

Annex E

NEEDS ASSESMENT ANALYSIS REPORT

Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Needs Assessment Methodology	3
3. Common findings and analyses for all participating countries	6
4. Country analysis	
A. Albania	10
B. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	25
C. Serbia	36
D. Montenegro.....	45
E. Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244	53
F. Bosnia and Herzegovina	55

1. INTRODUCTION

The Needs Assessment Analysis (NAA) was undertaken during the inception phase in all offices. The scope of the NAA was to assess the existing capacities, level of information and needs of the beneficiaries in the participating countries with regard to implementation of the future CBC Programmes. The process of interviews started in August 20 and is completed on September 15, 2006.

2. NEEDS ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Needs assessment analysis was mapped by relying on the following main sources of information:

- (i) *face-to-face semi-structured interviews*: the insights provided by face-to-face semi-structured interviews with representatives of different stakeholders that could potentially be involved in future CBC Programmes' activities
- (ii) *questionnaires*: developed for each main target group (explained below)

Interviews

Interviews and meetings were held with all identified stakeholders and key representatives of institutions that could potentially be involved in future CBC Programmes' activities, such as Government central institutions, regional and local government authorities in the bordering areas, civil society and business representatives.

The initial thrust of interviews was aimed at identifying; (i) the programmes for which each country is eligible; (ii) status of affairs for each programme; (iii) institutional mechanism for coordination and management future CBC Programmes; (iv) level of awareness on the CBC related activities; (v) capacities for programme management; capacities for developing project proposals and (vi) potential needs for training. The interviews gave an indication of the level of technical knowledge that exist amongst staff, the type and level of institutional support, awareness and training needed for enhancing capacities of beneficiaries to effectively participate in the future CBC Programmes activities. A key objective of the NAA was to identify the constraints that may hinder the participation process of different target groups in the programmes. The results of the interviews provided initial "qualitative" information on the perceptions of the *strengths* and

weaknesses and of existing situation, and needs and priorities for improvement in order to ensure an effective and active participation in the CBC Programmes.

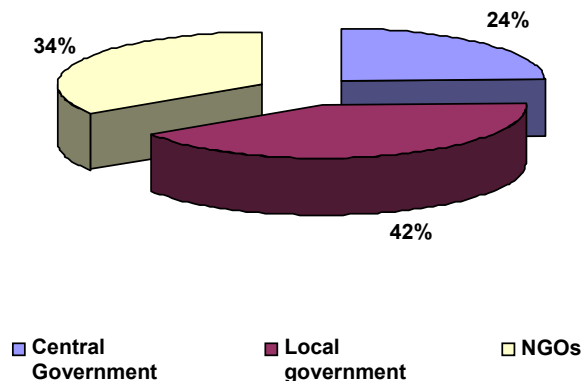
Questionnaires

Based on the insights gathered from the interviews, *three sets of questionnaires* were designed in order to get a “quantitative” view, level of knowledge and potential needs for participation in the future CBC Programmes. Questionnaires were designed for the three following target groups:

- central institutions (mainly ministries or other central government agencies)
- regional and local government units
- civil society organizations, business community and other non-governmental organizations.

The overall distribution of interviewed persons according to the main categories is presented in the Figure 1 below¹:

Figure 1: Distribution of samples across categories



As noted from the Figure 1 above the majority of respondents represent the staff working at the regional and local level administration, followed by the representatives of non-governmental organizations active in the bordering regions. Particular attention was paid to send the questionnaires to the local government units covering regions that could potentially participate in the IPA CBC Programmes’ activities. A copy of the questionnaires can be found as appendix F to this Inception Report. The questionnaires were designed to emphasize the knowledge on CBC Programmes and perceived gaps of different subsets of persons dealing with, or that could potentially benefit from CBC activities. As a secondary objective, the questionnaires also allowed to gather preliminary feedback about capacities in place for preparing project proposals and potential needs for training.

¹ Filled in questionnaires were received as follows: (i) Albania 110 questionnaires (60 Central Government, 26 LGUs and 24 NGOs) ; (ii) –the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 48 questionnaires (22 from LGUs and 26 from NGOs) ; (iii) Serbia 64 questionnaires (35 from LGUs and 29 from NGOs) ; (iv) Montenegro 31 questionnaires (22 from LGUs and 9 from NGOs) and BiH 146 questionnaires 146 questionnaires (47 from central government; 51 from LGUs and 48 from NGOs)

The results emerging from the Needs Assessment Analysis and their implications for the implementation action plan were validated through a second round of discussions with selected key informants in the institutions direct counterpart of the CBIB Project.

3. COMMON FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS FOR ALL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

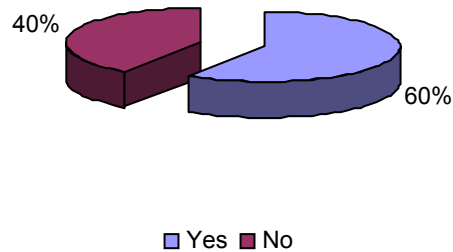
The report presents specific findings per each country and provides several recommendations for addressing the needs and shortcomings. There is a general conclusion that despite specific issues, all of them are facing also similar problems that hinder effective participation in the CBC Programmes.

The following presents a summary of common findings identified during the NAA:

- The first overall conclusion is that there are significant differences between the borders in the extent to which CBC activities have been developed. By far the best developed CBC Programmes in the western Balkans are those on the external borders of the region where Member States or Candidate Countries are involved. One of the main reasons for the above conclusion is that the Member States have relatively large amounts of multi-annual funding from ERDF for these programmes. In addition they have dedicated Managing Authorities and JTSs to support programme management activities. The JTSs receive technical assistance, paid for by programme funds, to undertake regional analyses; awareness raising activities; project preparation; project selection and evaluation. These management structures are very active in promoting Calls for Proposals and supporting potential beneficiaries on both sides of their borders to prepare applications. Consequently, the Member States are in a position to drive the CBC activities in their bordering countries.
- The guidelines and procedures for implementation of Neighbourhood Programmes (NPs) in the “external borders” are commonly found unnecessary “too complex” and not flexible.
- No Joint Management Structures exist in the internal borders.
- There has been a widespread failure to develop Joint Programming Documents (JPDs) on the internal borders. In the absence of JPDs both central and regional authorities have been reluctant to dedicate the resources needed to establish joint management structures. At present there are none on the internal borders.
- In comparison to the external borders there is little EC or bilateral assistance funding allocated to internal borders and therefore little incentive for preparing JPDs. The CARDS Programme, which is the main source of assistance funding to the region, over the period 2002-2004 has allocated for TA only Euro 1.8 million out of Euro 16.8 million to internal borders. Experience with external borders has shown that technical assistance has been very instrumental in launching and managing CBC Programmes.

- The funding disparity between internal and external borders is set to continue under future future CBC Programmes, this being one of the consequences of the recent EC guidance on developing matching funds for programmes on both sides of borders. For example, over the period 2007-2009, BIH will be allocated some Euro 10.2 million for cooperation with Italy whilst receiving Euro 5.8 million for developing programmes on its borders with Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro. The same disparity applies also to other countries.
- With some difference from country to country the needs assessment analysis identified. In general, a relatively low level of information on CBC Programmes, varying from “external” to “internal” borders and very low level of information on future CBC Programmes (Figure 2 and 4 below).

Figure 2: Information on CBC Programmes for all participating countries

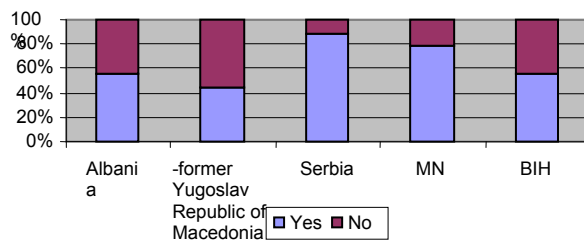


Around 60% of all respondents confirmed that they are aware of the CBC Programmes and only 40% of them have no information on existence of such programmes.

The level of awareness as shown in the Figure 5 below differs from country to country²

- The level of awareness on CBC Programmes is relatively satisfactory in the “external borders” but low or often inexistent in the “internal borders”. This is explained by the fact that most of knowledge on CBC Programmes in the “internal borders” still remains with the national coordinators and due to lack of joint management structures and operational activities very little information has reached the regional and local

Figure 3: Information on CBC Programmes by country



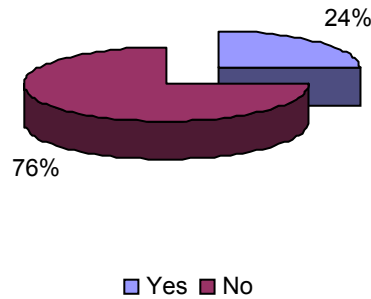
levels. The start of CBC activities in the “internal borders” should be associated with an intensive awareness campaign. As mentioned above the level of awareness on future CBC Programmes is very low. At the Regional level 76% of respondents confirmed that they have no information about future CBC Programmes and its instruments. More informed is staff working at the central level, especially those working in the structures dealing with EU integration and other few

² The different results between countries should be also taken with some reservation, considering the difference in the number of respondents. In case of Albania and BIH where the number of respondents is higher than other countries, the results tend to be closer to reality, than in the case of other countries with smaller number of respondents e.g Montenegro.

staff working at the central ministries. Respondents out of the central ministries who have information on future CBC Programmes constitute a small group. As Figure 4 confirms only 24 % of the respondents have information on IPA CBC, while 76% percent have no information on that. At the country level the situation is more or less the same, with exception of Montenegro, where the majority of respondents confirmed that they are informed about IPA CBC.

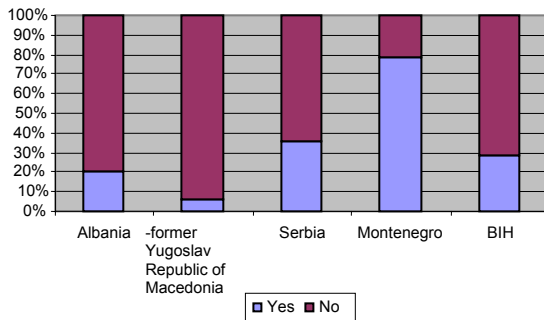
However, this should be taken with reservation as the number of respondents is quite small.

Figure 4: Information on IPA CBC all participating countries



The capacities of the beneficiaries to participate in the CBC Programmes result to be weak, despite some slight differences.

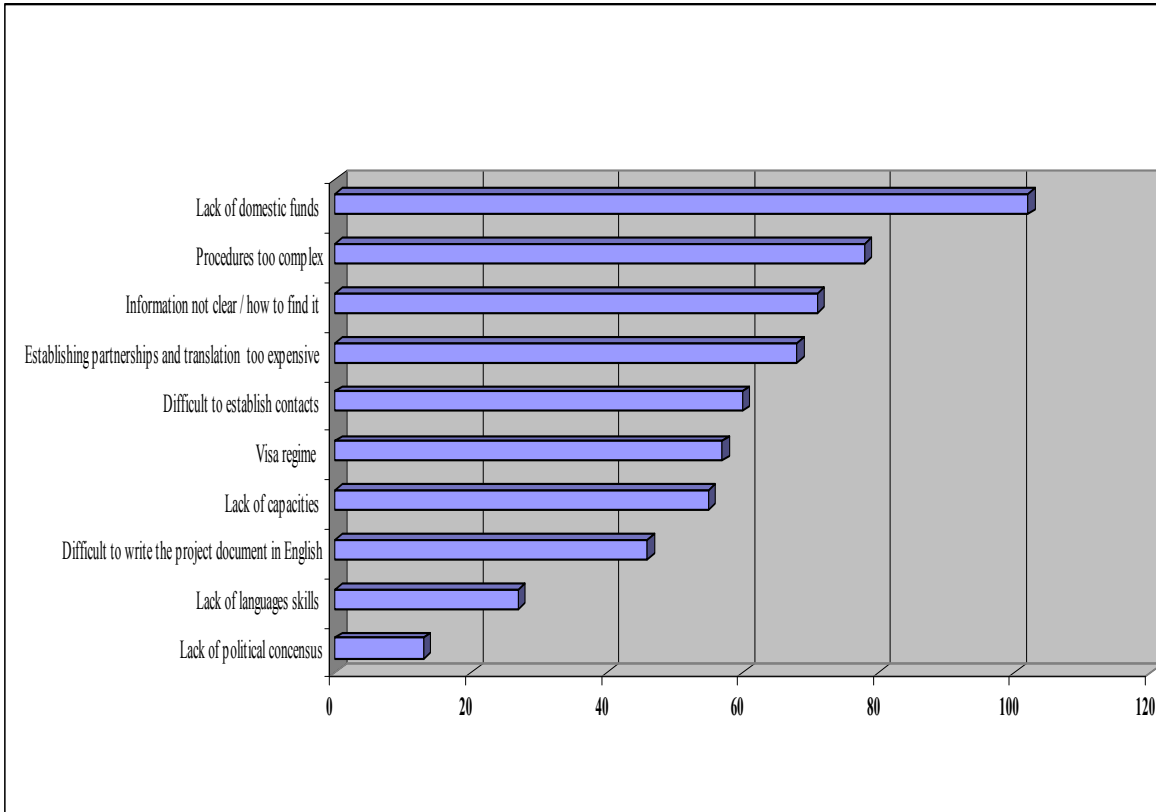
Figure 5: Information about IPA CBC



The general finding show that capacities to develop good quality project proposals are quite low especially at the regional and local levels in the “internal borders”. If the “internal borders” CBC Programmes are to be developed, considerable resources and strong efforts need to be mobilized for developing capacity building programmes, in order to enable the beneficiaries to successfully participate in these programmes in the future.

- Capacity building programmes and training activities should be not considered only in the short term and linked to the life of the CBIB project. A longer term support and training strategy could support the sustainability of the results of this project and build the foundation for future successful participation of the countries in the future CBC Programmes in the future. A core group of “certified trainers” should be established in each country and potential for establishment of a Regional Training Centre on the future CBC Programmes could be worth exploring.
- Participation of beneficiaries in the “calls for proposals” in the “external borders” is often hindered by various “logistic” reasons such as; (i) difficulties to establishment contacts in the other side of the border; (ii) source of Information and clarity; (iii) shortage of funds to cover beneficiary’s contribution to project’s participation; (iv) difficulties in obtaining border entrance-visas; (v) relatively high cost of application (v) language problems in preparation of project proposals in English. Even though in the first look logistic problems they need to be considered and addressed carefully.

Figure 6: Main obstacles for participating in the CBC programmes. – all countries.

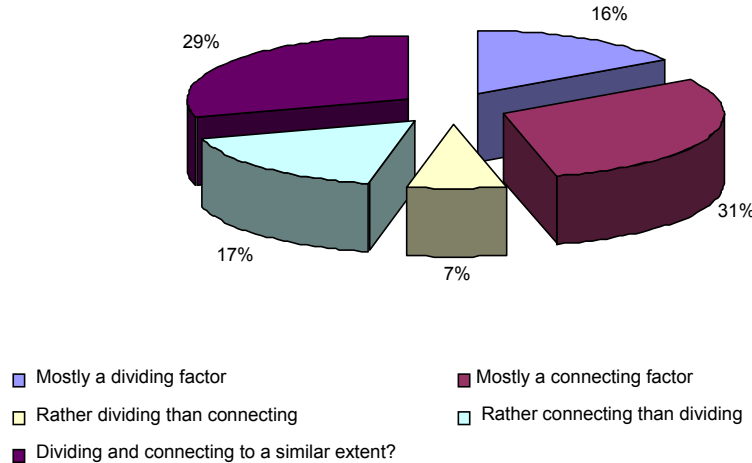


As the Figure 6 above explains, the first main obstacle for beneficiaries is the lack of domestic funds to cover the co-financing part of a project. This is a problem for all countries, in particular for the local government units and civil society organizations. The second is the difficulty several beneficiaries are facing to understand the procedures in the CfPs. Cost of establishing the partnership and translation of documents seems to be a problem for all groups. For all participating countries the “lack of capacities” to develop projects is a serious concern (for details see the chapter for each country). From the interviewed groups, capacities to manage the projects are lacking in particular at the local administration level (both regional and local units) and central ministries. This does not seem to be of much concern for the NGOs. Difficulties to obtain entrance – visa result to be a problem only for beneficiaries in Albania (the first one) and for Bosnia and Herzegovina. While “lack of political consensus” is an issue only for the local beneficiaries in Serbia.

Overall perception of beneficiaries on the role of the border and CBC Programmes.

Although that the scope of the survey was to assess the needs of several beneficiaries across the Western Balkan to effectively participate in CBC Programmes, the survey tried to make a modest attempt to measure the perception of beneficiaries about the role of the borders as a factor for connecting or dividing countries, and the role of such programmes for enhancing such cooperation.

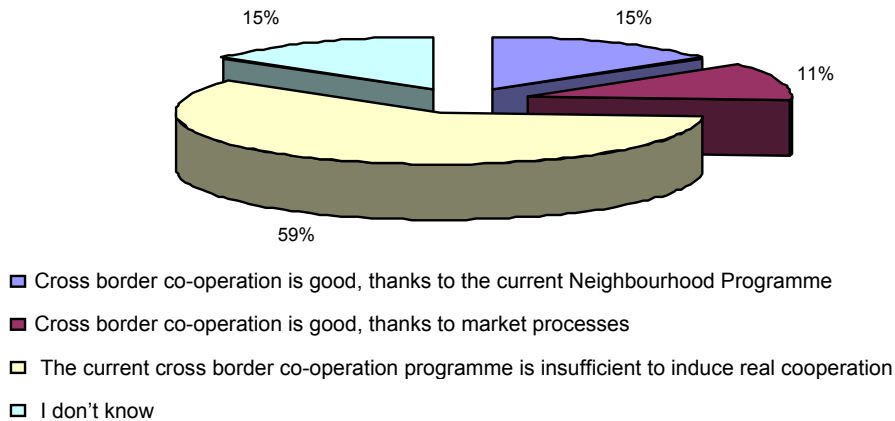
Figure 7: Consideration on the borders



The key finding of this section is that beneficiaries across the region are not confident on the role of the CBC Programmes on fostering cross-border cooperation, although the majority has a positive opinion about the role of borders. There are very interesting findings coming out from the survey related to this perception. The Figure 7 above confirms that the majority respondents consider the borders as connecting factor 48% (31% “mostly a connecting factor” and 17% “rather a connecting factor”). Only 25% of them consider the borders a dividing factor (16% “mostly dividing factor” and 7% “rather dividing than connecting”). While less than 30% of them have the perception that borders play more or less the same role as dividing and connecting factor.

The respondents across the countries share more or less the same view about the role of the CBC Programmes as a factor for inducing real cooperation among the bordering countries (Figure 8 below). The majority of them think that the programmes are insufficient to induce the cooperation between the countries (59%). Only a small group of them are of the opinion that these programmes have a role on this (15%). 11% think that the cooperation is good thanks to the market processes.

Figure 8: Consideration about the role of CBC Programmes



If we analyze the data at the country level, interestingly, each country presents a mixed picture of perception on the role of border and the role of the CBC Programmes on inducing the cooperation among borders. The perception in some cases is in the same line with the general one, but some time stands in the opposite side, not mentioning that in case of Serbia interviewed persons expressed a high degree of scepticism about the role of these programmes.

We have to mention, however, that due to limited time and resources, the interviews were conducted with target groups of beneficiaries and do not necessary express the opinion of the all beneficiaries in the region.

The following Section presents findings and recommendations of the Inception Phase according to the *scope of work* for the Implementation Phase of the project. Findings and recommendations are summarized for each country based on the following components:

- I. Institutional mechanism for coordination and management of CBC Programmes
- II. Awareness on CBC Programmes
- III. Capacities for programme management and training needs

4 Country analysis

The following sections present detailed analysis of findings per each country.

A. Albania

Around 150 persons were interviewed in Albania, out of which 40 face-to face discussions and the rest (110 interviews) were questionnaire-based interviews. The central government officials represent the majority of interviewed persons (56%), followed by the local government officials (24%) and representatives of non-governmental organizations (20%) (Figure 10) Attention was paid to have a larger representation of interviewed staff at all levels, from the secretary generals in the central ministries to the specialist level at the local administration and NGOs. The Figure 9, below presents the distribution of interviews according to the position hold by each respondent, according to three main categories: (i) central administration; (ii) regional and local government units and (iii) non-governmental organizations

Figure 9: Distribution of samples by positions

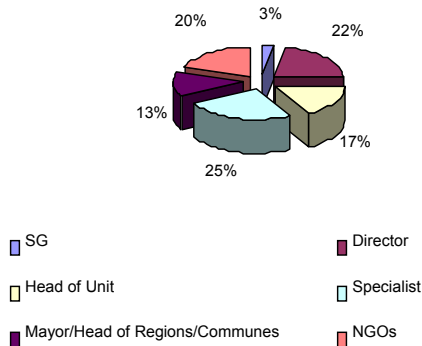
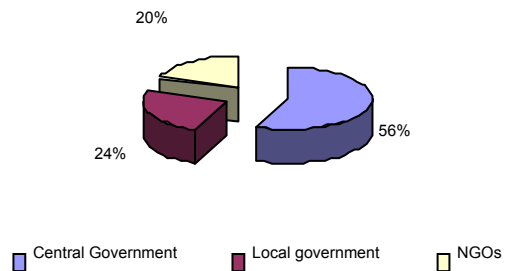


Figure 10: Distribution of samples according to categories

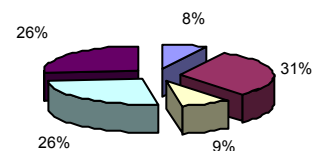


A.1 Perception of Albanian's beneficiaries on the role of the border and CBC Programmes

Respondents in Albania have a more optimistic position considering the role of the borders, compared to the respondents to other countries. As presented in the Figure 11, the majority of respondents consider the borders as connecting factor 57% (31 % “mostly a connecting factor” and 26% “rather a connecting factor”).

Only 16 % of them consider the border a dividing factor (8% “mostly dividing factor” and 9% “rather dividing

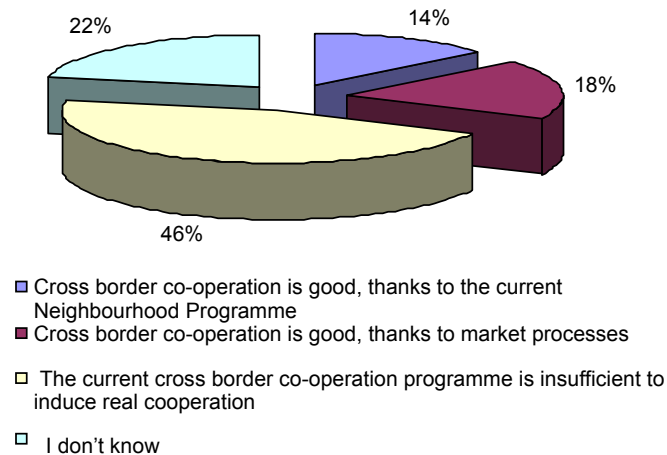
Figure 11: Albanian's respondents view on the role of borders



than connecting”). While only 26% of respondents have the perception that borders play more or less the same role as dividing and connecting factor.

They feel, however, a little bit sceptics about the role of the CBC Programmes for inducing the cooperation among the bordering countries. Close to half of them think that the current programmes are insufficient to induce the real cooperation. Only 14% of them think that the future CBC Programmes are factor for the good cross border cooperation, while 18% of them dedicate this to the market processes.

Figure 12: Role of the CBC Programmes



A.2 Institutional mechanism for coordination and management of future CBC Programmes

A.2.1 Coordination of CBC Programmes at central level

The system of coordination of CBC Programmes in Albania has evolved over years. Until late nineties coordination of CBC Programmes under Phare/Interreg was placed at the Council of Ministers (unit dealing with coordination of external assistance). From late nineties overall coordination of EC assistance under CARDS was transferred to the Ministry of Economy. During this period, the Ministry of Economy coordinated also participation in Interreg III programmes to which Albania participated only partly, with no national funding and relatively weak representation in the programme structures.

As of last year the responsibility for coordination of NPs and SAP Countries CBC Programmes is placed at the Ministry of European Integration (MEI).

Currently, there are three main players that might have a potential role in overall coordination of CBC Programmes in Albania; (i) the Ministry of European Integration, also national coordinator of EU assistance; (ii) Ministry of Economy (MoE), in its capacity as coordinator of regional development policies; and (iii) Ministry of Interior, also in charge of local government issues. To this it should be added also the latest transfer of responsibility for overall coordination of external assistance to a dedicated unit at the Council of Ministers.

Different previous analysis and reports indicate that frequent organizational changes, as well as high turn-over of staff have, in general, weakened the capacities of management external assistance in Albania.

The **Ministry of European Integration** is responsible for coordinating EU assistance. The **Directorate of Institutional Support and Integration** (DISI) in the Ministry of European Integration, deals with the coordination of the EC assistance under the CARDS Programmes, IPA (national and CBC) and other EU initiatives.

As of mid 2006, under the DISI it was established the **Unit for Regional Cooperation (URC)** which is in charge of coordination of future CBC Programmes at national level.

The Unit for Regional Cooperation acts as the National Contact Point for all the neighbourhood and cross-border cooperation trans-national programmes that Albania participates in the framework of EC financing. It is the main Project Partner (PP) for this contract. The organizational structure of URC foresees a Head of Unit and two task managers. At the moment there is only the head of unit, a task manager and a vacancy. Even though the existing staff dealing with coordination of CBC Programmes activities is highly active, the URC is markedly understaffed for carrying out efficiently all activities related to NPs coordination. In addition, this situation becomes more problematic in the context of a larger and ever-expanding coordinating mandate of the MEI under upcoming IPA CBC funding for Albania. Given that URC's agenda is dominated by "permanent urgencies" the acquisition of new functions/tasks in the framework of IPA CBC, may create serious sustainability problems if understaffing issue is not tackled soon.

A.2.2 Coordination of CBC Programmes at line ministries

It is difficult to identify one structure as a model of coordination of future CBC Programmes in the Albanian institutions. Lately upon the request of the Ministry of European Integration all line ministries have appointed a "coordinator of EU assistance" (including future CBC Programmes). Beyond the direct "coordinator", it is difficult to identify a model of coordination of EC assistance and future CBC Programmes in the line ministries. Some ministries have newly established Units for European Integration. The unit deals also with coordination of EC assistance, including future CBC Programmes activities coordination. Other ministries have Project Coordination Offices (PCOs) that carry out these functions, while the rest have appointed individual staff that serve as "focal point" for coordination. Obviously, each ministry has its own approach to coordination, programming, project implementation and monitoring of EC assistance. Yet, these functions take place in a non-systematic way and they are not consolidated in an effective manner.

The appointed "coordinators" have different positions and status in different ministries. In some ministries the coordinators have the status of director of department, while in most ministries they have the status of specialist across different departments. In many cases, dealing with EC assistance and future CBC Programmes coordination is an extra assignment given to the coordinators, some of which have already a quite busy agenda

and are already overwhelmed with work. This makes coordination of CBC Programmes activities being sometimes seen as a “burden” without being given the proper attention.

It should be noted at this stage the relatively modest level of involvement in CBC Programmes coordination of the Ministry of Economy (in charge of regional development policies), and the Ministry of Interior (in charge of local government development).

A.2.3 Coordination of CBC Programmes at regional and local government

The decentralization law and the decentralization strategy in Albania foresee three main institutional structures at local government level; (i) the Regions; (ii) Municipalities; (iii) Communes.

Regions (composed of several municipalities and communes) are in charge of coordination and programming of the regional development programmes. The coordination structures at the regions are relatively well established and staffed. Almost in all regions there exist the coordination and programming units, but in most of them these units are understaffed and the level of exchange of information with corresponding structures in municipalities and communes is low. There has been previous support from other donors, such as UNDP and SIDA, to develop regional strategies, but in most of the cases these strategies do not consider cross border cooperation. However, as explained further down in the report, the awareness level of staff on CBC Programmes at the regional level is higher compared to municipalities and communes.

With regard to *municipalities* and *communes* in the bordering areas, only the biggest municipalities such as Tirana, Durrës, Fier have established coordination and programming units to deal with foreign finance projects, while in the medium and small municipalities and communes, such functions either are missing or are sporadic. In addition to this, the level of awareness and capacity to deal with programming issues or project preparations is considerably low.

Some serious obstacles that hinder the local government authorities to actively participate in cross border cooperation programmes are also the following:

- lack of domestic funds to cover beneficiary’s contribution to project’s participation
- relatively high costs in preparation of project proposals (translation of the proposals in Albanian or English, etc)
- difficulties in the process of establishing partnerships on the other side of the border,
- difficulties of obtaining visas for travelling to the other side of the border, which represents a serious obstacle in particular for the civil society and business representatives

Conclusions

- One main conclusion of the Inception Phase is that *there is a serious shortage of staff and weak capacity* within the Ministry of European Integration and URC in particular to

cope with neighbourhood and cross border cooperation programmes. In our view the lack of human capacity might become a major risk to the achievement of the project results, especially on considerable requirements over the next year for launching CBC Programmes activities in the internal borders. The risk is that the project team will, rather than support building capacity of the staff, supplement the missing staff, thus decreasing the sustainability of the technical assistance.

- The same can be said also for line ministries. CBC Programmes activities are relatively known for most of line ministries in Albania, and consequently the level of awareness is relatively good, but *institutional capacities to actively participate in them need to be developed substantially*.
- Little can be said about coordination capacities for future CBC Programmes' activities at the regional and local level. There is a *great need for developing institutional and staff capacities at regional and local institutions*. There are great difficulties for regional and local authorities to participate in the CBC Programmes' activities, which relate especially to costs for preparing project, finding partnerships and obtaining visas to travel to the other side of the border.
- Both in line ministries and regional and local government institutions there is a need for *establishing a sustainable networks of "focal points"* that should be in charge of coordinating CBC Programmes' activities.
- Even though the programming for "external borders" is managed by the assigned Managing Authorities in the Member States, in the view of increasing demands under future CBC Programmes there is a *great need for supporting Albanian institutions with awareness and training on these Programmes*.
- The preparation of programmes for cooperation in "internal borders" with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244) had not started yet at the time of writing this Inception Report. In the absence of programmes *no joint management structures have yet been established* for "internal borders". One major reason for the slow development of these programmes is the delay in preparation of Joint Programming Documents. It is expected that the project will support in the establishing of relevant joint management structures, but it is now clear that no programming documents will be approved before next year.
- The programming aspect of the project is mainly related to the finalization of the new cross-border cooperation programmes for 2007–2013 under IPA CBC and preparation of Joint Programming Documents for cooperation in the "internal borders" with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244).
- Discussions with EC Delegation in Tirana and some of entities that are already implementing NPs indicate that there is a need for providing support on contracting and implementation process for beneficiaries and successful applicants. It is therefore important that project planning takes account of this and support be provided also to monitoring, should project's resources allocation allow for that.

Recommendations

- ⇒ The ToR put strong emphasis in strengthening institutional capacities of project counterparts. The institutional capacity of the URC at MEI is currently low and we recommend that it will need *substantial assistance* from the project team in both short and mid-term. The project team will provide intensive support to URC, hoping that not only the present vacancies will be filled in soon, but also that additional staff will be added to the organizational structure of this Unit in the near future. Hence, we foresee that considerable hands-on coaching support, and more sustainable institution building activities to be provided to URC especially during 2007 in the view of establishing joint management structures and preparation of joint programming document for the cross border programmes in the “internal borders”.
- ⇒ In support to URC the Project will provide advice concerning the standard structure of the unit, proper staffing of it, detailed functions and competencies of CBC Programmes coordinators, job description and operational procedures enabling them to carry out efficiently their coordination role. A simple management information system is recommended to be adopted at UCR. The Project will support the establishment of a proper feed-back or implementation monitoring mechanism which will strengthen the links between the different elements of CBC Programmes in order to ensure that lessons learnt from previous activities are fed into the design of new programmes.
- ⇒ For the line ministries, local and regional partners the project team will provide support to increase their awareness on CBC Programmes under IPA and develop capacities for preparing good quality project proposals.
- ⇒ Since the project cannot provide support to joint structures in the “internal borders” with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244) it was agreed that project assistance in the first months should be focused on; supporting the Albanian inputs to programming for IPA CBC 2007-2013; and providing of training and coaching and on-the-job assistance on “external border” activities, Greece/Albania, Italy/Albania, Ital/Adriatic and CADSES, which will require substantial involvement of URC over the next months. The project team will assist the Albanian side to provide all the relevant inputs with awareness and training and to ensure, especially, wider consultation with regional and local levels and with line-ministries.

A.3 Awareness on CBC Programmes

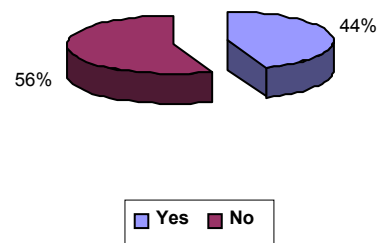
The needs assessment carried out during the inception phase aimed at measuring the level of awareness on the Neighbourhood programmes and IPA CBC. The interviews and participation in the four information days, organized in the framework of the Call for Proposals for the NP Greece/Albania were very helpful to understand the situation regarding the level of awareness on the CBC Programmes, difficulties faced by both public and non-governmental institutions, as well as asses the needs for training and awareness raising activities.

A.3.1 Information on the Cross–Border Cooperation

56% of respondents confirmed that they are informed about CBC Programmes, but the level of awareness differs from the central government to regional level.

At the **central level, the level of awareness is relatively higher**. The majority of respondents (76%) have been involved in the past at least in one of the NPs implementation. At the ministry level the less informed staff is the staff with less than one year activity in the respective ministry. Only a very small portion of those with more than 5 years of experience has not been informed about the CBC Programmes.

Figure 13: LGUs - Information on CBC Programmes

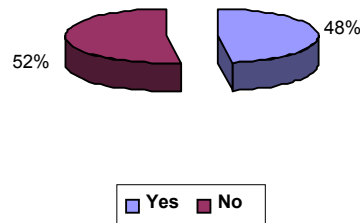


The level of information at the regional and local level is not the same across the units.

Staff at the regional and local units along the border with Greece and Italy knows more about the CBC Programmes. Even in this case, the distribution of information does not seem to be equally reaching every one. Findings reveal that staff working at the regions' and prefectures' administration is more informed about the CBC Programmes than the staff working at the municipality or communes. Also the level of knowledge at the "external borders" is higher than regions or municipalities in the "internal borders". Along the borders with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia (including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244) and Montenegro, the level of information on cross-border cooperation activities is very low, if non-existent.

Non-governmental organizations have low level of awareness on CBC Programmes. The information is almost non-existent in remote areas. Such conclusion is supported by the Figure 14, as well. The situation is presented differently, however, in Tirana and big cities where the access to information and activities are more advanced and access to information is larger.

Figure 14: NGOs - Information on CBC Programmes

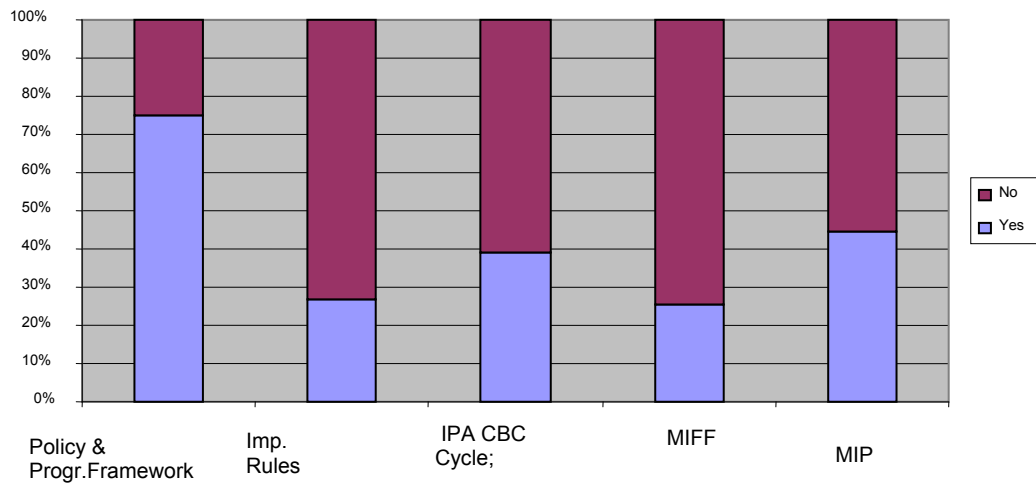


A.3.2 Information on IPA CBC

Thanks to information provided by the government through media, political debates and the civil society advocacy and information activities there is high awareness among different groups, including public about the association and stabilization process and the SAA agreement. But, in terms of the IPA CBC itself and its instruments, respondents seem to be little informed.

Even regarding IPA CBC level of awareness **differs substantially between the central and local government administrations.** At the central level the majority of those interviewed seem to have information on the IPA CBC policy and programming framework, but they are less informed about the cycle, implementation rules, strategic programming and financial documents. At this category the level of information is high at the manager's level and lower at the specialist level. The most informed staff is the one working in departments dealing with strategic planning and coordination.

Figure 15: Central Ministries Staff Familiarity with IPA CBC elements



While at the local and regional administration the level of awareness is lower. The respondents who confirmed that they are aware about IPA CBC have general information about it, but do not know much about its instruments (Figure 16 below). As presented in the Figure 17 the NGOs seems to be the least informed group. Only 10% of them confirmed having some limited information on IPA CBC.

Figure 16: How much are the LGU-s familiar with IPA CBC elements

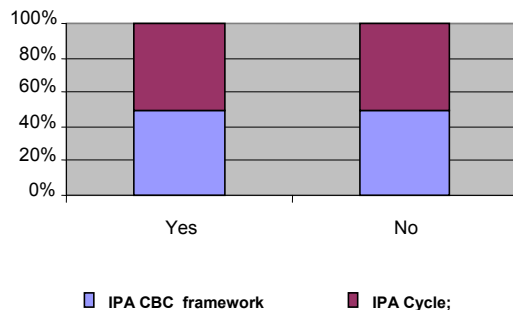
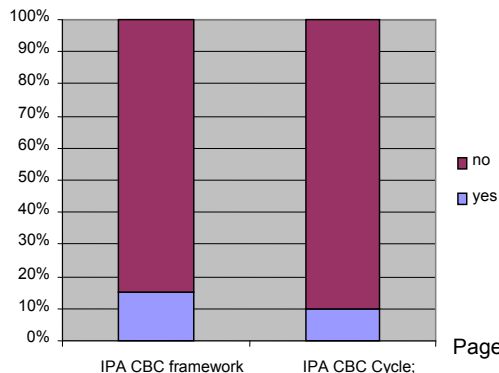


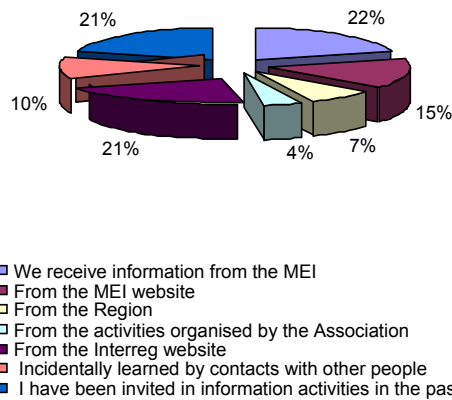
Figure 17: How much the NGOs are familiar with IPA CBC



A.3.3 Source of information

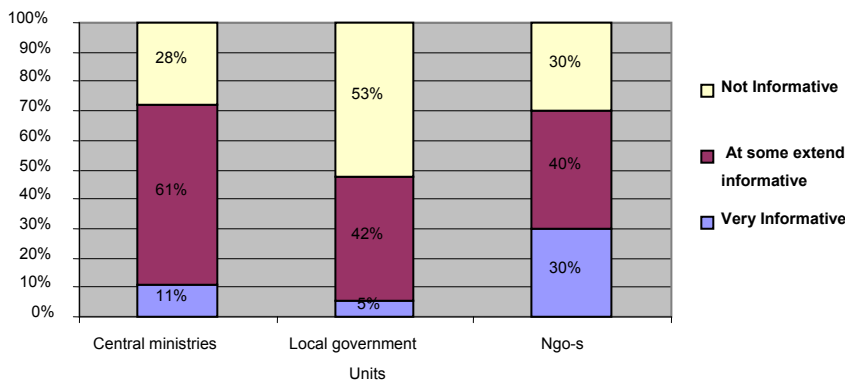
During the needs assessment another objective was to identify the sources of information with the scope to make use in the future of the best sources and identify potential efficient tools for dissemination of information on CBC Programme. As presented in the Figure 18 below, information on CBC Programme was obtained from different sources. The main sources are; (i) information delivered through official communication of MEI; (ii) participation in the info days; (iii) Interreg website (especially used by NGOs).

Figure 18: Source of information



The respondents have different views about the website of the Ministry of European Integration. The majority of them consider the information published “at some extend informative”. (Figure 19 below). 53% of local government, 30% of NGOs and 28% of central ministries respondents consider the information not informative.

Figure 19: Information on the NP Program on the MEI website



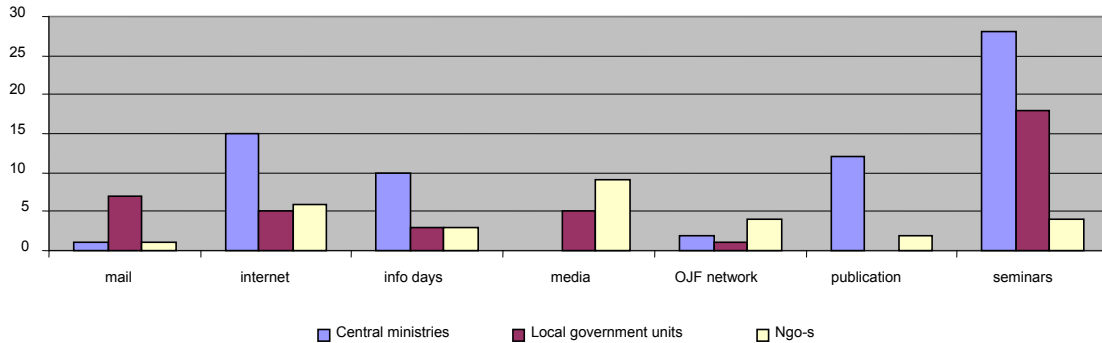
The relatively low level of awareness is also due to the limited outreaching activities organized so far. When asked about the most efficient ways for receiving information, the respondents consider “sessions of info-days, training and seminars”. Information days can be used as a good

tool for establishing contacts³. Publication of information in the leaflets and other forms, as well as publication in the internet is suggested also as cost effective.

³ The Info Day organized from the Region of Gjirokastra during the inception period of the project was a good example that could be replicated in the other regions and events in the future. During this day, participants from the Ioanina Prefecture were present and have the possibility to establish direct contacts with the Albanian partners, and discuss about potential project proposals

Seminars and info days are especially required from the local government units and NGOs in the remote areas. This is also linked to the low of IT development and limited Internet access in these areas⁴. During the face-to-face interviews the respondents appreciated the role of the different networks, such as Association of Mayors and NGOs networks, in outreaching and awareness raising activities.

Figure 20: If you don't have info on IPA/NP which way is most effective to receive it?



Conclusions

- *There is in general a relatively low level of information on the CBC Programmes. Central organizations seemed to be more informed, while the level of information at the regional and local level is unbalanced, even though generally low. The level of awareness is almost non-existent in particular at the “internal borders” areas.*
- *There is low information on IPA CBC at the regions, local government and NGOs.*
- *The mechanisms for dissemination of information at the remote areas is insufficiently developed*

Recommendations

- ⇒ There is a need to develop a sustainable information dissemination system on CBC Programmes and IPA CBC throughout the country;
- ⇒ Organization of serious of dedicated “information days” should be considered and associated well in advance with the launch of call for proposals. This especially for remote bordering areas.
- ⇒ Publication of information, leaflets brochures etc. and dissemination through administration and other interested groups should be considered.

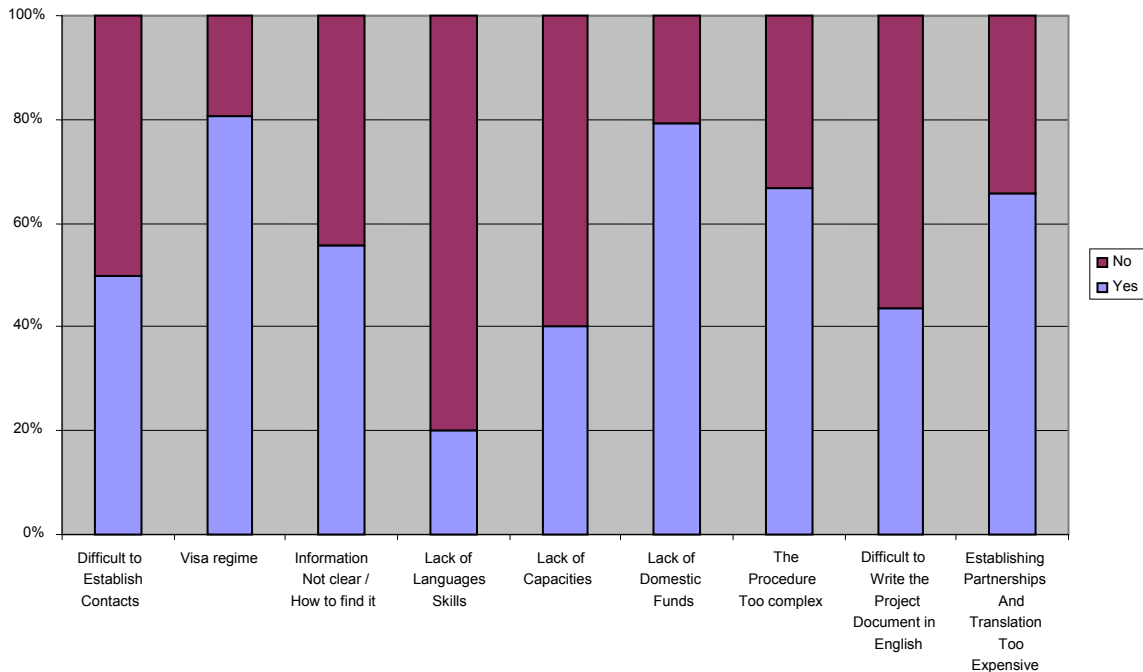
⁴ An ambitious GovNet project supported by the EC and UNDP will extend the internet infrastructure in the entire country and will increase the access of the local government units to e-information.

- ⇒ Use the existing network of the associations, civil society and business development agencies could be an cost effective way for large dissemination of information;
- ⇒ Use, whenever possible, of media organization for specific awareness activities is also recommended.

A.4 Capacities for developing and managing projects

Participation in the CBC Programmes seems to be difficult due to a number of obstacles. The Figure 21 provides a picture of the most significant obstacles:

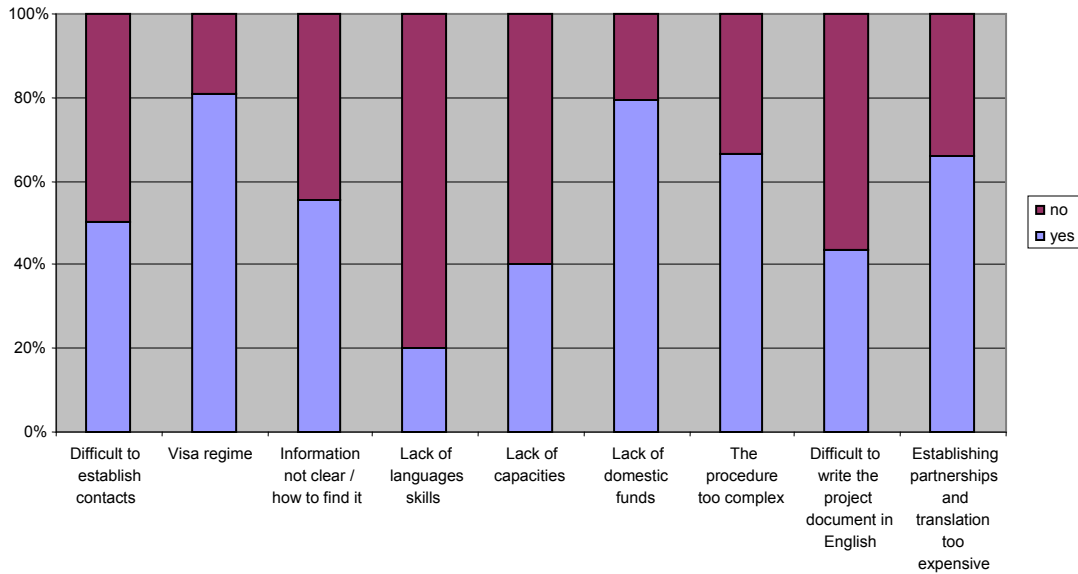
Figure 21: the main obstacles to apply in a NPs all groups



- *Shortage of funds to cover beneficiary's contribution to project's participation.* The local government units and NGOs are the groups facing more the difficulty of covering the percentage of beneficiary contribution. For the NGOs this is the most important obstacle. Because of considerable needs for investing on infrastructure projects (roads, water and sewerage) the priority of the local units is to include in the CBC Programmes projects for improving infrastructure. The majority of local government units situated in the border areas have limited financial resources, except of regions in the costal areas, where the tourism and trade bring higher revenues. The activity of the private sector, mainly in the north-eastern area and medium and small units in the south area is underdeveloped. This impacts the level of tax collection and local revenue generation.

- *Source of Information and clarity of procedures* are the main difficulties for the local government units (57%) and the non-governmental organizations (76%). Although the language is not a real concern for the non-governmental organizations, as it is for the

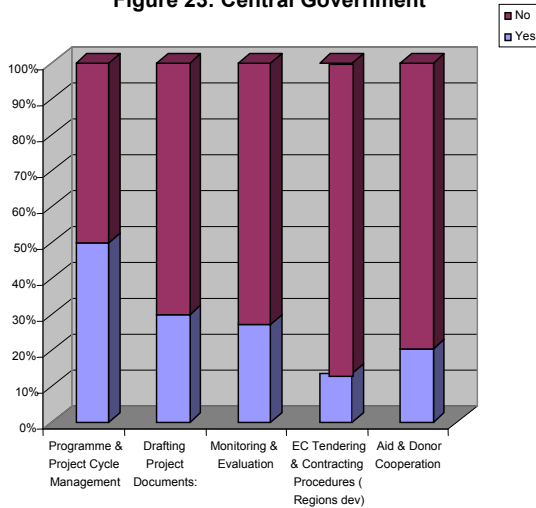
Figure 22 : The main obstacles to apply in a CBC Programmes - LGUs



local government units, the majority of them confirm that they face difficulties to understand the procedures established in the call for proposals (62% of respondents for local administration, and 73% NGOs). Difficulties face also the central ministries staff as well (44%). Several staff interviewed from the regions and local administration stated the

difficulties for understanding the procedures. As result of the above much effort needs to be placed at the preparatory phase prior to submission of applications.

Figure 23: Central Government



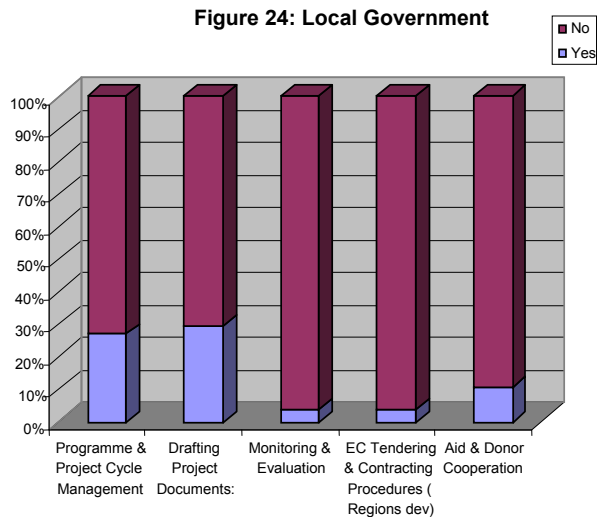
- Albania has a well established Institute of Training of Public Administration (ITAP). The ITAP has developed curricula and provides training for the civil servants of central organisations. It also provides limited training support for decentralization and human resource management issues for the local administration. Despite the very active role of TIPA on providing training courses, except on training on PCM⁵, (Figure 23), other areas are very little covered. A lot of training is being

provided currently on the EU policy framework, but there is no evidence that training courses on EC contracting procedures are well developed. TIPA provides also training on monitoring and evaluation. The perception of the team is that not all the staff in line

⁵ Close to 50% of respondents confirmed to have participated in training courses on PCM

ministries attends such training courses, and this training is mainly concentrated or offered to the staff working in the policy and programming development departments.

The support with training is v limited at the local administration levels. The National Strategy for Training of Local Administration is developed since 2003. A Training Agency for Local Administration (TALGA) was established in 2004. Due to lack of funding from donors and support from the government, TALGA’s activity remained very limited and as a result distribution of training programmes for local government has been always a donor’s driven process and lacked equal distribution of training across local government units. Training is concentrated at more easy and accessible area i.e. Tirana, Korce, Durres, Shkoder etc. Remote regions i.e. Permet, Skrapar, Peshkopi, and Kukes etc. are often let aside or very few training courses provided to the staff. Frequent overlapping among donors and training activities, is common in many LGUs. While the big municipalities benefit more from training programmes, the staff of smaller municipalities and communes are often poorly trained, or not trained at all.



As presented in the Figure 24 above, a small group of staff from both central and local institutions have received training on “*EC tendering procedures and contracting*”. Less than 10 % in the central administration and only 4% of the respondents in local administration have some knowledge on this area. More or less the same is the situation related to training offered on “*aid–coordination issues*”. There is very small group of staff at the local level who have been trained in “*project monitoring*”. The staffs of central government institutions has received more training on “*project cycle management*”, compared to the region and local government staff. For both groups only 25 % of them confirm that they have received training on “*drafting project proposals*” for EC funded projects. .

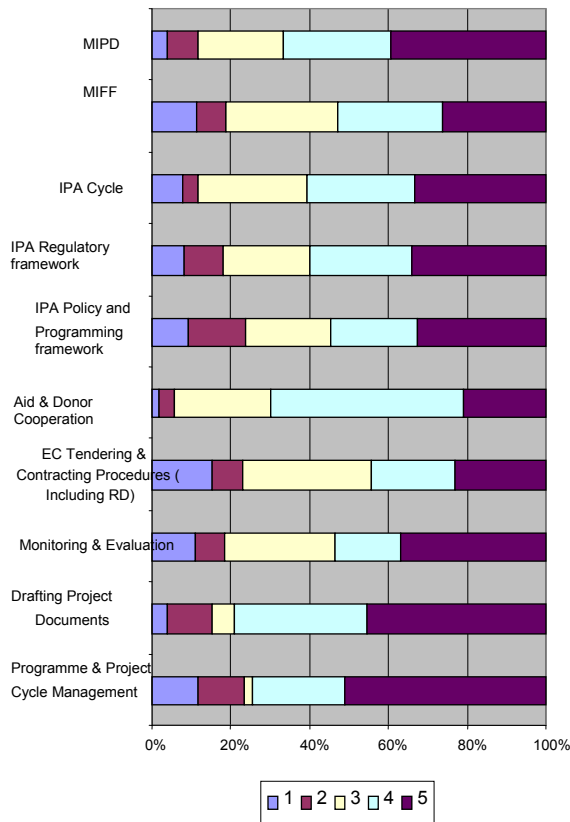
The assessment revealed that there is a huge need for training in the five selected areas: (i) project cycle management; (b) drafting of project documents; (c) monitoring; (d) EC tendering procedures (e) aid–coordination.

Training on “PCM” is considered as the highest priority (Figure 25 below) by 55% of respondents from central administration and 80% of local administration. High priority is also considered training on “developing project proposals” by 83% of respondents from local government and 52% of central institutions. Around 32% to 40% of respondents from central institutions consider priority training on IPA CBC.

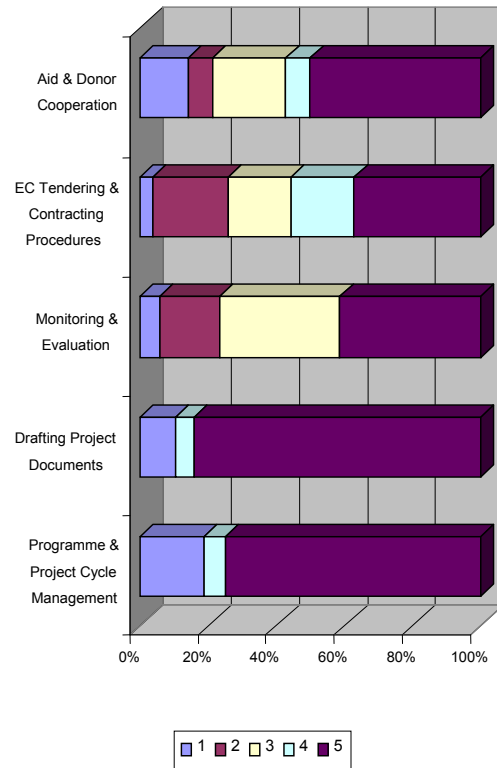
Aid coordination is also the priority area for the local government staff (57%), followed by training on monitoring. There is less emphasis put on training on EC tendering procedures (22% at the central institutions and 30% at local administration).

Figure 25: Training priorities

Training priorities for Central Ministries



Training priorities for LGU-s



Conclusions

- *There are weak capacities for drafting proposals in almost all levels.* This is more emphasized for the regional and local administration.
- There is *low level of understanding* of the rules and procedures established in the call for proposals
- *Limited staff* in the MEI to provide frequent and when required support to the potential candidates who apply for the grand schemes

- *Difficulties for obtaining visas* and contacts on the other side of the border are a serious impending factor for active participation in “external border” programmes.
- Applications are associated with *high costs* and there is lack of domestic funds for covering participation costs.
- Training on “PCM” and “developing project proposal” are considered as the highest priorities for training in all the levels of potential participants in CBC Programmes.
- Training on future CBC PROGRAMMES, mainly IPA CBC is seen a priority for staff of central institutions

Recommendations

Addressing issues related to capacities for developing and managing projects is crucial for Albania’s active participation in the cross border cooperation activities.

- ⇒ Support of strengthening institutional and staff capacities to develop and manage projects
- ⇒ Provisions of sufficient financial resources to enable participation of local government units in CBC Programmes.
- ⇒ Effective networking in place to enable cooperation among different beneficiaries
- ⇒ Examination of the possibility that calls for proposals packages are translated in advance and published in Albanian.
- ⇒ Parallel to strengthening of institutional mechanism for coordination and management of CBC Programmes, training requirements should be considered seriously. Either of the two elements alone is sufficient to prepare Albanian institutions to actively participate in call for proposals, thus they should be considered as complementary and equally necessary.
- ⇒ Tailored training packages on “PCM” and “Developing project proposals” should be developed and offered to a large scale of trainees, especially from region and local government units, in cooperation with TIPA and Associations of Region, Municipalities and Communes. A training of trainers approach might be effective to create a cadre of trainers that ensure long term sustainability of assistance
- ⇒ Specific training on IPA CBC should be offered to central government institutions.

B. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

130 questionnaires were distributed during the period from 22 August up to 30 August. Distribution took place through email or at the meetings organized by CBIB team. Questionnaires were sent to all municipalities located at the borders. In addition, some questionnaires were sent to the units at the second line area (the eligible municipalities according the JPDs related to CBC between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/Greece). Change of the Government, made it difficult for collection of filled in questionnaires distributed to National Ministries. The structure of the persons, who filled in the questionnaires and distribution according to groups: LGUs and NGOs, is presented in the Figure 26 and 27 below.

Figure 26: Distribution of samples according to categories

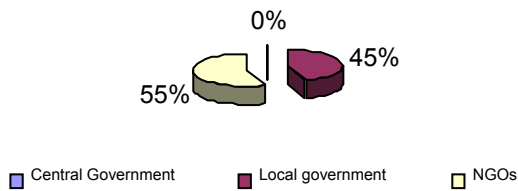
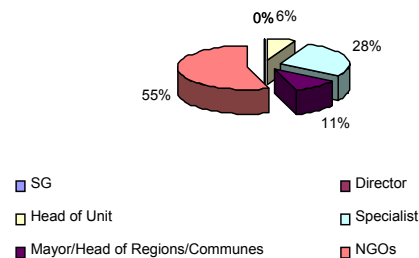


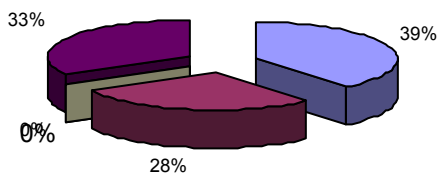
Figure 27: Distribution of samples by positions



Many of the findings are results of inputs from the interviews conducted with mayors during the face-to-face interviews. Filling in of the questionnaires was left mainly to specialist's level in the municipality.

B.1 Perception of beneficiaries on the role of the border and CBC Programmes.

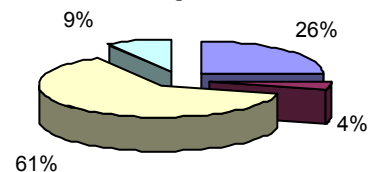
Figure 28: Views on the Borders



From the questionnaires, and also from the interviews with people interested for CBC, there is still an existing opinion that the borders at the moment are a dividing factor.

There is a mix position and different opinions expressed from region to region, but in overall only 28% consider borders "mostly a connecting factor, while 39%

Figure 29: Views on the CBC Programmes



“rather a dividing factor”. 1/3 of respondents feel that borders have more or less the same role as dividing and connecting factor.

But they are even less confident that the average of the region on the role of CBC Programmes. The majority of them think that the current programmes are insufficient to induce the real cooperation. 26% of them are of the opinion that the futures CBC Programmes are factor for the good cross border cooperation. They do not share any consideration about the role of the market processes. Only 9% of them are of the opinion that the market processes are good factors for ensuring cooperation between countries in the same border. However, we should emphasize that findings in this needs assessment are based on few interviews and may not necessarily represent the vision of all beneficiaries.

B.2 Institutional mechanism for coordination and management of CBC Programmes

B.2.1 Coordination of CBC Programmes at central level

The administration responsible for CBC is the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) under the authority of the deputy prime minister, responsible for European Integration and coordination of foreign assistance. Within the SEA the overall supervision of the CBC issues is ensured by the State Counsellor and the Unit for European Programmes and Instruments Utilization (UEPIU). The UEPIU is in charge of the operational tasks. The new government was officially nominated in the end of August. Therefore it was difficult to get clear information about existing or future plans for this structure.

The unit in charge of the operational aspects of CBC Programmes within the SEA, working in close cooperation with the EAR, is currently understaffed (one junior expert and one assistant) and will hardly be able to handle the expected increase of activities. Once the strategy and possible re-structuring envisaged by the new cabinet will be completed, it will be possible to have a clear idea about the organization and capacities required.

The future CBC implementation system will be managed under the joint authorities of the Deputy Prime minister responsible for the SEA and the Minister of Finance responsible for the National fund. The Central Finance and Contracts Unit (CFCU), integrated in the Ministry of Finance is being established. So far 6 staff are already appointed. The CFCU is expected to be accredited no later than mid 2007. It is expected to play a key role for the implementation and contracting of the CBC Programmes.

B.2.2 Coordination of CBC Programmes at line ministries

A “Units for European integration” or Units for International Cooperation (i.e. Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Transport and Communication) is established at almost all line ministries. Many of them are participating in the CBC Programmes preparation and implementation process (JPD, projects evaluation, etc). So

far, there is no formal coordination at the national level of CBC Programmes. Intensive exchange of information among the different services is taking place through SEA, which for the moment is the main focal point in this informal coordination system. Most of the national stakeholders expressed the need of a more regular coordination, taking into consideration the potential increase of the CBC activities in the coming years (under IPA component II).

B.2.3 Coordination of CBC Programmes at regional and local government

There is no administrative Region in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the only institutional structure at local government level is the municipality. The establishment of CBC partnerships is authorized and regulated by the Law on local self-government adopted on January 2002 (article 14).

The absence a regional institutional structures raises the question of the coordination particularly at the level of municipalities, when they are part of the same “neighbourhood areas”, sharing the same constraints and potentials. So far this coordination is made on ad hoc and informal basis, some municipalities having a leading role (which should be taken into account when implementing awareness activities). Of course the leading urban municipalities have more facilities than rural municipalities to attract and to manage international assistance and investments.

Considering the absence of intermediary institutional structures between the municipalities and the government, the role of the Ministry of Local Self-Government but also of ZELS, the association of the Units of Local Self-Government, is certainly of crucial importance.

Conclusions

- There Unit in charge of the operational aspects of CBC Programmes within the SEA is under shortage of staff. Lack of staff will make more difficult for the Unit to handle the expected increase of activities in the future.
- The Central Finance and Contracts Unit (CFCU), integrated in the Ministry of Finance is at the very stage of establishment and will take time to become fully operational.
- There is not coordination system at the national level about CBC Programmes. The coordination of information and activities is ensured informally through SEA,
- Intermediary institutional structures between the municipalities and the government are missing. The role of the Ministry of Local Self-Government, ZELS, the association of the Units of Local Self-Government, will be crucial for the success of the project.

Recommendations

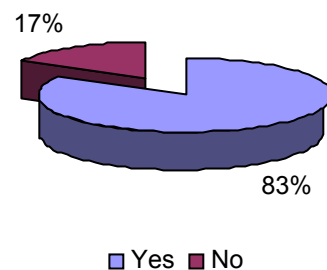
- ⇒ The project team will provide intensive support to the UEPIU and the staff involved in the preparation of CBC Programmes. A combination of dedicated trainings and on-the-job training program will be implemented. involvement of CBIB team is specific actions such as the preparation of the application packages
- ⇒ Regarding internal borders, supporting the establishment of efficient JMSs (for Serbia and Albania) should be a high priority. However, the envisaged duration of the CBIB project and the time frame of the SAP countries CBC Programmes could be a constraint.
- ⇒ Regarding external borders (Bulgaria, Greece), CBIB project should support the establishment of the sub-Joint Technical Secretariat(s): frequent visits and on-the-job training
- ⇒ To facilitate the coordination, sharing of experiences and information, among the institutional actors: the request is not to establish a formal coordination body but to facilitate the organization of regular information meetings and to spread regular information on a systematic way (email lists, etc.)
- ⇒ To emphasize the role of the Ministry of Local Self-Government and of ZELS in the preparation, awareness and coordination of CBC activities

B.3 Awareness on CBC Programmes

B.3.1 Information on the Cross–Border Cooperation

The implementation of Neighbourhood and CBC Programmes is still at an early stage in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, the awareness of the potential beneficiaries on the concept of CBC, sources of funding and procedures cannot be expected to be very high and well defined. However, the interviews conducted with local authorities and local NGOs activists as well as the questionnaires show a general comprehension of the objectives and mechanisms of CBC Programmes (Figure 30) by the local stakeholders and this even in the regions which did not beneficiate so far from such programmes. We do consider that the ongoing implementation process of the NP Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia together with some other initiatives (i.e. the Euro regions), are the main cause of this basic, but widely spread, knowledge. It is encouraging and shows also that the impact of a call for

Figure 30: Information on NP



proposals (i.e. NP Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), in term of awareness, is exceeding the eligible region.

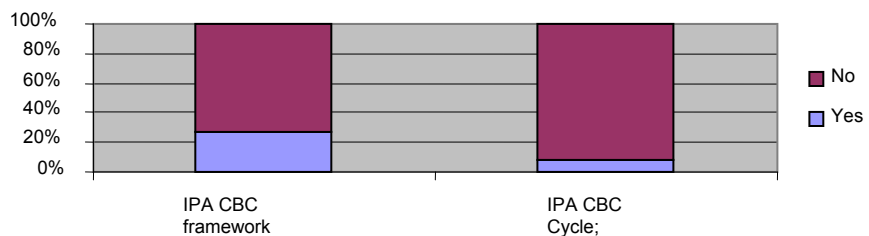
The main findings are as follows:

- In most of the border regions, *the municipalities, mayors and technicians, have a better understanding of the questions related to CBC Programmes than the NGOs activists*. It reflects the fact that the persons in charge within the municipalities have a better access to information. A majority of them do not consider the access to relevant information as a major problem, while it is a main obstacle for a majority of the NGOs. Many of the municipalities in the region eligible for NP Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia established a strong communication with Bulgarian municipalities. In addition to Internet and information days, these regular exchanges with the Bulgarian municipalities are considered by most of the mayors to be a major source of information.
- *The calls for proposals under the Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia NP 2004 are restricted to organizations located and registered in the eligible municipalities, which excludes the main the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia NGOs, most of them being registered in Skopje*. The situation of most of the NGOs registered in the borders regions is by far more precarious than the situation of the NGOs registered in Skopje: they do not have the same experience in working with international funds; they hardly participate in the coordination bodies and NGOs forum. Many of these NGOs consider themselves as isolated and marginalized. Some of them consider their relation with the municipalities, regarding the calls for proposals, as an unfair competition.
- *We also found that the information on calls for proposals is mainly targeting cultural or environmental NGOs*. Some other types of associations such as sport associations or farmers associations do not feel much concerned by the CBC calls for proposals, although they have the same legal status than the others. Considering that some of these associations have a very good social basis (number of members, participation in the daily life of the communities) it could be worth to try to involve them in CBC Programmes.

B.3.2 Information on IPA CBC

All local authorities on the borders regions know that the current instruments will be replaced by IPA CBC, but they have no clear knowledge about the way this new instrument is going to function. At this stage this is not surprising. But it is worth to notice that receiving precise information about future CBC

Figure 31: How much is familiar with future IPA CBC Programmes total



Programmes is considered by all of them as a main priority.

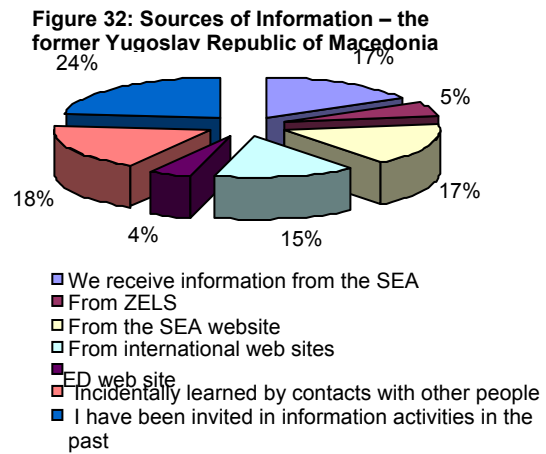
The awareness on CBC concept and the CBC dynamic vary from bordering regions

- *At the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/Bulgarian border:* due to the recent calls for proposals under the Cards/Phare NP as well as to an easy and regular communication with the Bulgarian counterparts, the awareness is high and the dynamic around CBC initiatives is launched. Within the eligible area, the “second line” of municipality, which are not directly located at the border, are facing more difficulties but are showing an equal interest. As mentioned above the local NGOs are still handicapped by weak capacities and resources. The cooperation between NGOs and municipalities, in the field of CBC, needs certainly to be improved.
- *At the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/Greek border:* local stakeholders allocated at the western and eastern part of the border, expressed an extreme interest for participating in CBC Programmes. This dynamic is boosted by ongoing initiatives such as the Euro region Ohrid-Prespa and, at a much lower level, the Euro region Strumica-Belasica. However, despite intensive business relations and significant Greek’s investment, the formal relation between Greek and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia municipalities and civil society organizations is still difficult. The municipalities and NGOs have the impression that their interest for CBC is not shared by the Greek counterparts.
- *At the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/Albania border:* the Southern part of the border is in a favourable situation. Due to common concerns, particularly in environmental protection and tourism, as well as to the dynamic generated by previous and ongoing initiatives (i.e. Euro region Prespa-Ohrid, Lake Ohrid conservation project) the CBC trend is launched. The northern part of the border is handicapped by poor infrastructures and difficult geographic conditions: to increase the interest in CBC and to facilitate the partnerships will be here a real issue.
- *At the Serbia (including Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244) border:* the border with Kosovo and the border with Serbia cannot be treated jointly and are to be differentiated. This is obviously one of the main problems CBIB project have faced and overcome. “Trilateral” initiatives such as the GPKT micro region (Serbia (including Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244)/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) supported by EastWest Institute are ongoing but can hardly be duplicated in the frame of a CARDS or IPA CBC Programme.
- *At the border of Serbia (5 municipalities directly at the border for 162.000 inhabitants),* where the municipality of Kumanovo will have a leading role, links between municipalities and CSO from both parts of the borders are to be strengthen. Local stakeholders are more than interested in participating in the CARDS Regional CBC programmes but are still in a very initial phase.
- *At the border of Serbia (including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244) (10 municipalities directly at the border for 338.000 inhabitants):* several initiatives such as the GPKT micro region already mentioned, the Regional cross-border cooperation Albania/Serbia (including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244)/ the former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia implemented by MCIC and the CBC Programme (Albania/Serbia (including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244) /the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) supported by OSCE started to increase awareness and capacities related to CBC Programmes. However, the CBC dynamic at this border is of course handicapped by the political issue. Leading municipalities such as Tetovo express a high interest in creating sustainable partnerships with Local Government Units in Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 but so far did not succeed in establishing formal relations.

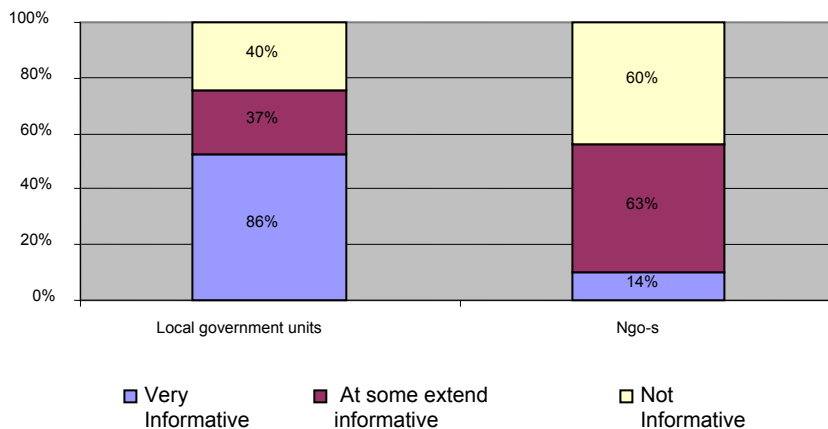
B.3.3 Source of information

By far, *Internet is for all stakeholders the main and favourite source of information.* (Figure 32). In the case of the NP Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the local stakeholders are mainly consulting the Bulgarian website supported by the EC and dedicated to the NPs, www.npgrants.info, rather than SEA website where information on CBC Programme is mixed with the other issues related to European integration and therefore more difficult to find.



In the region eligible for the Bulgarian/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia NP, the *info days organized jointly by the JTS, the SEA and the EAR, were highly appreciated by the attendees and are considered by all as the second necessary and main source of information.* However, a wish expressed by many municipal and NGOs responsible is to receive in the future more “practical” information during these info days: links with potential partners at the other side of the borders, where can we find technical support, presentation of CBC Programmes considered as “success stories”. The wish to use these info days as a “forum” where actors already involved in CBC

Figure 33: Information on CBC on SEA website

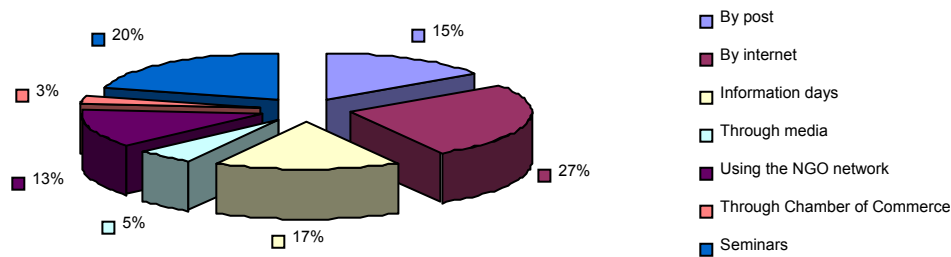


Programmes could share experiences and advises is also commonly expressed (“to hear also about concrete realizations”)

The role of the JTS as a permanent structure able to provide updated information and day-to-day support is underlined by most of the local

stakeholders we met during the needs assessment. For the NP Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the location of the JTS at the other side of the border is considered by many of them as an obstacle for the establishment of a more interactive relation.

Figure 34: Preferred ways of receiving information



As supported by the Figure 34 above, the information centres managed by NGOs are actively participating in delivering information to the NGOs, thus remaining still the most preferred way for disseminating information. The role of certain institutions and organizations likely to participate in the awareness activities could be higher. This is in particular the case for the Ministry of Local Self-government and ZELS (the association of local self government unit in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). It must be emphasized that the Bulgarian municipalities confirm receiving a significant support from the Bulgarian association of self-government units.

Conclusions

- *The information on the CBC Programmes at SEA is not clear.* It is mixed with the other issues related to European integration, thus making it difficult for the interested users to find the relevant information on the CBC Programmes
- *The NGOs seems to be the less informed group.* Access to relevant information is major obstacle for a majority of the NGOs. The participation of the NGOs is only limited to the culture based organizations.
- *Low level of involvement of the Ministry of Local Self-government and ZELS* in providing support to the local government units with regards to CBC activities.
- *The stage of development of the CBC from one border to another is different.* The interests of the partners on the other side of the borders is different from country-to-country, but there is in general interest to participate in the CBC Programmes.
- *The lack of domestic funds* as a prerequisite to participate in programmes demanding co-financing is considered to be the main obstacle for applicants.

Recommendations

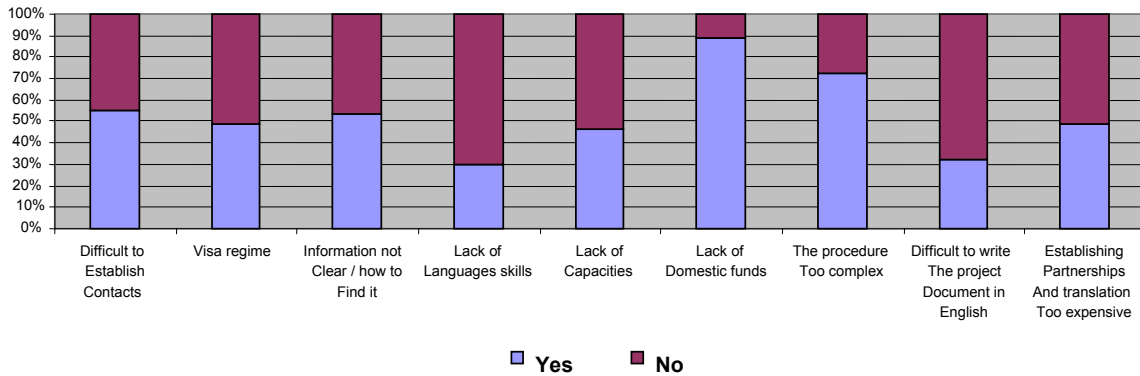
- ⇒ The CBC approaches for Serbia and Kosovo under the UNSCR 12244 are to be differentiated. The possibility to work on sub-programmes basis should be considered. Even if the future status of Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 is still a question mark, the preliminary steps (awareness activities about CBC principles, animation of the local stakeholders, collection of project's ideas) should start at the same time than for the other internal borders.
- ⇒ Specific efforts (awareness activities, animation of the local stakeholders) should be devoted to the northern part of the Albanian border.
- ⇒ The other ongoing and non EU-funded CBC Programmes and the donors and organizations involved in these projects should be systematically informed about CBIB activities and as much as possible associated.
- ⇒ To start awareness campaign about IPA CBC has to be a priority for CBIB project as it is already for the SEA which entered recently in the preparation phase on the Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia border.

B.4 Capacities to Develop Project Proposals

The Figure 35, below, presents a mix picture of the main obstacles faced by the beneficiaries. Shortly, findings revealed from the questionnaires and face-to-face interviews regarding the capacity of the local stakeholders in planning and drafting CBC Programmes, and the main problems/obstacles are listed as follows:

- *Lack of domestic funds for co-financing the projects is by far considered as the main problem by both LGUs and NGOs.* This problem of course affects the NGOs more than the LGUs and the rural LGUs more than the urban LGUs. Most of the NGOs registered in the borders regions do not have any experience in fund raising (which is not the case for the NGOs based in Skopje). Cooperation between NGOs and municipalities is at a very low level regarding co-financing. Private sponsors so far are not participating.
- *The complexity of the procedures is the second obstacle,* with a major implication for the NGOs than the LGUs. It is to be mentioned that in the case of the NP Bulgaria-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, all the municipalities engaged in defining a project and drafting a proposal are benefiting from advises and technical support provided by the Bulgarian partners. The NGOs do not have such facilities.

Figure 35: Main obstacles for LGUs and NGOs to participate in the Call for Proposals

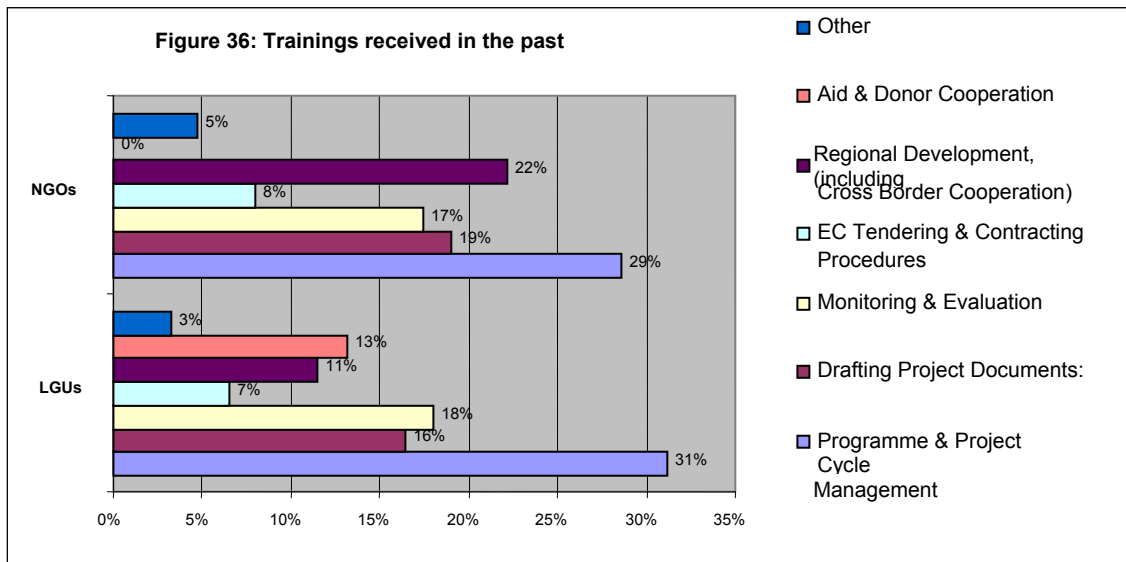


- *Difficulty to establish contacts with partners on the other side of the border*, is identified as the third problem. General opinion is that NGOs are facing more difficulties than LGUs in identifying partners. However, the situation is different from one border to another:

- *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/Greece*: high level of difficulty due to visa and language problems, low level of communication between Greek and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia LGUs and CSO. The situation is certainly better on the western part where ongoing projects such as the establishment of the Euro-region Prespa-Orhid are facilitating the exchanges. But most certainly this difficulty will be a major constraint when implementing the Interreg/CARDS Greece/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia NPs. It is to be noticed, as a paradox, that the business relations which are intensive in many parts of the border do not facilitate significantly the CB exchanges between LGUs or NGOs. This question should be further researched as well as the way to involve the business community in the CBC programmes
- *Albania/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia (including Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244)/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*: medium level of difficulty. Visa and language are not a problem, but cross border cooperation or exchanges are not common or “natural”. A dynamic cross-border cooperation Programme needs to be launched.
- *Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*: low level of difficulty

- *Lack of capacities in project planning is the fourth problem* mentioned by the LGUs and NGOs. In the case of the calls for proposals NP Bulgaria/the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia most of the urban municipalities (i.e. Strumica) involved external Bulgarian or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia consultants to write the project proposal and to ensure the coordination with the partners. Rural municipalities and NGOs cannot afford to do this. All the mayors we met during the needs assessment are requesting trainings for the LGU’s technical staff. However, 31% of the LGU’s responsible and 29% of the NGOs activists we interviewed received already PCM trainings. (Figure 36

below) The demand is focusing on “practical” trainings: how to write a proposal, how to follow the procedures, case studies, and analysis of projects ideas, procurement rule.



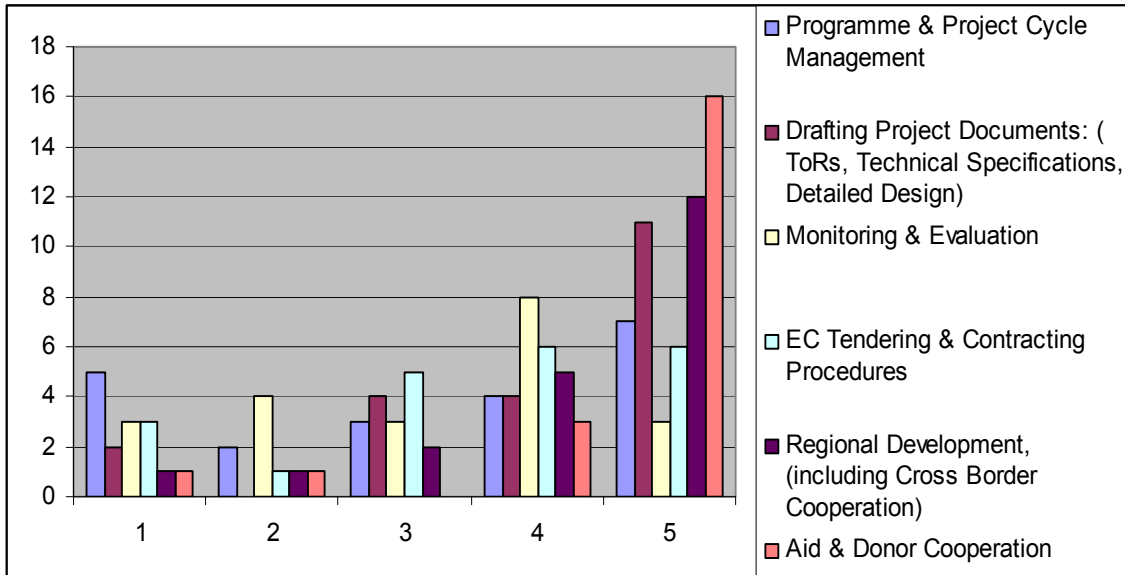
For many beneficiaries *cost of establishing partnerships* (transportation costs, communication costs), defining the project (expertise) and drafting the proposal (translation costs in some cases) *is too expensive*.

The obligation to write the project document in English is considered as a problem for only 30% of the persons interviewed.

We also found that several organizations and donors are planning to start or to continue in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia capacity building and training activities in the field of PCM, projects preparation, CBC and even IPA. ZELS, the association of the units of local self government, plans to open soon a new training department mainly dedicated to IPA. EastWest Institute, UNDP, USAID, GTZ, MCIC will most certainly be involved in capacity building and training activities related to CBC or PCM. Many of these programmes are still to be confirmed and finalized and a further research is needed in order to draft a precise inventory of all events and training activities which will be organized during the coming year. But it is already obvious that coordination will be needed in order to avoid overlaps.

However, as shown in the Figure 37 below, over 98 %, from the interviewed persons are interested for further training and receiving information about CBC issues. At the LGUs level the interest for PCM is little bit lower because, as it was mentioned before, many workshops are already held from other projects and donors. The point is that these workshops were in most cases basic, without further follow up and specialization of the trainee. So, the training in PCP should be in an advanced level with concrete case studies, as well combined with training of the trainers.

Figure 37: Training needs for LGUs

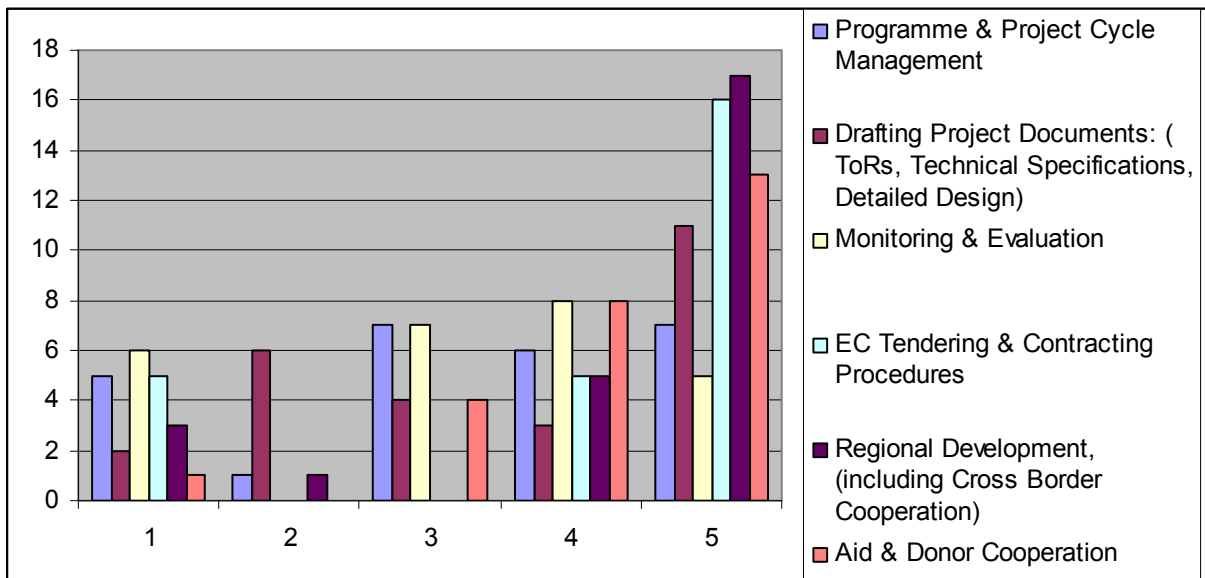


The situation with the NGOs is different (Figure 38 below). They are at different level of capacity, some of them are really advanced in implementation of the projects (including some CBC), but generally we can said they are too fragmented. Therefore, linking in the consortium or making partnership at the applying is necessity, especially when it is worth for more complex and bigger projects. Their lack of finance could be covered by various donors, also by the municipalities (if the project is a priority of the municipality and if there are available funds). Actually, one of the issues about the monitoring of the project activities is almost forgotten by everyone at the discussions. The municipality and NGOs lack of proper monitoring techniques and their awareness for the benefits of monitoring is missing.

Conclusions

- Very low experience of the NGOs registered in the borders regions about fund raising;
- Difficulties for obtaining visas and lack of language knowledge make it difficult to establish contact on the Greek side of the border, becoming so an impending factor for active participation in “external border” programme;
- Applications are associated with high costs and there is lack of domestic funds for covering participation costs.
- There is a lack of capacities in project planning for the local self – governing units.

Figure 38: Training needs for NGOs



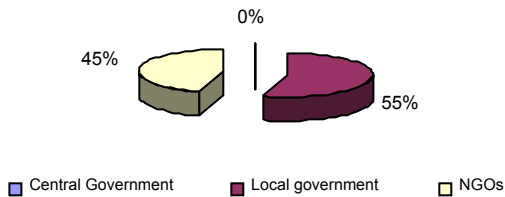
Recommendations

- ⇒ The CBIB training activities should focus on the internal borders (Serbia (including Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244) and Albania). We do recommend the organization of short (two days) and practical training sessions, joining LGU staff and local NGOs. Main topics could be: explanation of the CBC concept, what is a CBC project, how to define a CBC project, how to write a project document, procurement rules, fund raising. 25% of the trainees at least should be selected in the other side of the border which is also a way to facilitate the establishment of partnerships.
- ⇒ An advanced training or training of trainers on CBC procedures and IPA component II procedures needs to be organized, in order to equip the applicants with more information and knowledge for the future implementation of the programmes.
- ⇒ A strong Coordination and cooperation with the other projects involves in project preparation and/or CBC is required. The objective being to avoid overlap and to optimize the existing resources. It would particularly useful to involve ZELS in the training activities and to dedicate some human resources in strengthening the capacity of it's newly established training unit.

C. Serbia

With the aim of assessing the needs of potential users of the CBIB project. A balanced approach was followed to carry out the interviews. 35 questionnaires were to all municipalities which are located at the borders, and 29 questionnaires were sent to eligible Non-governmental organizations.

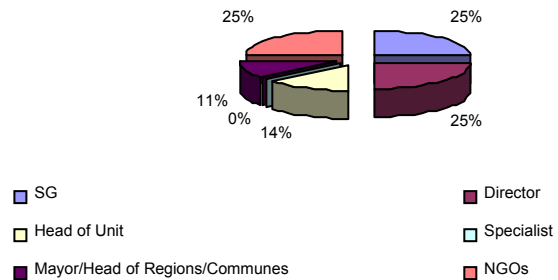
Figure 39: Distribution of samples according to categories



This exercise was conducted in coordination with MIER and agreed that due to the size and number of borders in Serbia, the questionnaire based interviews were to be followed. Therefore the outcome of the exercise is small number of questionnaires returned but very relevant to NAA Non-governmental organizations Figure 39 above.

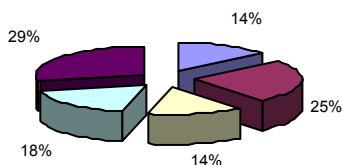
As presented in the Figure 40, interviews included not only the heads of agencies and LGUs, but also other managerial and technical staff. Distribution by position of respondents is provided at the Figure 37.

Figure 40: Distribution of samples by positions



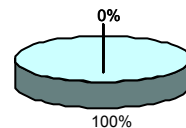
C.1 Perception of beneficiaries in Serbia on the role of the borders and CBC Programmes.

Figure 41: Role of the borders - SR



Borders are perceived mostly as connecting factor from the respondents, with 43% having a positive opinion about their role (25% mostly connecting and 18% rather connecting factor). 29% consider the border as “a dividing factor” (14% dividing factor and

Figure 42: How you evaluate the cross-border cooperation?



- CBC good, thanks to the current Neighborhood Programme
- CBC is good, thanks to market processes
- The current CBCP is insufficient to induce real cooperation
- I don't know

connecting and 18% rather connecting factor). 29% consider the border as “a dividing factor” (14% dividing factor and

14% rather dividing). Other 29% have a double position on the borders' role. But when it comes to the evaluation of the CBC Programmes they prefer not to give any opinion. (See Figure 42. above)

C.2 Institutional mechanism for coordination and management of CBC Programmes

C.2.1 Coordination of CBC Programmes at central level

The TA team of the *Inter-regional Cooperation Support Programme, financed by EU and managed by EAR*, supports the Ministry of International Economic Relations of the Republic of Serbia with the establishment of a Project Coordination and Management Unit (PCMU), and to ensure that the NPs of Serbia and Montenegro are transformed into successful projects⁶. During the reporting period, the TA team of three foreign experts, one local assistant and short-term experts have covered, among other activities, co-ordination of local experts in the context of preparing and holding info days, workshops and partner search under calls with Bulgaria and Romania, the assessment of projects submitted under the JSPF with Bulgaria, training on the new PRAG and assisting with recruitment and training of staff and local experts. The PCMU is part of MIER's systematisation. NPs are covered by seven experts/consultants. Local offices are operational, except in Bor. Except for the NP with Romania, none of the Serbian JTS members has formally taken up work; due to administrative constraints related to the use of CARDS funds and procedures in Hungary.

The next quarter will focus on supporting EAR in awarding contracts under CADSES, the assessment of project applications for the Adriatic NP and programmes with Bulgaria and Romania, training of beneficiaries on project implementation/tendering, monitoring visits and IPA CBC. The TA team will continue with training of the local experts' pool. MIER strongly supports the request for an extension of the TA project to provide support during grant project implementation and in the transition to IPA CBC.

C.2.2 Coordination of CBC Programmes at the regional and local level

Serbia suffers from lack of NUTS units. There are no NUTS levels in Serbia. Apart from Autonomous province of Vojvodina with its governance, and Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 resolution, there are no official regions in Serbia. The only level between local (municipalities) and national are districts, with appointed Heads of district by national government. However those districts are smaller than regions as per NUTS2, and also without significant governing powers and responsibilities. They are without budget and with limited staff. Their role is more of a facilitation type.

MIER has supported establishment of regional offices in the bordering regions that are in the range of existing CBC Programmes. Those offices are funded by EU through EAR

⁶ The TA is focused in five key areas (plus project management): Establishment of the PCMU, training PCMU staff, establishment of a pool of local experts, ensuring that sufficient eligible projects of adequate quality are identified and implemented, and preparation of programme evaluations.

within the UNDP project. Offices are located in Subotica for Hungary NP, Vrsac for Romania NP, Bor both for Romania and Bulgaria NP and Nis for Bulgaria NP.

In addition to the level of awareness and capacity issues, another concerning issue is the lack of the coordination structures at the local level (mainly municipalities and communes).

However, there is more potential on local level than on district level since municipalities have their governing structures, different departments responsible for different areas of development and its budgets. Majority of municipalities have established aid coordination units and local development strategy has been prepared, but their capacity is yet to be analysed. The main issue is relatively small size of particular municipality, lack of inter-municipal cooperation, and limited capacity of national level to manage big number of municipalities.

Conclusions

- At the national level there are limited capacities to manage projects where a big number of municipalities are involved in. The Project Coordination and Management Unit (PCMU) capacities are still weak and the TA is essential for successful implementation of the future CBC Programmes.
- Lack of NUTS 2 level and the lack of the coordination structures at the local level (mainly municipalities and communes) makes also difficult coordination of the cross – border activities at the regional level. Establishment of regional offices in the bordering regions that are in the range of existing CBC Programmes is a good step, but it will require intensive capacity building support to make them active and enable them to coordinate the future CBC Programmes.
- Aid coordination units are established in the majority of the municipalities, but their capacity is yet to be analysed. The main issue is relatively small size of particular municipality, lack of inter-municipal cooperation, and limited capacity of national level to manage big number of municipalities.
- The lack of domestic funds as a prerequisite to participate in programmes demanding co-financing is considered to be the main obstacle. However, the experience has shown that it is more of planning issue, since municipality budgets are created on annual bases, and usually do not take into account allocations needed for contribution to donor projects. This is followed by the lack of capacities for developing project proposals and unclear information which is also difficult to find. Complexity of procedures has also been identified as an obstacle present among the potential beneficiaries of IPA CBC.

Recommendations

- ⇒ The project will support subsidizing decisions related to regional and inter-regional development from national to district level

- ⇒ Support to strengthening inter municipal cooperation on local level will be provided by the project.
- ⇒ Adjustment of the CfP with municipal budget planning

C.3 Awareness on CBC Programmes

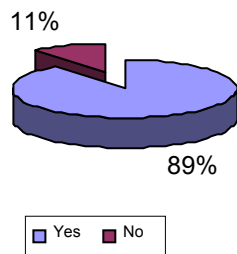
The needs assessment carried out by the Team during the Inception phase aimed at measuring the level of awareness on both future CBC Programmes

C.3.1 Information on the Cross-Border Cooperation

Meetings organized by MIER within the framework of exiting neighbourhood programmes have shown that the awareness among beneficiaries is high. General knowledge in the external bordering areas was good, and interest was significant.

However the area covered by our programme vary from those municipalities that has experience with NPs, such as north-west part of Vojvodina (bordering Croatia), involved in programmes with Hungary and Croatia, as well as South-east east Serbia (bordering the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), involved in NPs with Bulgaria.

Figure 43: Information on Regional CBC Programmes



On the other side there are areas such ones bordering Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro that never had experience with NPs and as a consequence are not familiar with the CBC Programmes' activities. This applies to most of the western Serbian border.

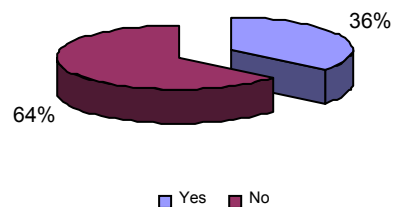
The level of awareness is generally better at the regional and local level than at national level. At the national level, only MIER, the staff involvement in one or the other cycle of the programming, officials are informed about the cross border cooperation programmes.

Findings from the NAA at regional level confirm that majority (80%) of respondents are familiar with the CBC Programmes, (Figure 43 above) whereas 20% are not informed. Concerning the level of awareness among two categories, it results to be lower among Non-governmental Agencies as opposed to the Local Government Units.

C.3.2 Information on IPA CBC

Serbia has recently started the association process. Thanks to information provided by the government through media, political debate and the civil society advocacy and information activity there is a high awareness among different groups, including public about the association and stabilization process, but, in terms of the IPA CBC itself and its instrument, people seem to be very little informed about it. (Figure 44).The low level of awareness is also due to very limited information about IPA CBC the EU side

Figure 44: Information on IPA CBC



IPA CBC and its instruments findings from the NAA reveals, that, people seem to be less informed than on CBC programmes; 60% more or less informed and 40% lacking information.

C.3.3 Source of information

According to the respondents, the main source of information is the MIER website, whereas participation in information activities (information days, seminars, workshops) follows. The information is also exchanged through contacts, and learnt from the Interreg site.

Conclusions

- *There is in general good level of knowledge about on the external Neighbourhood Programmes and significant interest to participate in the CBC Programmes.*
- *Level of awareness is low in the areas covering the internal borders.* This applies to most of the western Serbian border.
- *The level of awareness at the National level is relatively low.* Only MIER, the staff involvement in one or the other cycle of the programming, officials are informed about the CBC Programmes.
- There is in general low level of information about IPA CBC.
- The NGOs are the less informed group about the CBC Programmes.

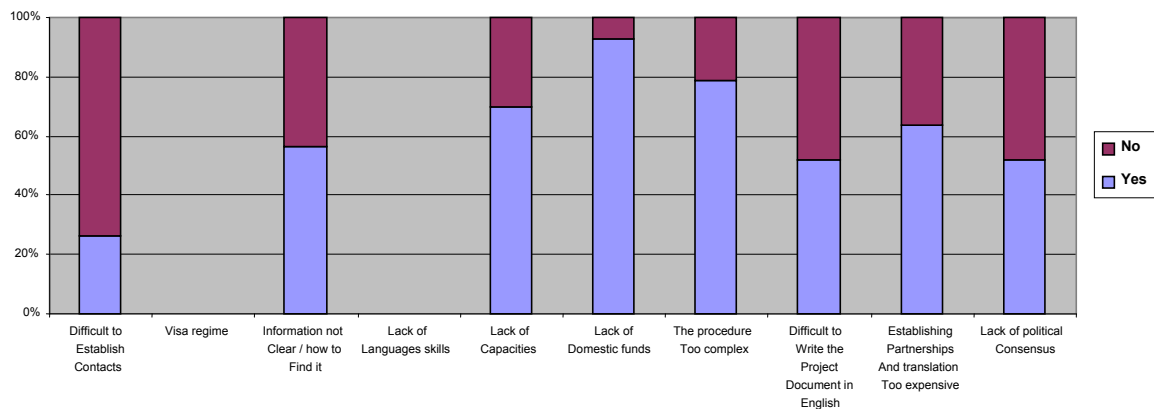
Recommendations

- ⇒ There is need to develop sufficient information dissemination on IPA CBC throughout the country;
- ⇒ Organization of particular information days with the stakeholders along the internal border regions will increase the level of awareness on the future CBC Programmes and will help on increasing the participation of the local stakeholders.
- ⇒ The project will support publication of the information and dissemination through out the central administration. This will increase the level of awareness at the central ministry level and will help on making them play a more active role in the future.
- ⇒ Use the existing network of the associations, civil society and business for large dissemination of information;
- ⇒ Organization of specific awareness activities in media for informing the public at large

C.4 Capacities to Develop Project Proposals

Within the scope of Inter-regional Cooperation Support Programme, financed by EU and managed by EAR supporting MIER, establishment of networking by local experts in their respective regions is at various stages of advancement. The experts in Nis having been contracted on 1 February are most advanced, having supported info days, workshops and partner search under two calls and conducted a regional SWOT survey. For those based in Subotica, the SWOT interviews proved an invaluable networking opportunity (they have not so far worked on supporting open calls). The late recruitment of experts to work under the NP with Romania implies that there have only been basic networking activities in the region so far. However, they are very well connected and are developing a network as part of their daily activities.

Figure 46: The main obstacles for the LGUs to apply in a NP - SRB



At this stage, focus is on networking in the Romanian border area. Discussing whether planning a cross-programme stakeholder workshop would be opportunity at the current stage – since no projects have been selected except under the NPs with Hungary and CADSES, it is probably too early to make this a meaningful opportunity to exchange experience.

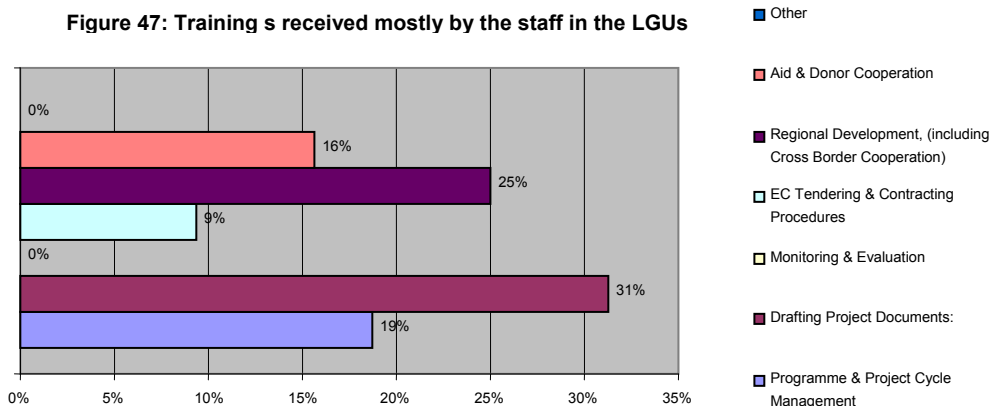
Best practice project examples have been made available on the Ministry’s NP website. Stakeholder networking has begun in the programme areas covered under the NPs with Bulgaria and Hungary.

Evaluations will take place at a later stage of the project. No activities in this field have been carried out, but, there have been activities in the fields of exchange of experience and in preparing for IPA CBC.

- *Lack of domestic funds as a prerequisite* to participate in programmes demanding co-financing is considered to be the main obstacle.
- *Complexity of procedures* which can create misunderstanding, is the second concern of the Serbian’ respondents.

- One of the facts that is perceived as hindering is the difficulty of establishing partnerships and *exceedingly high cost of translation* necessary for the adequate presentation of the documentation.
- Although the language is not a barrier, *writing good proposal in English* seems to be an obstacle as well.
- *Lack of political consensus*, as specific for Serbia, and different from other countries involved, is presented as another obstacle for participating in the IPA CBC Programmes.
- What also hinder the processes are *unclear information which is also difficult to find and the lack of capacities for developing project proposals*

However, except those regions that are covered with NPs, there are no known capacities for this exercise, especially within the internal bordering region. In some of those regions, there have been other donor activities present, and those structures that have been involved in different donor projects potentially have capacity for managing project proposals. Experience shows that the capacity for preparation of project proposals has been hidden among individuals and NGOs. Those ones should be identified during the life of the programme. As presented in the Figure 47 below, in majority the level of trainings in the CBC Programmes related areas has been very limited in the past for the staff of



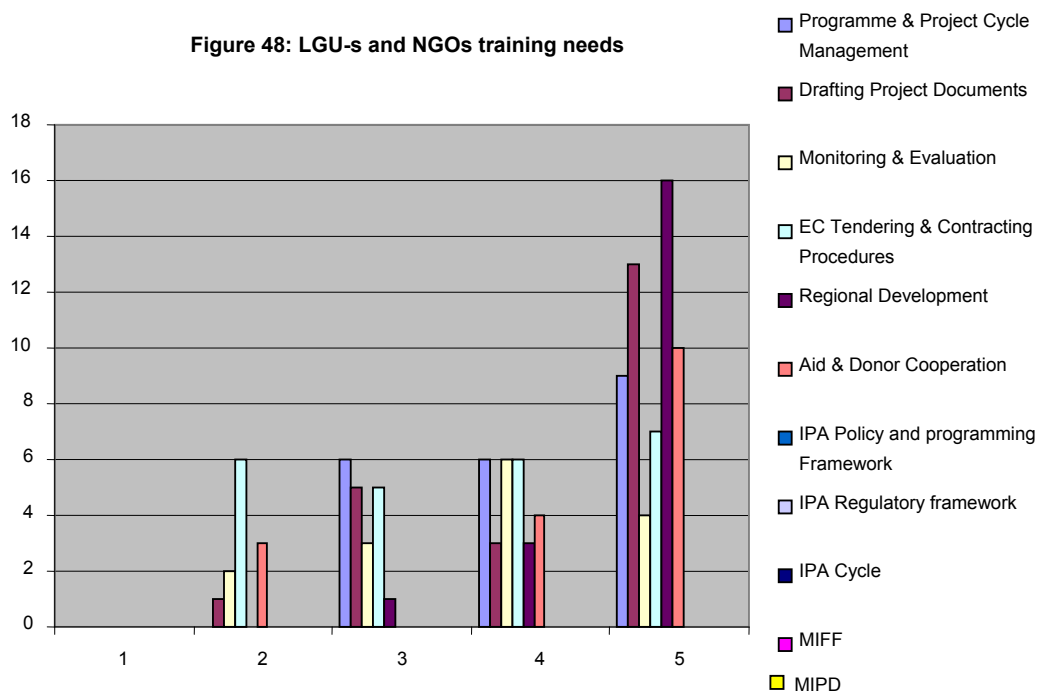
On the other hand those individuals and NGOs have experience with other donors, grant schemes and procedures, but not particularly with CBC ones. Therefore there is a need for training in project preparation and management identified.

The training needs assessment revealed that there is a considerable need for training of the local administrations in the areas selected by the team during the needs assessment exercise. Among the responded only 1/3 of them (31%) confirmed that they have received training on drafting project documents and in regional development. A smaller group of respondents (25%) have been trained in Regional Development including Cross-Border Cooperation, 19% in Programme and Project Cycle Management, and 17% in Aid and Donor Coordination. Only 9% have been trained in EC Tendering and Contracting Procedures.

As training priorities, the following areas were identified:

- (i) regional development (90%),
- (ii) drafting of project documents
- (iii) aid and donor coordination (75%) and
- (iv) project cycle management (60%)

In more detailed level training priorities according to interviewed groups are presented in the Figure 48 below



These data confirm the need for developing a comprehensive training programme for the local government administration placed at the border area.

Conclusions

- There are at some extend developed knowledge on the “external borders” NPs, but very low level of information is about the “internal borders” programmes and opportunities for grand schemes.
- The capacities at the local administration for developing project proposals, PCM are relatively low, while very low on aid coordination and EC tendering procedures.

Recommendations

⇒ There is a need to develop a comprehensive training programme for the local government administration placed at the border area. The project could make benefit

of the already established network of expert, in particular the ones working at the local units participating in the “external borders” and use them as a good quantity of “trainers”.

- ⇒ Best experience practice and exchange of knowledge activities between municipalities and units that are more advanced and active in the CBC Programmes could be supported by the project. This will help also fostering the networking and exchange of experience. Twinning activities between municipalities already involved in the “external borders” NPs and the ones that will participate in the “internal borders” CARDS CBC Programmes could be studied as a good knowledge exchange tool.

D. Montenegro

With the aim of assessing the needs of potential users of the CBIB programme, 22 questionnaires were sent to all municipalities which are located at the borders, and 9 questionnaires were sent to eligible Non-governmental organizations.

Due to limitation on timing and resources the needs assessment in Montenegro was undertaken only at the regions placed at the border areas with Serbia. Therefore it presents the situation regarding the local administration and non-governmental organizations, only.

The main finding the team was able to get from the interviews related to institutional capacities as about establishment of the structures that are in charge with aid coordination. Findings from the NAA confirm that the majority of municipalities have developed the local development strategy. Aid coordination units are established with the role of coordinating the flow of foreign aid provided to the local government from different donors.

D.1 Perception of beneficiaries in Montenegro on the role of the border and CBC Programmes.

Respondents in Montenegro, although constituting a very small portion of total interviewed persons in the NA, take a more positive approach regarding the role of borders. The majority of them 57% (Figure 49) are of the opinion that borders play a connecting role for the countries. Only 7% of them think that borders play a diving role, while a considerable amount 36% are more neutral, and think that borders play the similar role of dividing and connecting countries.

While on the CBC Programmes, the general opinion of responded who answered to this question is positive, with 40% expressing the CBC Programmes play a good role on inducing the cooperation among countries, Figure 50 above.

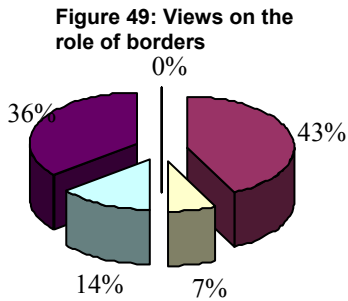
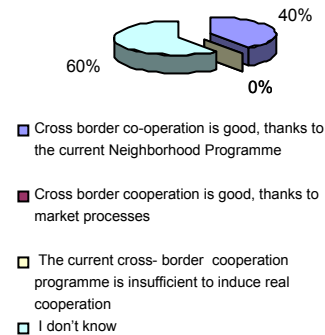


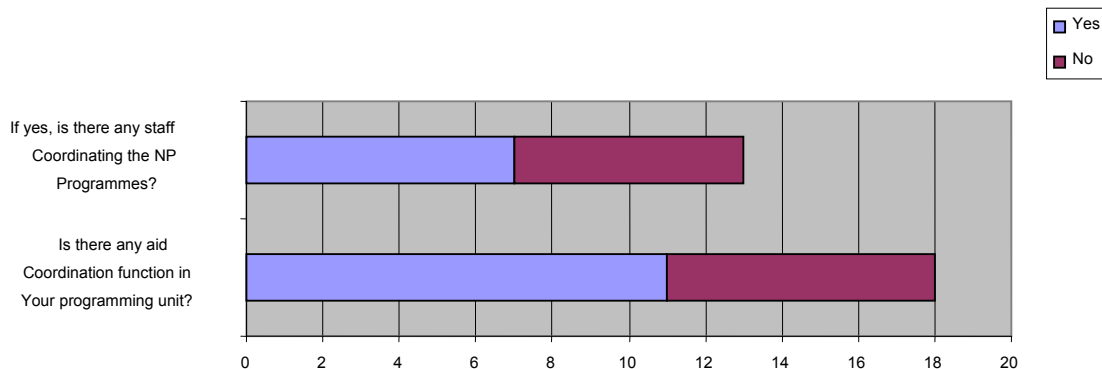
Figure 50 : How you evaluate the cross-border cooperation



D.2 Institutional mechanism for coordination and management of future CBC Programmes

In the majority of municipalities there are established aid coordination units and in 60% of them local development strategy has been prepared. It is interesting to note that questionnaires filled in by NGO employees show lack of information concerning the existence of local development strategies in their respective municipalities. It should be emphasized that there is a need for enhancing the exchange of information and overall cooperation between local authorities and NGOs.

Figure 51: Aid-coordination functions - LGUs

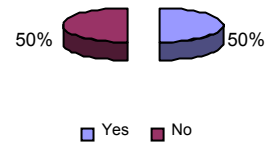


D.3 Awareness on CBC Programmes

D.3.1 Information on CBC Programmes

The level of awareness on the programmes is substantially lower in Montenegro, than in Serbia, particularly along the border with Serbia. This may be the consequence of the former status of the state, where the majority of CBC Programmes have been managed from Belgrade. As regards CBC Programmes, 50% of respondents in Montenegro have answered that they are familiar with the programmes, and 50% claim not to be familiar on the matter.

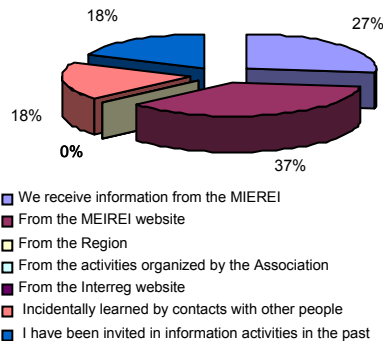
Figure 52: Information on CBC



D.3.2 Information on IPA CBC

In terms of IPA CBC its instruments, people seem to be less informed than on CBC Programmes - 40% more or less informed and 60% lacking information. The level of awareness on the programmes is substantially lower in Montenegro, than in Serbia, particularly along the border with Serbia which may be the consequence of the former status of the state, the majority of CBC Programmes having been managed from Belgrade.

Figure 53: Source of Information



The level of awareness is also higher among Non-governmental Agencies' employees in comparison to those employed in Local Government Units.

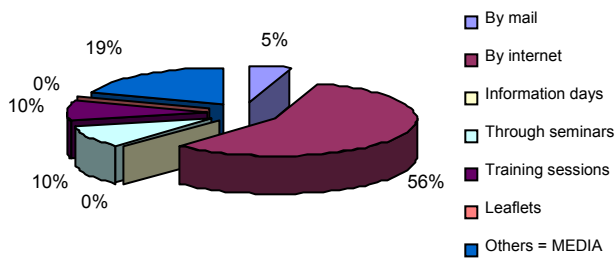
D.3.3 Source of information

According to the respondents, the main source of information is the Ministry of International Economic Relations' website, whereas participation in information activities (information days, seminars, workshops) follows. The information is also exchanged through contacts, and learnt from the Interreg website. MIEREI website was given special attention, being considered to be the most fruitful source of information. 65% of NGO respondents and 40% of LGUs respondents find the website informative to a certain

extent, 35% (NGOs) and 20% (LGUs) considers it to be very informative. There are respondents among LGUs (40%) who think that it is not informative at all.

The conclusion to be drawn is that NGO representatives more rely on the website when searching for information than local authorities' representatives

Figure 54: Preferred ways of receiving information



The most efficient ways for receiving information, as indicated in the Figure 54, are through Internet and media, whereby Internet is preferred by NGOs. Seminars and training sessions as desirable sources of information for the NGOs, whereas apart from the Internet, media and mail system seems to be the preferred tools for the LGUs to receive information. This reiterates the conclusion drawn in the previous text, that LGU representatives should be provided by publications containing

information on the programme and also e-mail alerts.

Building a CBIB website with a strong promotion package should be organized as a basis for providing all relevant information in the area. The site should cover the whole region, providing information in all local languages, as the "regional site" would have more effective impact on potential users of the programmes than local CBIB sites.

A number of information days should be organized throughout the country, publications and other material containing selected information published in advance in order to be disseminated among the participants.

Media coverage should be organized for all activities as well as for the promotion of publications, so that the broader public could be provided with an opportunity of gaining information on the programmes and the possibilities given.

Special attention should be paid to information activities to be organized for the LGUs representatives as their need for information is stronger.

Also, a comprehensive network of information-providing points (info-points/corners in each municipality) in border areas should be developed as soon as possible.

Conclusions

- *There is in general relatively low level of information* about the CBC Programmes.
- There is in particular *low level of information on the "internal borders"*, with specific along the border with Serbia due to the previous management of the CBC Programmes from Belgrade.
- The level of information is low among the local government units.

Recommendations

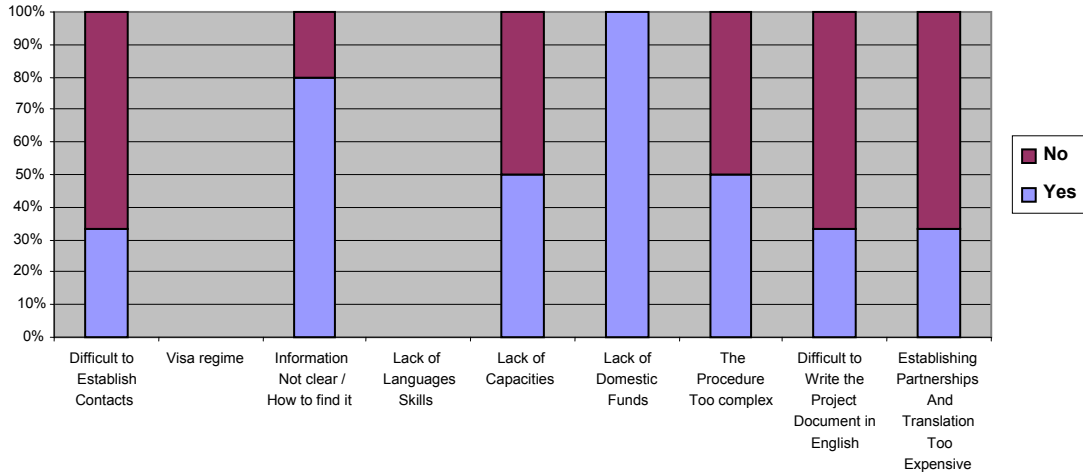
- ⇒ There is a need to develop a comprehensive network of information-providing points in border areas soon as possible, in order to increase the level of information and participation of different stakeholders in the cross-border cooperation programmes, in particular the less informed groups i.e. NGOs.
- ⇒ Building a CBIB site with a strong promotion package should be organized as a basis for providing all relevant information in the area. The site should cover the whole region, providing information in all local languages, as the “regional site” would have more effective impact on potential users of the programmes than local CBIB sites.
- ⇒ Alternative means of information must be applied, simultaneously. Information days should be organized throughout the country. Publications and other material containing selected information on the CBC Programmes must be published in advance and disseminated among the participants.
- ⇒ Media coverage should be organized for all activities as well as for the promotion of publications, so that the broader public could be provided with an opportunity of gaining information on the programmes and the opportunities given under each programme.
- ⇒ More attention should be paid to information activities in Montenegro, as the lower level of awareness has been identified.

D.4 Capacities to Develop Project Proposals

A number of obstacles to participate in the CBC Programmes have been identified by the respondents.

According to the Local Government Units employees, *the lack of domestic funds* as a prerequisite to participate in programmes demanding co-financing is by far the most difficult obstacle to be overcome.

Figure 55: the main obstacles for the LGUs to apply in a NPs

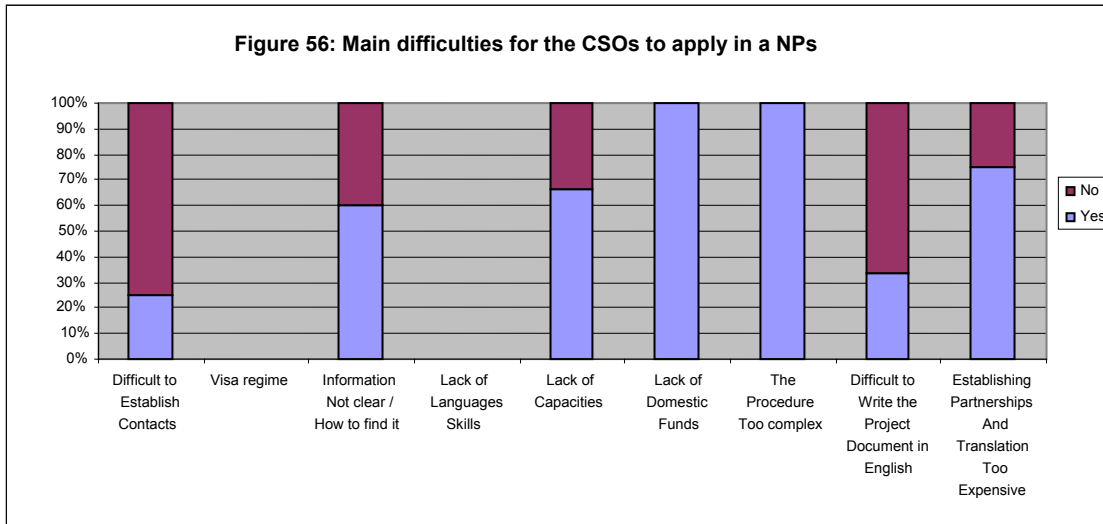


- What follows is the *matter of unclear information* which is also difficult to find (this reiterates the need that more attention should be paid to providing information to LGUs, (when compared to NGOs' demand for information), and the lack of capacities for developing project proposals. Complexity of procedures has also been identified as an obstacle present among the potential beneficiaries of IPA CBC.

Therefore, information activities and trainings of a more intensive kind should be organized for the representatives of LGUs, preceded by a more intense campaign.

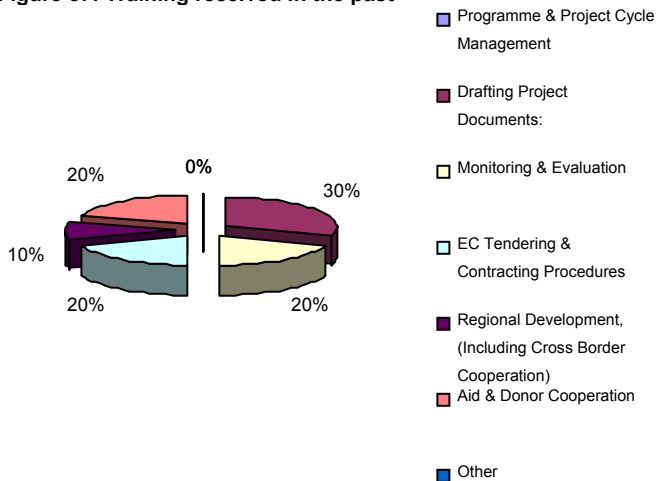
- *The lack of domestic funds*, along with the complexity of procedures is considered by NGO employees to be the main obstacle. One of the facts that are perceived as hindering the participation in the programmes is the difficulty of establishing partnerships and exceedingly high cost of translation necessary for the adequate presentation of the documentation. What is also hindering the processes is unclear information which is also difficult to find as well as the lack of capacities for developing project proposals.

- With regard to the above-mentioned information, the need for training beneficiaries - both NGO and LGU employees - in drafting project proposals and in project management has been reiterated so that the lack of capacities could be overcome, as already envisaged in the framework of the CBIB project.



Although the English languages skills are not an obstacle, about 30% of respondents, however, express that they face difficulties on writing the proposal in English. This is a bias position and could be explained with the difficulties to understand the technical terms in the CfP, rather than writing the content of proposal in English language.

Figure 57: Training received in the past



As shown in the Figure 57 the highest percentage of LGU respondents (30%) has been trained in drafting project documents. A smaller group of respondents (20%) have been trained in EC Tendering and Contracting Procedures, and together with the 20% of those having been trained in Monitoring and Evaluation make the majority of beneficiaries having already been provided with the basic information on EU assistance procedures. This will facilitate the CBIB team’s efforts as the group can be taken as trainers for the rest and ‘train the trainers’ sessions can be organized for them, thus making the training process both time and cost-efficient.

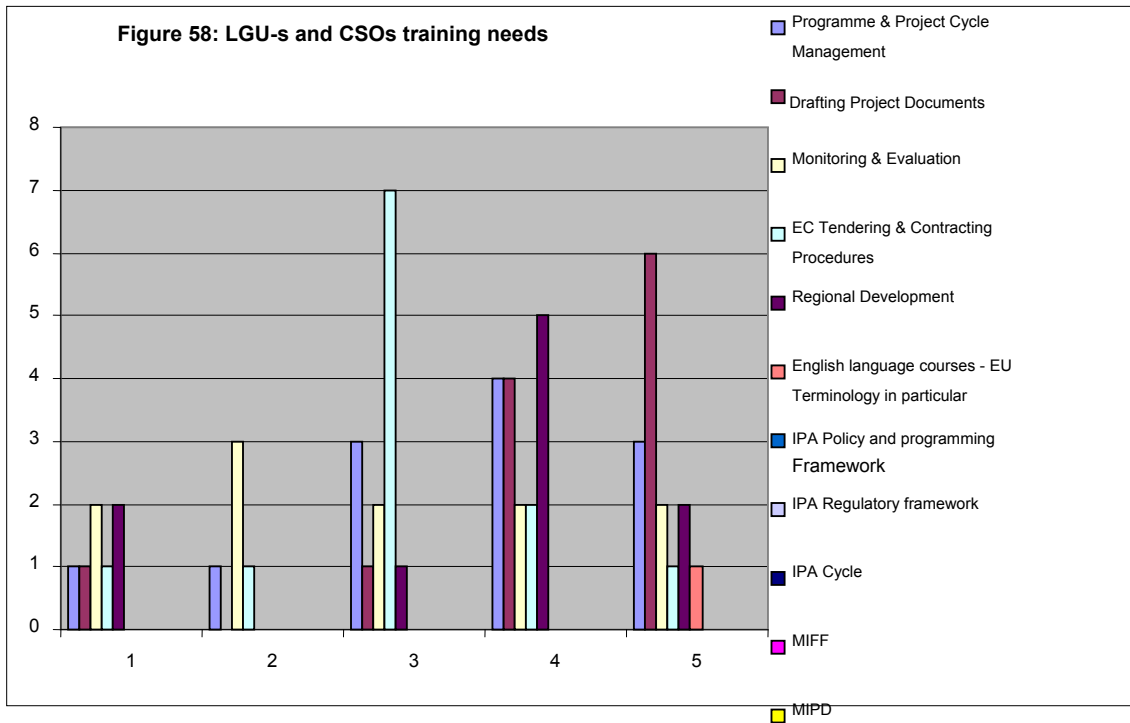
A smaller number (10%) was trained in Regional Development, including cross border cooperation what shows that not all potential beneficiaries are unfamiliar with the regional development programmes.

What is also interesting, in comparison with the situation in Serbia, is the fact that some of the respondents in Montenegro have been trained in Monitoring and Evaluation, which is

also an advantage as it contributes to the better understanding of the project cycle in general.

More attention should be paid to organizing training sessions on Drafting Project Documents, as all beneficiaries should be skilled in it, as well as in Programme and Project Cycle Management.

As training priorities, the following areas were identified: (Figure 58 below) EC tendering and contracting procedures (both NGOs and LGUs representatives agree on this – approximately of all responses). Drafting project documents follows (app. 80%), regional development (70%) aid and donor coordination and project cycle management.



NGO respondents set the following priorities: EC tendering and contracting procedures, drafting project documents and Monitoring and evaluation, which shows their demand for more in-depth, practical information, whereas LGUs responses show the need for information, still, (EC tendering and contracting procedures, but also Regional development with CBC programmes) and the basics – drafting project documentation.

Again, the conclusion to be drawn is that LGUs should be targeted by a more intense information campaign and the most essential training – drafting project documentation, should be paid special attention, particularly in terms of LGUs.

E. Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244

E.1 CBC Programmes in Kosovo (under the UNSCR 1244)

By following UNSCR 1244, the borders of Kosovo potentially concerned by CBC programmes are the one with Montenegro, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. However the question of the cooperation of Kosovo municipalities with neighbouring Serbian municipalities is already researched (i.e. the study conducted jointly by KIPREK, Kosovo NGO and European Movement, Serbian NGO) and to a certain extent experienced (i.e. GPKT initiative supported by EastWest Institute).

As a potential candidate and as stated in the draft of the Multi-Annual Planning Document for Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244, Kosovo will benefit from IPA component I (Transition Assistance and Institution Building) and component II (Cross-Border Cooperation). IPA allocation for CBC Programmes in Kosovo, as agreed in the Multi-annual Indicative Framework is 8,2 million for the period 2007-2009. Kosovo will participate in IPA as a full beneficiary under UNSCR 1244.

So far, the main CBC initiatives involving Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 are the GPKT (Gilane, Presevo, Kumanovo and Trgoviste) initiative supported by EastWest Institute and the Kukes, Dragas, Tetovo CBC initiative supported by OSCE. The future CBC Programmes launched under IPA will benefit from the lessons learnt and structures established under these initiatives, however they can hardly be considered as CBC programmes regarding IPA procedures:

- They are implemented at the municipal level and do not involve the national institutions.
- They are all “trilateral” initiatives (Serbia-Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Albania) which, in the case of Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244, could be hardly duplicated under IPA CBC.
- They consist mainly in networking activities (among municipalities and CSO) and do not include the set-up of mechanisms for call for proposals and projects co-funding.

E.2 Institutional Set Up

The body in charge of European integration and of managing CBC components is the Agency for European Integration, acting under the direct authority of the Prime Minister and supported by UNMIK Pillar 4. The Agency is dramatically understaffed (11 persons totally, including the service in charge of the translation of the *acquis communautaires*). The acting director is following CBC issues at the regional level (participation in the regional workshops such as Zagreb and Sarajevo in 2006) but nobody is in charge of the operational aspects of CBC. The Agency does not have the human resources and capacity to organize the coordination of the different ministries which should be involved in CBC process (such as the Ministry of Local Administration). As a result, the capacity and awareness about CBC in the other institutional bodies is expected to be even lower than in the Agency for European Integration.

Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 being no involved in operational EU funded CBC Programmes; there is no task manager specifically in charge of CBC in the EAR Pristina, the contracting authority for CARDS Programmes. Considering IPA CBC it means that the Agency for European Integration will not benefit from a significant transfer of competence from EAR, as it is for example the case in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

DFID is financing a study (20 days) on cross-border cooperation between Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 and bordering regions under IPA. The objectives are “to identify options for a simple and efficient structure and strategy for CBC” and “to establish a detailed picture of the socio-economic situation at the border areas and the existing level of capacity and coordination with local authorities on both sides of the border”. This study started mid-September 2006 and CBIB project is coordinating with the team in charge.

E.3 CBIB activities in Kosovo under USCHR 1244 during the inception period

CBIB project has no office in Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 and no international or local expert dedicated to Kosovo, although Kosovo, regarding CBC issues, is certainly one of the most complex area in the region and also the most in need of technical assistance.

CBIB activities were therefore limited to interviews of the main stakeholders involved in CBC issues in Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244. The NAA has not been carried on in Kosovo as has been done in the neighbouring regions. The cooperation with the ongoing DFID study mentioned above is therefore considered as very important for the definition of a further strategy for the participation of Kosovo in the CBC process and for the possible participation of the CBIB project in this process.

Conclusion

- It can be reasonably said that Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 did not start yet to implement CBC Programmes with neighbouring regions, and consequently that the awareness on CBC as well as the coordination and capacity at the local level is extremely low. Regarding awareness on CBC and capacity to implement CBC Programmes, Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 is far behind the neighbouring regions.
- It has to be noticed that this weakness is not only a handicap for Kosovo but also for the neighbouring regions such as the 10 former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian municipalities (about 350 000 inhabitants) located on the Kosovo border. A non participation or a weak participation of Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 in CBC Programmes leads to the marginalisation of these neighbouring regions. This point has been underlined by the Secretariat for European Affairs (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), willing to start the implementation of CBC Programmes with Kosovo as soon as possible.

A technical assistance is required in order to help Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 in participating efficiently in future CBC Programmes, So far the CBIB project does not have the possibility to provide this technical assistance.

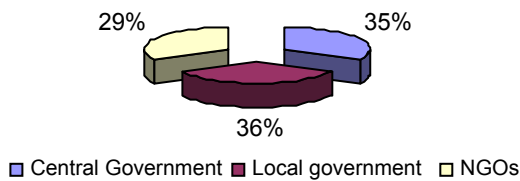
Recommendations

- To address the issue of the technical assistance to be provided to the bodies in charge of CBC in Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244.. So far CBIB project does not have the capacity to provide this TA.
- The ongoing DFID study on CBC in Kosovo under the UNSCR 1244 is to be connected with CBIB project as a tool to identify the next steps to be implemented in order to facilitate the integration of Kosovo in the regional CBC dynamic.

G. Bosnia and Herzegovina

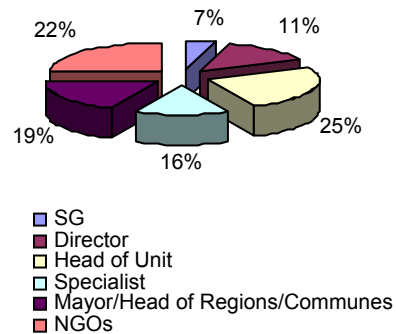
In order to have a comprehensive view about of the needs of potential users of the CBIB project questionnaires were distributed to all three levels. A balanced approached was followed to carry out the interviews. As presented from the Figure 59 below the ratio of the interviewed persons is in average the same for all groups: 35% of the interviewed persons represent the central government officials, 36% local government and 29% Non-governmental organizations. With a slight difference the majority of respondents comes form the local government group.

Figure 59: Distribution of samples according to categories

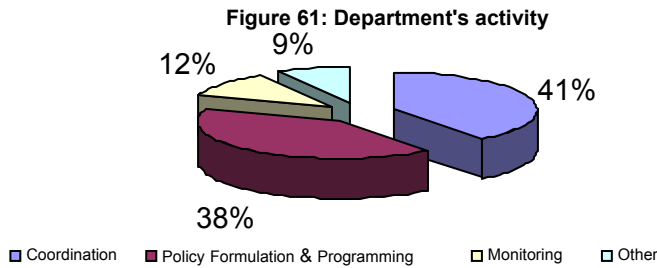


The team paid attention to have a larger representation of interviewed staff at all levels, from the secretary generals in the central ministries to the specialist level at the local

Figure 60: Distribution of samples by positions



administration and NGOs. Figure 60 presents information on the distribution by position of respondents. Since cross-border cooperation involves in particular coordination and programming tasks, the focus of the NAA was to interview the staff from the programming and coordination structures in the central ministries, Figure 61 below.



G1 Perception of beneficiaries in BIH on the role of the border and CARDS Regional CBC Programmes

The interviews show that a high scepticism among the respondents about the role of the border. Data from the survey (Figure 62) indicate that the majority of them look the border as a dividing factor, rather as playing the role of connecting countries and people. 66% of them have such view (38% rather dividing than connecting and 28% mostly dividing factor). Only 6% of respondents consider think that borders play a connecting role. The same critical position is shown to be taken when asked to evaluate the CBC Programmes. Figure 63 below

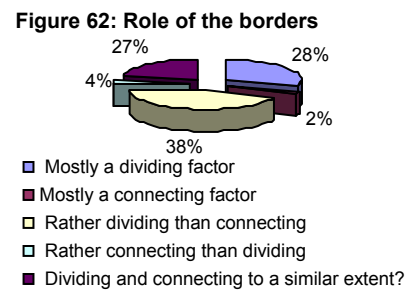
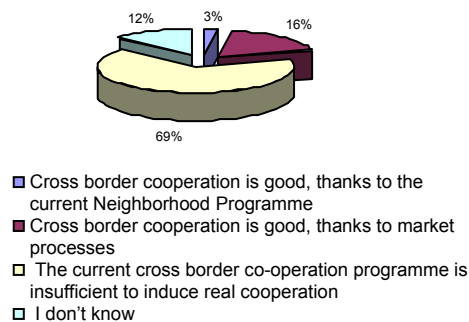


Figure 63: How you evaluate the CBC Programmes



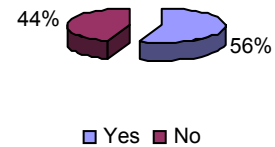
G.2 Awareness on CARDS Regional CBC Programmes

The needs assessment carried out during the inception phase aimed at measuring the level of awareness on the NPs and IPA CBC among different beneficiaries in BIH. The interviews were very helpful to understand the situation regarding the level of awareness on the CBC Programme, difficulties faced by both public and non-governmental institutions, as well as asses the needs for training and awareness raising activities.

G.2.1 Information on the Cross–Border Cooperation

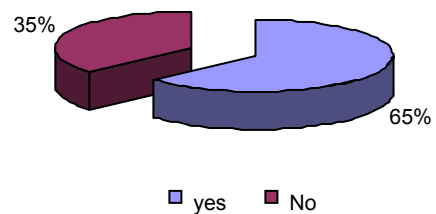
There is a relatively low degree of information and awareness on CARDS Regional CBC Programmes among beneficiaries in BIH. 56% of respondents confirmed that they are not informed about CBC Programmes, while 44 % confirmed that they are aware about the CARDS Regional CBC Programmes. As in case of other countries, even here the level of awareness differs from the central government to local government level.

Figure 64: Information on CARDS Regional CBC



At the central level, the level of awareness is relatively higher (Figure 65 below). The majority of respondents (65%) have been involved in the past at least in one of the NPs implementation. The majority of them have been involved in the past in one cycle of the management of the NHs. The most involved area has been “project design and preparation” (37%), and the second one “Priority selection” (28 %). This has helped them to get involved and be familiar with the CARDS Regional CBC Programmes. **The level of information at the regional and local level** is lower, compared to the central government. The same applies to NGOs as well.

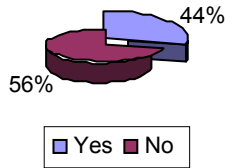
Figure 65: Information on CARDS Regional CBC - central ministries



G.2.2 Information on IPA CBC

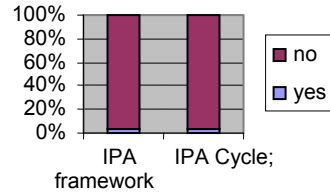
The level of information on IPA CBC is very low. Only 1/3, in average, of interviewed persons knows about IPA CBC and its instruments Figure 65, below. This contingency is closed to the central level, where the flow of information is higher. While at the local level respondents are less informed about IPA CBC policy framework and instruments. As presented in the Figure 66 and 67 a small group of respondents 25 % have information

Figure 65: Information on IPA



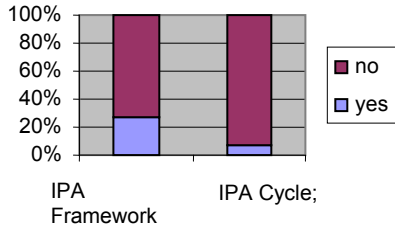
about IPA. The level of awareness at the local government is lower than among the NGOs. Although, we would say that despite very slight differences, both

Figure 66: Information on IPA CBC- LGUs



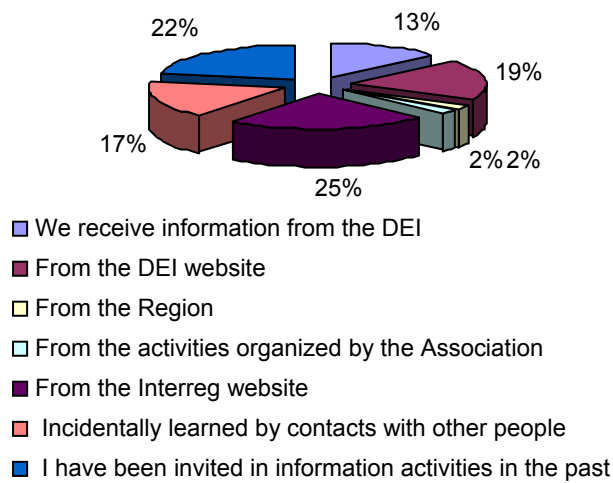
groups indicate very low level of information.

Figure 67: Information on IPA CBC NGOs



The Interreg website seems to be the most important source of information about the CARDS Regional CBC activities, for the beneficiaries. The NGOs seems to be the group using this site as a very helpful source of information. Data reveal that there is not a well developed information dissemination system at the local level. Very little number of the respondents is informed on dedicated activities organized by the regions and associations of the local government. Only 2% of respondents indicate that they receive information from the regions and activities organized by associations of elected officials.

Figure 68: Source of Information



Conclusions

- *There is in general a relatively low level of information on the CARDS Regional CBC Programmes. Central organizations seemed to be more informed, while the level of information at the regional and local level is generally low.*
- *There is very low information on IPA CBC at the local government and NGOs.*
- *The mechanisms for dissemination of information at local government level is insufficiently developed*

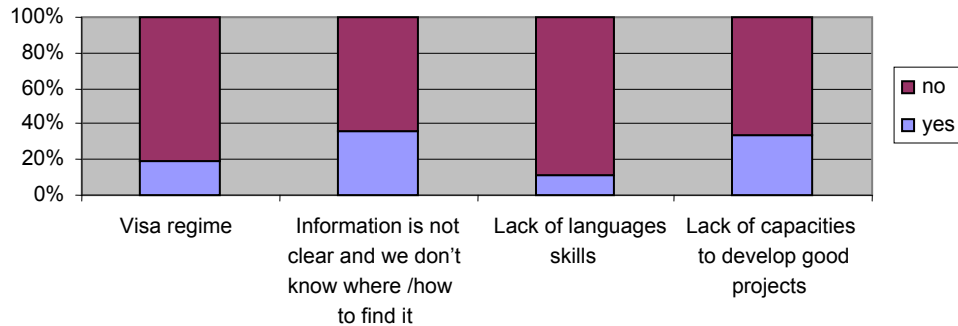
Recommendations

- ⇒ There is a need to develop a sustainable information dissemination system on cross-border cooperation programmes and IPA CBC throughout the country;
- ⇒ Organization of serious of dedicated workshop at local level and for non-governmental organizations must be considered.
- ⇒ Publication of information, leaflets brochures etc. and dissemination through administration and other interested groups would be very helpful to enhance level of knowledge and awareness about IPA CBC.
- ⇒ More involvement of the associations of elected officials in information and awareness activity should be considered for building future networks.

G.3 Capacities for developing and managing projects

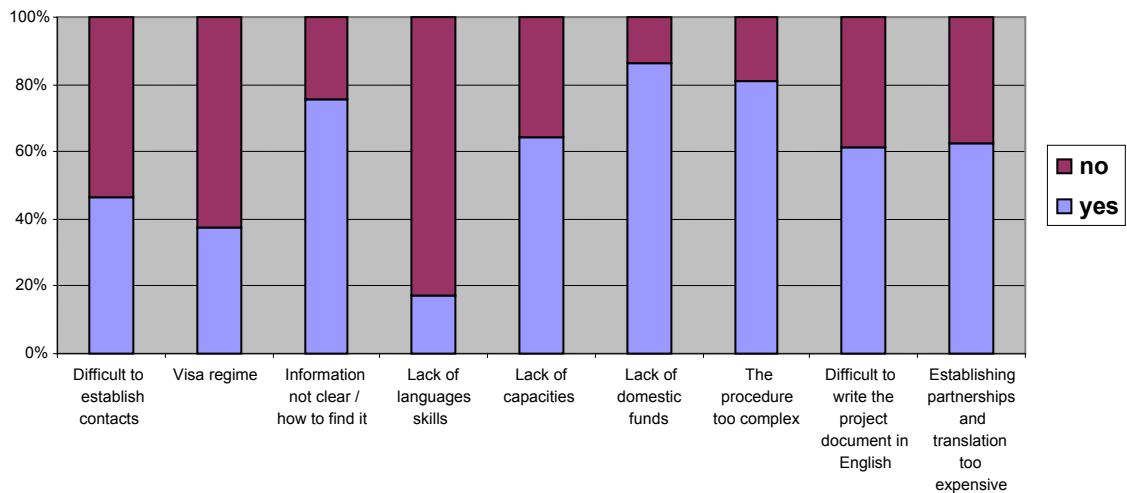
Participation in the CARDS Regional CBC Programmes seems to be difficult due to a number of obstacles. The impact of them seems to be differently among three categories. The Figure 69, 70 and 71 below provide clear picture of the most significant obstacles, for each group. The data indicate that central ministries do not face to many difficulties, when preparing the proposals. Only 1/3 of them indicate the lack of capacities as a problem and also uncertainty how to easily find the required information.

Figure 69: Main Difficulties for Central Ministries



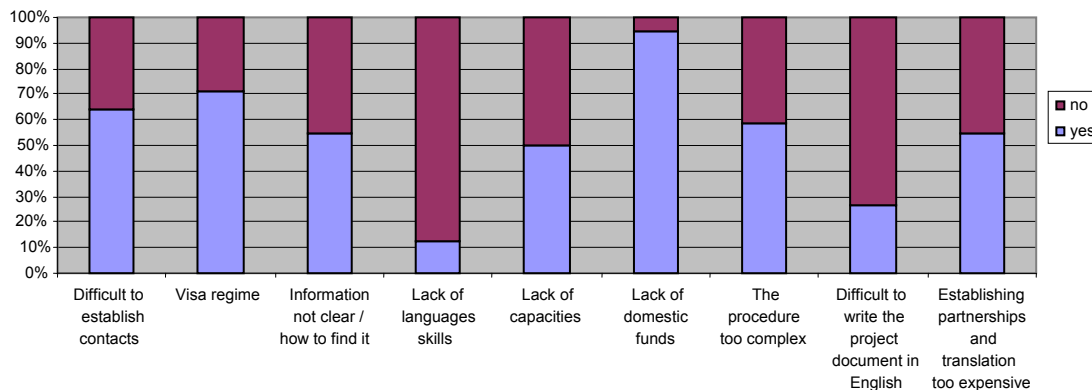
- *Shortage of funds to cover beneficiary's contribution to project's participation.* As indicated in the other countries' report, even in BiH local government units and NGOs are the groups facing more the difficulty of covering the percentage of beneficiary contribution. For the NGOs this is the most important obstacle. Shortage of funds reduces the level of possibility of the local units to participate in the cross- border programmes projects with several projects. This is indicated by more than 83% of respondents in the local level.

Figure 70: The main obstacles for the LGUs to apply in a CARDS Regional Programmes



- *Source of Information and clarity of procedures* are the main difficulties for the local government units (close to 80%). Although the language is not a real concern for the local government units, the majority of them (61%) confirm that they face difficulties to understand the procedures and to write the proposal in English language.

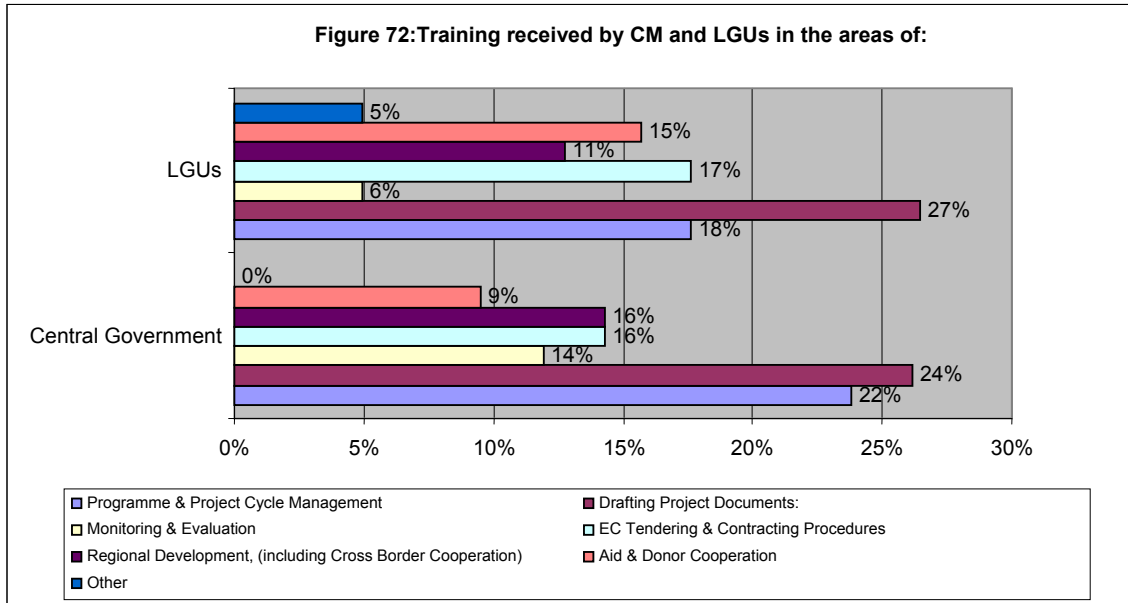
Figure 71: Main difficulties for the CSOs to apply in a NPs



As in case of beneficiaries in BiH, visa regime, although in a lower degree is an obstacle for applicants, in particular for the NGOs, coupled, in addition by the difficulties to establish contacts. All this increases the cost of establishing partnership. The last one is a concerning issue for the LGUs as well.

The NAA indicates a high need for training in all 5 selected areas. The interviews revealed (Figure 72, below), less than 33% of staff from both central and local institutions have received training on “*EC tendering procedures and contracting*”, There is very small group of staff at the local level who have been trained in “*project monitoring*”, only 6 % of them. At the same level , is the percentage of staff that have received training on drafting project proposal(27%).This % is very low , on what it should be to enable the beneficiaries participate in the call for proposals.

The staffs of central government institutions has received more training on “*project cycle management*”, (22%) compared to the region and local government staff (18%). It is interesting that respondents at the central level are less trained on aid-coordination, than the ones at the local level (9% vs. 15%). This is a situation different compared with other countries.



The assessment revealed that there is a huge need for training in the five selected areas: (i) project cycle management; (b) drafting of project documents; (c) monitoring; (d) EC tendering procedures (e) aid – coordination. Training on “PCM” is considered as the highest priority from the central ministries (60%). Other high priority items are also; EC tendering and procedures, and training on IPA CBC elements and policy framework. While LGUs and NGOs has the most priority “developing project proposals” with 58% of respondents. Aid coordination, despite very little staff is trained, still is not seen as a priority by central government respondents (9%).

Conclusions

- *Difficulties for obtaining visas* and contacts on the other side of the border are a serious impending factor for active participation in “external border” programmes.
- Applications are associated with *high costs* and there is lack of domestic funds for covering participation costs.
- Training on “PCM” and “developing project proposal” are considered as the highest priorities for training in all the levels of potential participants in the CBC Programmes.
- Training on IPA CBC is seen a priority for staff of central institutions.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Support of strengthening institutional and staff capacities to develop and manage projects
- ⇒ Tailored training packages on “PCM” and “Developing project proposals” should be developed.