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INCEPTION REPORT

ENGAGE THE ALBANIAN COMMUNITIES ABROAD (ACA) TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ALBANIA

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ACRONYMS AND TERMS

Acronyms / Terms	Definitions / explanations
AC	Accountant
ACA	Albanian Communities Abroad
AIDA	Albanian Investment Development Agency
CAGC	ConnectAlbania and Grant Coordinator
CBFC	Capacity building and Fellowship Coordinator
CP	Compensation Plan
FC	Fellowship Coordinator
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FPDEACA	Framework Policy Document and action plan on Engagement with ACA
GDF	Global Diaspora Forum
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GoA	Government of Albania
HLD	High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development
IADC (AICS)	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
IMC	Information and Media Coordinator
IMT	Inception and Monitoring Team
INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IOM - REP	IOM Representative
IOM RO	IOM Regional Office
MFE	Ministry of Finances and Economy
MEFA	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MIDWEB	Migration for Development in the Western Balkans
SMOD	State Minister for Diaspora
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
PM	Program Manager
PPA	Program and Procurement Assistant
PMT	Program Management Team
PRISM	IOM Processes and Resources Integrated Systems Management
PSC	Program Steering Committee
RMO	Resource Management Officer
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOPs	Standard Operation Procedures
TAB	Technical Advisory Board
TABS	Technical Advisory Board Secretariat
TOR	Terms of Reference

TST	Technical Support Team
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United Stated of America

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project inception phase has been successfully accomplished during the period mid October 2017 – January 2018 with the support of and in close collaboration with the IOM office in Tirana and the Italian Agency for Cooperation & Development office in Tirana.

It is important to understand that the period of this analysis was immediately after the Albanian parliamentary elections in June 2017, which brought significant changes to the GoA. A new State Minister for Diaspora was appointed and the AIDA agency started restructuring.

The Inception Report has been written having in mind the purpose of this project: not only looking at the final numbers of the start-up and at the new jobs created but at the same time to be a pilot project engaging the diaspora that could be used as a best practice for other projects.

Initially an extensive desk research for all the basic information was conducted in order to create the basis of the report. It was followed by a mission in Tirana, between the 30th October and the 2nd of November, to meet and understand the level of interest of the local stakeholders and to understand the will of the GoA regarding the project.

In Italy, several meetings with the Italian-Albanian associations took place for a first contact and to inform them that about this new initiative engaging the diaspora will start soon, and to understand what their needs are and how to cater for a better outcome of the project. Meetings with local authorities were carried out to better understand which initiatives are already being developed with the Albanian diaspora, so that this work does not overlap or duplicate, but synergies are created instead.

Following the indication from AICS Tirana, and the State Minister for Diaspora, an Action Plan is prepared for a four months period that prioritizes the intensification of outreach activities with the communities in Italy, in order to better inform them on the project activities and foster further trust building.

The Steering Committee will be composed as follows: AICS, IOM and the State Minister for Diaspora.

The report is divided in four chapters. The first one elaborates on the background of Albanian migration and the project itself. The second chapter describes other projects and best practices on diaspora engagement as well as migration and development identified through desk research. The third chapter presents the findings of the inception phase meetings and suggested changes that emerged during the meetings. The last chapter elaborates on institutional roles and project activities and introduces changes to the project document and work plan.

INTRODUCTION:

The project "Engage the Albanian Communities Abroad to the Social and Economic Development of Albanian" founded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation through a total amount of Euro 2,876,500.00 million implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission in Albania.

Official documents of the project, taken as reference documentation, are the following:

Technical documents:

- ✓ Program Document (PD), elaborated by IOM Albania
- ✓ Framework Policy Document and action plan on ACA Engagement (FPDACA) developed in 2016
- ✓ National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020(NSDI)
- ✓ National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration 2018 -2024
- ✓ IOM Media and Communication Handbook 2016
- ✓ IOM Social Media Guidelines
- ✓ IOM Social Media Strategy
- ✓ AICS Communication and Visibility Guidelines.

Legal documents:

- ✓ Business and Investments Development Strategy 2014-2020
- ✓ Albania's Economic Reform Program 2016 – 2018
- ✓ Cross-Cutting Strategy "Digital Agenda of Albania 2015 – 2020
- ✓ Strategy on Employment and Skills 2014 -2020
- ✓ Italian-Albanian Development Cooperation Protocol 2014 - 2016

CHAPTER 1

Background to the project

The United Nation's Department of Economic and Social Affairs' report on International Migration in 2015 states that "when supported by appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development in both home and host communities."[1] It is in this larger framework that we must contextualize Albania's Diaspora.

Albania remains predominantly a country of emigration. The main causes of emigration are economic; unemployment remains high (17.3 per cent, with a peak of 32,5% in the age group 15-29 years) and poverty is also a problem (12,5% of the population lives below the poverty line)[2]. This is despite the constant improvement of living conditions and a net stable (although not peaking) growth of the Albanian economy by 1,11% in 2013, 1,8% in 2014 and 2,8% in 2015,[3] at a time of a protracted economic crisis in Europe. An additional pull factor for young people and Albanian families is the higher quality of training and educational opportunities they hope to find abroad. Finally, the last decade has witnessed an increasing stabilization of Albanian Communities Abroad,[4] supported by family reunification, and only partly affected by repatriation for economic reasons.

Emigration of Albanians in the recent years has been characterized by irregular movements. The overall trend of irregular migration from Albania, however, is decreasing following the country's visa liberalization agreement with the EU, as compared to the period before visa liberalization. Currently the main ways of irregular migration are: (i) overstays in the European Union Member States after the period of 90 days of stay permitted under the visa-free regime; (ii) application for asylum in the EU Member States submitted on false grounds; (iii) the abandonment of children in host countries and their parents‟ return to Albania, a phenomenon that has led to an increasing number of migrant UAMs; (iv) the use of the opportunity to enter freely in the Schengen area and use it as a springboard for irregular migration in the UK, USA and Canada.[5]
Another major trend in recent years has been an increase in returns. One of the major causes of return is the global economic and financial crisis, which since 2008 has strongly hit countries of traditional settlement for the Albanian Communities Abroad (ACA), such as Greece and Italy, causing a rise in unemployment rates. The rejection of asylum applications has also risen contributing to increase return flows.

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[1] U.N. Department of Social and Economic Affairs, International Migration Report 2015: Highlights, p.2. Available at http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015_Highlights.pdf

[2] IOM, The Return of Irregular Migrants to Albania: An assessment of Case processing, Reception and Return. Need and Modalities, IOM 2006

[3] IOM, Return and Readmission. The Case of Albania, August 2006

[4] IOM, Needs Assessment: Human Trafficking in the Western Balkans, 2014

[5] Ministry of Internal Affairs, Albania: Extended Migration Profile 2012-2014, Tirana, 2015

Countering however the positive effects of circular migration there have been negative consequences such as loss of key human resources for the country's development. This possible "drain" is partly stemmed by the current return flows, more needs be done to strengthen the positive development impact of emigration and return migration in the country. Experts agree that the link between migration and development in Albania can be facilitated, firstly by attracting investments and expertise of migrants and secondly assisting on the return. These processes need to be easily accessible for those who return.[6] This could be achieved by the adoption of labour market policies targeting the ACA, and other appropriate ACA engagement policies. The ACA can be a bridge to stimulate investment and trade relations abroad for Albanian companies as well as for institutional and private sector partnerships between the territory of origin and the one of destination. In addition, returnees can inject considerable labour and social innovations in the system, and their contribution is key at this phase of the country's development. In this context, a Policy Document on Engaging with Albanian Communities Abroad (PDEACA), developed with the IOM technical and financial support, has been shared during the recent Albanian Diaspora Summit (November 2016) and is now in the process of being endorsed by the GoA.

1.1 ALBANIAN MIGRATION

The history of Albania's communities is characterised by the "Old" and "New" diasporas. The International Organization for Migration positions the Old diaspora as those who emigrated prior to 1900.[7]. During this time they developed their own languages: Arbëresh, Arvanitas and Arbanas, these names originating from the terms "Arbër" and "Arberi", and which defined their populations and territories in the historical period coinciding with these first migrations. The language has been preserved and has developed over the years maintaining the language, culture, identity, traditions and values of the Albanian people.

1.1.1 Albania's diaspora in the 19th and 20th centuries

After the communist regime, a new period of migration began in July 1990 when 5.000 Albanian citizens claimed sanctuary at numerous European Embassies and were granted refugee status. In the following years around 26.000 Albanians (mainly of male gender) illegally crossed the Adriatic Sea to Italy on boats[8], which negatively impacted on the collective perception of migrants in Europe, and still affects the way migrants are seen today.

In the period 1997 – 2001 there was a new spur of migrations from Albania as with the Kosovo refugee crisis, and the influx of 500,000 Albanian Kosovars into Albania, there was a sustained economic pressure, and a marked lack of resources, both contributory factors to more

[6] IDOS, Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, Roma, 2016
[7] International Organization for Migration, Albania: Extended Migration Profile, 2012 – 2014, p. 16. Available at http://www.albania.iom.int/publications/reports/Profili_i_zgjeruar_i_migracionit_ENG_web.pdf
[8] http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/albania-looking-beyond-borders

emigration[9]. Other factors resulted in a new outflow of migrants in 1997, contributing to approximately 70,000 leaving Albania[10]. An additional factor was the loss of approximately $2 billion – estimated at 15% of Albania's GDP of that period.

As far as the Academic world is concerned, up until 2001, 40% circa of Albania‘s university professors and intelligentsia had moved abroad seeking work outside the country[11]. After this date the trend shifted from staff to university students, who did not move back to their country of origin, but integrated abroad. A growing number of Albanian students — 4.000/5.000 annually in recent years — have attended universities in Italy, France, other EU countries and the United States[12]. UNESCO estimates that Albania has about 25.000 students abroad with the top five destinations being Italy (11.623), Greece (8.209), United States (621), Turkey (471), Germany (424)[13]. AlmaLaurea, a consortium of Italian universities, reports a total number of Albanian graduates and students from 2001 onwards, of approximately 16.000[14]

Today we find that Albania is living a new phase of its Diaspora, with more than 30% of the Albanian population having emigrated in the last two decades[15], establishing communities in Italy, Greece, Germany, UK, Belgium, France, USA, and Canada. The Italian government alone estimates that 448.407 Albanians are resident in Italy[16], making up 9,3% of the total immigrant population in Italy[17]. Greece remains popular with Albanian migrants. However there are now new destination countries for Albanian migrants. This is particularly true of highly skilled emigrants who, attracted by a global demand, prefer to travel to the United States, Australia, Canada and elsewhere.

[9] Barjaba and Barjaba, ‘Embracing Emigration’.
[10] Barjaba and Barjaba, ‘Embracing Emigration.’
[11] Etleva Germenji and Ilir Gedeshi, ‘Highly Skilled Migration from Albania: An Assessment of Current Trends and the Ways Ahead’, Center for Economic and Social Studies in Tirana, Albania, January 2008.
[12] Barjaba, ‘Embracing Emigration‘
[13] UNESCO, Global Flow of Tertiary Level Students: Albania, available at http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx
[14] http://www.almalaurea.it/universita/statistiche
[15] https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017&cm49=8
[16] http://www.tuttitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri/albania/
[17] http://www.istat.it/it/immigrati

The table representing the geographical spread of the Albania diaspora in Italy

Region	Albanian				% of the foreign population	Variation % Previous year
	Male	Female	Total	%		
1. Lombardia	48.176	46.926	95.102	**21,2%**	8,35%	-4,5%
2. Toscana	33.121	30.811	63.932	**14,3%**	15,97%	-3,9%
3. Emilia-Romagna	30.010	28.157	58.167	**13,0%**	10,99%	-3,4%
4. Piemonte	21.050	20.528	41.578	**9,3%**	9,93%	-5,2%
5. Veneto	17.440	17.318	34.758	**7,8%**	7,16%	-6,1%
6. Lazio	12.656	11.875	24.531	**5,5%**	3,70%	-1,3%
7. Puglia	11.674	10.965	22.639	**5,0%**	17,69%	-1,8%
8. Liguria	11.461	10.353	21.814	**4,9%**	15,77%	-1,7%
9. Marche	8.399	8.361	16.760	**3,7%**	12,31%	-9,3%
10. Umbria	7.131	6.793	13.924	**3,1%**	14,51%	-6,2%
11. Abruzzo	6.275	5.921	12.196	**2,7%**	14,09%	-4,4%
12. Trentino-Alto Adige	5.797	5.314	11.111	**2,5%**	11,92%	-6,5%
13. Friuli Venezia Giulia	4.936	5.065	10.001	**2,2%**	9,59%	-6,2%
14. Sicilia	4.421	3.830	8.251	**1,8%**	4,36%	+2,6%
15. Campania	3.801	3.004	6.805	**1,5%**	2,79%	-0,9%
16. Calabria	1.443	1.378	2.821	**0,6%**	2,74%	0,0%
17. Basilicata	904	822	1.726	**0,4%**	8,30%	+3,3%
18. Molise	444	406	850	**0,2%**	6,55%	-2,1%
19. Valle d'Aosta	411	388	799	**0,2%**	9,68%	-8,1%
20. Sardegna	320	322	642	**0,1%**	1,28%	-0,2%
Totale ITALIA	**229.870**	**218.537**	**448.407**		8,9%	-4,1%

(Data from Ministry of Interior of Italy - http://www.tuttitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri/albania/)

1.1.2 Academic Diaspora in Italy

Based on the latest documentation from the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research in 2014 10,700 Albanian students accounted for almost 4% of the whole of Italy's university graduates. Over the last decade, foreign graduates have more than tripled. Albanian students were a notable contributing factor to this growth and, in the most recent year,

Albanian graduates amount to nearly 1.500 (14% of all foreign graduates) and is the most represented nationality (followed by the Chinese with about 1.200 graduates).

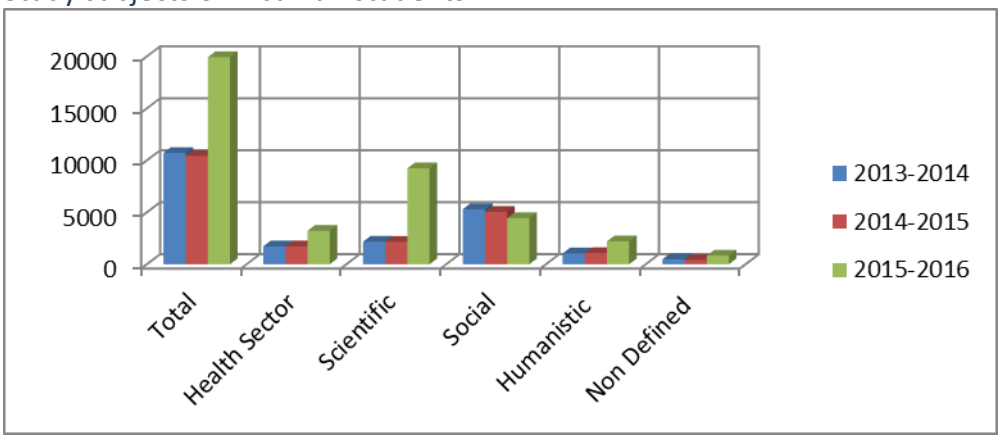
Characteristics of the Albanian Graduates

Using the collected documentation from AlmaLaurea, it has been possible to analyse the profile of over 7.000 Albanian graduates, who have graduated in the six years from 2010 to 2015.

More than half of the Albanian graduates analysed were enrolled in seven of universities belonging to AlmaLaurea: starting with La Sapienza (Rome), who graduated a very high number of Albanian citizens (more than 900, 13% of all the graduates between 2010 and 2015), then Bologna (760 graduates, 11%) followed by the universities of Florence, Padua, Turin, Perugia and Genoa (among non AlmaLaurea-adherent universities worthy of note are the Politecnico di Milano, the Cattolica and the Bocconi of Milan).

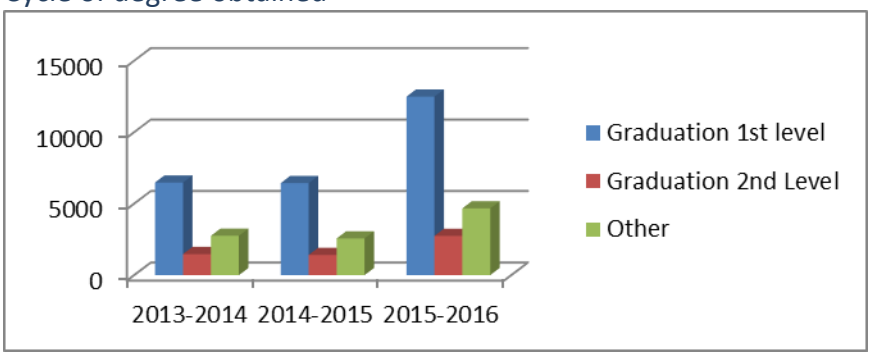
The subjects favoured by Albanian graduates fall in the following categories: economics and statistics (28 vs. 18 and 14%, of the total foreign and Italian students respectively), socio-political area (16 vs. 13 and 11%, recorded for foreign and Italian students respectively), and legal (8 vs. 3 and 6%, recorded for foreign and Italian students respectively). Another 8% of graduates is following an engineering path and an additional 8% graduates in the areas of the health professions. While language courses (5%), arts (4%) and the agrarian-veterinary areas (0.4%) have a much smaller influence compared to the complex of foreign graduates.

Study subjects of Albanian students



One of the main features of the Albanian graduates is the high female representation (64% vs. 62% and 60%, respectively, of all foreign and Italian graduates) as well as the large presence of young people from less-favoured family-background: only 9% of Albanian graduates' parents are entrepreneurs, free professionals or executives (21% for foreign students and 22% for Italian graduates). This result is most likely affected by the different national economic environment of origin. On the other hand, Albanian graduates have more favourable background compared to the Italian average: 36% of Albanian graduates have at least one parent who holds a degree (41% for foreign students and 27% for Italian students).

Cycle of degree obtained



1.2 ALBANIAN ECONOMY

In recent years, Albania has remained one of the growing economies in Europe. Growth has been the result of a structural transformation, based largely on the movement of labour from low productivity agricultural occupations to services, construction, and – to a lesser extent – manufacturing in the period 2001-2011.
On June 27th 2014 Albania received the EU Candidate status by the EU Council. As stated by Commissioner Füle in his declaration on that occasion: Granting of candidate status is a logical consequence of Albania's reform efforts (….) today's decision of the Ministers is acknowledgement of the EU for the efforts made and the progress achieved on Albania's accession road. At the same time it should be seen as an encouragement to continue with existing reforms and embarking on new reforms necessary to prepare Albania for the start of the accession negotiations later on.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita increased twofold (to USD 4,555) to reach 31 per cent of the European Union average. The World Bank in its 2015 Country Diagnostic underlines that Albania "Exceeding 6% per annum on average, was Europe's most rapidly growing economy in the decade leading up to the global financial crisis of 2008. […] This strong growth performance meant that Albania, which was the poorest nation in Europe in the early 1990s, reached middle-income status in 2008. [...] In the boom years between 2002 and 2008, growth lifted a large number of people out of poverty, with the poverty rate declining from 25,4% to 12,5%. Economic growth was inclusive, with consumption among the bottom 40% of the distribution (the bottom 40) growing more quickly than the average for the country."[18]
The global financial crisis in 2008 weakened economic growth with an average rate of 5.5% marked in the period 1997-2008 and falling to 2,4% in the period 2009-2014Prior to the financial crisis, growth was due to rising domestic consumption, the real estate boom, and the remittances of emigrants, with a shift from rural agriculture to urban sectors. However, this did not result in an increase in its total productivity (stagnant since 2000), or formal employment that dropped from 73% in 2000 to 58% in 2008.

[18] World Bank Group, April 2015, Next Generation Albania – A systematic country Diagnostic, p. i.

The impact of the crisis resulted in a reduction in labour demand with a poverty rate at 14,3% by 2012. In 2013, with 7% of the population living below the $2.50-a-day poverty line Albania was the fourth poorest country in Europe[19]. The 2008 crisis highlighted the limits of a growth model depending on foreign flows to finance domestic consumption, investment, and ultimately growth.

After the global economic crisis, Albania's economic growth averaged less than 3% a year between 2009 and 2012, sinking to an average of only 1,7% a year from 2013 to 2015."[20] Data collected for the year 2016 and previsions for the year 2017 describe a better situation in GDP terms, but still far from the pre-crises years.

During 2015, according to Labour Force Survey estimates 52,9% of the population aged 15-64 years old was employed, 11,2% was unemployed and 35,9% was economically inactive (outside the labour force).[21] In a gender perspective, females are 1,8 times more likely than males to be contributing family workers.

Most importantly, remittances from ACAs faced a sharp slowdown from 2008 onwards. While during 2007 remittances culminated to 952 million EUR or 12,3% of GDP, in 2015 they dropped to 597 million EUR or 5,8% of the GDP. Hence remittances cannot constitute, alone, a sustainable endeavour to the social and economic development of the country.
Despite some improvement in recent years circular migration has resulted in oscillating levels of human capital both at home and abroad in the same comparative timeframe without a strong enough infrastructures to harness these opportunities.

In relation to circular migration the rationale of promoting the physical and virtual return of the Albanian community abroad capital developed in the Action Plan of this policy is valid. It pinpoints the growing potentials of transnational virtual return "because people tend to associate with others sharing the same norms and values. Networks of expatriates can have a high impact and thus the highly skilled can contribute to the development of their home country even if they are not physically at home. In addition, through these networks the home country may have access not only to their individual embodied knowledge but also to the socio-professional networks in which they are inserted overseas"[22].

[19] http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/rapportiricercaimmigrazione/Rapporti%20Nazionali
[20] http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/rapportiricercaimmigrazione/Rapporti%20Nazionali
[21] http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/rapportiricercaimmigrazione/Rapporti%20Nazionali
[22] Meyer and Brown (1999) quoted in Germenji and Gedeshi, Highly Skilled Migration from Albania

CHAPTER 2.

Results of the Meetings with stakeholders

The program will contribute to enhancing the engagement of the Albanian Communities Abroad in the development of the country as it is suggested by its tittle. The proposed approach for the programme is based on the Policy Document on Engaging with Albanian Communities Abroad, developed by the Government of Albania with the technical and financial support of IOM in 2016, as announced during the first Diaspora Summit held in Tirana in November 2016.

The development of the programme was carried out in conjunction with and based on the inputs provided by the partner institutions at the time of development, respectively the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[23], the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship (MEDTTE)[24] and the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA)[25] in a series of meetings and exchanges held in the first semester of this year.

The country should approach the ACA to stimulate productive investments that attract highly educated and trained workforce, as well as tap in the economic potential and knowledge of the Albanians abroad. Also in this regard, Albania should ensure that immigration is addressed not only as a matter of public safety / law enforcement , but also as an issue of socio - economic development, and labour mobility in conformity with European and international standards.

The inception phase was carried out in the period between October 2017 and January 2018. During this period various meetings were carried out, both in Albania and in Italy, with relevant stakeholder and experts in the field. It should be noted that the inception phase took place in a period when the GoA was still in the process of restructuring.

Round Table with main Albanian stakeholders

Nevertheless in Albania, during the mission from the 30th of October to the 2nd of November 2017 most of the stakeholders have been met. During the first day a Round Table was organized by IOM office Tirana, to represent the project and to have all the partners and stakeholders for an exchange of views and opinions.

In the first meeting attended representatives of AICS Tirana, IOM (Tirana and HQ), the Italian Embassy in Tirana, the State Minister for Diaspora, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Economy and AIDA.

[23] Now Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs which came after the reform of the government after the general elections of 2017.
[24] Now the Ministry of Finances and Economy which came after the reform of the government after the general elections of 2017.
[25] This Agency is now under the MFE and is undergoing a restructuring phase.

As stated by **AICS**, it is very important that the project goes beyond numbers and focuses at establishing consolidated mechanisms and best practices for future projects. In this context the project should be considered a series of pilot actions that serve to the above purpose. As such, the project enjoys a certain degree of flexibility to allow for corrective approaches to be adopted during the implementation.

For the **Ministry of Finance and Economy**, this project is welcomed and timely initiative. The third component of the project is very important to enable AIDA to be in contact and have a direct relation with the diaspora. No additional information on the eventual restructuring of AIDA was provided. Tourism and agriculture were indicated as eventual sectors to prioritize for the start-ups while Austria and Germany were indicated as the other two countries to take into consideration for the skill mapping.

The **Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs** mentioned the development of the Policy Document for Engaging with ACA, developed in 2016 with IOM support which laid the basis for the project. The MEFA provided the contacts of the Albanian Associations in Italy which were engaged in previous outreach activities and in the Diaspora Summit of November 2016. The MEFA representative stated that the Ministry should be part of the Steering Committee. The MEFA highlighted the importance of being part of the outreach activities as well as benefit from the capacity building as planned in the project.

The **State Minister for Diaspora** has expressed a concern on the feasibility of this project and the project being maybe too ambitious, considering that diaspora engagement is at a very basic stage and structures are not consolidated. He also highlighted the lack of information, as there is no formal register of Albanians living abroad.

This is why the project requires flexibility, because at the moment there's no information on the actual features and needs of the Albanian community and of Albanians abroad.
The appointment of the State Minister on Diaspora as the third member of the SC is considered the best option given the specific focus of his portfolio. In regard to the fellowship component journalists and teachers were indicated as a priority profiles. The State Minister for Diaspora highlighted the high interest towards the outreach activities as well as suggested that the capacity building and resources foreseen by the project be directed entirely to this institution.

Meeting with **AIDA** A bilateral meeting with AIDA was organised as well. This agency is being reorganised and there is a concern about its engagement in the programme implementation. They don't know yet which exact role they will have in the project and are understaffed. They don't have any fellowship schemes or plans for such initiative AIDA is implementing several initiatives on supporting entrepreneurship.

Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS)

During the mission in Tirana a meeting was held with the Director of the Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS). The discussion touched upon the changes of the Albanian migration through the years, elaborating more specifically on the scientific diaspora.
Some data were provided, for example: Italy is the second country for the scientific diaspora, with 14%, while the First one is the USA, with 26%. As a result from the later studies, Albanians come to Italy to study without the idea to continue their working career in this country. On the contrary, after receiving an Italian Diploma they tend to move to Germany, Austria, Spain, and UK. Other data has shown that only 6% of the students would like to move back to Albania.

The CESS director pointed out the difficulties in reaching out the Albanian diaspora, (2 years were needed to obtain 700 responses), as the respondents from Diaspora were reluctant to engage.

In relation to the scientific diaspora, the Director suggested that other countries that should be taken to consideration could be the UK, France or Austria. Subject to the availability of resources and time, it would be interesting to study the American diaspora, since it is an elite community.

IOM Regional office Vienna

A conference call with the IOM Regional Office in Vienna was organised. This discussion was very useful in understanding other projects and best practices in diaspora engagement.

AICS Tirana

In order to take stock of existing schemes and exploring eventual synergies, a meeting was organised with an AICS Tirana representative, who elaborated on some on-going initiatives.

AICS has three very interesting projects, which could complement the diaspora program.
1) Credit line active since 2009

- One instalment of 25 million euros and a second of 11 million euros.
- For Albanian entrepreneurs or for companies with minimal property of 51%, a discounted rate
- Financial portfolios of projects from 15 thousand to 500 thousand euros
- 70% of costs to buy Italian technology, carried out to support Italian technology in Albania
- Not eligible sectors: tourism seen as transitory set ups (but for example a dry cleaner which serves hotels, yes).

2) Guarantee Funds

- One instalment of 2.5 million euros and a second of 2.5 million euros.
- Linked to the first project, which covers the guarantee by the Credit line.
- The financing of projects as a government priority.

- Up to 200 thousand euros, the financing of which is covered by the guarantee fund which is directly controlled by the lending banks, above this amount the companies, through the banks make a request to the guarantee fund, presenting the investment project.

3) Technical Assistance (1.5 million euros). Directly implemented by the Economic and Finance Ministry, it has 3 components: this could be used for example for the implementing of architects who could develop rural areas.

- Direct Assistance to the SME (600 thousand euros). A subsidies scheme by the SME to help businesses realise consulting studies (Business Plan), marketing research, acquire Know How to access credit (consulting costs up to 50%).
- Promotional Activities with CCIAA, Trade Associations, AIDA for the business environment.
- Support to the Ministry for management of costs

Meetings with stakeholders in Italy

During the Inception period different meetings have been held in Italy especially with the Albanian community, with possible partners, and local authorities, as below:

- The Italian Agency for the Cooperation & Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to obtain information on initiatives and best practices on related with diasporas.
- Ministry of labour and Social Policies, on their current engagement with Diasporas and information about mapping. Unioncamere, the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture - is the public body that unites and represents institutionally the Italian Chamber of Commerce. Established in 1901, it creates and manages services and activities of interest to Chambers of Commerce and Economic Categories.
- Mr. Cleophas Adrien Dioma, Responsible for the first Italian Summit on the Diaspora and their projects on the cooperation to Development, gave us some good inputs on the methodology used to prepare the first Italian summit on the diaspora.
- IOM Rome office, to inform them about the project and the possibility of a future collaboration for a better outcome of the project. In the meantime they offer to the project all their know-how about the Albanian diaspora in Italy with whom they are working form many years. They are available even for assisting with the research methodology, for the mapping.
- AlmaLaurea is a Interuniversity Consortium established in 1994 and currently counts 74 Universities as members (with the process of membership currently in the decision stage for 3 other ones) and represents about 90% of Italian graduates. The Consortium is supported and funded by the Universities that are part of it, by funds from the Ministry of University and Research (MIUR), by the companies and the bodies that use the services offered. From 2015 AlmaLaurea is member of SISTAN, the National Statistics System. Cineca is a non-profit Consortium, made up of 70 Italian universities, 8 Italian Research Institutions and the Italian Ministry of Education. Today it is the largest Italian computing centre, one of the most important worldwide. With more seven hundred employees, it operates in the technological transfer sector through high performance

scientific computing, the management and development of networks and web-based services, and the development of complex information systems for treating large amounts of data.

- Albanian Diaspora Associations in Italy have been contacted by emails (40). The list of associations is attached to this report as **Annex 1**. The experience in engaging with them gives the proof that the outreach activities are going to be the most important ones, and the ones that will take more time. Despite all the email sent, the answers from the associations were few. Having in mind this situation it is very important that the outreach activity is going to be well organized, and implemented. It is important to underline the fact that on the 29th of January 2018, the Cultural Italian-Albanian Association is planning a meeting with Minister Majko, and it could be a good opportunity to present and give visibility to the project itself.
- The Albanian Embassy in Rome, the Ambassador and her staff are willing to support the project, using all their official channels, and in the meantime she would like to be part of the kick-off event, and would like to jointly work on the project.

Follow up round table in Tirana

On the 21st of December 2017, a round table with project stakeholders was organised in Tirana for the presentation of the Draft Inception Report. Some updates and recommendation were provided by the stakeholders.

The State Minister for Diaspora updated on the following points:

- The creation of a National Agency for Diaspora is approved and is expected to be fully functional by mid-January 2018
- The creation of a State Committee for Diaspora is approved
- The work for the development of a National Strategy for Diaspora is ongoing. The Law on Diaspora is expected to pass in the Council of Ministers within December 2017 or in early January 2018.
- The Diaspora Council will be established soon.

The ***Italian Ambassador in Albania*** suggested to start planning the kick-off event and he remarked on eventual synergies with the banking system, as banks operating both in Albania and in Italy could be interested to engage and there are synergies to be explored.

The representative of the ***Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA***) confirmed that the Economic Diplomacy is of primary focus for the Ministry. Several activities and initiatives were undertaken in this regard, including, inter alia, a project with Harvard University for training the diplomats as well as a meeting with Ambassadors in November where issues related to diaspora engagement and economic diplomacy were highlighted. He reiterated the high interest of the MEFA on the project, in particular on the ConnectAlbania component.

The representative of the ***Ministry of Finances and Economy*** stated that the restructuring at ministry level is not yet finalized. As regards the eventual restructuring of the Albanian

Investment Development Agency (AIDA) she stated that AIDA will however remain engaged to the implementation of the project activities despite restructuring that might occur.

The representative of the ***AIDA*** confirmed that some restructuring is expected to take place in this agency and new staff is expected to join the Agency in January, also following the restructuring of the ministry. As it was highlighted, AIDA has been implementing already start-up support schemes and can better contribute to the project in this aspect. Recently an assessment of start-up schemes was carried out, which findings can contribute to the project. He informed the participants that a new law on investments is being drafted which might be of relevance for the project.

CHAPTER 3

Revisions of the Institutional roles, project activities and best practices

Institutional

Institutional engagement and establishment of the SC

At the meeting held in Tirana on the 31st of October all the Institutions confirmed their willingness to collaborate for the implementation of the project. As far as the institutional framework of the project is concerned, it is important to point out that the new Government of Albania has established new entity which work is focused entirely on the Albanian Diaspora: the State Minister for Diaspora (SMD).

The Responsibilities of the SMD are:

a) Organization, developing and implementation of state policy for Albanian citizens abroad and the countries where they live, in cooperation with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs;
b) Promoting and supporting communication and interaction between diaspora and Albanian citizens living abroad and Albanian diplomatic representations their countries of residence;
c) Promoting and supporting development of Albanian best values and traditions to Albanian citizens living abroad;
d) Cooperation with international organizations conveying and protecting the interests of Albanian citizens living abroad;
e) Supporting the preservation and cultivation of national identity, and taking initiatives to promote Albanian language, culture, traditions and any national value, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Culture;
f) Coordinating the process guaranteeing the registration and the right of the diaspora to vote, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice;
g) Managing and organizing the setting-up of a State agency for Diaspora;
h) Coordinating the organization of a National Diaspora Summit and of other national and international conferences to advance cooperation among Diaspora and Albania;
i) Cooperation with responsible ministries to stimulate foreign investment in Albania.

Hence, there is a need to duly reconsider the SC membership. During the inception period, following the several meetings held with the Albanian institutions beneficiaries to the project, all institutions (namely Ministry of Finances and Economy, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the State Minister for Diaspora) stated their consent that the third member of the SC, along with the donor and the implementing agency, should be the State Minister for Diaspora.

Institutional Engagement of other Line Ministries to programme components and mechanisms

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

When the project document was written the concept of "economic diplomacy" was not clearly developed and implemented by the GoA. Hence "Connect Albania", a specific mechanism and platform to promote foreign direct investments, was proposed to be institutionally linked to AIDA. Since September 2017, economic diplomacy is an institutional function of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and specific sector policies are in the pipeline. Hence, it is recommended that "Connect Albania" takes stock and builds on what the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is developing in this regard. It recommended that one seconded expert from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is involved in the Program, and the handover of the Platform, goes to the same Ministry, in order to ensure institutional sustainability of this very important component of the Program.

Ministry of Economy and Finance (including AIDA)

The process of institutional restructuring impacted also the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, Tourism and Entrepreneurship, whose competences and dependent Agencies (including AIDA) are, since September 2017, transferred to the Ministry of Economy and Finance. AIDA is currently under an institutional transformation. From the interviews conducted with Ministerial and AIDA representatives, notwithstanding the name and functions of the new Agency for the promotions of Investments in Albania, one of the current and most successful instruments of AIDA, the start-up schemes, will continue to be a priority. Hence, it is recommended that the Program, through the direct involvement of the Ministry of Economy and Finance in the PSC, implements the 'start-up scheme for second generations' through AIDA or the Agency which will take over the same institutional functions, in those sectors, or with those modalities, where the start-up schemes have clearly proven to be successful. One expert should be seconded to AIDA to support the implementation of the scheme.

Current status of diaspora policy and related structures

A new multi annual Strategy (and Action Plan) for Diaspora and Migration was launched by the State Minister for Diaspora in October 2017. The Strategy, though larger in political scope, reflects, in general, the Policy Document on Engaging with Albanian Communities Abroad (and Action Plan) developed in 2016 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the technical assistance of IOM Albania.

The Strategy foresees the creation of a National Agency for Diaspora, to be constituted, preferably – as stated from the State Minister – by the Albanian Parliament, in order to have a larger and bipartisan consensus.

The main objective of the work of the Agency is to develop the Institutional cooperation with the diaspora by: i) improving the status of members ACAs and the protection of their rights and interests in the countries of destination; ii) providing assistance for the conservation of national

cultural heritage; iii) encouraging economic cooperation, peace, well-being, culture and social solidarity between the country of origin and the diaspora.
As far as the ACA consultative council is concerned, there is still a work in progress and more details are to be presented to the stakeholders in the months to come. Consequently, the program document will need to be revised accordingly.
Given the upper mentioned update, the State Minister for Diaspora recommends that two seconded positions, instead of four, 1 expert and 1 assistant, be engaged for all the activities, which fall under the institutional competences of the State Minister.

Related regional/local authorities (in Albania and Italy) to involve for the implementation of the programme activities

- ✓ AIDA: the Agency is an important interlocutor for the start-up scheme. The internal expertise gained over the years by the Agency should not be lost.
- ✓ Include local authorities in the respective regions in Albania where activities will be implemented (diaspora weeks).
- ✓ The Department of strategies in the Prime Minister Office, should be involved especially with regards to the matching of skills with the needs and the fellowship programme.
- ✓ Regional Development Agencies in Albania should be included.
- ✓ Chambers of commerce should be involved in the program.

In Italy possible partners could be:

- ✓ IOM office in Rome, may provide quality inputs and know-how for the implementation of the project,
- ✓ Regione Emilia Romagna: they already have some projects on going with the diaspora.
- ✓ Other 4 identified Regions (Piedmont, Lombardy, Tuscany and Lazio).
- ✓ Municipalities of Rome, Milan and Bologna, which are already active in Diaspora engagement. They could give useful information concerning the project, especially considering the mapping of the diaspora.
- ✓ Unioncamere could provide all the information on the Albanian companies in Italy, for a mapping of the skills.
- ✓ Associations: Albanian – Italian Associations need to be involved in the project implementation.
- ✓ The National Council of New Italian Generations is an umbrella organization gathering youth associations led by youth with a migratory background who embrace multiple identities (CoNNGI http://conngi.it/). IOM Italy has signed an MOU with CoNNGI.

The other schemes that AICS Tirana is implementing under different programmes could add an important multiplier effect to the project. AICS Tirana has an important initiative in this perspective: the Italian - Albanian Program for SME Development in Albania, which aims to contribute to economic and social growth of Albania, facilitating lending to small and medium enterprises in Albania.

The overall objective of the program is to contribute to Albania's economic growth and the strengthening of its economic relations with European Union. The objective of this program is to develop and strengthen the private sector (SMEs,) to enter in the private banking system. The Credit Line management is done through Private Commercial Banks (BTP), which are included in the program, which deliver the loans to SMEs. This program started in January 2009 and now is the sixth year of implementation.

Priority sectors supported by this program are: Agriculture and agro-food, natural production projects for energy efficiency / energy conservation & projects with low environmental impact or to reduce environmental pollution; projects aimed to create new jobs, as well as localized projects in less developed areas of the country

Programme Document

Horizontal – Inception and Monitoring Team

The Technical Advisory Board

Considering that three months have already passed since the official start of the program, and s three months of the project will mostly concern visibility and communication actions, it is recommended that TAB works on 30 months out of 36.

In all the consultation meetings with ACA in Italy emerged the need to have credible and committed reference persons who would ensure proper implementation of programs activities in Italy. It is recommended that a focal point in each Region is hired from IOM in order to guarantee the necessary liaison between activities and partners in both countries. These positions were not foreseen in the program document. They could be introduced and replace the function of the TAB secretariat, which could be embedded in the functions of the Program Management Team.

Horizontal – Communication and Visibility Strategy

Continuous communication and visibility actions were some of the most frequent suggestions coming out from the meetings with ACA in Italy during the Inception phase. Every single step of the project should be made visible, so that the diaspora is updated on what is going on. In addition to the need for information, the visibility of the project initiatives and activities and the results will contribute to building trust on the programme. A communication strategy needs to be developed including understanding the different target groups and the different methods of communication for these different groups. At this stage it is recommended that specific spots/short films telling stories of successful Albanians abroad, as well as stories of successful beneficiaries of the Program, be developed throughout the project lifespan. RTSH 3, the National broadcasting TV channel on diaspora, could be a very useful tool to disseminate programs activities and results. Another recommendation is to continuously align the communication strategy to the communication strategy of AICS Tirana and governmental partners.

Outcome 1

The key recommendation for Outcome 1, stemming out from the institutional roundtable organized by IOM in November 2017, is related to the consolidation of outreach activities, especially in Italy, as a precondition for program success. Hence, it is recommended to organize at least 2 additional activities (launch and feed-back) for each identified Region.
It is recommended that a high level visibility launching event take place in the beginning of 2018, given the major political relevance of the Program for both the Albanian and Italian governments.

The State Minister for Diaspora recommends that the number of seconded staff, under his Ministry, passes from 4 to 2. This due to the fact that more qualitative, rather than quantitative work, is needed to establish a functional National Agency for Diaspora and State Committee for Diaspora.

The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs recommends that an online course (in order to optimize cost/efficiency and impact) with a focus on economic diplomacy is delivered to all the diplomatic representations of Albania abroad and to a significant number of selected professionals of ACA. This would also help to select proper development agents for Connect Albania. Hence, it is recommended the online course replaces the more general (and limited to number of participants) and traditional course initially planned.

Finally, it is recommended to rely on the already existing institutional web platform www.diaspora.gov.al and mainstream all other web platforms/tools to it, in order to ensure institutional sustainability and this will also have a positively impacts on the management of information and communication flow. This would bring also to some savings that could be used to plan additional communication and visibility actions.

Outcome 2

In all the consultation meetings with ACA in Italy there emerged the need to have a capillary involvement of the ACA associations and communities in Italy, and especially in the identified Regions. Hence, it is recommended, in line with IOM best practices, to involve ACA associations in the data collection for the mapping of ACA communities in Italy.

As far as the selection of two other countries for mapping is concerned, it is recommended to choose among United Kingdom, France, Canada and Belgium. This based on the following criteria: i) there are no development agencies in Albania which might potentially finance a similar research (such as for example the United States, Switzerland, Austria and Germany); ii) these countries have an intellectual/ professional Albanian communities, not in-depth studied in the recent years.

From some consultation meetings with ACA in Italy some preliminary suggestions came out with regards to some possible professions to be included in the Fellowship scheme: architects, urbanists, engineers, doctors, specialised farmers, etc. However, it is deemed that, in this phase,

it is appropriate not to give any ex ante sector suggestion. A general recommendation, none the less, is to focus in a few, but strategic sectors, in order to pilot replicable experiences and to create critical mass and mutual trust, as well as to focus in those sectors funded by the Italian Cooperation where there is potential for multiplier effects in the future.

Outcome 3

The key recommendation of Outcome 3 is related to the shift of Connect Albania from a merely economic instrument to more strategic economic diplomacy vision. This would ensure institutional sustainability and give a certified and enhanced role to development agents. Hence, it is recommended to strengthen the role of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs in the Connect Albania platform.

Another key recommendation for Outcome 3 is to align and add coherence to the two strands of Italian technical assistance: Connect Albania and Start-up Fund. Specifically, given the relatively low allocated funds for each technical assistance component, and given that no specific similar experience, in terms of Connect Albania, exists in Italy, it is recommended to acquire technical assistance based on: i) capacity to reach the Albanian communities in Italy; ii) specific work experience with start-up schemes for migrants.

As far as the selection of some potential sectors for the start-up schemes is concerned, the same recommendation elaborated for the Fellowship scheme is valid, meaning to focus on few but key sectors in order to create trust on the mechanisms for second generations and community of graduated Albanians in Italy. Worth to cite that in some regional meetings a specific sector was mentioned as important: tourism. It is hence recommended to have a more in-depth appraisal on the potential of the tourism sector in the start-up scheme.

Best Practices and related initiatives

Following the contacts with the stakeholders and especially with IOM RO Vienna and IOM Rome, a number of similar projects have been pointed out as best practices.

Fellowship Programmes

"Migration for Development in the Western Balkans" (MIDWEB).

From 1.2.2010 to 30.11.2012 the project MIDWEB made a contribution to the reconstruction and the development of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and UNSC Resolution 1244 administered Kosovo. This was facilitated by temporary assignments of highly qualified persons, who originate from these countries and lived during the project implementation period in Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The participants had to possess an EU or Swiss citizenship or should have a permanent residence permit status; hold a university degree; have at least three years of relevant working experience, preferably in the realm of teaching and in project based work show good communicative skills.

MIDWEB sent highly qualified migrants to the particular target countries. They were selected on the basis of skills and experiences as well as on the particular needs of the target country. The duration of the assignments was in average two months. Beside the physical deployment of the resource persons, virtual return and remote engagement was also explored.
http://www.iomvienna.at/en/midweb-migration-development-western-balkans

PARE 1+1 improving Moldova's Remittance – based Investment Program.

The Program "PARE 1+1" aimed to make remittances "work" and bring value and became an effective tool to stimulate the creation of new businesses in rural areas by contributing to regional development. Its general objective was the mobilization of human and financial resources of Moldavian migrants in sustainable economic development of Moldova. At the national level, it contributed to solve such problems as: low level of remittances investments, especially in rural areas, limited SMEs access to financial and informational resources, low level of entrepreneurial and financial education, huge number of emigrants, especially from rural areas, low level of start-up survival, etc. IOM supported the conceptualization, launching and pilot testing of the program, under and EU-funded project in 2008-2010.
http://www.iom.md/pare-11-improving-moldovas-remittance-based-investment-program

Migration and development initiatives

Diaspora Engagement in Economic Development

Diaspora Engagement in Economic Development (DEED) is a program funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and implemented in cooperation with United Nations Development Program in Kosovo. The DEED Program is an innovative initiative to encourage Kosovo Diaspora to be more actively involved in the economic development of the country and their communities of origin.
The project consisted of three main components:
1) An increased gender-sensitive access and literacy of remittance receiving households in Kosovo to financial services in order to promote the accumulation of local savings and investment;
2) Models and mechanisms that facilitate migrants' investment and savings in Kosovo are identified and piloted;
3) Evidence-based policies created by Kosovo authorities who have improved capacity to produce and manage information related to migration and development, including gender disaggregated data. Each component targets different beneficiaries: the first focuses on remittance-receiving households whereas the second targets members of the Kosovo diaspora and Kosovar migrants. The third component targets mainly Kosovo authorities who benefit from the first two outcomes as well. IOM is involved in the implementation of activities under the second and third components delineated above. These activities include assessment and

feasibility studies for models that enable migrant investment in Kosovo as well as technical support to the Ministry of Diaspora (MoD). http://kosovo.iom.int/diaspora-engagement-economic-development

Diaspora and Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The project has three main outcomes, as follows:
- Policies for an effective engagement of diaspora as true partners for the country's development designed and implemented, clearly identifying areas for state actions and responding to diaspora needs.
- Local governments proactively connect with diaspora and their hometown associations, deliver tailored public services and measures, and facilitate diaspora's engagement in local economic development.
- Private sector in the country and in diaspora interact effectively through knowledge and skills transfer, networking and investments, thus leveraging job creation and economic growth.
https://bih.iom.int/sites/default/files/downloads/publications/Diaspora%20and%20Development%20of%20Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina.pdf

Migra Venture

is a project promoted by the IOM, in collaboration with the Etimos Foundation and financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. It aims to support migrant entrepreneurs who would like to start economic activities in Africa. The project aims to select the best companies' ideas, which will benefits from a support path to access to all the financial instruments of micro-equity.
http://www.etimos.org/progetti/archivio-progetti/migraventure/

Connecting Diaspora for Development (CD4D)

CD4D supports the development of targeted sectors in selected countries by strengthening the capacity of key institutions through the engagement of their diaspora communities in the Netherlands. Engaging diaspora with their countries of origin is an important aspect of IOM's work. IOM's new project CD4D enables diaspora professionals to use their knowledge and expertise for the reconstruction and development of their country of origin. CD4D is a continuation of IOM's successful Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) project. The CD4D project is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Many countries have a considerable number of professionals among their diaspora communities in the Netherlands. They also face brain drain and often lack qualified human resources. Through temporary physical and online assignments, professional diaspora members, residing in the Netherlands, are linked to institutions in their countries of origin to share knowledge and expertise. To enhance the impact of the assignments, internships and training opportunities are offered in the Netherlands for representatives of host institutions. Diaspora experts are instrumental in establishing and maintaining sustainable links between institutions in the Netherlands and institutions in the target countries. The project facilitates various connections that will be established and maintained:

- Connections between diaspora experts and representatives of host institutions;
- Connections between institutions in the Netherlands and host institutions;
- Connections between diaspora experts themselves.

http://www.iom-nederland.nl/en/migratie-en-ontwikkeling/connecting-diaspora-for-development

MIDA Programme

The Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) strategy is the outcome of an initiative of the African States and their Diasporas aimed at strengthening the institutional capacities of Africa through the mobilization of resources from those Diasporas. Various African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Somalia, have moved to set up MIDA programs. The MIDA programs made possible to develop mechanisms for analyzing the needs in the major development sectors of the African countries, through consultations with a large range of development actors, in order to draw up a picture of the development sectors that are suffering a shortage of qualified resources, expertise or management capacity. These mechanisms have to form part of a process of buy-in by the African countries. IOM ensures that these tools have the objective of promoting the role of African governments in a long-term process of active cooperation with the diaspora in the definition of national policies, their implementation, and the organization of multi-year economic growth programs and poverty reduction programs. https://www.iom.int/mida

The New Zealand Diaspora initiative (KEA)

KEA (https://www.keanewzealand.com) was conceived and launched at the Knowledge Wave Conference in Auckland in August 200. The New Zealand Government increased its commitment to the country's offshore community with major funding that enabled Kea to improve its infrastructure and develop a world-class website, launched in July 2005.

in March 2006, more than 18,000 overseas New Zealanders participated in Every One Counts, New Zealand's largest-ever census of New Zealanders overseas.

Surveys, Projects and Programmes

Every Vote Counts

Kea's global campaign, Every Vote Counts, encouraged New Zealanders around the world to vote in the 2008 General Election. The campaign launch was associated with an immediate and sustained increase in voter enrolments from overseas, and with the highest number of overseas votes in any peacetime General Election.

Diaspora Investment into New Zealand

In 2011 Kea undertook an in-depth research study to understand the motivations of expats to

invest into the productive economy. The aim was to validate the potential of the diaspora to encourage Foreign Direct Investment into New Zealand by determining the segmentation of investor types and the type of investment opportunities that would be attractive to them; to quantify the level of prospective investors in the diaspora and economic value add potential; and to identify key investor roadblocks to attracting investment into certain segments

Every Kiwi Counts

In 2013 Kea held the Every Kiwi Counts survey which asked 12,000 expats about their connection to New Zealand and their life offshore.

AIDA Funding Schemes

Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) is divided into four main departments:

- ✓ Investment and Service Directory
- ✓ SMEs and Export Directory
- ✓ BRIC and Marketing Directory
- ✓ Support Services Directory

The objective of the Investment Department is to promote Albania as an investment destination and to facilitate and support direct investment in Albania, through the identification and promotion of investment opportunities, offering services and support to existing or potential investors. AIDA also offers additional aftercare services aiming to successfully fulfill the demands of foreign investors even after the successful completion of projects.

AIDA helps more specifically through, studies, research on the business climate; information about business conditions and opportunities in Albania; contacts within national and regional government agencies - links with potential partners; detailed statistical and survey data about Albania and its key sectors; identification of sites and buildings; project management support throughout the investment cycle.

Regarding the strategic investments the FDI Department is able to:

- Facilitate administrative procedures and reduce legislative complexity for strategic investments
- Due diligence procedure (AIDA completes the due diligence within 30 days of the submission of an application)
- Support with the necessary infrastructure
- Provision of immovable assets to develop and implement strategic investment projects

AIDA has 4 main funds available for the entrepreneurs that are willing to invest in Albania better describe here below:

Competitiveness Fund

Competitiveness Fund aims to serve the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises. The objective of this initiative is to help Albanian companies to be part of foreign markets with their products, providing the necessary financial support for activities that will assist in the implementation of their marketing plan to export. The government has allocated 28 million ALL for 2017. A company can benefit a maximum amount of 1.4 million ALL for the project. The scheme covers 70% of the costs recognized within the above limit. In a year, it can assist one project for each company.

Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund is a grant scheme that provides direct subsidy for small and medium Enterprises (SME). Innovation fund will assist companies in overcoming the obstacles they face in becoming more innovative and competitive.
The government has allocated 10 million ALL for 2017.

- A company can benefit a maximum amount of 400 thousand ALL for the project.
- The grant scheme covers 50% of costs accepted, within the above limit.

Fund of Creative Economy (Craft)

The Fund of Creative Economy was created to serve the Micro and Small Enterprises that operate on the craft sector. The purpose of the fund is: Development of crafts and handicrafts sector in Albania, creating favorable conditions for more sustainable economic activities on this sector and job creation

The government has allocated 10 million ALL for, 2017.

- A company can benefit a maximum amount of 500 thousand ALL for the project
- The scheme covers 60% -80% of the costs recognized within the limit

Start-Up Fund

The fund aims to support the newly established businesses "Start-Up" in Albania, through direct financial subsidies by improving the climate and their operating conditions, with a view to create sustainable economic development and job opportunities.
The government has allocated 10 million ALL for 2017.

- A company can benefit a maximum amount of 300 thousand ALL for the project;
- The scheme covers 70% of the expenditure approved within the above limit;
- The fund payment will made 50% at the beginning of the project and 50% at the end of the project.

Tourist Entrepreneurship Fund

In 2017, there was established a new scheme under the Decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 390, dated 03.05.2017, called Tourist Entrepreneurship Fund, lasting for the next three years (2017 – 2019), with an amount of 30, 000, 000 ALL. This scheme aims to support the development of the tourism sector in Albania, creating a favourable environment with an impact on the country's sustainable economic development and the creation of new jobs.

This fund provides direct financial assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that develop their activity as tourism ventures, such as:

- Host accommodation facility in rural areas;
- Agro-tourism and traditional culinary area services.

The scheme covers only form 60% up to 80% of eligible and approved costs for each project application, with a maximum of 1 million ALL per project.

Something important to point out is that the outreach is fundamental for this kind of projects, and to obtain the best results as possible this part activity of the project has to be well planned and it does take a lot of time. As IOM already did in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with a similar project, underneath reported, they made up on line questionnaires, using “Survey Monkey”, face to face interviews, using both focal points in the territory and using the consulate networks or embassies. The questionnaires should be written by experts knowing exactly what the outcomes should be. This questionnaire should not be too long, and they should have a good prior period of communication and visibility of the project. This kind of communication should arrive to the Embassy, to the Consulates, to all the Associations, the information should be spread out using TV and radio channels together with online networks.

Recommendations

Key recommendations from the inception phase included the following:

- Include the State Minister for Diaspora in the project documents, among the partner institutions and as member of the Steering Committee;
- "Connect Albania" takes stock and builds on what the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is developing on "Economic diplomacy" as an institutional function of this ministry, shifting this platform from AIDA to MEFA;
- Two seconded staff, 1 Expert and 1 Assistant, to be engaged with the State Minister for Diaspora, to support the National Agency for Diaspora and State Committee for Diaspora and implementation of related activities;
- One seconded Expert to be engaged with AIDA, to support the implementation of the start-up scheme and implementation of related activities;
- One seconded Expert to be engaged with MEFA, to support the development of ConnectAlbania platform and implementation of related activities;
- It is recommended that the current Action Plan for Diaspora and Migration is updated with the content of the present Program Document.
- Five Italian Regions should be considered as priority Regions, considering higher presence of Albanians and high potential for development (Lombardia, Toscana, Emilia-Romagna, Piemonte and Lazio). It is recommended that a focal point in each Region is engaged, to guarantee the necessary liaison between activities and partners in both countries (to replace TAB secretariat). The focal point should also liaise with possible partners such as IOM office in Rome, Municipalities in the abovementioned regions, Unioncamere, Associations of Albanian Diaspora etc.
- The Technical Advisory Board (TAB) will work for 30 months.
- Local authorities in Albania, chambers of commerce and regional development agencies should be involved.
- Rely on the existing web platform www.diaspora.gov.al and mainstream other platforms to it.
- Department of strategies in the Prime Minister Office, should be involved especially with regards to the matching of skills with the needs and the fellowship programme.

Recommendations for formal changes

- Insert the State Minister for Diaspora in the partner institutions;
- Change terminology from "ACA" to "Diaspora"
- Reflect the exact names of the "National Agency for Diaspora" and "State Committee for Diaspora" (instead of Council)

Implementation Plan and Geographical coverage of activities

In the institutional roundtable organized in November 2017, AICS Tirana, State Minister for Diaspora and the Italian Embassy suggested that an initial 3-4 months operational plan, including relevant and frequent outreach activities in Italy, is of crucial importance for the program's success. Consequently, a 4-months operational planned has been developed in the Inception phase. Its main components are:

i. Program management team and seconded experts fully operational;
ii. Intensification of outreach for the period February – May (at least 5 meetings in Italy to present the program);
iii. Launch of the Programme in Albania;
iv. Launch of calls for applications for ACA associations to be involved in the outreach activities organization;
v. Launch of calls for applications and selection of 5 focal points (one in each Region)
vi. Launch of calls for applications and selection of 6 member of the Technical Advisory Board;
vii. Launch of call for applications and selection for ACA mapping;
viii. Launch of call for applications and selection of Italian technical assistance for Connect Albania and start-up scheme;
ix. Priority sectors for the Fellowship fund and the start-up scheme selected;
x. Decision on other 2 countries relevant for the ACA mapping;
xi. Communication and visibility strategy for the program in place;

Staff Terms of References

In addition to the experts that will be seconded to the partner institutions, the project will recruit other staff to be implemented.
The staff to be recruited includes:

- Programme Manager;
- Connect Albania and Grant Coordinator;
- Information and Media Coordinator;
- Programme and Procurement Assistant.

Below the Terms of Reference of the staff that will be engaged.

Programme Manager

1. Carry out all necessary tasks for the daily management of the program and report to the IOM HoO in Albania on the program´s progress, challenges, and other relevant developments;
2. Lead the planning and budgeting, programming, evaluation and administration as well as oversee implementation of the program by ensuring guidance for the timely implementation of all the components of the program;

3. Be responsible for the implementation of all the Program activities as well as monitor the activities/results of the project by developing and applying results-based management approaches;
4. Supervise and provide guidance to the program staff as well as to external experts and consultants and coordinate the work between the different implementation levels;
5. Ensure coordination and communication with Government counterparts and community groups for the implementation of program activities in line with IOM policies and donor instructions;
6. Work in close collaboration with the relevant stakeholders involved in the program - both those from country of origin (Albania) and destination (Italy and the other potential selected countries), as well as with national and international actors involved in implementing migration and development initiatives and research, in order to identify and apply best practices and models developed by other partners;
7. Ensure coherence between the program activities and other projects/programs funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in Albania and in the region, as well as other diaspora engagement and/or relevant development related projects in Albania, and liaise with the donor to support potential actions to involve the "Sistema Italia" in the program;
8. Participate in the Steering Committee meetings, sectorial and working group meetings; support coordination and relations with the Technical Advisory Board;
9. Ensure that the program works in synergy and complementarity with other on-going projects/programs in Albania related to human capital development and return of qualified skills, in order to avoid overlapping and waste of resources;
10. Ensure know how transfer, working in synergy and complementarity with other ongoing projects/programs within the SEE region among the missions which are implementing diaspora engagement or mainstreaming migration projects;
11. Develop partnerships with local actors including Government actors, universities, business community, diaspora communities, civil society, UN and I/NGOs partners as relevant;
12. Utilize lessons learned from past activities and beneficiary feedback to revise implementation strategies and action plans accordingly;
13. Ensure the integration of cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender, environment, children and other vulnerable groups in the program activities;
14. Provide financial and administrative backstopping for projects, and the tracking of all program expenditures, to ensure budget recommendations are met and financial tracking instruments are reconciled and that all funds are spent in accordance with IOM standards and donor guidelines;
15. Provide timely implementation, as well as progress, narrative and financial reports as per the IOM reporting requirements;
16. Ensure monitoring and evaluation of the program in compliance with the IOM Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit;
17. Perform such other duties as may be assigned.

ConnectAlbania and Grant Coordinator

1. Coordinate the ConnectAlbania and start - up support component;
2. Assist with the capacity building activities for the development of the ConnectAlbania platform in particular, as well as on boosting the economic engagement of ACA in general;
3. Assist with the development of the concept of 'ConnectAlbania' investment boosting platform, in coordination with the information/communications specialist;
4. Participate in the development of an information toolkit for Development Agents from the AC A in Italy in collaboration with AIDA;
5. Assist the work for the development and launch of the bonus scheme for the development agents;
6. Coordinate and monitor the delivery of development agents bonus for successful referrals leading to employment;
7. Coordinate with the IT company to ensure maintenance and upgrade/update of the platform based on needs, throughout the program;
8. Participate in the development of the support scheme for second generation migrants from Italy;
9. Review the narrative components of all grants and reports closely to ensure that the grant development process and approved grant records successfully convey the goals and strategic objectives of the programme;
10. Check the overall quality of grants documentation to ensure a high level of quality of grants documentation and timely entry of all relevant grant information;
11. Assist on conducting the preliminary assessment of business proposals in line with program criteria and local needs;
12. Maintain up - to - the minute Grant Activity Matrix and filing system of all grant documentation and ensure grant documents are being filled correctly an d are shared in a timely manner;
13. Maintain an extensive filing system of documentation related to individual grants;
14. Working in close coordination with the administrative and finance teams regularly reconcile financial tracking of the Grants Data base with IOM financial systems;
15. Continuously monitor the progress of activities supported through grants and report accordingly to the Programme Manager and HoO;
16. Maintain a reporting system of programmatic activity for donors, and counterparts within the programme, the Mission and IOM as required;
17. Assist in organizing an international workshop to present the best practices and advise GoA on implementation of future similar initiatives;
18. Assist in drafting reports, updates and briefings on project related issues on a regular basis as well as upon request;
19. Perform any other duties as may be assigned.

Information and Media Coordinator

1. Support drafting the program visibility strategy and building broader communications and branding strategy with diaspora in Italy, in coordination with the PM and HoO, including goal and objectives, target audiences, key messages, innovative information tools and channels as well as prepare a detailed plan of actions;

2. Set up evaluation benchmarks and indicators for the campaign including gender sensitive indicators;
3. Coordinate communication and media related activities planned under the program;
4. Assist the GoA institutions on their visibility and branding vis-à-vis the diaspora;
5. Monitor regularly reporting of activities in the media, including social media such as Facebook, T witter, Instagram and You Tube;
6. Monitor interactions with followers of social media outlets and participate in dialogue around relevant topics and events;
7. Undertake broader data analysis on diaspora communications through analyzing diaspora use of Albanian media sites using Google Analytics
8. Participate in the development of social media campaigns and make recommendations for the implementation;
9. Support in designing the content, format and agenda of outreach and visibility events in accordance with the project document and assist in the planning;
10. Compile materials for upload on the IOM Albania website and IOM Albania social media channels;
11. Assist in regularly update mission documents, such as the reports, information sheets, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, and other written reports and materials on the programme activities;
12. Ensure that there is appropriate gender awareness as well as migrants' rights awareness in all IOM communications in relation to the programme;
13. Assist in the planning, logistics and organization of meetings as requested;
14. Coordinate with media, partners and government counterparts, as well as provide input on the development of new media activities;
15. Assist in drafting reports, updates and briefings on project related issues on a regular basis as well as upon request;
16. Perform such other duties as may be assigned.

Programme/Procurement Assistant

1. Assist day to day implementation of project activities, in close coordination and cooperation with other project staff;
2. Assist in the organization of project related meetings, workshops and training activities and coordinate with project partners and government counterparts;
3. Participate in co - ordination/information meetings, conferences, seminars, round tables, trainings, etc. related to project activities and prepares minutes and reports;
4. Assist in drafting reports, updates and briefings on project related issues on a regular basis as well as upon request;
5. Assist the conduct of the monitoring site visits for projects;
6. Maintain ac curate programme filing system;
7. Assist in the planning and coordination of arrangements for conducting program events such as workshops, trainings, study visits, outreach activities and other events and meetings through procuring necessary event organizing services as needed;
8. Liaise with the relevant IOM Tirana units on all administrative, logistic and procurement related issues;

9. Prepare procurement related documentation and ensure full compliance of procurement activities with IOM rules, regulations, policies and strategies;
10. Assist in the procurement processes, including preparation of request of quotations/proposals, receipt of quotations, bids or proposals, their evaluation, assist in negotiation and conclusion of contracts;
11. Ensure proper maintenance of procurement records, regular update of contract, procurement and administrative hard copies and electronic data bases as relevant ;
12. Support the assessment of fellowship propos also and start-up proposals and compile the necessary documentation;
13. Support the assessment of SME start - ups and spin offs for ACA second generation proposals and compile the necessary documentation;
14. Perform other duties as may be assigned.

Conclusions

Based on the inception findings, the following paragraphs offer a list of key recommendations to the Program Steering Committee (PSC). The recommendations are structured as follows.

Institutional

Institutional engagement and establishment of the PSC

It is of utmost necessity, given the institutional reconfiguration of the GoA after the 2017 summer elections (constitution of the Minister of State for Diaspora), to find a political agreement on the GoA representation in the PSC. After having analyzed thoroughly the Ministerial competences, and conducted interviews with the relevant Line Ministries, most of the project activities fall under the competency of the Minister of State for Diaspora. Hence, it is recommended that the Minister of State for Diaspora sits in the PSC, with other Ministries having a proactive role.

Institutional engagement to programme components and mechanisms

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

When the project document was written the concept of "economic diplomacy" was not clearly developed and implemented by the GoA. Hence "Connect Albania", a specific mechanism and platform to promote foreign direct investments, was proposed to be institutionally linked to AIDA. Since September 2017, economic diplomacy is an institutional function of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and specific sector policies are in the pipeline. Hence, it is recommended that "Connect Albania" takes stock and builds on what the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is developing in this regard. It recommended that one seconded expert from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is involved in the Program, and the handover of the Platform, goes to the same Ministry, in order to ensure institutional sustainability of this very important component of the Program.

Ministry of Economy and Finance (and AIDA)

The process of institutional restructuring impacted also the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, Tourism and Entrepreneurship, whose competences and dependent Agencies (including AIDA) are, since September 2017, transferred to the Ministry of Economy and Finance. AIDA is currently under an institutional transformation. From the interviews conducted with Ministerial and AIDA representatives, notwithstanding the name and functions of the new Agency for the promotions of Investments in Albania, one of the current and most successful instruments of AIDA, the start-up schemes, will continue to be a priority. Hence, it is recommended that the Program, through the direct involvement of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, implements the 'start-up scheme for second generations' through AIDA or the Agency which will take over the same institutional functions, in those sectors, or with those modalities, where the start-up schemes have clearly proven to be successful. It is recommended to second one expert to the Agency to support the implementation of the scheme.

Current status of diaspora policy and related structures.

A new multi annual Strategy (and Action Plan) for Diaspora and Migration was launched by the State Minister for Diaspora in October 2017. The Strategy, though larger in political scope, reflects, in general, the ACA Engagement Policy (and Action Plan) developed in 2016 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the technical assistance of IOM Albania. It is recommended that the current Action Plan for Diaspora and Migration is updated with the content of the present Program Document.

Related regional/local authorities (in Albania and Italy) to involve for the implementation of programme activities.

Five Italian Regions were identified as priority Regions during the Inception phase (Lazio, Toscana, Emilia-Romagna, Lombardia and Piemonte). Several criteria were used for the identification (demographic, integration index, presence of ACA enterprises, economic potential for internationalization, involvement of local authorities in migration & development initiatives, etc). It is recommended that Italian local entities are strongly and proactively involved in the organization of outreach activities and in the promotion of the program's mechanisms (fellowships, start-ups, Connect Albania). Coordination with IOM Italy will be foreseen, as local authorities are primary interlocutors of IOM Italy owing to various national and European projects that involve them as partners and beneficiaries e.g. Admin4All, TandEM, Skills2Work, etc.

Program document

Horizontal – Inception and Monitoring Team

The Technical Advisory Board - Since three months have already passed since the official start of the program, and since the last three months of the project will mostly concern visibility and communication actions, it is recommended that TAB works on 30 months instead of 36.

In all the consultation meetings with ACA in Italy there emerged the need to have credible and committed reference persons who would ensure proper implementation of programs activities in Italy. It is recommended that a focal point in each Region is engaged by IOM in order to guarantee the necessary liaison between activities and partners in both countries. These positions were not foreseen in the program document. They could be introduced and replace the function of the TAB secretariat, which could be embedded in the functions of the Program Management Team. Engagement modalities as well as monitoring to be defined.

Horizontal – Communication and Visibility Strategy

The Communication and Visibility Strategy of the programme should be developed around continuous communication and visibility actions. The need for intensive information and communication on the programme activities was one of the most frequent suggestions coming out from the meetings with ACA in Italy during the Inception phase. The strategy tools it is recommended to include specific spots/short films telling stories of successful Albanians abroad,

as well as stories of successful beneficiaries of the Program, developed throughout the project lifespan. In addition to the audio-visual mass media in general as well as online and social media networks, specifically RTSH 3, the National broadcasting TV channel on diaspora, could be a very useful tool to disseminate programs activities and results. Another recommendation is to continuously align the communication strategy to the communication strategy of AICS Tirana and governmental partners.

Outcome 1

The key recommendation for Outcome 1, stemming out from the institutional roundtable organized by IOM in November 2017, is related to the consolidation of outreach activities, especially in Italy, as a precondition for program success. Hence, it is recommended to organize at least 2 additional activities (launch and feed-back) for each identified Region. Coordination with IOM Italy will be ensured, especially considering extensive network of contacts with diaspora communities and migrants associations IOM Italy has.

It is recommended that a high level visibility launching event take place in the beginning of 2018, given the major political relevance of the Program for both the Albanian and Italian governments.

The State Minister for Diaspora recommends that the number of seconded staff, under his Ministry, passes from 4 to 2. This due to the fact that more qualitative, rather than quantitative work, is needed to establish a functional National Agency for Diaspora and State Committee for Diaspora.

The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs recommends that an online course (in order to optimize cost/efficiency and impact) with a focus on economic diplomacy is delivered to all the diplomatic representations of Albania abroad and to a significant number of selected professionals of ACA. This would also help to select proper development agents for Connect Albania. Hence, it is recommended the online course replaces the more general (and limited to number of participants) and traditional course initially planned.

Finally, it is recommended to rely on the already existing institutional web platform www.diaspora.gov.al and mainstream all other web platforms/tools to it, in order to ensure institutional sustainability. This would bring also to some savings that could be used to plan additional communication and visibility actions.

Outcome 2

In all the consultation meetings with ACA in Italy there emerged the need to have a capillary involvement of the ACA associations and communities in Italy, and especially in the identified Regions. Hence, it is recommended, in line with IOM best practices, to involve ACA associations in the data collection for the mapping of ACA communities in Italy, considering also that there is

a wide network of associations in Italy working on Migration and Development with IOM, and IOM Italy is developing a database.
As far as the selection of two other countries for mapping is concerned, it is recommended to choose among United Kingdom, France, Canada, Belgium. This based on the following criteria: i) there are no development agencies in Albania which might potentially finance a similar research (such as for example the United States, Switzerland, Austria, Germany); ii) these countries have an intellectual/professional Albanian communities, not in-depth studied in the recent years. Belgium and UK could be more recommended due to a stronger organisation of diaspora organisations.

From some consultation meetings with ACA in Italy some preliminary suggestions came out with regards to some possible professions to be included in the Fellowship scheme: architects, urbanists, engineers, doctors, specialised farmers, etc. However, it is deemed that, in this phase, it is appropriate not to give any ex ante sector suggestion. A general recommendation, nonetheless, is to focus in a few, but strategic sectors, in order to pilot replicable experiences and to create critical mass and mutual trust, as well as to focus in those sectors funded by the Italian Cooperation where there is potential for multiplier effects in the future.

Outcome 3

The key recommendation of Outcome 3 is related to the shift of Connect Albania from a merely economic instrument to more strategic economic diplomacy vision. This would ensure institutional sustainability and give a certified and enhanced role to development agents. Hence, it is recommended to strengthen the role of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs in the Connect Albania platform.
Another key recommendation for Outcome 3 is to align and add coherence to the two strands of Italian technical assistance: Connect Albania and Start-up Fund. Specifically, given the relatively low allocated funds for each technical assistance component, and given that no specific similar experience, in terms of Connect Albania, exists in Italy, it is recommended to acquire technical assistance based on: i) capacity to reach the Albanian communities in Italy; ii) specific work experience with start-up schemes for migrants.

As far as the selection of some potential sectors for the start-up schemes is concerned, the same recommendation elaborated for the Fellowship scheme is valid, meaning to focus on few but key sectors in order to create trust on the mechanisms for second generations and community of graduated Albanians in Italy.
Worth to cite that in some regional meetings a specific sector was mentioned as important: tourism. It is hence recommended to have a more in-depth appraisal on the potential of the tourism sector in the start-up scheme.

Implementation plan February – May 2018

In the institutional roundtable organized in November 2017, AICS Tirana, State Minister for Diaspora and the Italian Embassy suggested that an initial 4 months operational plan, including relevant and frequent outreach activities in Italy, is of crucial importance for the program's success. Consequently, a 4-months operational planned has been developed in the Inception phase. Its main components are:

i. Intensification of outreach for the period January – April (at least 5 meetings in Italy to present the program), in coordination with IOM Italy;
ii. Launch of the Programme in Albania;
iii. Engage with ACA associations to be involved in the outreach activities organization, modalities to be defined, in coordination with IOM Italy;
iv. Program management team and seconded experts fully operational;
v. Launch of calls for applications and selection of 5 focal points (one in each Region), in coordination with IOM Italy;
vi. Launch of calls for applications and selection of 6 member of the Technical Advisory Board;
vii. Launch of call for applications and selection for ACA mapping;
viii. Launch of call for applications and selection of Italian technical assistance for Connect Albania and start-up scheme;
ix. Priority sectors for the Fellowship fund and the start-up scheme selected;
x. Decision on other 2 countries relevant for the ACA mapping;
xi. Communication and visibility strategy for the program in place.