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Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CEW | Community Exchange Worker |
| EVC | Empowering the Vulnerable Communities in Albania |
| EVL | Empowering the Vulnerable Local Communities in Albania |
| EU | European Union |
| DGP | Gross Domestic product |
| GoA | Government of Albania |
| LCDO | Local Community Development Officer |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MoLSAEO | Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities |
| NGO | Non Government Organisation |
| NPO | Non Profit Organisation |
| R/E | Roma and Egyptians |
| REC | Regional Environmental Center |
| TdH | Terre des Hommes |
| TLAS | Tirana Legal Aid Service |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNV | United Nations Volunteers |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |
| WB | World Bank |

Map of Albania (EVC regions: Tirana, Elbasani and Fieri)



I. Executive Summary

The end of socialism marked the beginning of Roma/Egyptians' decline from relative well being to extreme poverty. Low skills, discrimination, and the collapse of many state-owned industrial and agricultural enterprises during the transition period have contributed to their mass unemployment, along with rising illiteracy rates and deteriorating health, infrastructure, and housing conditions.

The project "Empowering the Vulnerable Communities in Albania: Support to the Implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions (April 2008-April 2010)" coordinates the activities of agencies working with vulnerable minorities and provides direct assistance to the poorest and most marginalized Roma communities at the local level (villages and quarters).

At the regional level, the project empowers vulnerable ethnic minorities to partner with relevant organizations and government institutions in facilitating access to social and economic aid programmes with the registration of marginalized communities. Minority communities will further establish partnerships with local government to address urgent development priorities in the poorest areas, supporting Roma to assume property rights and receive documentation of land ownership. Community members participate in on-the-job training, vocational education and courses on education, health and child protection. A network of mediators is established to further secure the well-being of the Roma and Egyptian population

The aim of the final evaluation of the project "EVC Project in Albania" is to make an objective assessment of the relevance, performance and success of the project.

The evaluation looks at the changes that have happened in communities' life due to their participation in the EVC project. The evaluation used participatory methodology involving beneficiaries, project staff as well as partner organizations and institutions as an important source for information.

The project implements activities based on 6 key interventions:

1. Enhance Access to Social Services through Civil Registration; Providing awareness raising and assistance to communities settled within a particular commune or municipality in three regions in receiving legal documentation (i.e., birth, residence, unemployment, marriage and divorce certificates, personal identification cards, etc.) needed to access social and economic assistance, health care, education, employment opportunities and political representation.
2. Support Community Participation to address development priorities. Supporting the creation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to lead the processes of identifying and implementing infrastructure projects in their communities.
3. Develop Capacities and Employable Skills; in cooperation with Regional Employment Offices, the National Employment Service (NES), and other vocational training agencies organizing vocational training for Roma and Egyptian individuals from the selected areas as well as providing training on awareness raising for both public employment offices and community members.
4. Mobilize Volunteer Community Mediators in the areas of Health, Education and Child Protection; Establishing a network of Roma volunteer health, education and child protection mediators to mediate between the local authorities and communities.
5. Promote Implementation of the National Roma Strategy; Providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and other government agencies supporting the action plan for the implementation of the national Roma strategy.
6. Advocacy on minority issues and social inclusion: Improving the awareness and attitude of the general public about disadvantaged minority groups by supporting several activities that promote a sense of multiculturalism within the country.

Summary of the evaluation findings:

- Relevance

The consultant finds the project objectives and design to be highly relevant to the needs and priorities of the Roma/Egyptian communities as confirmed by the Government and other partners. The participation of Roma community in development of the project components and activities is of a paramount importance for the Roma communities in these regions, because they felt included and appreciated and proved that the cooperation between actors State-Community-Donors is indispensable for the achievement of effective results that benefit all parties.

The project is also relevant due to the involvement of UNV volunteers who were instrumental in helping Roma/Egyptian communities understanding the concept of voluntary action and self-help.

The EVC project proposes a two-folded development model involving, **alleviation of the poverty** and **creation of an inclusive environment** for Roma and Egyptians. This is reflected particularly in the employability component, where in addition to supporting Roma and Egyptians for attending training courses and equipping them with the necessary tools, assistance has been offered to public vocational training centers and regional employment offices to make their services more inclusive towards vulnerable Roma and Egyptian communities.

Based on provided information and prior to the EVC project, the respective staff of public vocational training centers and employment offices perceived Roma/Egyptians individuals as a not-reachable target. Following EVC support in professional development, 85 Roma/Egyptian individuals received vocational courses at the public vocational training centers(i.e. tailoring, hairdresser, plumber, tile-worker), and have been provided with relevant tools and as well as are registered with employment offices as qualified job-seekers. Of the 85 Roma and Egyptian trainees, 25 have found part-time jobs, 6 are selected to benefit from a pilot *on-the-job-training*, leading to long term employment, while others are occasionally working as self-employed.

This two-folded approach fits well, on the one hand with the efforts of the government of Albania to alleviate poverty and improve the social economic situation of Roma community and on the other with the UNDAF 2006-2010 output on participation. Moreover, the EVC project has shown to be a successful approach to facilitate the recognition and integration of minorities into mainstream society through legitimizing their social status (registration with relevant authorities) and cooperating with stakeholders to raise awareness on equal opportunity rights.

- Effectiveness

Refer to Objectives, the EVC project management framework has provided direct and indirect benefits for Roma and Egyptian community in three regions. There were various methodologies followed to community development – starting from information provided through campaigns, leaflets, “street law campaigns”, training and capacity development, as well as intervention in infrastructure. Although each methodology is unique, they all have been based on a similar approach: participation and volunteerism of community members.

The project has affected the infrastructure of the areas, improving living conditions of Roma families. Direct evidence of achievements includes the tangible results which by and large tally with the plans according to the Log frames provided by EVC project.

Despite the fact that there were 85 Roma and Egyptian received vocational trainings and equipped with necessary tools, only 25 of them have been self-employed and 6 individuals have benefit from the promotion of employment programmes issued by Labour offices in each Region. There were evident signs of prejudices that private companies, as well as staff of employment offices and vocational training centers have against vulnerable Roma/Egyptian individuals, making difficult integration of Roma into the labor market..

- Efficiency

The EVC project has identified the most relevant areas and adequate means for the realisation of the activities of the project. Fieri and Tirana have a big number of Roma population, and that's why it is more easily to reach a high number of beneficiaries.

The activities have been implemented in an efficient manner and the staff recruited to work with Community has a high level of competence and motivation. This is not always true for the partners, especially for the public institutions. We can not say the same thing for Local government (Tirana case) and some public agencies (labour office).

Civil society measured efficiency based on both tangible and intangible results, for Public institutions, efficiency simply relates to cost per beneficiary. This is evident in the answers taken by representatives of vocational training centers

- Effects

Roma people understand that their participation and dialogue in activities as well as defining priorities is important to change their life (Elbasani Manzdere neighborhood)

Roma people as direct beneficiaries of the EVC project inspire others (Roma community members) to participate

There is a synergy in the EVC projects by UNDP, Local government, Roma Communities in three regions, creating a sense of community.

The EVC project helped local stakeholders, and in particular local governments, in adopting participatory consultations, negotiations and mediations, or in achieving consensus regarding priorities and needs in cases when interests of many stakeholders are different.

- Participation

Roma community members are encouraged to participate in all phases of the EVC project and are provided with full access to project information. They are also responsible and authorise for the development and implementation of a number of project activities through established CSO-s.

The primary goal of the Citizen Participation was to provide all members of our community specially women and young people with adequate opportunities to participate in the defining of priorities and problems of the community. The second is to involve as much as we can the community members in the implementation of the project activities.

- Voluntarism

With regard the voluntarism, the project has contribute in accomplish a long-term social goal. Evaluation results indicate that project had a high capacity to communicate volunteer opportunities and recognize volunteers.

- Sustainability

Sustainability of EVC project is ensured due to the following factors:

Maintaining the community feeling and keeping alive the participatory spirit of the community is a prerequisite for the sustainability of the project, since the philosophy of the project is based on participatory approach

The commitment of Local Government to hear the community voice is the second prerequisite.

The ability of the municipalities and communes to integrate Roma minority into the economic development and social services.

Through the very thorough preparation process, EVC staff has done its best to secure that the Roma Community members had all available information about the project activities, being transparent and not too much generous in promises as the others have done with this community.

Through the selection process (with regard vocational training, civil registration), EVC has attempted to identify committed and interested people.

EVC staff has worked closely with the local government and other actors in order to secure that they can play their part in the sustainability of project. EVC has carried out dialogue activities in order to minimize conflict within community members and between neighbors from majority.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The EVC project was a very positive learning experience for all involved. This includes the realisation that it's easier to motivate people by making them participate in addressing their concerns.

EVC project have had clear objectives and outcomes. This is true for management staff as well as for all stakeholders involve in the project implementation.

The project team has a high level of competence and motivation. The participation of the representatives from Roma/Egyptian communities has significantly impacted on the trustfully relationship established between management staff and community itself.

The EVC project have partially realised its main goal at increasing and strengthening confidence, capacities and dignity of vulnerable ethnic minorities in Albania, reducing poverty, social exclusion and vulnerability, but it proves that it is a good way to do it successfully.

The EVC project is in relevance with the main policy document "The National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions". The project was hailed as a positive step in addressing Roma real concerns by all actors (state, local government, civil society) and by Roma minority itself.

The participation of Roma community in development of the project components and activities is of a paramount importance for the Roma communities in these regions, because they felt included and appreciated and proved that the cooperation between actors State-Community-Donors is indispensable for the achievement of effective results that benefit all parties. Roma people understand that their participation in activities as well as in defining priorities is important to change their life and as direct beneficiaries of the EVC project inspire others (Roma community members) to participate

The EVC project has contributed significantly in empowering the Roma community and especially women and youth through establishment of CBO-s and providing training in several issues.

The EVC project proposes an alleviation of the poverty problem through employment and professional development. It gives priority to women and girls with social problems making use of adequate legislation for employment and vocational training services.

Despite the friendly and a cordial atmosphere, surrounded the EVC project in three areas, there were evident signs of prejudices that private companies, as well as any staff of employment offices have against vulnerable Roma/Egyptian individuals. It makes difficult the successful implementation of some activities such as employment.

The EVC project has identified the most relevant areas and adequate means for the realisation of the activities of the project in an efficient manner. Fieri and Tirana have a big number of Roma population which has helped to reach a high number of beneficiaries in both areas.

The project team should identify components of the project that have great potential for further development, but also interventions that need to change radically or even phase out.

The staff should:

- Create new inspiring meeting space for community in order to make them able to work together, to understand each others, to find ways of improving their life. Also communication between different groups from the Roma community need to be better managed.
- Involve different perspectives, not only top down. Make sure to include relevant decision makers.
- Create ownership in terms of greater responsibility of the community and individuals for specific tasks

Some of the comments were about the possible stakeholders such as private companies and NPO should pay more efforts to involve them in the project activities

A better coordination of funding opportunities is needed, which would take into account the needs and priorities formulated by Roma community as well as those outlined in this report.

Coordinate better the work with other agencies responsible for the implementation of the strategy in the areas of social services and social inclusion such as Department for Social Protection within Qarku (district) establishment recently in most of Regional Councils.

The EVC project should find new ways or adopt new incentives to facilitate the employment or self-employment such as providing micro grants.

II. Evaluation Report

II.1 Introduction

II.1.1 Brief background to country

Following the collapse of the communist regime at the end of 1990, Albania embarked on a series of economic reforms, as well as on many other political and legislative changes to accommodate the market economy and a democratic political system. Albania's progress during the early years of transition was quite impressive, taking into account that in 1991 the country was in dire economic conditions with no knowledge for the open market economy that replaced the completely isolated and centralized economy.

The transition economic difficulties were dealt through the stabilization program – which began in 1992 and was supported by international actors. During 1993-1995 GDP, the growth rate reached an average of 10%. Meanwhile the private sector development was not being followed by the same pace in regulatory institutional reforms and therefore unreformed and underdeveloped financial sector became one of the main reasons of unfolding pyramid schemes in Albania in 1996. The rise and fall of this pyramid scheme was a massive chaotic process which affected the initial economic and political stability the country gained following the transition stability and privatization reforms. When they crashed - end of 1996 until mid 1997, they caused a collapse of the political system and drove Albania into an anarchic situation.

Annual economic growth rate of Albanian economy after 2001 has been at an average of around 6%, while overall per capita income grew from US\$680 in 1990 to nearly US\$3 thousand in 2008

Regional disparities in Albania

According to official data such as employment and average income distribution, Albania did not inherit sharp regional disparities in wealth distribution and employment. The post-communist transition however, brought about the sharp regional inequality in wealth distribution that became sources of social problems of various magnitudes in different regions such as higher poverty of rural and mountain areas, large flows of internal migration, high unemployment especially of a long term nature for females and middle age labour force.

Table1. Regional Disparities

| | Population (in 000) | Life Expectancy | Education Index | GDP per capita (PPP) | Human Development Index |
|----------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tirana | 597,7 | 0,825 | 0,928 | 0,713 | 0,822 |
| Fieri | 382,5 | 0,825 | 0,914 | 0,626 | 0,788 |
| Elbasani | 381,2 | 0,795 | 0,91 | 0,575 | 0,760 |

Source: Regional Development Cross-Cutting Strategy (Draft Final, October 2006, p.17)

The triangle area Tirana-Elbasan-Fieri is considered to become the economic focal point of the entire country where most of nation's wealth has been accumulated. According to estimations, approximately 50% of the companies of the country are registered in this area.

Labour Market, Employment and Unemployment trends

According to LSMS findings, employment rates have dropped between 2002 and 2005 from 59 to 57 percent, which still remains acceptable by the EU standards and comparable with other neighboring countries. In any case these figures are much higher than those reported by official resources. On the other hand unemployment in Albania, though high by western European standards, is lower than in many neighbouring countries. Over the last years Albania has experienced a positive trend, bringing the unemployment rate to 13.2 percent in 2008. While it might be expected that administrative data would greatly underestimate the level of employment given the large scale of the informal sector, survey data do not support such assumption.

In Albania, there has been some progress in the area of the **employment policy**. The Employment and Vocational Training Strategy for 2008-2013 was adopted. Its main objective is to reduce the level of unemployment to a level comparable to that in EU countries by 2013. New employment promotion programmes have been adopted, providing subsidies to employers for training and/or hiring jobless persons. One of the programmes specifically targets jobless women. Measures to promote employment of young graduates have been stepped up. Databases on vacancies, jobseekers and training activities have been established. However, the system is not yet extended to all offices. In general, the link between the vocational training offered and labour market demand is not sufficient, and the capacity of the labour offices

to carry out labour market surveys is not strong enough. Also the capacity of regional labour offices remains limited.

In the field of **social policies**, the *social protection and social inclusion* strategy for 2008-2013 was adopted. It aims at reforming the economic assistance scheme for poor families and cash payments for groups in need, setting up community social services, protecting children and ensuring social inclusion of minorities, the disabled and the elderly. The 2008 budget provides for 1.3% of the GDP to support the poor and vulnerable. Improvements in the method of determination of the number of poor families have already resulted in an increase in the economic assistance provided.

With regard to **cultural rights**, the constitution provides for protection of the civil, economic, social and political rights of minority groups and the law forbids discriminatory treatment. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to be taught in their mother tongue. There are three recognized national minorities (Greek, *Macedonian* and Serbian-Montenegrin) and two ethno-linguistic minorities (Aromanian and Roma) in Albania. The Egyptian community is seeking the status of an ethno-cultural minority. The government has made efforts to include it in various activities for minorities and socially vulnerable groups. Development of minority policies requires up-to-date statistics on all minorities. Albania has no accurate data on minorities.

Albania joined the **Decade of Roma Inclusion** 2005-2015 in April 2008. A corresponding Action Plan has been prepared and approved by Council of Ministers. In December 2007, the first Progress Report on implementation of the National Strategy for the integration of Roma was issued, showing insufficient human and financial resources for proper implementation. The unit in charge of monitoring implementation of the Roma Strategy within the MOLSAEO has been up-graded to a technical secretariat. This will improve its capacity to monitor and coordinate measures with other institutions. One of the staff is a member of the Roma community. However, with only two people, the Secretariat is understaffed to perform its tasks. Efforts must be stepped up to coordinate the Roma Decade Action Plan with other existing strategies and provide sufficient human and financial resources to implement it.

The level of school enrolment amongst Roma children remains low, despite efforts by the government to facilitate registration and implementation of the second chance project. More needs to be done to tackle specific gender issues in the Roma community and to prepare more Roma to qualify as teachers. Registration of Roma with the authorities remains a problem. Roma continue to face very difficult living conditions and discrimination, with poor access to education, social protection, healthcare, housing and employment. Overall, there has been some limited progress in terms of measures taken by the government to improve the situation of the Roma, which remains a serious concern. What is needed now is to ensure that appropriate human and financial resources are allocated to implement these measures effectively.

II.1.2 Roma and Egyptian in Albania¹

The end of socialism marked the beginning of Roma/Egyptians' decline from relative well being to extreme poverty. Low skills, discrimination, and the collapse of many state-owned industrial and agricultural enterprises during the transition period have contributed to their mass unemployment, along with rising illiteracy rates and deteriorating health, infrastructure, and housing conditions.

Because of high unemployment in the formal labour market, Roma and Egyptians seek employment in the informal labour market. When income from informal labour is insufficient to meet daily needs, Roma and Egyptians utilise alternative poverty-coping methods, such as international migration, and, as a last resort, prostitution and trafficking of children and drugs. Forms of cognitive and structural social capital – such as trust, community solidarity, and Roma and Egyptian associations – have also emerged during transition to assist families in coping with poverty and economic insecurity in the absence of traditional forms of social organisation and government programs. However, social capital is fragile and does not pull families out of poverty.

The causes of poverty and social exclusion for Roma and Egyptians in Albania are lack of education, employment, and basic infrastructure. The symptoms of poverty and social exclusion are seen in their informal sector activities, migration, aid dependency, and prostitution, which they employ as coping strategies in their daily lives. Their overall approach is to use social capital, evident in different kinds of

¹ Roma and Egyptians in Albania: From Social Exclusion to Social Inclusion: Summary of the World Bank Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptians in Albania

relationships, exchanges and collaboration. These strategies help to sustain their livelihoods at the edges of mainstream society, but also tend to trap them in poverty and social exclusion.

II.1.3 Background to the project

The situation of Roma and marginalized groups has been chosen as a priority area of joint collaboration under the One UN programme. Further more, UNDP Albania has recognised the importance of social inclusion, specifically in Outcome 2 of the UN Development Assistance framework-UNDAF (2006-2010) which highlights the need to have “Institutions and forums in place to support people’s participation, including youth and women-with people empowered to take active part in policy formulation and decision making at all level” The project “Empowering the Vulnerable Communities in Albania: Support to the Implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions (April 2008-April 2010)” coordinates the activities of agencies working with vulnerable minorities and provides direct assistance to the poorest and most marginalized Roma communities at the local level (villages and quarters). The project assists this vulnerable population through community-level mobilization to plan and participate in the upgrading of their communities and in accessing their rights to public and social services through civic registration, prioritization and implementation of infrastructure development projects, community mediation on health, education and child protection issues and to employment security through vocational training.

At the regional level, the project empowers vulnerable ethnic minorities to partner with relevant organizations and government institutions in facilitating access to social and economic aid programmes with the registration of marginalized communities. Minority communities will further establish partnerships with local government to address urgent development priorities in the poorest areas, supporting Roma to assume property rights and receive documentation of land ownership. Community members participate in on-the-job training, vocational education and courses on education, health and child protection. A network of mediators is established to further secure the well-being of the Roma and Egyptian population.

At the central level, the project supports the Government’s work on social inclusion and improved governance, placing Roma issues on the national development agenda, and bringing minority rights in line with similar proactive courses of action taken by neighboring Eastern European states.

The project engages national UNV volunteers to facilitate community-led activities at the local level. This project has formed the basis of the recently approved joint UN programme on social inclusion.

The project is running for two years, 2008 – 2010, financed mainly by the funds from UNV Special Volunteer Fund with contributions from UNDP Country Office, One-UN and in kind contribution from UNICEF, WHO, and NGOs.

II.2 Aim, Limitation and Methodology of evaluation

II.2.1 Aim

The current report evaluates EVC Project from April 2008 to May 2010 and seeks to follow the objectives in the TOR (see **Annex 1 TOR**). The evaluation was originally designed to cover 6 project components and related activities as they are highly integrated namely civil registration, CBOs participation in local decision-making, vocational training, community mediators, support to National Roma Strategy, advocating social inclusion .

The aim of the final evaluation of the project “EVC Project in Albania” is to make an objective assessment of the relevance, performance and success of the project.

- To assess the achievement of project outputs and results as indicated in the project document.
- To assess the effects of the project on the lives of the vulnerable Roma/Egyptian communities in Tirana, Fier and Elbasan
- To identify good practices and lessons for information sharing purposes and ways to maximize positive effects for the new EVLC project
- To assess the contribution of volunteerism to achieving the project results
- To make recommendations for priorities and directions of the new project cycle

II.2.2 Limitation

The external evaluator consulted all relevant documents available (see **Annex 5 “Documents Consulted”**) and had meetings/interviews with all relevant stakeholders, CBOs, community members, representatives from Technical Secretariat for Roma at MoLSAEO, Local Governments, central/local NPOs subcontracted by UNDP, primary and secondary beneficiaries and others (see **Annex 4. “List of people interviewed”**). Interviews were open-ended, and in the case of beneficiaries, some had the character of focus group discussions since more than one respondent was present. Thus, the methodology was mainly qualitative, and throughout the report the consultant seeks to clarify whether a statement is a specific view point (and in that case whether conflicting view points were aired), or whether a statement seems to be generally held by all those sources consulted, and consequently, how the conclusions are reached.

This is an end point evaluation. The evaluator can therefore confidently conclude on the achievements of the project results. However, a proper assessment of the sustainability and impact would necessitate more time for research and would need to take place a while after project completion.

II.2.3 Used Methodology

Based on TOR-s and minimum indicators², the evaluation was based in **one step approach**. This means that the evaluation exercise does not use the control group³, so it looks at the changes that have happened in participatory communities’ life due to their participation in the EVC project.

Evaluation process was also an exercise. It provided an opportunity for learning for the EVC staff ,since it was a participatory process, which involves staff, local government, institutions of the local, regional and central governance, civil society (non-profit organizations, representatives from interest groups, as well as individuals from Roma community with an outstanding contribution in the project.

This part of the Methodology deals with the selection of sites to be visit and fields of intervention.

The approach to sampling sites follows the prescription of project document. Key features are: all regions included in the project (Tirana, Elbasani, Fieri) from which 5 subprojects (area of intervention) are sampled.

- Fieri considered as “good case” , Elbasani as “fair” and Tirana as “poor”

² Minimum indicators are the indicators set in the project document. Those indicators are used also during Mid term evaluation and represent minimum standards achieved. Usually minimum indicators are not sophisticated they are simple and can be measure through simple techniques like questionnaires, FGD observation etc

³ Evaluation methodology based on controle groups approach take in consideration both Community with and without project , to measure outputs and outcomes of the project comparing results taken from bothe communities.

- Two projects are sampled for detailed study in each site. If a site has less than two EVC projects three projects are going to be select from another site.
- The sample is proposed by the EVC team and the final decision is taken by evaluator.

Data collection features

The data collection derived from primary and secondary source of information. **As primary information** is used the rapid survey, the focus group discussion, key informants interview, site observations and in depth interviews with project beneficiaries and key stakeholders (See Annex 4 “Evaluation Tools”). Meanwhile as a **secondary source of information** is used the desk review of pre-existed information source, such as project progress report, the midterm evaluation report, databases, records by project staff, and other collected data.

Site visits

The main objective of the site visits was to validate and enrich the desk review and to generate new information that will confirm or refute the conclusions of the desk review. The work was co-coordinated by the EVC staff collaborating closely with the evaluator. EVC has undertaken to assist the evaluator to access the selected sub-projects and relevant officials and other stakeholders. The tasks for each phase of the evaluation, including visit preparation, are outlined with the selection criteria above.

Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder analysis is conducted at an early stage of preparation work for the evaluation. The analysis is refined during the process in order to obtain a range of perspectives and ensure that all key people and groups participated in evaluation process. Our broad classification of stakeholders with whom we consulted were:

- **Project Beneficiaries** – people the project aimed to reach and who have been involved in project activities to date.
- **Partners** – those who have knowledge of EVC and/or its projects and beneficiaries but who are not directly involved in project implementation. This were a wide ranging group and includes central government personnel, co-financiers, donors, NPOs and key informants relating to project beneficiaries and their livelihoods. The focus of interviews was on relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and replicability.
- **Project Management** – those who were directly involved in implementing the project including managers, staff, and sub-contracted implementers. Interview topics included both development impact and management issues.

Sampling

At the project level we took account of key elements of diversity: locations, components and types of the sub-projects and beneficiaries (women, children community, young people). An indicative objective is to conduct interviews with at least 5 beneficiaries per sub-project. Specific targets are developed once the nature of the sampled sub-projects was known. Work with beneficiaries included meetings with particular focus groups on whom the project may have had a differential impact and/or whose interests are a priority for EVC. Female headed households (*de jure* or *de facto*) and other groups of women were included in all site visits; other groups were elderly versus younger groups; livelihood systems were an important conditioning factor in some cases. Interviews with individuals and/or representatives of households were conducted in parallel.

Data processing

The information obtained through discussions and interviews is summarized using standardized forms and a system of ratings. In addition, and to provide a degree of triangulation where possible, quantitative secondary data appropriate to particular sites/projects are identified and sourced. For example by:

- examining records kept by sub-project implementers for the period since the project was completed
- inspecting statistical data for the locations or topic of the project;
- seeking independent survey data from third parties such as NPO or community organizations, researchers and other development organizations

Activities followed during the evaluation process

Activity 1. Preparation Phase

This took place during the desk review period. It was designed to prepare the way for maximum effectiveness and efficient use of time. Key tasks carried out by consultant were:

- Consultation with the EVC – checking available data and sources; drawing up a preliminary stakeholder analysis

- Establish contact with site people and stakeholders (who will be appointed by evaluator)
- Plan programme for the site visit including initial meetings with key stakeholders where feasible
- Prepare draft briefing documents, developed as part of the country and project based –develop and agree detailed work-plan and timing – especially preparatory work done on logistics, field studies and secondary data

Activity 2.

- Designing of the data collection tools (check list of questions)
- Identification of the responders

Activity 3. Site visits

- Data collection from primary sources and establishment of a data base that is assessed during analyses and report writing

Activity 4. Report writing

The report is written in chronological order using the methodology mentioned and according to work-plan. Evaluator and project staff) started with the desk review. The largest part of the work during the desk study phase was to review information available at EVC project office concerning policies and strategies related to each evaluation's topic. Project documents, subprojects documents and temporary reports, (see Annex 2 "Bibliography and lists of the documents consulted", were the documentary sources reviewed for each of the intervention area. Each topic was evaluated in two ways: Firstly, all documents that are specific to each topic (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, effects etc) are reviewed to assess consistency and complementary with the country strategy and programme. Evaluation reports produced by the EVC constitute a specific resource for the evaluation. Project- and specific documents are examined as part of the project review process. Secondly, the evaluator used to assess through Interviews and meetings Interviews with EVC project staff and stakeholders. These are considered an important part of the desk study methodology. Many are done on an *ad hoc* basis to pursue specific lines of enquiry about policies, strategies and projects. There were, in addition, a variety of structured meetings to explore specific topics.

Table 2. **Summary of interviews during Desk Review**

| Evaluation framework topics | Type of interview and participants |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Policy and General | EVC project officer Senior management team Roma Secretariat of MOLSAEO |
| Project influence | Key Informant interviews with stakeholders in site-based.; telephone and email interviews with stakeholders |
| Project impact | Interviews with stakeholder and beneficiaries |
| Resource allocation | EVC project officer Senior management team |
| Policy & strategy development | Focus group discussion with contributors from all three regions (local government representatives) |
| Partnerships | Questionnaire survey among a sample of all staff |
| Project cycle management | Key Informant interviews with staff |
| Monitoring & evaluation | Key Informant interviews with staff |
| Voluntarism | National UNV volunteers, CBO-s and representatives from Roma community |

Outline work-plan.

Site visits in Fieri, Elbasani, Tirana (see Annex 3 "List of people met")

Around 15 interviews in each site structured interviews and half structured interviews to be conducted with the direct and indirect project beneficiaries.

3 focus group discussion (in each site) with family members and parents of the young beneficiaries and non beneficiaries as well as 5 young beneficiaries of vocational training courses.

Interviewing and meetings with 5 other interested in the project such as Local Government representatives and local authorities, etc.

II.3 Project description

II.3.1 Short description of the EVC project (approach, areas of intervention, location, history, duration, beneficiaries, budget)

The Government of Albania has recognized the need to integrate vulnerable ethnic minorities and in 2003 the Council of Ministers approved the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions. The situation of Roma and marginalized groups has been chosen as a priority area of joint collaboration under the One UN initiative.

The EVC project contributes to the social integration of vulnerable minorities. It used to assist the poorest and the most marginalized minority communities at the local level by facilitating their access to social services, promoting participatory planning in marginalized communities, developing local infrastructure, enhancing Roma and Egyptians employability and working in partnership with local government and civil society.

In order to address poverty and vulnerability of Roma and Egyptian, UNDP/UNV launched the EVC project, which is focused in **6 areas**:

1. Enhance Access to Social Services through Civil Registration;
2. Support Community Participation to Address Development Priorities;
3. Develop Capacities and Employable Skills
4. Mobilize Community Volunteer Health, Education and Child Protection Mediators;
5. Promote Implementation of the National Roma Strategy;
6. Advocacy on minority issues and social inclusion

Duration of the project is 24 months (April 2008 - May 2010)

The initial planned budget to implement the project activities was: \$ 626,500 of which US\$ 526,500 is UNV SVF fund and US\$ 100,000 is UNDP funding. Further the project received recently an additional US\$ 38,400 from the One UN Coherence Fund and another US\$ 107,791 from UNDP. The actual total project budget has been 772,691. Further there was parallel funding from local governments, REC and Terre des Hommes.

Table 3. **Project budget according to founders and years**

| | Total budget Allocation | Expenditure 2008 | Expenditure 2009 | Expenditure/Commitment 2010 | Balance |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 00056090 (UNV) | 526,500 | 113,066.45 | 347,439.57 | 65,993.98 | 0 |
| 00061205 (UNDP) | 246,191 | 66,439.71 | 90,412.67 | 89,339.00 | -0.38 |
| TOTs | 772,691 | 179,506.16 | 437,852.24 | 155,332.98 | |

The estimated cost of the project is 772691 USD, from the 526,500 USD funded by UNV SVF Fund and 100,000 USD UNDP Fund, 38,400 funded by UN resident Coordinators Fund.

The cost of the infrastructure projects is shared between EVC project and local government in 80%:20%, respectively.

Locations selected: Tirana Municipality, Elbasan Municipality, and Fier Regions

Current status of the project: Completed

There are different **beneficiaries for each project component**:

- It is estimated that more than 15,000 Roma people have directly benefit from the project activities such as registration, infrastructure development, training and employment.
- The direct beneficiaries are CBO formation, which have been responsible for planning and implementation of infrastructure projects.
- Women and young people from Roma communities have participated actively in project implementation.
- Local Government unites have also benefit from a strengthened minority community as well as from the improved capacities within Roma.
- At national level the Roma Secretariat at the MOLSAEO

II.3.2 Description of the project overall objectives, activities and expected results

The goal of the project is to increase the access of vulnerable Roma and Egyptians to public and social services while promoting their social inclusion and implementation of National Roma Strategy through coordinating the activities of agencies working with vulnerable minorities and provide direct assistance to the poorest and most marginalized Roma communities at the local level (villages and quarters).

Project Activities: The project implements activities based on 6 key interventions:

7. Enhance Access to Social Services through civil registration; Providing awareness raising and assistance to communities settled within a particular commune or municipality in three regions in receiving legal documentation (i.e., birth, residence, unemployment, marriage and divorce certificates, personal identification cards, , etc.) needed to access social and economic assistance, health care, education, employment opportunities and political representation.
8. Support Community Participation to address development priorities. Supporting the creation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to lead the processes of identifying and implementing infrastructure projects in their communities.
9. Develop Capacities and Employable Skills; in cooperation with Regional Employment Offices, the National Employment Service (NES), and other vocational training agencies organizing vocational training for Roma and Egyptian individuals from the selected areas as well as providing training on awareness raising for both public employment offices and community members.
10. Mobilize Volunteer Community Mediators in the areas of Health, Education and Child Protection; Establishing a network of Roma volunteer health, education and child protection and police mediators to mediate between the local authorities and communities.
11. Promote Implementation of the National Roma Strategy; Providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and other government agencies concerned in supporting the action plan for the implementation of the national Roma strategy.
12. Advocacy on minority issues and social inclusion: Improving the awareness and attitude of the general public about disadvantaged minority groups by supporting several activities that promote a sense of multiculturalism within the country.

Expected results:

- 220 Family members in these communities registered and accessing basic services that they are entitled to.
- 10 (reduced from 30 to 10 following the recommendation stated at the Mid-term evaluation report, at page 25)
- Community Based Organizations formed and 9 infrastructure projects completed in Roma and Egyptian communities in Tirana, Elbasan, and Fier Regions.
- 30 trained child protection, education and health mediators liaising between communities and local administrations to improve community members' access to these social services.
- 60 community members, including women and youth, completed vocational training courses in order assist their access to the labour market, 50% of them are women).
- Support provided to the implementation of the national Roma strategy and enhanced good governance at local and national government levels.
- 3 volunteer Roma regional Committees established

II.3.3 Short description of the management structure of the EVC project

The project is implemented by UNDP under the DEX (direct execution modality). The UNV budget is managed under UNV10 business unit. The project is placed under UNDP Albanian's Cross-Cutting Cluster, which constitutes a platform for project targeting social inclusion, participation, governance, decentralization, civil society, gender, and income generation at local level.

A Project Management Board is established to oversee the overall implementation of the project activities. It provides strategic guidance and oversees mid-term and final evaluations. It is composed of the UNDP Deputy Country Director, representative of Technical Secretariat for Roma at MoLSAEO, the Project Manager, the UNV Programme Officer and the Programme Analyst of UNDP.

Project Advisory Committee (often referred to as Project Steering Committee) is established to coordinate activities under the project and allow for exchange of experiences among different project partners. It is composed of representatives from the Government, UNDP, UNV, Terre des Hommes, Tirana Legal Aid Services, Spanish Red Cross, Albanian Red Cross, the Regional Environmental Center and representatives of vulnerable minority groups.

- **An International Project Manager** worked for the period (April 2008 – April 2009); The Project Manager used to supervise and monitor the implementation of the project and was responsible for design, planning and implementation of project components including promotion of voluntarism as a sustainable approach for local development resource administration. The second year of the project this position became a national one.
- **A National Capacity Development Officer** was recruited initially to plan activities related to capacity building of stakeholders of the national and regional level. He worked closely with counterparts at the MoLSAEO and other key stakeholders including public and non public agencies. He was responsible for administering activities related to vocational training, government capacity development, and mediators. He worked in this position for one year. Later on he took over the duties and responsibilities of the **Project manager**. The national capacity officer's function changed to an **international UNV intern position as Capacity Development Assistant** focusing on documenting and reporting project activities as well as promoting the values of volunteerism and raising awareness of the benefits of civic engagement.
- **1 national UNV administrative project assistant** provided administrative, operational and financial support to all staff.
- **3 national UNV volunteer local community development officers (LCDO)**; are hosted by partnering local authority at municipal or qark level assigned to each of region (Tirana, Fieri, Elbasani). They developed the annual and quarterly work-plans for implementing the project activities in each area in close partnership with local government, local NPO-s and key stakeholders.
- **3 national UNV volunteer Community Exchange Workers (CEW)** worked closely with the LCDOs in each region. Being from the respective communities, they played a key role in facilitating the recognition and integration of the communities into project activities. They facilitated community-led activities and provided operational support to LCDOs.
- **An engineer**, on SSA contract is recruited since November 2008 to support the project work specially dealing with public works in infrastructure including, planning, design and implementation.

II.3.4 Overview of the implementation partners

Tirana Legal Aid Service (TLAS) a Local Non-profit organization specialized in providing legal aid to vulnerable groups has been contracted to support the project components on civil registration, while Terres des Hommes (TdH), and Red Cross, have been contributing with the training of education, child protection and health mediators. In addition, TLAS, and TdH have committed parallel funding, for some of the joint activities involving civil registration and community mediators respectively.

Government of Albania has a very important role in project implementation, with regard to infrastructure development, financial as well as in kind contribution.

The MoLSAEO through its Technical Secretariat for Roma as well as local governments in the regions of Tirana, Fier and Elbasan have a key role in project implementation, particularly on two components, namely facilitating implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and community participation in implementing local priorities.

Other Regional public institutions such as Labour office, Vocational Training Centers have been collaborating with the the project local staff in implementation of training activities, ensuring the adaption of services according to the participants needs.

II.4 Evaluation results

II.4.1 Relevance of the project

- *Relevance of the project design with the policy and institutional framework*

Protection of minorities is considered as one of the fundamental criteria for EU accession (with a special focus on exclusion and poverty of Roma people). The meeting of these criteria by candidate countries is monitored by European Commission. The Albanian Government, aspiring for membership in the EU has worked to meet the accession criteria.

The Government of Albania has recognized the need to integrate vulnerable ethnic minorities and in 2003 the Council of Ministers approved the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions which in 2009 has been completed with the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion. An inter-ministerial governmental committee was created to oversee the implementation of all necessary measures in the area of education, employment, health, housing cultural heritage, and equally protection.

In order to guarantee the rights and fundamental freedom of the minorities, the Albanian Government has also adopt a series of laws and by-laws, which provide not only the recognition and protection of the rights of minority but also taking of concrete measures for their integration and involvement in a normal public life.

The Roma strategy and its Decade Action Plan envisage steps to be taken and relevant instruments for their realisation. It also defines institutions in charge of the implementation of actions and budget needed for putting these objectives into practice. In this framework, the EVC project was hailed as a positive step by all actors (state, local government, civil society) and by Roma minority itself. The participation of Roma community in development of the project components and activities is of a paramount importance for the Roma communities in there regions, because they felt included and appreciated and proved that the cooperation between actors State-Community-Donors is indispensable for the achievement of effective results that benefit all parties.

The EVC project is based on a proper policy document, the Strategy. The project itself provide a quite clear and comprehensive picture of project objectives, components and approaches. It is structured into the following six main components/objectives:

- Enhance Access to Social Services through Civil Registration;
- Support Community Participation to Address Development Priorities;
- Develop Capacities and Employable Skills
- Mobilize Community Volunteer Health, Education and Child Protection Mediators; Promote Implementation of the National Roma Strategy;
- Advocacy on minority issues and social inclusion

Looking at its structure the project is very comprehensive, adding to it the specific assistance provided by the TLAS, TdH, UNV it tackles most of the issues and institutions related to policy formulation, public services (including social services and civil registration) , juridical institutions (courts) and local governance

- *Relevance of the project design with the social and economic situation of Roma population*

Roma and Egyptians have fewer opportunities for formal employment than the majority population. They increasingly rely on income sources, such as casual work and self-employment, which are in decline because of increased competition and offer few prospects for improving living standards. An average of 46 percent of their decreasing household income comes from casual work or self-employment. In comparison with the majority of the population, the percentage of the “very poor” group of households among Roma and Egyptians is apparently much higher, respectively 75 percent and 70 percent, while for the majority population, it is 28.8 percent. These communities are distinguished by two extremes, the 80 percent defined as the “very poor” and “poor” households, and a 5 percent minority in relatively good financial shape. Very poor and poor families face higher levels of social exclusion, because they are less capable of affording daily needs, and less likely to participate in processes that affect their individual livelihoods, such as employment and education.

The EVC project proposes a two-folded development model involving, **alleviation of the poverty**, and **creation of an inclusive environment** for Roma and Egyptians. This is reflected particularly in the

employability component of the EVC Project, where in addition to supporting Roma and Egyptians for attending vocational training courses and equipping them with the necessary tools, assistance has been offered to public Vocational Training Centers and Regional Employment Offices to make their services more inclusive towards vulnerable Roma and Egyptian communities.

Based on information provided, prior to the EVC Project the respective staffs of public vocational training centers and employment offices, perceived Roma/Egyptian individuals as a not-reachable target. Following EVC Project support in professional development, 85 Roma and Egyptian individuals received vocational courses at public vocational training centers (i.e. tailoring, hairdresser, plumber, tile-worker), have been provided with relevant tools and are registered with employment offices as qualified job-seekers. Of the 85 Roma and Egyptian trainees, 25 have found part-time jobs, 6 are selected to benefit from a pilot *on the job training*, leading to long term employment, while others are occasionally working as self-employed.

In addition, EVC Project through its civil registration support, has assisted over 210 Roma/Egyptian individuals to benefit birth registration, transfer of residency, child custody as well as other types of documentation necessary to access various social protection schemes. Following civil registration and equipment with necessary documentation, Roma/Egyptians individuals benefited economic aid, social housing, enrolment in school, health care, unemployment benefit etc. In providing such assistance EVC Project has further contributed to alleviation of poverty and minimization of social exclusion for Roma/Egyptian families without or insufficient incomes.

The EVC project has shown to be a successful approach to facilitate the recognition and integration of minorities into mainstream society through legitimizing their social status (registration with relevant authorities) and cooperating with stakeholders to raise awareness on equal opportunity rights.

The project is also relevant due to the involvement of UNV volunteers who were instrumental in helping Roma/Egyptian communities understanding the concept of voluntary action and self-help.

II.4.2 Effectiveness of the project

In applying EVC subprojects under six components, each of the subproject implemented, sets disaggregated objectives which were in accordance with the overall goal of the EVC project . for social integration of vulnerable Roma and Egyptian communities in three areas.

The evaluation report describes the desegregation and achievement objectives that EVC projects have set. (Data on the extent to which the sub projects have met their objectives are included in this report part in other chapters.)

Reference to the overall objectives, indicates that the EVC project management framework has provided direct and indirect benefits for Roma/Egyptian communities in three regions. Various methodologies involving awareness campaigns, (leaflets, "street law campaigns"), training and capacity development, as well as intervention in infrastructure through subprojects, have been utilized to attain community empowerment. Although each methodology is unique, they all have been based on a similar approach, that is, participation and voluntary-engagement of community members and cooperation with Local Government .

Both community participation and cooperation with local governments have contributed greatly to the achievement of the project objectives. However, in few occasions due to lack of cooperation between central and local government or proper coordination among various departments of the local government itself, there have been unexpected delays or obstacles primarily in the implementation of infrastructure development priorities identified by CBOs and agreed for implementation. That has been the case in Tirana with two infrastructure projects, namely water supply in Laprake, where the non-cooperation between Water Management Enterprise (subordinated to Ministry of Transport and Territory) and Municipality of Tirana delayed with several months the supply with water, of the newly constructed system, financed by EVC Project under the Agreement with Municipality. Only following negotiations that Project staff, (supported also by Programme Analyst) undertook, the Water Management Enterprise agreed to take the necessary measures for increasing the influx and thus supplying with water the 60 families newly connected to the system. Further, as a result of non-coordination between the "Commission for Return and Compensation of Properties" (also subordinated to Ministry of Transport and Territory) and the Municipality of Tirana, the construction of the Social Center identified as a need by Selita community was not possible to continue, because among others the Municipality's ownership on land was being questioned. Under these circumstances EVC Project re-started negotiations with Municipality, for indentifying another appropriate construction site. Several months of negotiations and coordination efforts were made, involving three different Municipality's departments (Social Services, Planning and Programming as well as that of Contract

Management), until finally the three departments came up with a common understanding for constructing the Social Center in a newly constructed block of social houses where a considerable number of Roma and Egyptians families, yet not from Selita, are to be benefit.

As it was explained, while the lack of cooperation and coordination between and among central and local governments have brought about delays or other feasibility obstacles in implementation of infrastructure projects, the efforts put forward by the EVC project with support of programme staff and always lead to resolving of problematic situations.

The management of the EVC project has taken into consideration the user/beneficiaries involvement. The evaluation underlines that the management approaches applied to EVC enables stakeholders' participation in and monitoring of project risks and progress.

More concretely, CBO members have taken an active part in addressing the challenges that EVC Project encountered for instance during implementation of the infrastructure projects considered as first priority in respective areas. To illustrate such community involvement, serves the example of the water supply in Laprake, where CBO members selected a community representative to take part actively during the negotiations that EVC Project made with the Water Management Enterprise, for bringing water to the Roma and Egyptian families benefiting from the installation of pipes.

Despite the fact that the first priority identified by CBOs in Selita (construction of a Social Center) was transferred in another area, where they are less likely to benefit directly, CBO members of Selita took part actively in referring to the municipality their second priority, related to rehabilitation of sewage and road infrastructure. Although this infrastructure intervention was not among the ones agreed for co-financing by EVC Project and Municipality due to its high cost, the latter under the persistent request of CBO members, took measures for fully financing the rehabilitation with sewage and roads of the area in block 79 in Selite.

The project has affected the infrastructure of the areas, improving living conditions of Roma families. Direct evidence of achievements includes the tangible results which by and large tally with the plans according to the Log frames provided by EVC project.

Box 1.

EVC has constructed secondary infrastructure:

1. Construction of water supply in Lapraka, Tirana (completed)– following long-lasting negotiations of EVC Project with Water Management Enterprise, and Municipality of Tirana, access to water is made possible for 60 families newly connected to the system;
2. Construction of Social centre Shkoza, Tirana (works expected to finalize by 30 July)– although far from the Selita Community, the Center is situated within a complex of 400 social houses/apartments, of which around 80 Roma/Egyptian families (20 percent of the total) are expected to benefit and thus have access to the services of social center. The Social Center will benefit also the 50 Roma families settled in a nearby area long the river.constructed in newly assigned area of Shkoze
3. Construction of Kindergarten in Driza, Fier (completed)- Over 30Roma children receive pre-school education services in the kindergarten. A Roma teacher assistant has also been employed at the kindergarten by Regional Education Directorate.
4. Construction of Community centre in Mbrostar, Fier (completed)- 20 Roma youngsters are attendign literacy and supplementation courses organized at the Center by Regional Education Directorate. Commune has agreed with Regional Health Directorate for employing a nurse who will be coming regularly to the center to provide health assistance to Roma families.;
5. Preparation of urban study for Driza, Fier(completed)- An urban study has been prepared for the Driza village which clearly defines the future infrastructure development of the area. The study has given particular attention to ; 1) orientation of investments for promoting integration by creating spaces for non-Roma to become resident in the village, and thus making it a more inclusive and desegregated area; and 2) creation of employment opportunities for Roma in the area of sport and culture by suggesting construction of a horse raising resort, which fits well also with the horse-breeding talent of Roma
6. Construction of Sewage system in Rrapishta, Elbasan (completed): 100 Roma families have connected to the newly constructed sewage system. With the completion of sewage channelization, there strong smell of septic holes has gone, thus improving the air quality and hygiene in the neighborhood.
7. Cleanning and systematization of Manazdere river in Rrapishta, Elbasan (completed)– The river passing through Roma neighborhood, has been systematized and cleaned, from inert materials, as well as garbage that used to be thrown in it, as there no waste bins and no cleaning service in the area. With installment of several waste bins and consequent awareness raising in the community for keeping the river clean, the the municipal cleaning service has been extended to the quarter.

8. Elbasan: reconstruction of Manazdere Bridge- (completed); the manazdere river has been widened and reconstructed to increase the safety crossing of the rivers as well as to allow easier circulation of construction machines in the Roma neighborhood. The improvement in circulation of heavy construction trucks has also contributed to reducing the construction costs in the area.

- Effectiveness of EVC activities related to Civil registration

1. 287 Roma and Egyptian unregistered individuals have been assisted with civil registration, of whom 210 were successfully registered with relevant authorities and thus benefiting citizen rights (in case of birth registration) or accessing various social services,(in case of other types of registration), such as economic aid, unemployment benefit, free vocational trainings etc. The assistance provided for civil registration included registration of different legal facts such as birth, transfer of residency, marriage, divorce, child custody, as well as getting the status of homeless, unemployed or preparing documentation for pension benefits.
2. 3 trainings to Roma/Egyptian CBOs involving 60 individuals have been organized to increase their understanding on importance and procedures of civil registration.
3. Over 100 community members from all three regions have been familiarized with procedures and documentation required to benefit social services such as housing, economic aid, as well as received knowledge on rights and responsibilities concerning education, health and child protection.

- EVC activities related to Community mobilization

1. 11 Community based organizations (CBOs) with approximately 117 members have been established and trained on needs prioritization and community planning, voluntarism and self-help, while have been involved in specialized workshops on education, health, child protection and social care
 - a. CBO-s in Tirana involving 45 individuals of whom 32 females (1 of 4 CBO-s is fully composed of females).
 - b. CBO-s in Elbasan involving 22 individuals of whom 15 females;
 - c. CBO-s in Fier involving 50 individuals of whom 10 females (1 of 4 CBOs is fully composed of females);
2. 9 infrastructure have been identified by CBOs and agreed with respective local governments to be implemented in all three regions. Of these, parallel funding of 20 percent of project cost, has been provided by LGs for 8 projects (i.e. kindergarten, community center, urban study, sewage, river systematization, bridge reconstruction, social center, water supply), while the 9th (reconstruction of kindergarten in Lapraka) project is fully financed by municipality of Tirana
3. 3 networks of community mediators involving 46 Roma/Egyptians of whom 20 females received trainings in conflict resolution and mediation related to health, education and child protection issues and are voluntarily acting as focal points for Roma in their communities. All mediators have been referred to various partner organizations and institutions for potential involvement/employment in projects targeting vulnerable communities. Project has regularly kept all community mediators informed about various, training, grant and employment opportunities.

- EVC activities related to Develop Capacities and Employable Skills

1. 85 Roma and Egyptians (of whom 28 males and 57 females) from Tirana, Fier and Elbasan have been assisted to attend various vocational trainings such as tailor, hairdresser, plumber, tile worker, as well as solar-panel repair.
2. All trainees at the completion of the course have been equipped with necessary tools in order to practice the newly gained profession. Monitoring reports indicate that 25 trainees have found part-time jobs, while others are occasionally working as self-employed. Team in collaboration with respective employment offices in the regions has recently assisted 6 trained Roma/Egyptian individuals (2 in each region) to benefit from the promotion of employment programmes related to on the job training, leading to long-term employment.

- Effectiveness of EVC activities related to capacity building

1. The EVC project assisted Roma Secretariat of MOLSAEO and other line Ministries to develop National Plan for Decade of Roma Inclusion. It also helped the Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan through the defined indicators and using the designed methodology for collecting data and information.

2. 30 officials from the court administration of Fier and Elbasan received trainings on mainstreaming minority issues and the importance of Roma's civil registration;
3. Following trainings (in CBO Formation and Functioning as well as in Identification and Prioritization of Community Needs), all CBO-s were involved regularly and voluntarily in identification of community needs and preparation of Community Development Plans.
4. 3 trainings to CBOs and 12 "street law campaigns" (reaching over 120 individuals of whom more than half were females) have been organized in three regions to increase the community's awareness and understanding of the importance and procedures of civil registration

It was evident during this evaluation exercise that the institutions like Labor office, Vocational training Centers, Civil registration offices have achieved significant milestones towards effectively performing their functions towards difficult cases. This is attributable to the effectiveness of the project staff, team efforts, clear goals, determination to succeed, and the support received from the central institutions (MoLSAEO, Municipalities),

- Effectiveness of EVC project related to long term employment of individuals

Despite the fact that there were 85 Roma and Egyptian received vocational trainings and equipped with necessary tools, only 25 of them have found part-time jobs, 6 individuals would benefit from the promotion of employment programmes issued by Labour offices in each Region. There were evident signs of prejudices that private companies, as well as staff of employment offices and vocational training centers have against vulnerable Roma/Egyptian individuals, making difficult integration of Roma into the labor market.

However, employment of the trainees is not an outcome resulting directly from the project activities, but rather an impact entirely depending on the relation between the employee candidate and the potential employer. Yet, project has not limited its efforts, only on providing vocational trainings and equipping them with necessary tools, but also in helping trainees in their efforts of job-searching. Thus, following courses, all Roma/Egyptian graduates were involved in workshops on career advice as well as study visits to potential employers. Further, in order to improve employment services towards Roma/Egyptian communities, workshops have been organized for respective staff of vocational training centers and employment offices.

In so doing EVC Project has proven effective in increasing employment skills of Roma, facilitating their job-search as well as increasing capacities of relevant public authorities to extend and improve their services towards vulnerable communities.

II.4.3 Efficiency

The EVC project has identified the most relevant areas and adequate means for the realisation of the activities of the project. Fier, Elbasan and Tirana have a big number of Roma population which helps in reaching a high number of beneficiaries. The activities have been implemented in an efficient manner and the staff recruited to work with Community has a high level of competence and motivation. Relying on the staff professionalism, EVC Project has successfully overcome obstacles and challenging situations, especially in relation to public institutions, such as Local government (Tirana case) and some public agencies (employment office).

The evaluator contacted a sample of stakeholders to seek their insights on efficiency actions based on their role in the project. Two kinds of stakeholders, were sampled, involving on the one hand public institutions, such as local government, and labor offices, while on the other hand, civil society and international partner organizations. Information provided by public authorities and civil society considers the EVC project effective, due to its responsiveness to the local needs that the community itself prioritized. Further, partners assess that Project activities have been designed to respond to both, individual needs (i.e. being registered, or acquiring a profession) as well as to commonly shared priorities (i.e. improving basic infrastructure).

However, while civil society measured efficiency based on both tangible and intangible results, for Public institutions efficiency simply relates to cost per beneficiary, and less or not at all to *awareness raising and changing of attitudes* of the community. This is evident in the answers provided by representatives of vocational trainings centers, who primarily weight the financial support that project provided for training the Roma beneficiaries, and not so much the changing of mentality in Roma community about benefits of attending vocational trainings and their integration in labour market.

Box 2

When asked whether they would continue to support the young Roma with provision of special designed courses even after the project has finished, the Representatives of Vocational Centers in Elbasan and Fier replied:

The organisation of such courses without the support of a project or NGO is very difficult because the success depends not just in being able to offer a vocational course but to design a special one that addresses their special needs and educational level (as the standard course offers are not always suitable for young Roma considering their massive gaps in educational attainment). Furthermore the attendance of the course by the young Roma for 3 to 4 months would require financial support that the Centre cannot provide for the time being.

Rudina- explained the Director of Vocational School in Elbasan, has supervised and supported the girls that attended the tailoring course twice a day for about 4 months in order to make sure the frequentation would be satisfactory. The centre can not afford this activity due to lack of staff and funds

In general, the evaluation shows that the selected areas to be served by EVC project have a high percentage or a large number of Roma families who are in need of such services as indicated by high levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, or other need-related indicators, including a high percentage of young people to be served by the program of vocational training.

II.4.4 Effects of the EVC project

Two overall effects can be emphasized:

1. Roma people understand that their participation in continuous dialogue and activities as well as in defining priorities is important to change their life. We can mentioned as a good example, the case of Manazdere community which participate not only in defining priorities through an open process and continues dialogue but also in **decision making around the local budget process – formulation and execution in Elbasani Municipality.**

2. Roma people as direct beneficiaries of the EVC project inspire others (Roma community members) to participate

Other positive effects for the Roma community as well as secondary beneficiaries include:

1. Benefits from access to vocational training have improved their life and the life of their families due to the employment or self-employment.
2. Many individuals from Roma community have obtain new skills and/or a sustainable income from the EVC activities performed
3. Community members but also many others from the neighborhood will be able to use improved infrastructure.
4. There is a synergy in the EVC projects ensured by involvement of UNDP, Local government, Roma CBOs in three regions, creating a sense of community , common understanding for difficult issues, exchanging experience for problems solving and creating networks for lobbying.
5. The business community in and around EVC project has benefited from reconstruction activities
6. EVC has made its premises available for other activities of the Roma Community own initiatives, including meeting to elect community representatives
7. The Local government has been assisted by EVC in its endeavor to facilitate Roma Community participation in the setting local priorities . EVC has particularly mediated the contact between the municipality and the Roma community's representatives.

AS conclusion of the evaluation- the Roma families have realised that by improving their livelihood and professional skills, by increasing educational opportunities of their children and by integrating them in early childhood education they help themselves breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion.

II.4.5 Participation

Roma community members are encouraged to participate in all phases of the EVC project and are provided full access to project information. They are also responsible and accountable for the development and implementation of a number of project activities through established CBO-s.

Box 3

The primary goal of the Citizen Participation was to provide all members of our community specially women and young people with adequate opportunities to participate in the defining of priorities and problems of the community. The second is to involve as much as we can the community members in the implementation of the project activities

Durim Tahiri Coordinator of the CBO in Fieri

The primary goal of the citizen participation was to provide all members of the community especially women and young people with adequate opportunities to participate in the defining of priorities and problems of the community. The second is to involve as much as possible the community members in the implementation of the project activities.

There are 9 infrastructure development projects, identified by CBOs and agreed with local governments for co-financing, of which 7 have been completed while 2 others are to be finalized by June 2010. The types of infrastructure projects implemented include kindergarten, community centres, sewage, water supply, urban study, bridge reconstruction, and river systematization and cleaning. All these priorities are articulated by community members involving both men and women. The priority defining process involved a lot of people and several weeks of hard work. Informational meetings were held with support and assistance provided by the project staff.

The achieved outcome of the EVC project, encourage citizens to see benefits of an active participation and civic engagement in the process of consultations that are focused and goal-oriented towards solving community problems .

Despite the results achieved in participation, in each of these, community participation was to be critical. As one of the community members met in Elbasan stated, their expectations were higher.

Box 4

"The road to Roma community development starts with broad participation by all segments of the society. This may include, among others, local business, which in this case have been indifferent, citizens from the neighborhood including non Roma who are direct beneficiaries of the project. This means that we have to put more efforts for community awareness and should involve others (from majority population) addressing our concerns "

Enver Mustafai, chief of Romanosezi, a Roma NPO in Elbasan

II.4.6 Voluntarism

At the regional level, the project empowers vulnerable ethnic minorities to partner with relevant organizations and government institutions in facilitating access to social and economic aid programmes with the registration of marginalized communities. Minority communities establish partnerships with local government to address urgent development priorities in the poorest areas.

The ethnic minority group members, targeting women and youth of this community, participate in on-the-job training and vocational education, partaking in professional courses on construction, health care and protection. A network of health, education and child protection mediators and community counseling groups are established to further secure the well-being of the Roma and Egyptian population and to improve their social integration with neighboring "majority" communities.

With regard the voluntarism, the project has contribute in accomplish a long-term social goal. Evaluation results indicate that project had a high capacity to communicate volunteer opportunities and recognize volunteers.

An increased engagement of the community is noted due to the involvement of national UNV volunteers to facilitate community-led activities. Especially the community exchange workers are Roma and Egyptian representatives from the community having strong impact with regard to trust, respect and engagement of the communities. This is shown by approximately 110 community members mobilized through CBOs. They all are regularly involved in project activities, such as helping with civil registration, prioritizing infrastructure projects, raising awareness on different subjects and attending vocational trainings, receiving training and acting as community mediators, as well as organizing and participating in campaigns on social inclusion. In addition, the project selected 15 volunteers (high school or university students of Roma/Egyptian ethnicity) who together with other 30 CBOs members received trainings on education, health and child protection mediators and organized campaign in their respective communities. The project also assisted all of their Roma/Egyptian volunteers in liaising with other volunteers from majority (Albanians) groups participating together in mainstream campaigns i.e. cleaning beaches in Fier, or Volunteering for our Planet organized in all three regions. In total the project counted at least 125 Roma/Egyptian volunteers (this may be slightly more) being involved in the project activities.

Also UNV volunteers were instrumental in bridging the gap between Roma/Egyptian communities and local government. The added value of having UNV volunteers in the project was the strong focus on self-help and voluntary actions as a mean for social mobilization and cohesion. It also created great opportunities for the Roma/Egyptian UNV CEW to gain experience in a broad range of activities and become promoters of volunteerism in their communities.

II.4.7 Sustainability

At this point in time, before the actual closing of the current EVC project, it is of course too early to assess the actual sustainability of the activities. We attempt to predict the likely sustainability taking into account the prerequisites, UNDP contribution and the possible scenarios based on the below activities with an long term impact.

The maintaining of community feeling and keeping alive the participatory spirit. of the communities is a prerequisite for the sustainability of the project. Through the very thorough preparation process, EVC staff has done its best to secure that the Roma Community members had all available information about the project activities, in an appropriate manner, raising mostly realistic expectations. Participation in the CBOs for prioritization of needs which were in fact addressed in partnership with Local government, as well as the organizations of the self-help activities, have contributed to strengthening the participatory spirit in the communities.

The commitment of Local Government to hear the Community voice is the second prerequisite. Since the start of the project EVC staff has worked closely with the local government and other actors in order to ensure that they can play their part in the sustainability of project. EVC has sustained continuous dialogue in order to increase understanding of authorities and communities as well as to minimize any conflicts within communities and between communities and public authorities responsible for education, health, child protection, and other social services. Further, Project funding of those infrastructure projects identified by community, has been a strong incentive for the local government in sustaining participatory planning and community involvement in decision-making.

The capacities of central and local authorities to effectively implement policy measures targeting vulnerable communities. . Project supported the preparation of the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma inclusion, and has been assisting Technical Secretariat for Roma at MoLSAEO to coordinate and monitor implementation of the Strategy for Roma. Further assistance has been provided to Technical Secretariat for Roma to establish and consolidate the Regional Coordination Committees for Social Services, responsible inter alia for coordinating implementation of National Action Plan for Roma at local level. In so doing Project has put efforts to build capacities of central and local public authorities in designing, implementing and monitoring measures targeting vulnerable communities.

EVC Project has contributed to recognition of Roma culture as an integral part of the national cultural heritage which deserves, support of the relevant public authorities. Thus in partnership with MoLSAEO,

MoCTYS and Municipality of Tirana the organization Roma cultural fair, as well as the Roma cultural week has turned out in an annual traditions of public authorities to commemorate the 8 April, the international Roma Day. Part of the cultural festivities is the handicraft fair where more than 10 Roma craftsmen throughout the country come annually to present and market their works. A Brochure with Roma craftsmen works have been also produced. Through such support, Project has paved the road to a more inclusive attitude on institutions and the public towards vulnerable and culturally-diverse communities.

Sustainability is also partly guaranteed through the approved follow-up joint programme on Empowering Vulnerable Local Communities. This is a three-year program which will be implemented in four regions including Tirana, Fier, Elbasan and Durrës. The program groups activities in three major objectives, which involve; enhancing community participation in local decision-making; assisting access to social services and rights, as well as increasing institutional capacities of public authorities and civil society for effective implementation of measures targeting vulnerable communities. Project is primarily based on the successful examples and lessons learned of the ending EVC Project and is expected to take the necessary actions for enriching the successful examples and ensuring their sustainability.

To sum up, the evaluation mission could safely conclude that EVC project achieved its objectives:

Remarkably with regard to:

- Support Community participation to address Development priorities
- Develop Capacities and employment skills
- Mobilize Community Volunteer Health, Education and Police mediators
- Advocacy on minority issues and social inclusion
- Promote Minority issues and Implement National Roma Strategy

Unremarkably with regard to:

- Enhance social Inclusion and Access of minorities to social services

II.5 Conclusions

II.5.1 General conclusions⁴

This project is designed based on an exercise of participation of a great number of stakeholders in the regions where it is developed, considering the wide participation of Roma/Egyptian community as the fundamental factor in order to increase the validity of this project and its plan of actions, being in line with the social and economic situation of the Roma Community.

Also, the EVC intends to promote cooperation amongst different stakeholders like central and local government, civil society as well as community itself, to take decisions which are oriented towards region's needs and priorities.

The EVC project was a very positive learning experience for all involved. This includes the realisation that it's easier to motivate people by making them participate in addressing their concerns.

EVC project have had clear objectives and outcomes. This is true for management staff as well as for all stakeholders involved in the project implementation.

The project team has a high level of competence and motivation. The participation of the representatives from Roma/Egyptian communities has significantly impacted on the trustfully relationship established between management staff and community itself.

The EVC project has achieved its main goal in creating a development model for poverty reduction of vulnerable communities and creating a socially inclusive environment both at community level as well as in relation to public and social services.

II.5.2 Specific Conclusion

The EVC project is in relevance with the main policy document "The national strategy for improving Roma living conditions" The project was hailed as a positive step in addressing Roma real concerns by all actors (state, local government, civil society) and by Roma minority itself.

The participation of Roma community in development of the project components and activities is of a paramount importance for the Roma communities in their regions, because they felt included and appreciated and proved that the cooperation between actors State-Community-Donors is indispensable for the achievement of effective results that benefit all parties. Roma people understand that their participation in dialogue and activities as well as in defining priorities is important to change their life and as direct beneficiaries of the EVC project inspire others (Roma community members) to participate

The EVC project has contributed significantly in empowering the Roma community and especially women and youth through establishment of CBO-s and providing training in several issues.

The EVC project proposes an alleviation of the poverty problem through employment and professional development. It gives priority to women and girls with social problems making use of adequate legislation for employment and vocational training services.

Although employment is not the project priority it should be considered as an outcome that indicates the success and efficiency of the project

Despite the friendly and a cordial atmosphere, surrounding the EVC project in three areas, there were evident signs of prejudices that private companies, as well as any staff of employment offices have against vulnerable Roma/Egyptian individuals. It makes difficult the successful implementation of some activities such as employment.

⁴ The general conclusions are dealing with overall objectives of the project, the project framework, and project management, while the specific conclusions are dealing with specific issues of the project,

The EVC project has identified the most relevant areas and adequate means for the realisation of the activities of the project in an efficient manner. Fieri and Tirana have a big number of Roma population and that's why it is more easily to reach a high number of beneficiaries in both areas.

The value and the contribution of the UNV volunteers have been reflected in most of the activities and components of the project. They played a vital role in facilitating community-led activities, encouraging participation of the community, supporting the process of defining their priorities in small-scale infrastructure projects and to promote the values of volunteerism and raise awareness of the benefits of civic engagement. .

On the other hand volunteerism is a challenge to the Roma/Egyptian community, due to their previous experiences with other projects, poverty and difficulties they are facing, and the very low level of awareness. But knowing and implementing an experience, which permits man and women from the community to express themselves, to decide for their priorities, to see the results of their work, is a successful starting and a reference point for future projects.

II.6 Recommendations for further action

The project team should identify components of the project that have great potential for further development, but also interventions that need to change radically or even phase out.

- a. the organisation of information and awareness campaign for better familiarisation with the legal framework , facilitative policies and employment programmes.
- b. Institutionalisation of cooperation with organisation that have powerful networks for informing groups in need.

The staff should:

- c. Create new inspiring meeting space for community in order to make them able to work together, to understand each others, to find ways of improving their life. Communication between different groups from the Roma community need to be better manages.
- d. Involve different perspectives, not only top down. For the next phase of the project, I would recommend to carry out a need assessment in order to have a clear picture of the areas previously the intervention.
- e. Create ownership in terms of greater responsibility of the community and individuals for specific tasks

Some of the comments were about the possible stakeholders such as private companies and NPO, should be done more efforts to involved them in the project activities.

A better coordination of funding opportunities is needed, which would take into account the needs and priorities formulated by Roma community as well as those outlined in this report.

We recommend cooperation with organizations and foundations that operate in the Regions, as related to formulating, organizing and financing employment programmes.

The EVC project should adopt new incentives to encourage and facilitate the employment or self-employment such as micro grants

Coordinate better the work with other agencies responsible for the implementation of the strategy in the areas of social services and social inclusion such as Department for Social Protection that are recently established in most of the Regional Councils. The project should continue to assist local governments, specially Regional Councils in three Regions (Department of Social Services) in building local capacities, to draft policies for decision-making with Roma community participation, to distribute rationally limited financial and material resources, as well as to formulate the action plan for intervention, considering Roma Community's social and economic issues.

The project should assist in better application/interpretation of legislation related to civil registration of vulnerable Roma and Egyptian unregistered individuals. .

With regard to the Roma craftsmen it is recommended to strengthen their network and link them with institutions and organizations that would enhance their product development skills as well as marketing strategies and opportunities. The EVC should develop activities that promote Roma handicrafts and traditional works.

The EVC project should help local stakeholders, and in particular local governments, in adopting participatory consultations, negotiations and mediations, in achieving consensus regarding priorities and needs in cases where interests of many stakeholders are different with those of Roma Communities.

The project should assist the Roma Community representatives to actively take part throughout the debating and design of regional social policies, namely the designing of Regional Social Care Plan. In order to achieve this, the project should build and strengthen the capacities of CBO in relation to:

- Designing social policies addressing the Roma community problems
- Defining priorities
- Lobbying in order to introduce and include the issues of Roma community in the agendas of wider communities and policymakers
- Lobbying to sensitise strong society actors and figures to support the Roma community causes especially in relation to bias and discrimination.

The project should establish strong links with other non public programmes that aim at the employment of marginalised people such as “Youth empowerment through community development- a World Bank project ” operating in Tirana and Durrës Districts, Swiss contact etc

III. Annexes

Annex 1 “Terms of Reference”

FINAL EVALUATION EMPOWERING THE VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN ALBANIA: SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING ROMA LIVING CONDITIONS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Vacancy No: | UNDP/VA/2010-69 |
| Post Title: | Local Consultant for Final Evaluation of EVC Project |
| Hosting Agency: | UNDP Albania |
| Project: | Empowering the Vulnerable Communities of Albania: Support to the Implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions |
| Duration: | 20 working days |
| Duty Station: | Tirana, Albania |
| Type of Contract: | SSA |
| Educational Background: | University degree at the post-graduate level in the social sciences, management or other relevant field of study |
| Work Experience: | 8-10 years work experience of which at least five in the area of monitoring and evaluation |
| Language requirements: | Fluency in English and ability to work in Albanian (desirable) |
| Tentative starting date: | 22 March 2010 |
| Deadline for Applications: | 19 March 2010, 5:00 p.m. |
| Job Description: | is available at the UNDP site http://www.undp.org.al |

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Background to the UNV Programme

The United Nations Volunteer (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UNV volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

1.2. Background to the project to be evaluated

The situation of Roma and marginalized groups has been chosen as a priority area of joint collaboration under the One UN programme. The project “Empowering the Vulnerable Communities in Albania: Support to the Implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions (April 2008-April 2010)” coordinates the activities of agencies working with vulnerable minorities and provides direct assistance to the poorest and most marginalized Roma communities at the local level (villages and quarters). The project assists this vulnerable population through community-level mobilization to plan and participate in the upgrading of their communities and in accessing their rights to public and social services through civic registration, prioritization and implementation of infrastructure development projects, community mediation on health, education and child protection issues and to employment security through vocational training.

At the regional level, the project empowers vulnerable ethnic minorities to partner with relevant organizations and government institutions in facilitating access to social and economic aid programmes with the registration of marginalized communities. Minority communities will further establish partnerships with local government to address urgent development priorities in the poorest areas, supporting Roma to assume property rights and receive documentation of land ownership. Community members participate in on-the-job training, vocational education and courses on education, health and child protection. A network of mediators is established to further secure the well-being of the Roma and Egyptian population.

At the central level, the project supports the Government's work on social inclusion and improved governance, placing Roma issues on the national development agenda, and bringing minority rights in line with similar proactive courses of action taken by neighbouring Eastern European states.

The project engages national UNV volunteers to facilitate community-led activities at the local level. This project has formed the basis of the recently approved joint UN programme on social inclusion.

The project is running for two years, 2008 – 2010, financed mainly by the funds from UNV Special Volunteer Fund with contributions from UNDP Country Office, One-UN and in kind from UNICEF, WHO, and NGOs.

2. JUSTIFICATION

As the project is coming to an end, it is time for a final evaluation. The final evaluation of projects is a UNDP/UNV requirement. It will also provide vital information on project progress and results for the main national and local partners in Tirana, Fier and Elbasan and future joint UN programme on social inclusion. The timing of the evaluation, at the end of the project, is crucial to the future of the newly approved One UN join programme Empowering Vulnerable Local Communities. It will provide much needed qualitative and quantitative data on achievements, strengths, weaknesses of the existing project and recommendations for future directions of the new programme.

3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The aim of the final evaluation of the project "Empowering the Vulnerable Communities in Albania" is to make an objective assessment of the relevance, performance and success of the project. It will draw lessons and make recommendations for ensuring sustainability of project results and facilitating information and knowledge sharing thereby contributing to similar development initiatives in the future.

- To assess the achievement of project outputs and results as indicated in the project document.
- To assess the effects of the project on the lives of the vulnerable Roma/Egyptian communities in Tirana, Fier and Elbasan
- To identify good practices and lessons for information sharing purposes and ways to maximize positive effects for the new EVLC project
- To assess the contribution of volunteerism to achieving the project results
- To make recommendations for priorities and directions of the new project cycle

The evaluation will focus on how the project addresses and responds to the 6 key intervention areas. When assessing that response, the evaluation will analyze the implementation of the project and results achieved expressed in the 6 output areas, namely registration, CBOs, vocational training, mediators, support to National Roma Strategy, advocating social inclusion. The period under evaluation should cover activities implemented from April 2008 up to February 2010.

4. KEY AREAS /ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

4.1. Relevance

External coherence: The extent to which the objectives and design of the project are suited to locally defined stakeholders' needs and priorities, to government policies, to other development agencies' efforts.

Internal coherence: The extent to which the objective and design of the project are suited to UNV's strategic goals and priorities, to the country programme, to regional strategy.

Questions to be asked:

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?

- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended effects?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the objectives and missions of the different partners involved?
- How coherent is the project with the development agendas of the different institutions involved and how does this affect the project (positively and negatively)?
- What relevant lessons emerging from this project can inform future projects in similar areas?

4.2. Effectiveness

A measure of the extent to which the project has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives.

Questions to be examined:

- To what extent are the intended results of the project achieved or are likely to be achieved? What indicators demonstrate that?
- What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the results?

4.3. Efficiency

A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs and usually requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

Questions to be examined:

- Are the activities cost-efficient?
- Are results achieved on time?
- Is the project implemented the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

4.4. Effects

The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both, intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

Useful questions:

What has happened and is happening as a result of the project?

What real difference have the activities made to the beneficiaries? What are the most significant changes that this project has helped and is still helping to generate?

How many people have been affected?

The evaluation of effects needs to keep in mind that UNV works in collaboration with other partners in the field. While the added value of UNV and volunteerism can and should be highlighted in this evaluation, it is important that the report takes into consideration and credits others' inputs as well as UNV's.

4.5. Sustainability

A measure of whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. Factors (political, institutional, economic, technological, socio-cultural and environmental) affecting sustainability should also be considered.

Useful questions:

- To what extent do the benefits of the project continue after the project comes to an end?
- What are the major factors which influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?
- Is there a clearly defined exit strategy and to what extent does it contribute to sustainability?

4.6. Volunteerism

UNV recognizes that volunteering means different things to different people and that there is a wide range of ways to promote volunteerism. Within this context, the evaluation should cover different aspects of volunteering.

- What is the distinctive contribution or added value of the UNV volunteers and the promotion of volunteerism to the results of the project?
- Without the involvement of the UNV volunteers what would have been different? Would the outcome be the same, slower, negative, not happened at all?
- How do UNV and the UNV volunteers in the project contribute to stimulating local volunteerism?
- What are the helping and hindering factors to the stimulation of volunteerism in the project?

4.7. Other evaluation criteria

As part of UNV's strategy, the project is done in partnership and coordination with other development actors, includes gender and human rights perspectives, and has strong participation and capacity development elements.

Partnerships

An analysis of the institutional relationships developed throughout the project and the extent to which they have contributed to the achievement of results.

- Who are the partners involved in the design and implementation of the project (UN, government, international NGOs, local organizations, etc)?
- What value do the different partners add?
- What are the key factors contributing to building good partnerships?
- How can partnerships be strengthened in the future?

Gender

Whether and to what extent the project took the gender dimension into account and whether it promoted a gender sensitive approach to formulation and implementation. It also involves practical measures to guarantee an adequate treatment of gender issues in the project, beyond equal participation by men and women, and addressing changes in attitudes and behaviours.

- Does the project follow a gender sensitive approach?
- What is the level of participation of men and women in the project?
- Does the project work specifically with women's groups and organizations and is this an effective approach?
- Are there any changes in attitudes and behaviors towards gender relationships among the beneficiaries that can be noted, and to what extent does the project contribute to these changes?

- Are there any actions promoted by the project that demonstrate that volunteerism can support changes in gender relationships?

Coordination

Whether and to what extent the actions of different development actors were coherent in relation to each other, and whether this had a positive, negative and neutral effect on the project.

- Are there specific actions to promote the coordination among different development actors in the context of this project? Which ones?
- Are there examples of good coordination practice emerging from this project that can inform future actions?

Human Rights

Whether and to what extent the human rights dimension was taken into account, and if the project promoted a rights-based approach to formulation and implementation.

- What are the practical measures taken by the project to guarantee a human rights perspective? Was this approach effective?
- Does the project have a specific inclusion approach?
- Are there any actions promoted by the project that demonstrate that volunteerism can support inclusion?

Capacity Development

This criterion measures the extent to which the project has supported the creation and/or development of national, local, organizational and individual capacities.

- Does the project have a specific capacity development approach? What are the key elements of this approach?
- Who is the target group of the capacity development approach? Are the capacity development actions adequate to the needs and expectations of these target groups?
- What are the specific capacity development activities promoted by the project? What are the most significant results of these activities?
- To what extent does the volunteer element of actions promoted by the project influence the development of capacities?
- At what level are capacities developed (e.g. national, regional, local, organizational, individual)? What are the main challenges and constraints to developing capacities in the different levels?
- Are there any lessons emerging from the project on how to promote a capacity development approach linked to volunteerism?

Stakeholder involvement and participation

This criterion measures the extent to which the project has promoted participatory approaches, used participatory tools or other means to promote the involvement of stakeholders at different levels and stages of the project cycle.

- What is the strategy used by the project to engage and involve stakeholders in the different stages of the project? Is this strategy effective? Does it have a positive, negative or neutral effect on the achievement of results?
- Is it possible to establish a link between volunteer actions promoted by the project and more/ better stakeholder participation in other areas (e.g. in activities of other partners, more participation in public spaces promoted by the government, etc.)?
- Are there any participatory tools used in the project that are worth being considered for future UNV interventions?

5. METHODS AND APPROACHES

The evaluation should be done in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, using a mixed method approach and a variety of participatory tools, with a focus on triangulation. The evaluation design needs to take into consideration the different stakeholder groups, their specific needs and inputs, in order to avoid biases in the overall analysis. On the other hand, it needs to be adequate to the scope and context of the evaluation, to the availability of resources, and to the needs of each particular project.

Methodology:

- Desk review
- Stakeholder mapping
- Briefing meetings and interviews with key project informants
- Interviews with key stakeholders, representatives of the different partners, and volunteers in the field; phone-interviews may be used if deemed necessary.
- Focus groups meetings with stakeholders. One good practice is to have small groups, with a configuration that allows participants to speak as freely as possible, e.g. treating donors and beneficiaries, men, women and school children as separate groups.
- Site visits to areas where the project is implemented (Tirana, Fier and Elbasan)
- De-briefing meetings or workshops with stakeholders
- Presentations of final evaluation to UNV, UNDP and project team.

“All evaluations in UNV should be consistent with the UNEG (United Nations Evaluation Group) Norms and Standards (annex to the TOR), and the UNDP Evaluation Policy. The consultant needs to sign the UNEG Code of Conduct for evaluation consultants (annex). After the evaluation is finalized, the project partners will be responsible for preparing a management response to the recommendations made (template is annexed to the TOR). All documents related to the evaluation (TOR, evaluation report, management response matrix) will be made available to the public through the UNDP Evaluation Resource Center (<http://erc.undp.org>)”.

6. EVALUATION PROCESS

Inception stage:

- Desk review of all relevant documentation related to the project including project document, progress reports, mid-term review report and other relevant literature and video shorts.
- Stakeholder mapping: Prepare a comprehensive list of different stakeholders in the 3 regions of the project activities and agree on the approach to be adopted to generate information.
- Briefing meetings and interviews to finalize evaluation design including the UNV country team, the project management team, key partners/ stakeholder representatives and others with an interest in the evaluation.
- Preparation of inception report with detailed description of work plan including activities to be carried out necessary to achieve the required results, people to be met and interviewed, focus group discussions to be organized and clear time frame. This will be consulted with the project manager, UNV programme officer and programme staff of the UNDP country office

Data collection and generation stage:

- Evaluation mission: visit to the locations where the project is implemented. During the mission, the following tools can be applied for data collection and generation:
 - Surveys with project stakeholders
 - Face-to-face interviews with selected project stakeholders.
 - Focus groups meetings with stakeholders
 - Stakeholder workshops
 - Site visits to areas where the project is implemented
 - Learning workshops with volunteers and partners

- De-briefing meetings or workshops with stakeholders to report on initial findings from the data collection and generating stage, to correct errors, and to discuss ideas for recommendations. When appropriate, a summary of conclusions in local language or pictorial format (for illiterate stakeholders) should be produced.

Analysis and reporting stage:

- Preparation of draft evaluation report
- Feedback on draft evaluation report and evaluation brief from UNV, UNDP and selected stakeholders
- Presentation of final evaluation report at UNV and UNDP country office in Tirana

| Steps in the evaluation process | Estimated # of working days | Deadline for completion |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Desk review | 3 days | |
| Briefing meetings and interviews | 2 days | |
| Inception report | 2 days | |
| Evaluation mission (including travel time) | 6 days | |
| Preparation of draft evaluation report, debriefing and initial feedback | 3 days | |
| Finalizing report based on feedback | 3 days | |
| Presentation of final evaluation report at UNDP/UNV office in Albania | 1 day | |
| Total: | Up to 20 days | |

Once dates have been confirmed, a detailed plan for the evaluation mission will also need to be prepared in coordination with the country office team.

7. OUTPUTS

All expected outputs should be clearly identified, and a detailed description of the kind of report that is expected should be provided, including length, format, and language of main report and executive summary. Templates for the documents below are available in the UNV Knowledge Platform and in the Evaluation Unit intranet space and can be annexed to the TOR.

- Inception report including:
 - Evaluation matrix with key questions, indicators and means of verification
 - Detailed information on evaluation methods and tools to be used
 - Evaluation work plan
- Draft and final evaluation report with executive summary that can be used as stand-alone document
- Evaluation brief

8. MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

The overall responsibility for managing the evaluation will be with the UNV programme section. It will ensure close collaboration with the UNV evaluation unit and other UNV stakeholders at HQ and the UNV Country Office. The continuous involvement of major stakeholders at the country level (including UNDP, government and others) should be ensured and maintained throughout the entire evaluation process.

9. REQUIREMENTS

The main responsibilities in this assignment will be contracted to a local consultant with experience in the substantive area of social inclusion, participation and promotion of volunteerism. The consultant should have:

- University degrees at the post-graduate level in the social sciences, management or other relevant field of study
- 8-10 years work experience of which at least five in the area of monitoring and evaluation
- Proven track record and experience in the substantive area of the project (social inclusion, community development, etc), possibly involving vulnerable Roma/Egyptian communities
- Knowledge and experience of volunteerism with its diverse manifestations and cultural settings
- Competence in sample survey techniques and computerized data processing
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills
- Good people and communication skills
- Fluency in English and ability to work in Albanian (desirable).

10. ANNEXES

- UNEG norms and standards for evaluation (available from EMS-evaluation intranet space and UNV Knowledge Platform)
- UNEG code of conduct for UN evaluators (available from EMS-evaluation intranet space and UNV Knowledge Platform)
- Template for evaluation matrix with key questions, indicators and means of verification (available from EMS-evaluation intranet space and UNV Knowledge Platform)
- Template for evaluation report and executive summary (available from EMS-evaluation intranet space and UNV Knowledge Platform)
- Handbook “A participatory methodology for assessing the contribution of volunteerism to development”
- Template for preparation of evaluation brief

Annex 2. "Timetable of field work"

| Date | Tasks to be carry out | Duty bearer | Status of the action |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| 12 April | Receiving docs on Monday, | Bujari | Completed |
| 15 April postponed 19 April | Inception report on Thursday | Mirela | Completed |
| 19 April 19, postponed April 21 | Tools (interviews and focus groups) | Mirela | To be complete |
| April 22 | Feedback on tools | Project and UNV/UNDP Programme Staff | |
| Wednesday, 21 April | Interviews and focus groups in Fier, | | |
| Thursday 22 April; | Interviews and focus groups in Elbasan, | | |
| Friday, 23 April; | Interviews and focus groups in Tirana, | | |
| Monday, 9 May; | First draft ready | | |
| | Feedback on first draft | by Project and UNV/UNDP Programme Staff, Friday, 14 May; | |
| Thursday, 20 May; | Presentation of final draft on | | |

Site visits in Fieri, Elbasani, Tirana

Around 15 interviews in each site (the number to be defined) structured interviews and half structured interviews to be conducted with the direct and indirect project beneficiaries .

3 focus group discussion (in each site) with family members and parents of the young beneficiaries and non beneficiaries as well as 5 employers of young beneficiaries of vocational training courses.

Interviewing and meetings with 10 other interested in the project such as Local Government representatives and local authorities, etc.

The information that is going to be collect through individual interviews with direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as focus group discussions, served to set up a data base which supports the conclusions and recommendations stemming from the study on the issues to consider in order to have successful projects aiming at Empowering Roma Communities in the future.

- The above information made possible the evaluation of the project impact on the overall situation of the beneficiaries and in specific on employment and vocational education situation; civil registration and improvement of life conditions of Roma community.
- Based on the collected information, the evaluator will be able to identify the impact of the project on the livelihood, health condition, well-being of the individual beneficiary families within Roma community.

Summary of planned interviews during Desk Review

| Evaluation framework topic | Type of interview and participants | When where |
|----------------------------|---|------------|
| Policy and General | Project oficer NUNV Staff of the project | |
| 1.1 Policy influence | Key Informant interviews with representatives from MOSAEO | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1.2 Project Impact | Interviews with Managers and NUNV | |
| 2.1 Resource allocation | “ “ “ | |
| 2.2 Policy & strategy development | Focus group discussion with representatives from three regional council Key Informant interviews with the one of the regional directors (department of social assistance in regional council) | |
| 2.3 Partnerships | Representatives from local government and other central institutions , TLAS, Terres des Homes | |

Key Questions Identified by the Evaluator

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation list a multitude of questions for consideration under the headings of: design, relevance of strategy, process of implementation of the project, performance and achievements, sustainability, as well as special aspects.

While the evaluation attempts to address as many of these as possible, a number of questions were identified by the evaluator as being of key importance during desk review and field visits.

1. How is the project able to link or coordinate with other initiatives to address the issue of Improving the living condition of Roma community?
2. How is the project able to influence and coordinate with governmental initiatives (including legislation and strategies)?
3. Are the correct populations being targeted and reached? (How are potential beneficiaries identified?)
4. Are the activities operating where the need is greatest?
5. Are the beneficiaries being served from the intended groups, including Evgjit communities?
6. What are the main project activities? Will these lead to the desired outputs and outcomes?
7. Do the local implementing partners have the necessary capacity to implement, monitor and report on their activities?
8. What has supported implementation? What have been the barriers?
9. What have been the key successes or accomplishments?
10. What has been learned? (What would you do differently? What is the most important thing to know about your work?)
11. What are the plans for the future? How will the work be continued? What supports sustainability?
12. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a strategy which integrates with existing initiatives or the work supported by other donors?

It should be noted that these questions were not applicable to all informant groups. The evaluator used a variety of other questions and follow-up probes to obtain information, as each interview or focus group required.

Suggested Aspects to be addressed during focus group discussions and individual interviews

Check list

The evaluation will address the overall EVC project evaluation concerns such as **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency** and **sustainability** as defined in the *TORs*

The following are the broad suggested aspects that can be identified at this point for the evaluation to address. Other aspects can be added as identified by the evaluator in accordance with the given purpose and in consultation with EVC Team.

Project Design

1. Are the intervention strategies of the EVC project designed more than two years ago still considered valid?
2. Did the strategies adequately address the cultural causes of poverty, as lack of education and skills training, gender inequality as well as problems with civil registration?
3. Assess the relationship between the EVC project and other interventions supported by other organizations working in Fieri/Elbasani/Tirana
4. Assess whether the beneficiaries were clearly identified (i.e. sub-groups, age, socioeconomic status, etc. ‘poor’ or ‘women’ is not a homogenous group,) determine if more details are needed to better target interventions.
5. Assess whether the problems and needs were adequately analysed. Determine whether the needs, constraints, resources and access to project services of the different beneficiaries were clearly identified taking gender issues into concern.
6. Examine the appropriateness of the indicators and whether they are ‘measurable’

7. To what extent were external factors identified and assumptions identified at the time of design?
8. Were the linkages between inputs, activities, outputs and objectives clear and logical?
9. Assess the design of the action programmes, its link to the overall project and assess the community participation during the formulation phase
10. Did the design of the project take into consideration any collaboration efforts with other country with similar problems with the Roma ethnicity?
11. Assess any implications of the funding mechanism used in this project.

Relevance of the project with the national/regional/local strategies

- How does the EVC project fit within national development, education and anti-poverty efforts, existing policies and programmes on Roma issues and interventions carried out by other organizations (public and non public)?
- How relevant is the project design to address Roma issues in the selected Regions (sites)? How well did the project design take into account local efforts already underway to address Roma issues and existing capacity to address these issues?
- Were alternative strategies considered or implemented during the life of the project?

Process of Implementation of the EVC project

- How closely has the EVC project adhered to the workplan (Regional strategy) at the Fieri/Elbasani/Tirana Region, and communal levels?
- How effective are local management structures (e.g. project focal point or any structure within local government such as staff of the municipality) of the project?
- Assess the participation of different relevant actors (e.g. Ministry of Labour, employers' organizations, law enforcement, judiciary, etc.) How are these structures participating in project implementation? How is this participation contributing to progress toward the objectives of the project?
- How efficient is the process by which the Annual work plans are reviewed and approved. Assess process of allocating resources to each site.

Performance and Achievements

- Has the project made sufficient progress toward reaching its final objectives? Is the expected number of beneficiaries being reached in each site? Are outputs being delivered on a timely basis and of appropriate quality?
- How has the capacity of the implementing agencies and other relevant partners, including the local government, to develop effective action for improving Roma living conditions as a result of the project activities?
- How effective is the project in raising awareness about Roma issues and in promoting social mobilization to address this issue?
- Assess the level of government involvement to and support for the project. Mention all the legal documents (MOU etc)
- What regional impact has the project made thus far?
- Identify unexpected and multiplier effects of the project.
- Assess the key achievements of the project per each Region in terms of improving living condition of Roma community.
- How effective would the current project framework and management structure be in addressing other issues of Roma community such as "worst forms of child labour" issue, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation etc?
- Assess what effect the regional based approach of the project had on the project as whole?
- To what extent are factors outside the control of the project management affecting project implementation and attainment of objectives/goals?

Sustainability

- How effective has the project been to date in promoting local ownership of the project and promoting long-term sustainability? Has the idea, been clearly articulated and progress made toward this goal?
- What is the long-term commitment, and the technical and financial capacity of local/national/regional/institutions to continue delivering services to the beneficiary group once the project ends?

Special Aspects to be Addressed

- Examine the logical framework which was established for this project.
- Assess which of the project interventions seem to be effective and replicable.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the different types of project interventions in different sites to design further interventions based on project experiences.
- Assess the extent the project took advantage and exploited opportunities of learning from each other, of sharing experiences across countries including processes.
- Assess methodology and approach to identify and share good practices.

Annex 4. List of people interviewed

Central Institutions

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Blerina Zoto | Ministry of Labour Social services and Equal Opportunities Technical secretariat for Roma |
|--------------|--|

Fieri

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Astrit Hysenaj | Director Department of Social protection regional Council |
| Stavri Kola | Gender commune Deputy head of the Commune |
| Ferdinand Agalliu | Director VET Agency |
| Zoi Doga | Teacher VET Agency |
| Vasillaq Xhoxhi | Teacher VET Agency |
| Athina Cera | Economist VET Agency |
| Kristaq Lena | Labor office Director |
| Drita Alushi | Volunteer in kindergarten |
| Durim Tahiri | CBO Coordinator |
| Panajot Alushi | CBO member |

Elbasani

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Enver Mustafa | CBO coordinator |
| Mexhidie Ademi | CBO member |
| Mimoza Demiri | CBO member |
| Lindita Ademi | CBO member |
| Lavdie Misha | Community memebr |
| Buuroshe Manaj | NPO director |
| Rasim Balliu | Director VET Agency |

Tirana

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Gladiola Musabelliu | Specialist in Tirana Municipality |
| Jeta Seitaj | Head of Municipality unite no.5 |
| Ndre Jaci | Specialist of urban planning in Tirana municipality |
| Miranda Mece | TDH |
| Valbona Sauku | TDH trainer |
| Haki Mustafa | Head of Municipality Unite no.11 |
| FG | 12 CBO members in Tirana |
| Rajmonda Bozdo | TLAS |
| Elvira Dervishi | TLAS |
| | Director of Tirana Labor office |

Staff

| |
|----------------|
| Bujar Taho |
| Mirjeta Ramizi |
| Klodiana Tosun |
| Gjolek Mera |
| Leonard |
| Brunilda |

Annex 5. Documents consulted

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