

**Name of the country:** the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

**Project number (Atlas):** 00061401

**Project name:** Strengthening Evidence-Based Policy Processes

**Implementation period:** 21.04.2009 - ongoing

**PROJECT PERFORMANCE**

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Outcome areas under UNDP strategic plan 2008-2011 <sup>1</sup>	Purpose and expected output	Activities undertaken	Results Achieved	Reasons if progress below target
<p><b>Outcome 1.1</b> A strategic national vision for local human development and good governance at national and local level is in place</p> <p>1. Civil society, and the private sector contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in support of national planning strategies and policies</p>	<p>The report aims at providing policy makers and the broader community with insights into people's perceptions on political, social and economic issues, inter-ethnic relations and trust in institutions. Getting people's views on their needs and concerns, especially of those whose voice could be hardly heard in the public policy processes, is even more important as the country devolves powers to local authorities and prepares for EU membership.</p> <p><u>Output 1:</u> People-centred Analyses Reports are produced in partnership with national institutions, contributing to the enhancement of inclusive national policy making</p>	<p>Act 1: National partnerships with the South East European University established and strengthened</p> <p>Act 2: Third issue of the PCA report developed and distributed</p> <p>Act 3: Methodology for governance assessment developed</p> <p>Act 4: Multi-stakeholder forum for consultation on governance issues created</p> <p>Act 5: De-facto governance assessment implemented in four pilot municipalities and Citizen Satisfaction Survey conducted (based on statistical sample of population per municipality)</p>	<p>Building on the findings of the third PCA, which focused on the quality of social services, the Government has drafted new by-laws to the Law on Social Protection. This means that accessibility to the quality and forms of social services offered to the citizens will be enhanced, improved and inclusive for all.</p> <p>The report examined regional disparities and quality of life - for the first time in the country. It drew lessons on how to reduce the geographic disparities through effective regional policies (for example which investments should be encouraged to boost the economy in a given region with specific characteristics).</p> <p>The key recommendations of the Report were incorporated into the National Strategy for Regional Development.</p> <p>Citizens satisfaction surveys based on a statistical sample of population were conducted and Analytical Reports were prepared for each of the pilot municipalities, providing recommendations that further on initiated preparation of concrete policy proposals.</p> <p>A nationally owned Governance Assessment Methodology was developed, providing tools for assessing governance and social inclusion policies in the health and education sectors. <b>This methodology now serves as an accountability mechanism both for citizens and decision makers, providing them with the necessary information on how to improve the overall governance system and contribute to the reform processes initiated in the country.</b></p>	

<sup>1</sup> Please state under which of the following nine outcome areas your project falls into, (in addition to BDP Outcome 69 "Capacities of stakeholders to assess and measure democratic governance reform strengthened") :

1. Civil society, (including civil society organizations and voluntary associations), and the private sector contribute to the MDGs in support of national planning strategies and policies
2. Electoral laws, processes and institutions strengthened to ensure inclusive participation and professional electoral administration
3. Access to information policies support accountability and transparency



## CUMULATIVE RESOURCES UTILIZED

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GAP resources: **200,000 USD**

Other resources (as applicable; please state sources of funding and amount): **UNDP TRAC: 32,920 USD**

## PROJECT PERFORMANCE—MAIN CHALLENGES

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Internal factors:

- Selecting potential researchers for developing the pilot study was a challenge, due to the lack of in-country experts with a thorough knowledge of the subject. This is why a research institution was engaged. This institution had both the necessary human resources and means to carry out an in-depth research in both the health and education sector, based on the agreed methodology framework.

External factors:

- Conducting a governance assessment was a new initiative. It was a challenge to foresee the flow of all activities beforehand. Experiences from other countries would have been helpful throughout the process.
- Involving representatives from the readers group, especially members from the institutions in the education and health sectors, was very important for the quality of the governance assessments. However, only a few officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health provided comments and suggestions.

## PROJECT PERFORMANCE—MAIN OPPORTUNITIES

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Please list the main opportunities which have been the key enabling factors to support the implementation of the project.

- The project provided policy makers and the broader community with insights into people's perceptions on political, social and economic issues, inter-ethnic relations and trust in institutions. Getting people's views on their needs and concerns, especially of those whose voice could be hardly heard in the public policy processes, is even more important as the country devolves powers to local authorities and prepares for EU membership.
- The project has provided an opportunity for all project board members to become very much involved in the development phase of the report from the very beginning. Their support, dedication and commitment throughout the entire process was crucial for the smooth implementation of the project.
- The team that was selected by the national partner - the South East European University team, had a previous vast experience with project management and working with international consultants. This was very important as they carried out the Governance Assessment methodology, which was a new and innovative approach for them. The prepared report now serves as a critical accountability mechanism for a variety of stakeholders, including citizens and decision makers. It provides all the necessary information on how to improve the governance system and contribute to the governance reform processes initiated in the country. It was widely disseminated to all relevant partners and promoted on different events.
- Experience shows that governance is crucial for the health and education systems to fulfill their essential public

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4. National, regional and local levels of governance expand their capacities to reduce conflict and manage the equitable delivery of public services

5. Legislatures, regional elected bodies, and local assemblies have strengthened institutional capacity, enabling them to represent their constituents more effectively

6. Effective, responsive, accessible and fair justice systems promote the rule of law, including both formal and informal processes, with due consideration on the rights of the poor, women and vulnerable groups.

7. Strengthened capacities of national human rights institutions

8. Strengthened national, regional and local level capacity to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in government policies and institutions

9. Strengthened national, regional and local level capacity to implement anti-corruption initiatives

functions, as it encompasses institutions and linkages among citizens, government officials and health/education service providers. Some of the target groups, for example, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health were quite cooperative in providing information to the research institutions and they were very enthusiastic about the research results. This mechanism proved indispensable in obtaining a complete picture of vulnerabilities and risks in the context of educational and health policies.

- In the second phase, the creation of community based planning groups in the four pilot municipalities allowed a more productive involvement of local stakeholders in the execution of the de-facto governance assessment in the ten areas of the transferred competencies. The complexity of the assessment required participation of the local stakeholders in the preparatory phase including the preparation of the citizen's satisfaction survey questionnaire. Since, the survey was carried out by selected local CSOs, the preparatory/instructive meetings helped increase the CSOs capacity for more effective involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of local services. The preparation of the survey was also used as an opportunity for joint overview (with local officials) of the scope of local services, more precise definition of the local responsibilities (those that are authentic and those that are shared with other municipalities and /or state institutions), the actual coverage of the population of the municipality with particular services, the existing modalities of the service delivery and the assumed expectations of the citizens on the quality of services in all ten areas of the transferred competencies.

### RATING ON PROGRESS on PARTNERSHIPS

Please describe the level to which the GAP project has contributed to strengthening partnership with different stakeholders and tick the boxes as appropriate:

	Strengthened	Somewhat Strengthened	Unchanged
1. Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Donors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Civil society:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Academia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Unions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Religious organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) NGO/CBOs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. UN system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Other Int. organizations (like IMF, ADB, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

### TO WHAT DEGREE WAS THE COUNTRY-LED APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

Please indicate how GAP funded activities followed the three principles of the country-led approach: strengthening country-ownership, developing capacities of local stakeholders, and aligning with country's policies and priorities. To what extent were these principles conducive to achieving the project results? Do these principles make a difference in terms of sustainability? Did these principles assist in strengthening both the supply and demand side of democratic governance?

The South East European University was engaged as the Responsible Party for the project implementation. The national partner institution was identified after its capacities were fully assessed for the envisaged project components. Once the cooperation agreement was signed. A research was conducted in collaboration with the national team of experts and as a result a final draft of the report was provided to the readers group for the final comments.

The report systematically addresses issues related to social cohesion, quality of governance and ethnic cohesion, while deepening its focus on a specific theme of particular importance – reflective of the country's actual development and policy priorities.

The governance assessment in the area of social exclusion was expected to support national efforts to monitor and evaluate the governance, thus bridging the gap between the government and citizens in understanding the principles of democratic governance. The developed methodology can serve as a critical accountability mechanism for a variety of stakeholders, especially the citizens of the country, the non-state actors and the decision makers – so that they all have the necessary information to improve the governance reform processes initiated in the country.

Broadening of the initially tested methodological approach in two areas (education and health) to all ten areas of the transferred competencies (local economic development, urban planning, communal infrastructure, protection of environment, social and child protection, culture, sport and recreation, rescue and protection of citizens and goods) contributed to setting baseline indicators on the perceptions of the citizens on the quality of the local services in the four pilot municipalities. The setting of the baseline indicators will further enable translation of the identified needs and problems into concrete community based local policy action and a consequent prioritization and budgeting consistent with the needs and the expectations of the communities. The governance assessment of the four pilot municipalities precisely indicated the areas that require attention for achieving the overall objectives of social inclusion. The registered impact of decentralized fiscal management on service delivery outputs and documented areas of policy weaknesses in different sectors strengthened the ongoing work of the Ministry of Finance on improving the fiscal equalization framework.

#### **WAYS IN WHICH GAP FUNDED ACTIVITIES WERE CATALYTIC AND INNOVATIVE**

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Please indicate how GAP funds helped the CO advanced its agenda in Democratic Governance. How did GAP funds allow the CO to explore innovative approaches? Did other donors or the government provide additional funding as a result? Did the GAP funds allow UNDP to advance the dialogue or garner a leadership position?

The project was designed to provide policy analysts, decision makers and the public at large with an effective analytical policy tool that would continue analyzing people's perceptions on key variables that affect their lives, based on exploring and suggesting possible policy options that are responsive to citizens' aspirations and concerns, support the country's general development and its advancement towards EU membership. The report systematically addresses issues related to social cohesion, quality of governance and ethnic cohesion, while deepening its focus on a specific theme of particular importance – reflective of the country's actual development and policy priorities. The third issue supported with this project provided further analyses and tools for policy makers and other involved stakeholders in regard to the regional development processes and Quality of life in the 8 regions in the country, in line with the EU accession process requirements. The "People-Centred Analyses" report series monitors people's perceptions through regular surveys, provides statistical indicators, policy-oriented analysis of the important issues on social inclusion and governance and also recommends effective policy actions.

Also as part of the Global Programme on Capacity Development for Democratic Governance Assessments and Measurement, in March 2009, a new initiative began, aiming to reflect activities for supporting the governance assessment component. The methodology was developed to support the national efforts to monitor and evaluate governance. The process consisted in developing a nationally owned methodology for governance assessment and related capacity building activities of local pool of trainers and researchers to conduct the assessment. Such Assessment can contribute to further examine the governance in the area of poverty reduction and social inclusion policies and can also mobilize a wide range of stakeholders.

As a complementary tool, a scientific research on representative sample from total number of population was conducted in four pilot municipalities: Krushevo, Jegunovce, Konce and Cair as an effort to determine the satisfaction of the citizens with services provided at local level. This type of a citizens satisfaction survey based on a statistical model of disproportional stratified sample (due to the differences between the selected municipalities) is unique for the country and has provided for the first time an opportunity for the citizens of these municipalities to give feedback both to the

local and the central government institutions on issues related to the quality of services and governance at local level. In addition, this instrument provides an innovative mechanism for the inhabitants of these municipalities to communicate their priorities to decision makers at the local level. Conclusively, this instrument has proved to be quite instrumental in assessing the quality of the services and identifying the community priorities from the perspective of the inhabitants of the pilot municipalities.

The citizen's satisfaction survey results reflected the demographic profile of all residents in the pilot municipalities. A valuable database was produced highlighting the specific perceptions of youth, women and different ethnic communities on the quality of the local services. In order to build the capacities of the local CSO's, SEEU-UNDP outsourced the operative realization of the survey to a local CSO's. An additional structured questionnaire was sent to the administration of the pilot municipalities with the aim to collect statistically valid data from the municipal officials on the preparation and delivery of the local services. The questionnaire itself and the collected responses represent useful tools and a knowledge base for improved planning, allocation of resources and improved process of creation of local public policies for the four pilot municipalities and other municipalities country wide.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

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Please elaborate on the three most important lessons learned during the project implementation.

There is need to strengthen the capacities of experts and civil society members to analyze data through quantitative research methods and to better understand the general technical aspects of statistical methods. This would lead to a better interpretation of statistical findings and would provide sound analysis for raising different challenges relevant to the subject.

When implementing pivotal programmes such as the governance assessment, it is very important to share the knowledge and experience from other countries on potential risks and opportunities.

Involvement of all relevant stakeholders in such processes is crucial, both for providing expertise in analyzing specific parts of the report/assessments and also, for using the data/methodology later on for the purposes of their own institutions.

### **SUPPORT FROM HQ/REGIONAL BUREAUS/REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRES**

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Please indicate the nature of support requested and received from the GAP team, HQ, Regional Bureaus, Regional Service Centers, DG-net during the course of project implementation.

Regular reporting was provided to the Oslo Governance Centre and discussions were held on several occasions. All the suggestions and recommendations that were given to the national team have been very useful and have led to improvements of several points of implementation, especially when it came to developing and implementing the governance assessment methodology.

The BRC Regional Programme Specialist on Governance Assessments participated in the consultations on utilization of the already developed assessment methodologies on governance issues in additional four municipalities.

### **GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

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Has your project contributed to gender mainstreaming? If so, please elaborate.

The PCA report provides some gender disaggregated data. One aspect refers to the gender participation on the labour market. The report contains some explanation on the low level of female representation in the public sector administration, especially when it comes to Albanian women. Brief analysis of the reasons are incorporated mainly related to the life style, level of education and the female participation in the mainstream development of the society which includes the access to information (internet usage, emancipation, etc.). The gender dimension was also analyzed from the perspective of job security. One of the report's conclusions is that women feel less secure in their job positions.



The GA methodology incorporates gender perspective, indirectly, through defining the excluded segments of society in the area of education and health. Another gender perspective is analysed in the report from the research conducted in the education sector within 6 municipalities.

Gender related variables were taken into account when developing the statistical sample for the client satisfaction survey questionnaire for the pilot municipalities. The used model of disproportionate stratified statistical sample (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner,2002) allows more indepth analyses of the perceptions of women and man on the quality of the local service delivery, while also taking into account the urban/rural specifics of the pilot municipalities. Complete gender disaggregated data was produced for all the four pilot municipalities. Specific comparative analyses and findings on the gender perception of the quality of the most relevant local services are presented in the respective municipal Reports.

**Prepared by:**


Name: Suzana Ahmeti - Janjic



Title: Programme Associate - Social Inclusion

Date: 21<sup>th</sup> of May, 2012

Name: Toni Popovski



Title: Decentralization and Local Development Initiatives Coordinator – serving as a Project Manager

Date: 21<sup>th</sup> of May, 2012

**Endorsed by Deputy Resident Representative:**

Name: Alessandro Fracassetti



Title: UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

Date: 21<sup>th</sup> of May, 2012