Policy and Good Governance, Lezha Municipality

¹⁷ Engjellush Serjani in municipalities of Gjirokastra, Dropull, Kelcyra

¹⁸ Three projects in CfA 2 and four projects in CfA 3.

¹⁹ CfA 1

- Establishing and setting the regulatory framework on community organization structure²⁰;
- The platform monitoring the electoral promises: www.unemonitoroj.al;
- Kindergartens’ infrastructure standards compliance questionnaire;
- The open-data platform for the public contractors of the municipalities www.opencorporates.al ;
- Monitoring Operational Plan (MOP) for coordinating response to gender based violence;
- Regulation for Drainage and Irrigation Service.

4. *Increased youth activism and participation in local decision making and monitoring of local government.*

- 22 projects²¹ (28%) supported youth activism and voluntarism in local decision-making and strengthened youth capacities in monitoring and holding local governments accountable;
- 10 youth structures were established to lobby and advocate for youth and community priorities in municipal councils.

Output 1.1: Demand-driven grants, fellowships, and rapid response action (when warranted)²² are awarded and are successfully implemented.

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessed progress to date
1.1.1 Number of Call for Applications organized and implemented	1.1.1a Five Calls for Applications are launched and respective Idea Competitions are successfully organized 1.1.1b Up to 400 participants benefit from the information sessions	1.1.1a Five Calls for Applications launched and 419 applicants presented their ideas in 15 Idea Competitions. 1.1.1b In Five Calls for Applications have participated 926 in 16 information sessions.
1.1.2 Number of interventions funded through the project	1.1.2 At least 120 interventions are funded through the LA project (40 per year)	1.1.2 At least 128 interventions are funded up to June 2018: 120 grants in four Call for Applications and 8 Rapid Responses
1.1.3 Percentage of projects that achieve stated objectives	1.1.3a More than 80% of implemented projects have accomplished their objectives 1.1.3b More than 80% of the finished projects have a final narrative and financial report that meet the LA criteria of project reporting	1.1.3a 99% of implemented projects have accomplished their objectives 1.1.3b 99% of the finished projects (77 out of 78 projects) have a final narrative and financial report that meet the LA criteria of project reporting
1.1.4 Percentage of awarded fellowships in relation to grants	1.1.4 25% of grants awarded are fellowships	1.1.4 30% of the awarded grants are fellowships (39 out 128 grants contracted)
1.1.5 Number of upscale projects in partnership among civic actors and type of actions funded by LA	1.1.5 At least 8 up-scaled projects contracted and successfully implemented	1.1.5 8 up-scaled projects contracted in December 2017

- **Demand driven grants**

Results of the demand driven grants: As the Interim Narrative Report July-December 2017, provided the insight on the results of grantees of the CfA 2, this report provides an in-depth analysis on the results of CfA 3 and the three (3) rapid response projects. Under the CfA 3, LA has contracted 33 grants (9 of them fellowships), outreaching peripheral/small municipalities across the country (Maliq, Perrenjas, Cerrik, Roskovec, Lushnja, Gramsh, UraVajgurore etc).

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRL1PgehuLQ>

²¹ 5 in CfA 1, 12 in CfA 2 and 5 in CfA 3.

²² Rapid Response action is dependent on contextual developments of the time when LA implements its activities, baseline and target statements have not been developed. However, if such grants are awarded, they will be reported in the annual report using all the indicators relevant for demand-driven grants.

It should be noted that the projects implemented in larger municipalities have reached out (rural) administrative units ensuring territorial coverage within the targeted municipality and have ensured cooperation with local civic actors and local media.

Some of the main results achieved are:

- *Raised awareness on gaps and quality of public services at community level as a result of monitoring and contributed to improve access to services through evidence-based lobbying and advocacy from organized communities.*

25 (69%) out of 36 grants engaged in closely monitoring specific public services and performance of municipalities including rural AUs (13 grants) and provided evidence-based information on the situation in the ground concerning access and quality of services, gaps in public services and community priorities.

There is evidence from project reports and data collected on site visits that 25 projects funded by LA have lobbied in improving access and quality of public services namely:

- a. Improved access to social housing program by vulnerable communities (female-headed households and Roma and Egyptian communities): Three grants focused on social housing programs in municipality of Tirana and contributed (i) to improve the legal framework in addressing the housing needs of vulnerable women through the package of integrated services, (ii) to propose an investment concept to develop municipal property for long-term solution to housing needs of Roma and Egyptian communities and (iii) facilitate access to social housing programs for eight (8) families from Roma and Egyptian communities;
- b. *Enhanced public awareness and civic activism, lobbying and advocacy to protect environment:* Seven grants addressed environmental protection issues in 6 municipalities and contributed to (i) increase awareness on negative impact on health and quality of life of environmental pollution (air, water, urban waste) and to advocate for change in environmental management and legal framework (Box 3), (ii) promote environmental protection through annulment of two draft laws on waste imports and conversion of agricultural land into peat land for energy and suspended one development project in the National Park of Divjaka - Karavasta and to advocate for sustainable management of forests in Dibra region.

Box 3: Public awareness raised on negative impact on health and quality of life of environmental pollution (air, water, urban waste) and advocacy for change in environmental management and legal framework.

Arjana Bardhaj²³ a local activist in the town of Ura Vajgurore undertook a public awareness and advocacy campaign against pollution caused by quarry extraction companies. *“It is over 20 years that we live with the smoke and noise of quarries, our landscape is ruined, our houses tremble every day, and those close to the quarries have wall cracks, people suffer from allergies and respiratory diseases. In 20 years, there was only one protest and quarry companies continued to work as usual. It was time to wake up and react”*²⁴.

A survey and air pollution monitoring provided evidence of the seriousness of the situation. 93% of surveyed families complained on air and noise pollution, around 59% reported high expenditures for house repairing and painting. 40% of persons reported problems with allergies and respiratory diseases. Air pollution monitoring identified four hotspots close to the quarries with pollution level 50 - 430% higher than established norms. These findings were shared in a round table with the public, local government, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, businesses and Inspectorate for Environmental Protection and media.

Three lobbying groups were established by the project who advocated for intervention by the responsible institutions at local and central level. *“It was time to hold accountable the responsible entities for the pollution and damage to the city and its inhabitants”*. 2,800 citizens were reached out and they actively participated through social media in reporting environmental pollution with photos and videos from the quarries documenting the deforested areas, mine explosion, smoke and ruined houses. *“Citizens became aware that together they have more power than the mayor”*.

²³ “Quarries – lobbying and advocacy through setting up ecological groups” implemented in Ura Vajgurore municipality.

²⁴ Interview with Arjana Bardhaj.

The findings presented in the roundtable attracted the attention of the Minister of Environment and Tourism who attended in person. *“He issued a decision for freezing all licenses for quarry extraction and work started for changes in the legal framework for licensing quarry extraction companies. We are proud that our project served as a catalyst to prevent further damage to our environment beyond our small town”.*
“We had raised this issue for many years, but no one listened to us. Thanks to this project the pollution from quarry extraction is a priority for the government and legal steps are taken to address it.”²⁵

- *Increased awareness on delegated functions to local government and monitored level of implementation under the Territorial Administrative Reform (TAR).*

Eight grants assessed and monitored the implementation of delegated functions to local government under TAR, focusing on health care and social services, irrigation, drainage and agricultural services to farmers, fire protection and safety.

- a. *Three grants monitored provision of health care and social services and lobbied for improvement in the quality and standards of services in 11 municipalities.*

Box 4: Increased budget for health care centers at local level and awareness raised on quality standards to be provided by the social and health care centers

GADC²⁶ monitored all healthcare centers (268) in five municipalities and documented a series of issues in infrastructure, logistics, standards of services and hygiene. All findings were presented in 5 reports, which were handed over to the municipalities and Ministry of Health and Social Protection. These findings were also presented to the public in each municipality and posted on Facebook page to reach out a larger audience. *“The local governments were unclear on their delegated function for primary health care services and in budgeting for this service and this project was an opportunity to raise their awareness and responsibility for this function”.*²⁷As a result of lobbying and advocacy for better health care services, municipalities increased their budget for health care services: the municipality of Ura Vajgurore allocated 2, 800,000 ALL in 2017 budget, while municipality of Pogradec managed to allocate 3, 200,000 ALL for the construction of several health care centers. In addition, they managed to allocate in 2018 budget, respectively 2,800,000 ALL and 1,200,000 ALL. The municipalities of Mirdita, Gramsh and Kucova, from zero investment in 2017 budget, managed to allocate respectively 600,000 ALL, 1,000,000 ALL and 400,000 ALL in 2018. Ministry of Health and Social Protection made available 245 million ALL in 2018 for the reconstruction of 67 healthcare centers all over the country. Two healthcare centers in Ura Vajgurore (Gorican and Kutalli) and two in Miredita (Perlat and Kthelle) benefited, which are municipalities monitored by the project.

- b. *Three grants monitored the drainage and irrigation services and support services to farmers in 4 municipalities and 13 AUS.*

Box 5: Improved local governance in provision of drainage, irrigation and support services to farmers

Integrated Sustainable Development Center²⁸ brought to the attention of the municipality of Shkodra the serious situation of the drainage and irrigation system in five AUs²⁹. *“It is the first time that drainage system was put on the agenda of the municipality. In the last five years no cleaning up of this system took place. Drainage is an important service for the development of agriculture.”*³⁰

The project designed in consultation with local farmers in five AUs in Shkodra municipality the Action Plan on Improvement of Drainage Service Units of Ana e Malit, Berdice, Dajc, Guri i Zi along with the Drainage Service Regulation which were unanimously approved by the municipal council.

²⁵ Interview with Petraq Tilo, Director of Regional Environmental Agency, Berat.

²⁶ “Monitoring for delegated functions to municipalities for the primary health care services” implemented in the municipalities of Pogradec, Mirdite, Ura Vajgurore, Kucove, Gramsh.

²⁷ Interview with Mirela Arqimandriti, Executive Director at Gender Alliance for Development Centre.

²⁸ Improvement of Drainage Service Units in five Administrative Units in the municipality of Shkodra.

²⁹ Ana e Malit, Berdice, Dajc, Guri i Zi, Velipoje.

³⁰ Focus group with beneficiary farmers.

“The project brought the municipality, Directorate of Agriculture and the farmers together to identify the instruments to address the situation. The municipality is taking over its responsibility to manage the drainage service, which is a challenge given its resources. The farmers provided valuable inputs to identify the most problematic canals and they monitored our work”³¹. The Action Plan contributed in doubling the dirt volume removed from the secondary and tertiary canals in 2018 and it is expected to triple it in 2019. Funding from municipal budget increased up to 40% in 2018 and the costs structure changed in favour of direct expenditures. The budget provides also for the purchase cost of the third excavator in 2019. The Plan accounted the opportunity cost affecting the cost-benefit analysis, which forecasts 20-30% increase of the agricultural produce in the targeted AUs. “This project helped us to clear the drainage canals from dirt and this year our lands were not flooded despite heavy rains”³².

- c. *Three grants raised awareness on importance of culture in tourism development in 5 municipalities and 13 AUs.*

Box 6: More funds for the art, culture and sports

Foundation “Rruga me Pisha”³³ promoted the public participation in long-term strategic planning, development and budgeting for art and culture in three municipalities (Vlora, Saranda, and Himara), which are highly demanded tourism destinations in the country. Three consultative groups are established in Himara, Vlora and Saranda on issues related to art and culture. Around 400 persons have been consulted and discussed with the representatives from municipalities the budget priorities for 2018, and more that 50% of the local communities’ priorities are reflected in the mid-term budget.

Media and Social Issues Center³⁴ supported youth in 13 peripheral AUs in Tirana to advocate with Tirana municipality assembly and its mayor for more investments for youth in sports and culture. Youth was engaged in advocating through videos, literature and photography competition on the situation of sports fields and culture premises in peripheral AUs for more attention and investments. A session in the municipal council was held with 60 young people and the mayor of Tirana where they raised lack of investments in sports and culture in their AUs. As a result of advocacy, three sports fields in the AU of Shen Gjergj, Tirana municipality were constructed and are regularly used by the youth and community members.

- d. One grant contributed to improve the fire protection and safety function delegation in 6 municipalities.

➤ *Enhanced youth activism in civic life and local decision-making through traditional and innovative participatory tools and mediums.*

A range of innovative tools were used from multimedia platforms, visual arts, surveys to public forums facilitated by the youth to identify and document social and economic issues faced by the community and youth and use them as evidence for lobbying and advocacy with local government and influence local decision-making.

Box 7: Youth advocacy awakens communities from apathy and local government from indifferentism and lethargy

Civil Society Development Center (CSDC)³⁵ in partnership with local NPO Kavaja Young Adult Center (KYAC) mobilized the youth to identify 10 community needs and priorities in their municipality and engaged the community, the mayor candidates and MP candidates in the local and national elections in June 2017 in two public forums to discuss the political offer for their priority issues and held them accountable on how these priorities would be taken into consideration.

³¹ Interview with Arben Gjuraj, deputy mayor of municipality of Shkodra.

³² Focus group with the farmers.

³³ “Local governance versus needs for culture development” implemented in municipalities of Vlora, Himara and Saranda.

³⁴ “Move for sports and culture in the periphery of Tirana” implemented in 13 AUs in Tirana municipality.

³⁵ “The youth of Kavaja active in local governance” implemented in Kavaja municipality.

A social contract including 10 priorities was signed between KYAC and the Mayor of Kavaja municipality, which constituted the monitoring basis of electoral promises. The continuous monitoring of the social contract showed that a number of priorities were addressed: (i) 8,279,498 ALL were allocated for education, heating and other services in the municipality budget; (ii) the city library was enriched with new titles for up to 50,000 ALL; (iii) a new Info Point for tourism was set up (20,000 ALL); (iv) tourism week extended from 5 to 15 days, (v) reconstruction of 11 roads and a tree planting budget allocated, while there are still pending priorities that need to be fulfilled (problem with drinking water).

“It is the first time that community was invited by a civil society organization in the presence of representatives of political parties to discuss their priority issues. Community members focused on their needs free of any political ardour. KYAC role was recognized and a cooperation agreement was signed with municipality of Kavaja and it was institutionalized as a Consulting Youth Committee. The municipality consults KYAC for a minimum of four times a year encouraging a bottom-up contribution of youth for local policies. The municipality of Kavaja offered office space to KYAC in its premises”.

*“This was an opportunity to see how local decision-making works and KYAC can make a contribution”.*³⁶

➤ *Increased public participation in decision-making and holding LG accountable through public engagement mechanism.*

Four grants contributed in holding local government accountable through the use of innovative public participation mechanisms in 6 municipalities.

Box 8: Public participation mechanisms hold local governments accountable to their citizens

Vlora Youth Center³⁷ implemented the Community-Based Scorecards (CBS) methodology, which enabled 120 citizens and 25 municipality representatives to engage in discussions to assess the situation and identify community priorities. CBS findings fed into development of 6 Action Plans with concrete actions for each Administrative Unit and monitoring of recommendations was conducted through citizens’ engagement in a bottom-up process. 9 local priorities identified through CBS were included in 2018 municipal budget contributing to further improvement of the services and governance.

*“This methodology established communication with citizens and brought community priority issues related to public services to the attention of the municipality. On the other hand, it helped municipality assess its performance and how responsive it is to citizens’ needs. This is a very efficient tool that we can use on annual basis to assess our performance”.*³⁸

In partnership with another parallel project³⁹, citizens’ commission was established and a cooperation agreement was formalized with Selenica municipality.

Agenda Institute⁴⁰ designed and implemented an innovative and efficient instrument to support priority setting by young people and citizens and their participation in local policy-making through launching an ad hoc platform (www.buxhetimi.al) to enhance citizens’ participation in municipal budgeting process. 6,055 citizens (64% women) listed their priorities in three municipalities using the application instrument, whereas the number of citizens reached out by the project is higher. Results were presented to each municipality, which took into consideration communities’ priorities. As a result, 8 out of 10 identified priorities have been addressed by the municipality of Durres in 2018 budget and 4 out of 8 identified priorities in the municipality of Korca are addressed in 2018 budget.

“We managed to reach out a high number of citizens and overcome their scepticism in using this participatory instrument relying on our local partners. Awareness raising campaigns in schools and universities and local media supported us to promote the application. Municipalities cooperated and not only attended the meetings where results were shared with the public, but listened to citizens’ voice and addressed most of their priorities.

³⁶ Interview with Miriam Recı Executive Director of CSDC and Armela Gjylsheni activist.

³⁷ “Governance Assessment by Community (GAC) in the municipality of Selenica”.

³⁸ Interview with Neim Vishaj, deputy mayor, municipality of Selenica.

³⁹ Project implemented by IDM through the program CIVICS.

⁴⁰ “Active public participation in budget drafting” implemented in the municipalities of Durres, Elbasan and Korca.

This proved to be an efficient instrument in ensuring public participation in priority setting and municipalities can use this instrument in the future in partnership with local CSOs on annual basis. This platform enables municipality to know in a structured format the preferences of their citizens.”⁴¹

“This year we reached out youth, next year we can reach out citizens of all ages to vote their priorities. It has a potential to be a common tool for all LGUs for participatory budgeting. We uploaded the application on our website and citizens can vote on line their priorities”⁴²

- *Increased transparency and accountability of local government through monitoring and legal analysis of public private partnerships and public money management.*

Four grants focused on (i) performance of public private partnerships in service delivery (ii) legal analysis of transparency and efficiency in management of public assets and funds in granting concessionary agreements and (iii) law enforcement in public money management.

Box 9: More transparency for the public-private partnerships, concessionary contracts and public assets management

Open Doors⁴³ monitored and provided legal analysis on two concessionary contracts in Divjaka and Fier municipality namely i) concession contract for 338 beach cabins in the municipality of Divjaka to various tenants (2010) and ii) construction and administration of urban waste treatment plant in Fier (incinerator, 2016).

The main findings were summarized in a report which highlighted: (i) legal irregularities in registration of 338 beach cabins in 2010 as they should have been approved first by the municipal council and not the Directorate of Public Properties Management and Sales; ii) the residents of Divjaka have been discriminated on social and regional grounds regarding cabin rentals being offered higher service payments, openly violating article 18th of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania; iii) the construction of the incinerator in Fier clashes with the national plan for waste management approved by the Albanian government, which prioritizes prevention, reuse and recycling over waste disposal and foresees their treatment in landfills; iv) the cost of construction and administration of incinerator in Fier, and energy production is several times higher than the construction costs of such plants in the European Union; v) citizens disapprove the attitude of municipality regarding concessionary contract and they view the municipality as imposing, ambiguous, non-transparent and secretive procedure. The Ministry of Environment and the Municipality of Fier were not responsive to written requests and complaints by the organization “Open Doors”, which is a violation of Law No. 139/2015 “On Local Self-Government” and Law No. 119/2014 “On the right to Information”.

Transparency and Free Information Center⁴⁴ monitored the level of implementation concerning the recommendations made by the State Supreme Audit Institution (SSAI) on public money management in 5 municipalities. *“Monitoring provided evidence that municipalities were not aware of their legal obligation to report on following up implementation of HSAI’s recommendation within six months”.*⁴⁵

As a result of the support provided by the project, the implementation rate increased from 12.8% at the start of the project to 47% at its end. Implementation of recommendations led to increase of incomes for the municipalities through collection of missing funds. Debts worth of million ALLs were accounted and working groups in municipalities were set up to identify rented assets (land, forests, pasture lands, and other immovable assets) and contracts were reviewed in order to match rent prices with the rented surface and with market prices.

*“The project set up a consolidated system within the municipality to implement HSAI’s recommendations. A working group was set up with relevant expertise to track the implementation of recommendations along with a system for tracking collection of pending payments. This project helped us to improve our internal accountability and our institution’s transparency”.*⁴⁶

⁴¹ Interview with Gentian Elezi, Executive Director of AGENDA Institute.

⁴² Interview with Ina Xhakolli, Durres municipality.

⁴³ “KONCESCAN” implemented in municipalities of Divjaka and Fier.

⁴⁴ “Responsible use of public money by a government through implementation of recommendations by State Supreme Audit Institution (SSAI)” implemented in municipalities of Lushnja, Elbasan, Pogradec, Maliq, Prrenjas.

⁴⁵ Interview with Sami Neza, Executive Director of Transparency and Free Information Center.

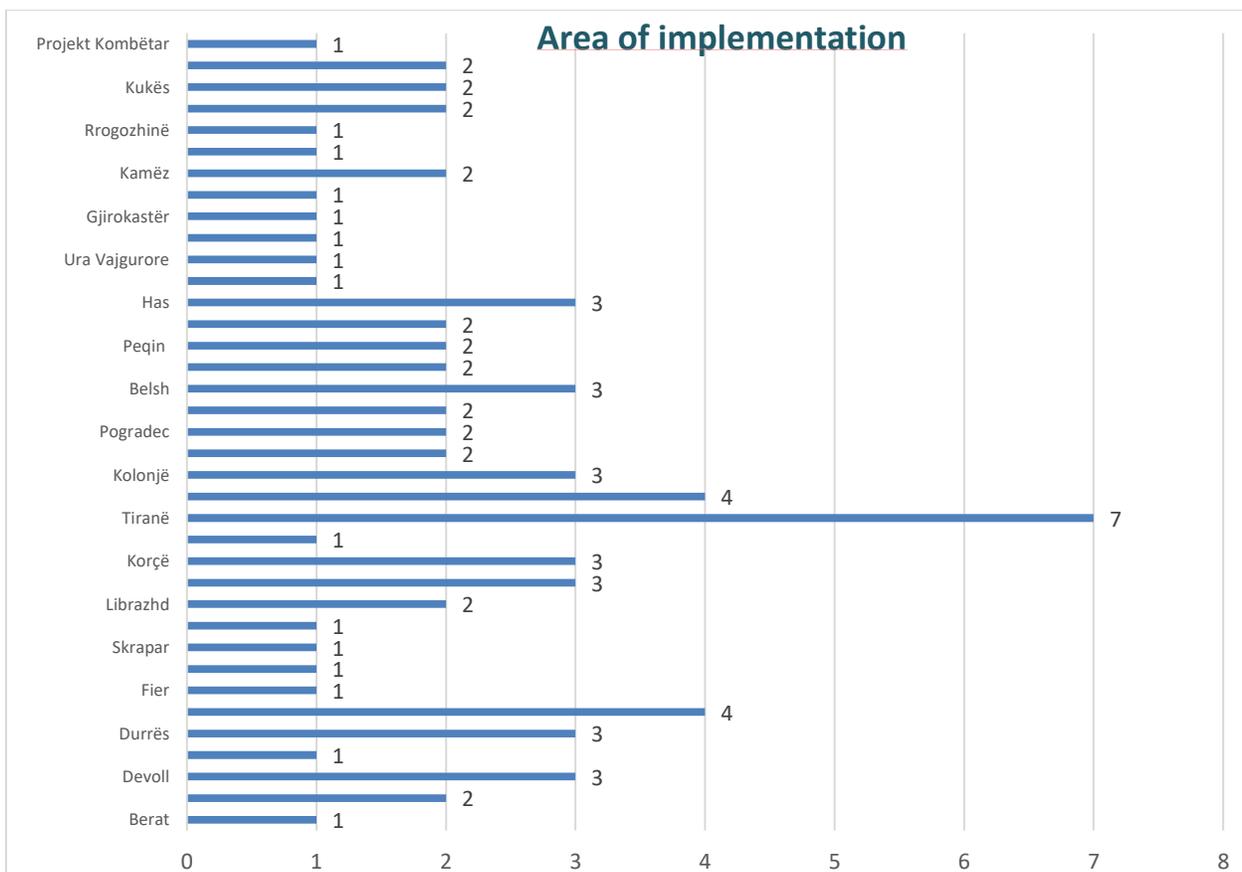
⁴⁶ Interview with Teuta Korreshi, deputy mayor, municipality of Lushnja.

• **The Call for Applications 5**

LA launched its last Call for Application of this first phase in March 19th, 2018. The call aimed to analyze and evaluate the impacts of TAR concerning: (i) the representation and civic participation level in decision-making with regard to local priorities; (ii) the increase of transparency and accountability in local government; (ii) the provision of more qualitative services, which are intended to be closer to citizens. The Call directions are:

1. *Inciting participation and civic activism in the pre-electoral period of local elections 2019.*
2. *The effects of the law 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government" implementation under the civic optic.*
3. *Increase the local government social responsibility through civic activism.*

It needs to be highlighted, that this call has considered the pre-electoral situation on local elections of 2019 and the ending mandate of municipalities that implemented TAR and the Law on Local Self-Government". There was a high demand in the Call 5 as LA has received 263 applications and 104 applicants were selected to present their idea to the Grant and Fellowship Board (GFB) in three Idea Competitions. The GFB qualified 52 applications as conditionally approved and invited the applicants to submit the full proposal in May 2018. The applicants of the Call 5 had very good geographical coverage extending in municipalities, such as Shijak, Skrapar, Kolonje or Kruja that were not previously covered. In early July 2018, the Grant and Fellowship Board will take the final decision and approve the list of grantees. LA has recommended 36 applicants to be awarded.



Graphic 1: The area of implementation of recommended grantees under Call 5

- **Rapid Response Assistance**

During the reporting period, LA has received 24 applications and four (4) of them are successfully contracted. Up to now, LA has contracted eight (8) projects under RR instrument and all of them target sensitive and highly debatable environmental issues. The Rapid Response projects contracted and implemented during the reporting year are:

- *The Albanian Ornthological Society that aims to protect the National Park of Divjaka – Karavasta (Box 10);*
- *The Federation of Rafting advocated for the annulment of the concessions of hydropower plants in Osum river;*
- *AKIP that lobbied and advocated against the amendments of the law on integrated waste management;*
- *TOKA advocated for the annulment of the concessions of hydropower plants in Valbona River.*

Box 10: Albanian Ornthological Society⁴⁷ (AOS) succeeded to raise awareness to prevent urbanization of the national park Divjaka - Kravasta from the resort development plan by MABETEX group through public forums, media, spots and one documentary film “Super resort that threatens National Park of Divjaka”. AOS technical and legal expertise for the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Finances, Economy and Labour, and AIDA (Albanian Agency for Development and Investment) put on-hold the status of “The Strategic Environmental Assessment” by the investor and suspended the endorsement and implementation of the proposed plan for building a new urban area with highly negative impact on environment.

The rapid response grantees have largely made use of Local Law Centers, established in the framework of SEI project “Establishing Local Law Centers” of LA. Three (3) rapid response projects have been assisted by Law Centers of LA in Shkodra and Durres to litigate the envisaged wrongdoing in the court, such as AKIP, the Federation of Rafting and “Toka” (please refer to the information on Output 2.3 for more detailed information).

Output 1.2: Capacities of LA grantees to influence local democracy are improved through training and networking.

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessed progress to date
1.2.1 Percent of grantees who report improving their capacity to engage with local government from implementing funded projects	1.2.1 More than 70% of grantees report increased capacity to engage with local government due to the experience gained from project implementation	1.2.1a On track All projects report increased cooperation with LG gained from project implementation
1.2.2 Percent of grantees who benefit from peer learning, partnership and networking with each other	1.2.2 50% of grantees benefit from peer learning, networking and partnership with each other.	1.2.2a On track 50/82 projects (61%) report good partnership with other local actors (CSOs, media, LG)
1.2.3 Number of LA grantees participating in tailored trainings	1.2.3a More than 70 people have participated in the Thematic Capacity Building Sessions on how government processes work 1.2.3b At least 50 participants have benefited from up to 12 online tailor-made trainings during the project lifetime	1.2.3a 50 persons participated on Thematic Capacity Building Sessions 1.2.3b 14 LA grantees participated to tailor made online trainings

⁴⁷ “Stop to urbanization of the national park Divjaka - Karavsta” implemented in municipality of Lushnja.

LA has closely mentored and coached the grantees of Call 3 and 4 that implemented the projects in the reporting period. The staff intensively worked with the grantees of Call 3 and 4 to improve project proposals and reporting. This was appreciated by “grantees highlighting the guidance, flexibility of LA staff to their project evolving needs on site⁴⁸”.

A peer to peer seminar on gender issue was organised in March 2018, a detailed information on that can be found on the section on gender mainstreaming.

On 7-11 May 2018, LA organized “Leviz for Democracy” Week, dedicated to local democracy. The week integrated 10 activities in five municipalities, such as Bulqiza, Durres, Vlora, Korca, and Tirana were organized by LA on local democracy issues identified mainly by grantees. The slogan of the week was based on the activities and geographical extension of them “5 days/10 activities/5 cities”. Sensitive and important topics were discussed such as environmental protections vs economic development, social policies in the municipalities mainly focused of protection of miners and women, guaranteeing the local referendums, discussing on local finances etc.

The week combined a variety of activities such as high-level forums, street art, painting exhibition, documentaries, theatre and debate. More than 600 persons participated in the activities organized by LA during the week. The week gained attentions of national media, especially the national forum on environmental issues and projects supported by LA.

Output 1.3: The capacities of local journalist to play a pivotal role in advancing local democracy are enhanced through hands-on training and resources.

It is assessed that good progress is made to achieve target indicators for Output 3.

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessment of progress to date
1.3.1 Number of LA supported projects that make use of media as an advocacy tool	1.3.1 At least 50% of the LA supported CSOs and fellows have included media as an advocacy tool in their interventions	<p>1.3.1 100% of LA grantee make use of media as an advocacy tool with at least two publications. 42 out of 82 projects reviewed i.e 50% have made extensive use of printed and audio-visual media (BIRN, Forumi i Mendimit te Lire, ISP, Fatbardha Ndergjoni, Eco-Albania, AKIP, ETMI, GentianaRamadani, Harilla Koci, Raimond Kola, IDM, Oxfam Italy, Shpresa Blaceri, QKSH, INFOCIP, TFL, Engjellush Serjani, Rio Kepraci, Art Kontakt, Dige, Epoka e Re, Infinit Plus, AIs, IPPM, LRER, Bledar Gilaj, Mjalf, Sokol Kosta, Visare, AOS, GADC, Refleksione, Migena Nako, Endrit Shabani, Ina Hoxha, Brejdon Xhavara, Agenda Institute, CSDC, UET, LRDC, TFIC)</p>
1.3.2 Number of training sessions to use media and social media in project implementation.	1.3.2 7 Training sessions on media use are implemented	<p>1.3.2a On track 128 grantees (including fellows) are trained how to use social media in three orientation sessions, and 76 grantees have been coached on daily basis.</p>

⁴⁸ “Evaluation Report, Call for Application 3” E. Metaj, 2018

LA considers media as an important tool to boost the impact of the grantees and create spill over effect. Hence some steps are taken to formalise and unify this standard for all the grantees as a reflection of Mid Term Review. Based on the grant contract, each grantee is obliged to have two (2) publications in media (in audio-visual or written media).

In 25-27 June 2018, LevizAlbania organized a study visit to Kosovo, with LA grantees and journalists of PortaVendore. The purpose of the visit was to exchange experiences/models on the use of media and investigative journalism by civil society actors. The visit was a combination of Kosovo experience on investigative journalism and outstanding NPOs that largely make use of media to voice and advocate wrongdoings. Some of the NPOs that were visited are: ÇOHU, ORCA, kallxo.com, Kosovo 2.0, Kosovo Open Society Foundation and Termokiss. The visit was successful in exchanging experience and establishing cooperation between LA grantees, journalists from PortaVendore and civil society organizations in Kosovo.

Outcome 2: Civil society actors initiate and support selected structural changes to improve democracy at local level.

In the third year, LA has developed under Outcome 2, instruments that advance the enabling environment for the civil society. Up to now, five (5) overarching instruments are operational and are contributing to improve evidence-based advocacy on finances of local government; remove barriers for CSOs to litigate cases of public administrations breaching general public interest; ensure a window for professional journalists and citizens to bring issues for their localities; enhance capacities of potential applicants of LA to improve their activism and using IT innovative solution for improved activism. The instruments are largely being used by civil actors (not only LA grantees) and media as reference tools.

Output 2.1: Skills and capacities of Civic actors (CSOs and individuals) for better drafting and implementation of initiatives that promote democracy are increased.⁴⁹

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessed progress to date
Percentage of participants in capacity building activities that have demonstrated increased understanding and capacities in drafting and implementing initiatives that promote democracy ⁵⁰	2.1.1 At least 25% of participants in the capacity building activities have demonstrated increased understanding and capacities in drafting and implementing initiatives that promote democracy.	33% of participants have demonstrated increased understanding and capacities in drafting and implementing initiatives that promote democracy
2.1.2. Number of case studies/best practices on participation tools prepared and shared with beneficiaries	2.1.2. 20 case studies	15 case studies
2.1.3. Percentage of beneficiaries participating in thematic networking sessions and number of beneficiaries engaged in individual coaching	2.1.3.a 75% of beneficiaries participate in thematic networking sessions 2.1.3.b Up to 50 grantees and fellows of LA benefited from individual coaching	82 out of 115 (approx. 72%) beneficiaries participated in the first and second round of networking sessions 27 grantees benefited from individual coaching.

Partners Albania designed and implemented a series of activities in order to fulfil this objective. They were focused on two main pillars: online and on-site tailored – made training programs, and online and on-site individual coaching. Overall 275 LA grantees and potential applicants benefited from following capacity building components:

⁴⁹ For more detailed information on the activities performed please refer to Annex 1 or we can provide upon request the detailed Narrative Report of the project.

⁵⁰ The capacity building activities includes: trainings (on site and online).

1. Training programs:

- *On-site trainings:* 86 persons (30% of them LA grantees) participated in 6 training sessions focused on Cooperative Planning and Participatory Governance. Through the training sessions, attendees increased their capacities in related area and brainstormed for project ideas for upcoming calls of LevizAlbania. Some of the generated ideas were reflected as call directions in CFA 4, such as monitoring of delegated functions of the municipalities;
 - *On-line trainings:* 37 persons (and 38% of the LA grantees) participated in three on-line sessions on Strategic Planning, Advocacy and Lobby and Cooperative Planning.
2. *Individual Coaching* to 19 grantees of the third and fourth Calls of LevizAlbania. The grantees were assisted by PA experts to prepare Advocacy and Lobbying plans, to design strategic communication tools and mechanisms of citizen participation in local decision making.
 3. *Local Democracy Camps:* This was a novelty introduced during the reporting period. The camps were designed as an intensive five days trainings with young persons, integrating theory, lessons learned from LA grantees and international experience from Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI) from Macedonia with an extensive experience in supporting young engagement in democracy. The camps were organized in Shkoder, Korça and Vlora and 64 young persons participated in them. The young people highly appreciated the experiences and recommended the continuity of such programs.
 4. *Capacity Building Impact Assessment:* PA designed and managed the *pre-test* and *post-test* as an assessment tool at the beginning and at the end of each capacity building program for measuring a training program effectiveness, identify main strengths and weaknesses, and provide recommendations for further interventions on the training programs component. Participants considered that the information received during the training was very useful and helped them in the implementation of their project. Participants, also, stated that they gained knowledge on the guidelines of LA Call for Proposals and that the training program was very helpful with regard to the preparation of the project proposal for LevizAlbania.
 5. *Thematic Networking Sessions for grantees/fellows of LA* with grantees of Call 3 and 4: a considerable number of LA grantees (50) participated in the thematic sessions. Some of the challenges faced during projects implementation are the lack of responsiveness and openness from local authorities, access to information on time and the lack of information and skills to establish new collaborations and partnerships for joint projects in the future. Grantees expressed as a need how to increase partnership between media- civil society organizations - local government, especially in the small municipalities, promotion of project activities from LevizAlbania, legal assistance for projects that deal with legal issues, enhanced community mobilization.
 6. *Networking with organisations/civic actors in the Western Balkans region:* 19 persons participated in the networking on-line session with the Institute for Policy Research and Analyses, Lithuania. In addition, 41 participants from the Local Democracy Camps in Shkodra and Vlora benefited from the experience of Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI) from Macedonia

Box 11: Impact of the Capacity Building Program:

The capacity building activities main impact related to LA grant mechanism are as following:

- 58% of the participants in the training programs (106) have applied to LevizAlbania and 18% of them are awarded as winners;
- 67% of the participating NPOs (86) have applied to LevizAlbania, and 31% of them are awarded as winners;
- 38% of the participating Individuals (20) have applied to LevizAlbania, and 30% of them have been selected as winners;

The findings from the Capacity Building Assessment Report shows that PA training programs were the first training program on that topic received from 52% of the participants in the assessment. The information with regards to community mobilization, design and implementation of advocacy plans, monitoring tools, etc. received during the trainings have been fully applied by 71% of participants in the implementation of their project. Around 23% of the participants in the assessment have increased their networking, sharing information and created new contacts with potential collaborators and partners as a result of training.

Output 2.2: Open data platform to measure the fiscal and financial performance of local governments is created and is accessed by interested parties.

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessed progress to date
2.2.1 Existence and operation of the platform at all times	2.2.1 Open data platform to measure the fiscal and financial performance of local governments ⁵¹ is populated and updated on quarterly basis within the second year of the project	100%
2.2.2 Updating of the platform data with quarterly data (on a quarterly basis)	2.2.2 All four quarters (2017 Q3 & Q4, 2018 Q1 & Q2)	75%, since the data for second quarter of 2018 are still not available by the Ministry of Finance and Economy
2.2.3 Number of quarterly/annual reports produced and disseminated	2.2.3 Four reports for each quarter: 2017 Q3 & Q4, 2018 Q1 & Q2	100%, in that, four reports were produced, starting from Q2 of 2017 to the Q1 2018. Q2 for 2018 has not been produced as yet as data are still not available by the Ministry of Finance and Economy.
2.2.4 Budgets and MTBP	2.2.4 Budgets and MTBP of 2017 for at least 25 municipalities	100% of the available MTBP (48 out of 61 municipalities)
2.2.5 Number of info graphics developed and disseminated	2.2.5 At least 1 info-graphics for each quarter	100% (two info graphics prepared and disseminated)
2.2.5.1 Social Media Reach	2.2.5.1 At least 1000 views.	100% (app. 4500)
2.2.6 Thematic articles on local finances in media, including print and online.	2.2.6 At least 8 articles in the written/online media on specific topics referencing the platform	100% (around 64 articles in written/online media on specific topics referencing the platform)
2.2.7 Media TV program fed with data from the platform	2.2.7 At least 2 media programs on local finances (thematic) over a period of 4 quarters, referencing the platform ⁵²	100% (participation in 8 TV programs)
2.2.8 Number of platform visitors	2.2.8 At least 10% increase in the number of visitors from the baseline level	100% (30,170 visitors)
2.2.9 Number of information and training sessions where the platform is presented.	2.2.9 8 information sessions	100% (10)

June 2018 marks the end of the second year of the implementation of the local finance platform strategic enabling instrument. During the second year, most of the work focused on:

- Diversifying the type of products that can be generated building on data acquired from the platform, such as the “Municipal Profiles for all 61 municipalities in the country, offering a succinct municipality-specific overview on (a) revenues by sources, (b) expenditures and (c) other economic indicators;
- Reflecting the changes introduced by the law no. 67/2017, the new law on “Local Finances”, which in platform terms means: the introduction of new sources of revenues for municipalities and detailing of public service tariffs;
- Updating the database with quarterly data for all 61 municipalities in the country;
- Analysing the performance of the municipalities in the form of Quarterly Analytical Reports: as per the platform calendar, three quarterly reports on the status of local finances were prepared and disseminated including an Annual Status Report (in two languages);
-

⁵¹The Platform includes information on, but is not limited to: own revenue divided per source (transfers, taxes and tariffs, type of taxes, etc.); expenses grouped as per economic, administrative and functional classification; debt, assets and obligations of each LG, etc.

⁵²This target starts from July 1st 2017.

- Actively participating in media programs and engaging with print and online media. Similarly, to the first year, visibility and outreach have played an important role: (1) In trying to make local finances feature in the media agenda; (2) Feeding the discussions with evidence-based arguments. (A list of the various media reports to be found in Annex 5 of the Report);
- Forums to introduce and discuss the findings from the Local Public Finances Status Report for 2017. In addition to the national event for the presentation of the Status Report of Local Finances, one additional region-based event *was piloted in Korca*, in order to reach-out to more local communities, and discuss aspects at greater depth and detail;
- Thematic Articles/Studies on various aspects of local governance and local finances.

During the period July 1st, 2017 – June 30th, 2018, there have been a total of 30,170 views of the platform, an increase of 72.2% compared to the previous reporting period. The data also shows an expansion of the new user pool.

The platform is fully operational, and regularly updated with data on a quarterly basis by the Treasury Directory (TD) in the Ministry of Finance and Economy. The platform improved, ensures that in less than 10 minutes, to obtain a very detailed insight into any given municipality's financial health and performance, for the past 7 years. Through the provision of municipal financial data on a regular, open and accessible to a number of different users, the platform has initiated an evidence-based discussion on municipal finances, be it among media partners, experts, authorities, academics and policy-makers (*please find attach the detailed information on the activities performed on this regard*).

The second period of 2017 and first half of 2018 have experienced intense media coverage, including predominantly television and online media, and in some occasions print media also. The media uses as reference source the data generated by the quarterly reports, to debate highly discussed issues such was the case of analyses on particular municipalities or particular taxes (property tax).

Data from the platform has been used as an input in a number of reports, both on a national and regional level. Some of the reports include:

- The Second Monitoring Report of the Cross-sectoral Strategy for Decentralisation and Local Governance 2015-2020, October 2017;
- Governance Perception in a Reforming Albania: A country-wide assessment of the Local Governance Situation in Albania, IDRA, 2017;
- World Bank Report – Municipal Finance Review: Local Finances in Western Balkan Region, 2017;
- Municipal Finance Self-Assessment Experience in South Eastern Europe 2011-2015, published in November 2017.

The link to the platform has been published on the official website of the Ministry of Finance and Economy. We believe such acknowledgement and endorsement, adds to the legitimacy and credibility of the data provided.

Output 2.3: Local Law Centers provides legal support for communities in the fields of health care, environment and services provided by local government.

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessed progress to date
2.3.1 Number of Local Law Centers created	2.3.1 Two Centers are created in two different municipalities in Albania	3.1 Two Local Legal Clinics are established and are fully functional, based in the districts of Durres and Shkodra. The Legal Clinics Staff is made of senior and junior lawyers, paralegals, who have been trained to provide legal aid and legal education services, having as a final goal the legal empowerment of the people.
2.3.2 Number of citizens/ local organizations, including LA grantees benefiting from legal assistance and representation	2.3.2.a 600 citizens and organizations receive initial legal assistance 2.3.2.b Legal Centers provide substantive legal assistance and representation in at least 20 cases	2.3.2.a The Legal Clinics have provided free primary legal aid in 87 cases. 2.3.2.b The Legal Clinics have provided free secondary legal aid in 84 cases (most of the cases include primary legal aid).
2.3.3 Number of strategic cooperation cases related to local democracy	2.3.3 At least 2 (two) strategic cooperation cases with NPOs and activists at the local level in relation to public decision making and/or services	2.3.3 The Clinics are providing legal aid in the pursuing of 4 strategic litigation cases, in collaboration with local and national organizations in relation to public administration's decisions.

In the reporting year, two Local Law Clinics are established and fully operational (Durres and Shkodra). The project main pillars have been:

- *Providing primary and secondary free legal aid:* The Clinics have provided free legal aid for 171 cases from which 87 cases constitute primary legal aid and 84 secondary legal aid. Moreover, the Clinics are following four strategic litigation cases, which are focused in environmental degradation;
- *Enhancing capacities of the project staff* (three training sessions, and one study visit in Moldova have been organized);
- *Synergizing and establishing partnership with local stakeholders:* the lawyers of the Clinics in Durres and Shkodra have organised workshops and individual meetings with local actors. Two meetings have been organised with Chambers of Lawyers in Durres and Shkodra; a regional workshop was organized and 50 representatives of local NPOs and public administration participated; up to now the lawyers met 24 local organizations, 40 journalists and 45 local lawyers, which represent an important tool for addressing the issues faced by citizens and communities at local level;
- *Promotion and visibility of the Legal Clinics:* The Clinics have their social media profiles with more than 5,200 followers, and a website. The project representatives have been active in media and have participated in five local TV programs. 181 citizens have contacted the Clinics through the Facebook page and have benefited the necessary aid.

The Clinics are providing legal services in the pursuit of 4 strategic litigation cases, in collaboration with local and national organizations:

- Secondary legal aid is being provided to EcoAlbania and the Albanian Rafting Federation regarding the construction of the HPP in the canyons of Osumi River. The Clinic has represented EcoAlbania and the Albanian Federation of Rafting, as a secondary interference in the lawsuit in the Administrative Court of First Instance with plaintiffs: "HP Bigas and Veleshnja Energy" Company Ltd (Box 10);

- Primary and secondary legal aid is provided to AKIP and residents of the village of Verri for the construction of the incinerator. Lawyers of the Durres Legal Clinic have been introduced with the claims of Verri residents and AKIP and have addressed requests for information to public institutions;
- Secondary legal aid is being provided to civil society actors that are in line with the Municipality of Tepelena, standing against the construction of the HPP near this territorial unit;
- Primary legal aid is being provided to TOKA organization. The claimed issues by the organization have been sent for reconsideration in June 2018 to lawyers of the Shkodra Legal Clinic and to the environmental expert.

Box 12: Successful story

The Local Law Clinic have represented Eco Albania and the Federation of Rafting on the case "HP Bigas and Veleshnja Energy" Company Ltd vs National Environment Agency, whereas the plaintiffs required the continuity of the concession contract of HPP in Osumi River. The NPOs showed interested to join the defendant (National Environment Agency) to prevent the environmental degradation by building three HPP in the canyons of Osumi River. The Administrative Court of First Instance decided to accept the request for secondary intervention by Eco Albania and the Albanian Rafting Federation to join the defendant, the National Environment Agency, recognizing the rights of 2 NPOs to represent and bring before the court their claims. At the end of the process the court decided to accept the requests of the National Environment Agency and the NPOs for the dismissal of the lawsuit of HP Bigas and Veleshnja Energy" Company Ltd, based on the argument presented by the Law Clinic.

"The ruling of the court is a very important victory in favour of the NPOs, as it legitimates them as important actors even on litigation cases to protect the environment. Acknowledgements goes to the Law Clinics and all the experts involved, who joined forces with us to bring evidences in court against the construction of the HPP⁵³".

⁵³ Mr. Zamo Spathara, Chair of the Albanian Rafting Federation.

Output 2.4: New multi-functional platform that enables publishing of independent and qualitative media content on local issues, and open knowledge on local government is created and used by citizens.

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessed progress to date
2.4.1 Existence and operation of the online multi-functional platform for journalists	2.4.1 The online multifunctional platform is operational by May 2018 and provides information on local issues and space for publications from different journalists	2.4.1 The online Platform www.PortaVendore.al is operational starting from May 11th, 2018
2.4.2 Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGU Functions and services covered; • Municipalities’ files prepared; • Reports and complains by citizens; Existence of the online Legislative Library	2.4.2.a) 61 data files/folders prepared with essential information and data on all 61 municipalities 2.4.2.b) At least 15 functions profiles and 30 public services passports are prepared and published	2.4.2. The platform contains information and data on LGUs, organized in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 LGUs functionalities portfolios • 52 public services passports • 61 data files/profiles for each of 61 municipalities • Full regulative and legislative package on local government operations, duties and responsibilities. • A data base with more than 40 monitoring reports and analytical studies produced by local and international actors working on local democracy in the country.
2.4.3 Number of journalists involved in media content publishing Number of journalists participating in trainings and other capacity building activities	2.4.3.a At least 20 local journalists engage in media content publishing 2.4.3.b Around 50 journalists participate in topic-oriented workshops, training sessions and other ‘on the job’ capacity building activities.	Around 60 journalists participated in three regional workshops “Challenges of Local Media reporting on local issues”; At least 30 local journalists have improved their knowledge and developed further their capacities through information and capacity building workshops organized, as well through on the job mentoring. Around 20 journalists are engaged by PortaVendore to produce media content on local issues.
2.4.4 Number of media content published on the online platform tackling local issues	2.4.4 At least 30 stories, investigations, analysis related to local issues published on the online multi –function platform or in other media outlets.	25 media articles (reportages, investigative stories, photo-video products, etc.), are produced and published in the online Platform.
2.4.5 Number of online visitors (web and social media)	2.4.5 At least 20% increase annually in the number of visitors	99% monthly increase in FB profile followers 123% monthly increase in PortaVendore posts engagements

The multi-functional platform PortaVendore.al started implementation in Year 3, and in very short period it has been a useful reference tools mainly for its journalistic profile and the rich information on LGUs. The platform was launched in May 11st 2018, and in a short period the key results achieved are:

- Set up of the multi-functional platform that provides integral information on LGUs operations, duties and responsibilities, while offering free and independent space for publishing good quality media content on local issues;
- Preparation and publication of 19 LGUs functionalities portfolios, 52 public services passports and 61 data files/profiles for each of 61 municipalities⁵⁴;
- Exhaustive regulative and legislative package on local government operations, duties and responsibilities are gathered and published.

⁵⁴ <https://portavendore.al/dialogmeqytetarin/kartelat-e-sherbimeve-te-bashkise/> ; <https://portavendore.al/cbenbashkia/> ; <https://portavendore.al/61-dosjet-e-bashkive/>

In more details: *21 laws, together with all their respective sub laws and acts; 4 Decisions of Council of Ministries; 19 sectorial laws related to LG functions and responsibilities⁵⁵;*

- More than 40 monitoring reports and analytical studies produced by local and international actors working on local democracy in the country, are identified and published;
- A network of 20 local journalists is established, contributing to PortaVendore media content, as well as participating to four information and training workshops organized;
- At least 30 local journalists have improved their knowledge and developed further their capacities through information and capacity building workshops organized, as well through on the job mentoring;
- 25 media articles (reportages, investigative stories, photo-video products, etc.⁵⁶), are produced and published in the online Platform. *These includes 11 in-depth reporting and 3 video reportages, exposing problems and wrongdoings mostly related to environmental issues and lack of public consultation; LGU transparency; access of people with disabilities to local public services and institutions, etc.;*
- Around 10 cases of abuses, wrongdoings or other law violations related to LGUs operations and/or public officials are identified and exposed through PortaVendore.al.

Box 13: Municipalities react from the media articles

One of the articles published in PortaVendore reported the act that the municipality of Durres, throw the seaweed/kelps in the highway (that is under construction) passing by the area of Keneta. Massive heaps of kelps where created by the street. Immediately after the article the Inspectorate of Environment in Durres, fined the respective agency of Durres Municipality with *1.000.000 ALL*.

Following an article exposing the lack of transparency in 4 municipalities of Qarku Diber and the fact that Local Councils decisions are not made public and published online, the municipalities started immediately to publish all council decisions in their official website.

The platform PortaVendore.al is the first platform of its kind that gathers and interconnects all the information and data on local government units, making it available to the public, easily accessible and in a user-friendly language. In short period its social media is highly populated as it has 3,100 followers, with a monthly post engagement rate of 25,200 people (people who took any kind of action like clicks, comments, likes, share, etc. on the posts of PortaVendore they have been exposed).

Box 14: Citizens reports:

Out of 30 reports and denounces received so far from the citizens, 6 of them have been followed up by the journalists of PortaVendore and reported in the media, and 4 others have been referred to law Clinic for administrative and legal consultation and/or for action.

Citizens have appreciated the follow up of their reports by PortaVendore and the reaction of the municipalities, such was the case of a report from a citizen from Vlora related to the poor open market conditions. Immediately after the article was published the municipality promptly reacted.

Further to nourishing the platform with information on LGUs, efforts are paid to capacitate the local journalists through sharing experiences and trainings.

⁵⁵ <https://portavendore.al/dhomaeligjit/>

⁵⁶ Please find the full list of Articles in Annex 6 of this report

Concretely:

- Three regional meetings “Challenges of local journalists reporting on local issues were organized (May 27th in Tirana, March 30th in Lezha and April 6th in Vlora) with the participation of around 60 local journalists;
- The first training session for journalists was organized in Durres, on June 22nd, 2018: “Local media and in depth reporting” with the participation of 23 local journalists from 6 municipalities. Lectors included experts of local government, investigative journalists, representatives from the Office of Right for Information, representatives of NPOs working with open data, as well as public interest lawyers – representatives of two legal clinics of Durres and Shkodra, part of the SEI project supported by LevizAlbania;
- This training was followed by the first call for investigative stories on local government issues and wrongdoings, which was launched at the end of June 2018;
- During this period, around 20 journalists are engaged by PortaVendore, and 25 media articles (including video reportages) are produced and published so far. They cover issues of public interest at local level, mostly issues not preferred by commercial media. The number of readers is growing constantly, as well as the comments of the citizens through social media. One of the investigative stories “[Illegal constructions on the cost line of Durres](#)” has had around 3,000 readers only from the Facebook post. In addition, at least 7 other commercial and online media, with significant audience, re-published the article.

Output 2.5: Technical skills in the development of new communication and interaction platforms for CSOs are increased and available.

Indicators	Targets 2015-2019	Assessed progress to date
2.5.1 Number of civic innovation lab center	2.5.1 An innovation lab centre is fully operational.	Centre established and fully functioning
2.5.2 Number of CSOs registered at TechSoup platform and benefit from free software and self-promotion platform	2.5.2 100 CSOs registered	30 CSOs registered in CILC platform already
2.5.3 Number of CSO technically supported (through trainings and coaching) to use Google for Non-profits and Net4 Local Democracy.	2.5.3.a At least 100 NPO and 150 individuals trained and assisted in using Google for Non-profits. 2.5.3.b Number of trainings delivered on Net4Local Democracy.	

The project “Civic Innovation Lab Center” CILS started in early 2018, aiming to provide the CSO with innovative IT tools to enhance their activism. Although the short of implementation, the project has already produced some results:

- 30 organisations supported by LA are ready to register in the TechSoup platform by CILC staff;
- Training modules and majority of the materials to be used during Google for Non-profit trainings are prepared;
- Trainer selected and certified from Google;
- ICT expert trained and certified by Google;
- CILS is already providing information and advice to organisations and individuals on Google products and best way to use them in everyday tasks;
- Trainings module for ‘Net4Local Democracy’ on course to finish by end of August 2018;
- The project is promoted in two events [Start-up Live](#) Tirana and round table at [Microsoft Albania](#) offices.

During January-June period the brand identity of the center has been set up which is portrayed in the web cilec.al and [Facebook](#) page, designed and constructed online content based on project deliverables as well as started online promotions to extend reach into the civil society community and its partner network.

Box 15: CSO interested on the assistance of CILC

CILC team has assisted [DARC](#)⁵⁷ with re-design of their website, help them migrate their email client from their existing different providers to the Gmail platform and register their domain as an internal email address. At the same time, a member of DARC team, Adriana Spahiu, was trained to configure email addresses of volunteers the organization hires during the summer, use calendar to schedule events and use Hangouts (chat/video call) with up to 25 people to exchange information during their working day. With ICT experts help, Adriana is on the way to setup a YouTube channel and use its tools to collect donations online for its causes, sell its story via video to a wider audience and portray a better image of their work in general. The support to DARC will be completed by the end of July 2018.

Chapter 3: Other Implementation arrangements

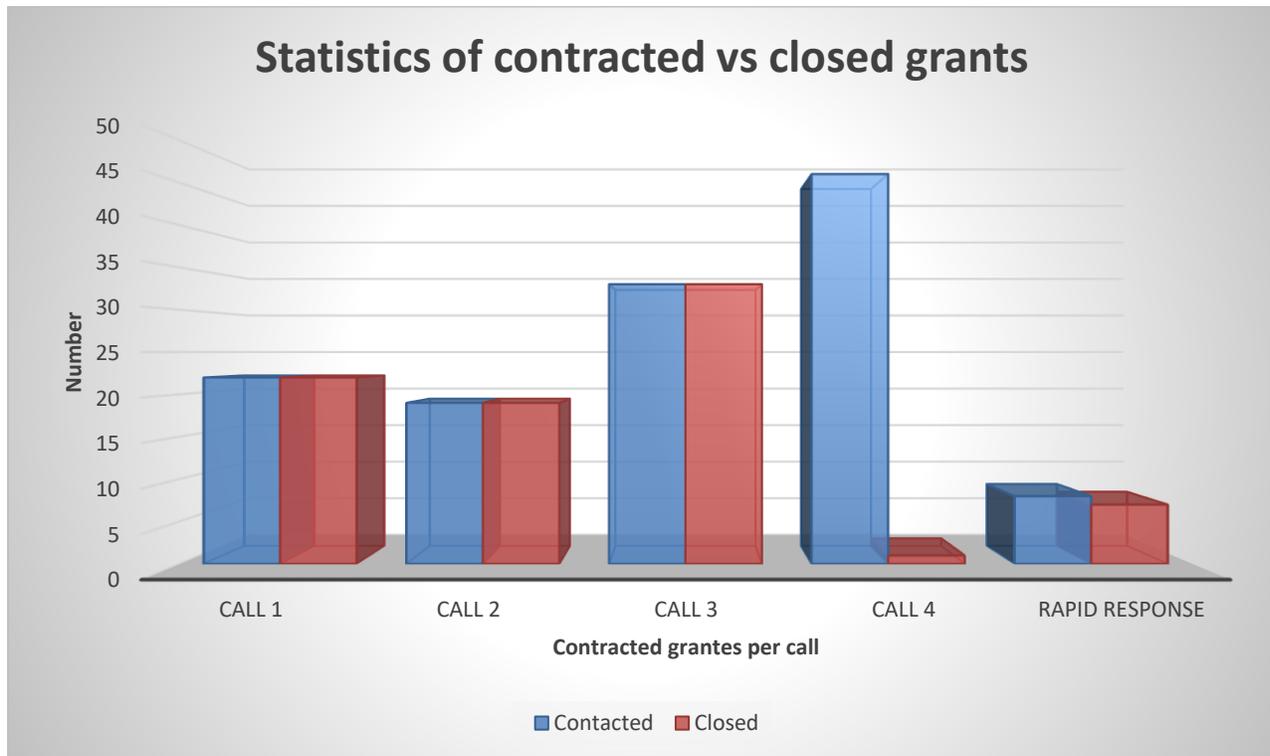
a. Monitoring and evaluation

As the project has intensify the activities and increase the number of the grants, attention was given to ensure that the M&E instruments are functional. In the third year, LA has commissioned two external evaluations for the grants of CfA 2 and CfA 3.

Grants monitoring remains a priority for the reporting period, although the number of the grants has increased. The LA staff has closely monitored the implementation of grants and provided at the same time support to grantees and fellows during the process of implementing the projects. LA has coached the grantees to keep track of meeting their project objectives and boost the grants results. In statistics:

- *Grants narrative/financial report*: 41 grantees (4 grantees from the CfA 2, 33 grantees from Call 3, 1 from Call 4 and 3 grants from Rapid Response) had final and/or interim report approved. From interim to final reporting improvement is noticed with the grantees reports. There has been one case that a grantee from CfA 3, had poor performance on project implementation and did not complete the grant activities;
- *Grantees/fellows monitoring*: At least 40 monitoring visits (including on spot monitoring); a direct output of this close monitoring is the fact that 99% of the closed projects (81 projects out of 82) met project's objectives and all had the final narrative and financial reports approved by LA;

⁵⁷ Development Alternative Resource Centre operates programs of positive social transformation and in the field of human rights.



- *External evaluation:* The project completed two external evaluations within the third year, by evaluating the projects contracted under Call 2 and 3. This evaluation was used as a supplementary tool to assess the outputs of the grants and respective impacts. The evaluator assessed the projects using a participatory approach, by visiting in the field 50% of grantees and by organizing meetings with representatives from the municipalities, final beneficiaries and partners of the projects;
- *Story telling:* In the third year LA has prepared and published eight storytelling based on impact/findings of from LA grantees through investigative articles, documentaries and stories in social media. Some of the cases addressed the funds dedicated to primary health care, concessions of incinerator of Fier and beach cabins, social housing policies in Tirana etc.

b. Approach to communication

LA has a twofold strategic communication approach: firstly, to intensively promote the results of LA supported grantees and their work and secondly to bring the issue of local democracy in the national agenda. There have been substantial results on that regards. LA has consolidated the ways of communications and the approach tailoring them for targeted audiences and collaborators.

- LA has intensively promoted the results of LA grantees and their work through social media communications channels, LA website, local and national media and online media. During the third year of implementation, fellows and grantees have increased and improved their relations with media and the way of using it, by bringing the issues of local democracy in the national agenda. In this direction have been achieved substantial results and records;
- A close cooperation with PortaVendore has made possible to amplify and reinforce the results of grantees and fellows;
- 35 articles and activities have been published in online media, raising the public awareness on civic activism and local democracy;
- 14 multimedia/video products from grantees rising the issues and problems regarding their local community and improving democracy in their local community;

- One dedicated TV show on environmental issues with grantees and environmental experts discussing topics on hydropower plants, incinerators, has been organized in June 2018;
- 4 short TV shows where grantees promoted their initiatives on environmental issues such as Vjosa protection and the risk of incinerator constructions, the urge for pro-activeness of young persons in public live etc.;
- Assuring the participation of 7 grantees/fellows in TV shows to promote their initiatives and projects supported by LA;
- 3 investigative/in-depth articles published by LA on thematic and tangible achievements from LA founded projects;
- 1 video documentary realized by LA to promote direct beneficiaries of the initiatives supported by LA;
- Active communication through social media channels of LA, such is Facebook with 18 k followers, Instagram around 2k followers and Twitter;
- 352 post's on Facebook page of LA project, excluding posts on Twitter and Instagram;
- 5 articles have been published on awarding ceremony of Call for application 4 of LA.

On May 07th – 11th, 2018, LA organized “Leviz for Democracy Week”, which was designed as a week packed with activities dedicated to local democracy, environmental, local referendums, theater.

Regarding the Competitions Idea, LA continued the tradition in transmitting LIVE in Facebook all the competitions ideas organized during the Call for Application 4 and 5. All the videos are archived. The detailed links of the LA visibility can be found in Annex 4 of the report.

Grantees and communications:

- All the grantees of Call 2 and 3 have been guided to implement a plan of communications through social media channels (Facebook pages and Instagram profiles have been opened from the grantees);
- There are grantees that have extensively used media as an advocacy tool to awaken the apathy of local government.

Box 16: Youth advocacy awakens communities from apathy and local government from indifferentism and lethargy

Levizja MJAFT⁵⁸ encouraged the critical thinking and civic activism of more than 120 young people in five municipalities through the use of the multimedia platform. About 107 young people were trained in the use of multimedia platform in various fields of mass communication: video, audio (radio), photography, writing to identify, document and report a series of issues of public concern in the selected municipalities: (i) lack of parking lots and bicycle lanes, occupied sidewalks, dilapidated market place, corruption in health centers (Shkodra); (ii) inaccessibility to rehabilitated premises of “Ali Demi” high school for unknown reasons, lack of cinema in the city, sewage pollution of the coast, drug use by teenagers (Vlora); (iii) lack of information on youth budget and activities, illegal cutting of wood (Korça); (iv) air pollution due to lack of filters in the plants, lack of waste bins, lack of traffic lights, corruption in university (obligatory purchase of books).

Four advocacy campaigns relying on the use of multimedia platform exerted public pressure on local governments and contributed in (i) the rehabilitation of a dilapidated market space (tregu i Rusit in Shkodra, (ii) youth involved in consultations for 2018 budget and pressure led to budget increase for youth activities, (iii) funding allocated for upgrading sewage system in Vlora, (iv) active youth council in Elbasan.

*“This project showed that clear articulation of demands by the citizens and consistent pressure can awaken the local governments from lethargy and respond to communities’ needs. This was a good opportunity for young people to test the local government, which in the end is not that hermetic. It is important that communication between citizens and local government is established and citizens’ representation in the municipal council is ensured to build mutual trust and interaction”.*⁵⁹

⁵⁸ “Youth empowerment at local level through the use of activism multimedia platform” implemented in municipalities of Korca, Shkodra, Elbasan and Vlora.

⁵⁹ Interview with Aldo Merkoci, Executive Director of MJAFT.

c. Gender mainstreaming

Gender is mainstreamed in LA activities and grants. LA has awarded grants to 8 NPO dedicated on gender issues and 36 % of the fellows are women. It is assessed that grantees have successfully implemented LA gender mainstreaming policy in project proposals, project reporting, but above all in the implementation process, participation in activities, composition of working groups, teams and trainings. Grantees report gender sensitive data for all their activities emphasizing that equal access and use of opportunity to project resources is provided to girls and women including rural young women. Three projects have specifically conducted (i) *gender sensitive analysis of social housing program for female headed households and has come up with a set of recommendations for integrated package of services for the municipality of Tirana for including this group in the vulnerable group category* and (ii) *specific needs for women and girls for social services* (iii) *domestic violence mechanism*. Some results from the grantees related to gender mainstreaming are:

- An online platform for reporting, coordinating and responding to survivors of domestic violence by responsible local institutions called Monitoring Operational Plan (MOP) is designed and successfully piloted in three municipalities;
- AIS prepared the second annual report, “Gender perspective of public contract at local government”.

Box 17: Monitoring Operational Plan for domestic violence reference mechanism

Refleksione⁶⁰ designed and piloted successfully the Monitoring Operational Plan (MOP) for the Domestic Violence Referral Mechanism (DVRM or CCR) in three municipalities, MOP is an innovative on-line platform for reporting, coordinating, assisting and responding to survivors of domestic violence by responsible local institutions in real time. It was designed based on feedback from citizens and relevant public institutions at central and local level to address main gaps in the functioning of DVRM:

weak cooperation of prosecutor’s office, court and bailiff, lack of human resources (lawyers and psychologists in the municipalities or police, schools) lack of reporting of cases of gender-based violence particularly in rural areas.

*“DVRM monitoring is a priority issue following the TAR in new municipalities which cover larger territories. Peripheral and rural areas lack access to services and they are black areas in terms of services and access to services”*⁶¹

*“We believe that MOP will be a useful tool to local government to coordinate response to domestic violence and monitor case management by the responsible actors.”*⁶²

MOP implementation was supported also with public awareness campaigns on DVRM and responsibilities of local government and other actors to address gender-based violence. Social media was actively used to disseminate messages of zero tolerance to DV and local journalists were trained on adopting positive gender approach in public information on domestic violence. Refleksione prepared a set of legal recommendations for improving the legal framework on improvement of DVRM functioning: i) apply sanctions on relevant institutions reluctant to cooperate in the Steering Committee of DVRM, ii) grant protection status to DVRM/CCR members, iii) to assign a psychologist and lawyer in the municipality to address the needs of survivors of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, LA has organised a dedicated activity on gender sensitive issues related to the challenges of the municipalities after TAR. On March 16th, 2018 in Roskovec, LA organised an activity to bring together all LevizAlbania grantees, representatives of local and central government, to discuss the challenges of delivering quality services while ensuring gender equality and mainstreaming. The activity combined was a combination of sharing experience from projects implemented by LA grantees on monitoring of three services in different municipalities, an artistic intervention by FemArt girls’ activists and open debates.

⁶⁰ “Monitoring of Referral Mechanism (RM) on Domestic Violence (DV) at local level – citizens’ activism to improve RM functioning” implemented in the municipalities of Lushnje, Fier, Korce.

⁶¹ Interview with Ani Ruci, Executive Director of Refleksione.

⁶² Interview with Teuta Korroveshi, deputy mayor, municipality of Lushnja.

Chapter 4: Finances and management

The approved budget of LevizAlbania for the 3rd Project Year (July 1st, 2017 – June 30th was 2,824,741 CHF.

During this reporting period LA has finalized the grant-giving process for the following:

- LA has awarded 46 grant contracts under the Call 4, with a total budget of CHF 934,490
 - 29 grants are awarded to NPO's
 - 17 to fellows
- 3 rapid response grants are awarded with a total budget of CHF 53,900.

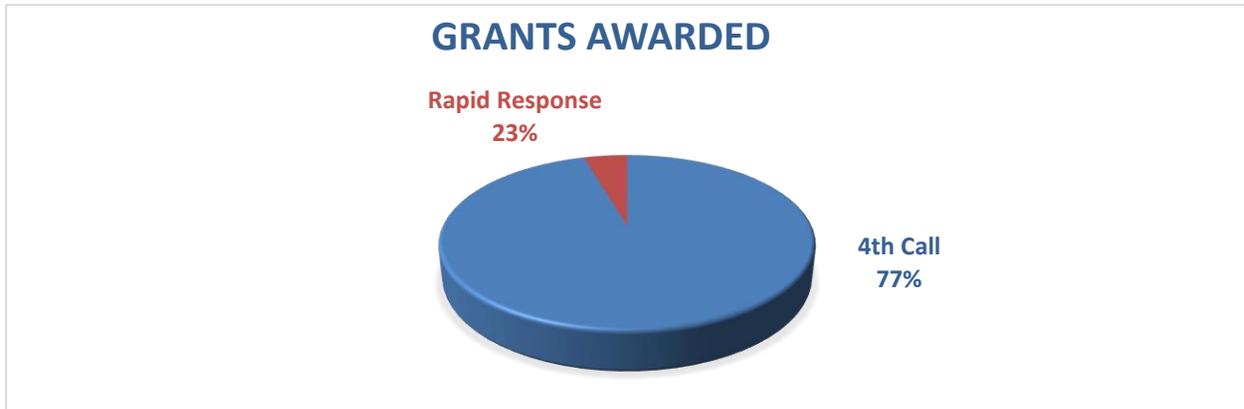


Table 1 below provides a summary for the 3rd Year and Table 2 provides a progressive picture for each call for all the implementation period of the project:

Table 1: Summary for 3rd Year

	Contracted amount			Disbursed amount			Reported Expenses		
	NPO	Individuals	TOTAL	NPO	Individuals	TOTAL	NPO	Individuals	TOTAL
Grants of the 1 st call	-	-	-	21,304	3,490	24,794	32	81	113
Grants of the 2 nd call	-	-	-	63,595	23,509	87,105	153,939	24,302	178,242
Grants of the 3 rd call	-	-	-	263,335	82,643	345,978	594,950	86,073	681,024
Grants of the 4 th call	771,050	163,440	934,490	420,454	40,104	460,558	39,248	20,937	60,185
Rapid Response	53,900	-	53,900	45,135	-	45,135	9,600	-	9,600
TOTAL 4.1.1	824,950	163,440	988,390	813,823	149,746	963,569	797,769	131,393	929,163
SEI Projects	366,376	-	366,376	256,882	-	256,882	208,895	-	208,895
TOTAL 4.1 & 4.2	1,191,326	163,440	1,354,766	1,070,705	149,746	1,220,451	1,006,664	131,393	1,138,058

Table 2: Progressive summary, Y1 + Y2 + Y3

	Contracted amount			Disbursed amount			Reported Expenses		
	NPO	Individuals	TOTAL	NPO	Individuals	TOTAL	NPO	Individuals	TOTAL
Grants of the 1 st call	361,848	63,038	424,886	359,157	61,921	421,078	359,157	61,921	421,078
Grants of the 2 nd call	319,000	64,000	383,000	314,669	62,990	377,659	314,669	62,990	377,659
Grants of the 3 rd call	646,023	92,924	738,947	609,621	84,070	693,691	594,950	86,073	681,024
Grants of the 4 th call	771,050	163,440	934,490	420,454	40,104	460,558	39,248	20,937	60,185
Rapid Response	102,781	-	102,781	92,099	-	92,099	43,667	-	43,667
TOTAL 4.1.1	2,200,702	383,402	2,584,104	1,796,001	249,084	2,045,085	1,351,693	231,921	1,583,614
SEI Projects	629,608	-	629,608	351,401	-	351,401	277,806	-	277,806
TOTAL 4.1 & 4.2	2,830,310	383,402	3,213,712	2,147,402	249,084	2,396,486	1,629,499	231,921	1,861,420

LevizAlbania provides continuous support and mentoring to the awarded grantees to increase their capacities and ensure a successful and effective project management & implementation.

Chapter 5: Way forward

The coming year is very challenging and important for LA, as it will lay the path for the last year of this first phase of LA project. In a nutshell some of the main directions of the work are:

- Contract the Call for Applications 5 grants and ensure successful implementation of the Call for Applications 4 projects, in line with the expected results;
- Boost results of the grantees in five calls for applications;
- Preparation for external evaluation of the first phase of LA and prepare the Project Document for the second phase based on the findings of the external evaluation;
- Enhance the capacity building component through on-site and online training sessions and close coaching of the grantees;
- User friendly analysing and dissemination of local finance data of 61 municipalities;
- Supporting local media and activists to be active in their community and to enhance local democracy;
- Providing legal support to local activists on issues related to local democracy;
- Organise Leviz Democracy week as a fully-fledged week covering important themes related to local government functions.