

# INTRODUCTION

USAID is proud to present the thirteenth edition of the NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, covering developments in 2009.

For the thirteenth year, the NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia reports on the strength and overall viability of NGO sectors in each country in the region, from the Baltic countries to Central Asia. The Index highlights both advances and setbacks in sectoral development, and allows for comparisons across countries and subregions over time. The Index is an important and unique tool for local NGOs, governments, donors, academics, and others to understand and measure the sustainability of the NGO sector. The effectiveness of the NGO Sustainability Index model led USAID to expand the use of this tool to Africa; the first-ever NGO Sustainability Index for Africa will be published in 2010, covering nineteen African countries.

The NGO Sustainability Index analyzes and assigns scores to seven interrelated dimensions: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure, and public image. The scores for the dimensions are averaged to produce an overall sustainability score. A panel of NGO practitioners and experts in each country assesses the sector's performance in each of the seven dimensions. A Washington-based editorial committee of technical and regional experts reviews the panel's findings. In some countries, expert panels are convened in several regions of the country in order to accurately reflect regional differences.

Based on their scores, countries fall within three basic stages of development in terms of NGO sustainability: consolidation, mid-transition and early transition. More detail about the methodology used to calculate scores is provided in Sections 1 through 3 (pages 12-19).

In addition to separate reports on twenty-nine countries, this year's Index includes two articles examining trends affecting NGO sustainability in the region: the impact of the global financial crisis, and the rise in the use of social media and other new technologies. The 2009 Index includes at the outset of each report a statistical summary showing this year's scores for each dimension, plus the overall score, as well as identification of the capital, population, and a summary of basic economic indicators. Reports include comparative information regarding prior years' dimension scores, encapsulated in easy-to-read charts. The Index also features statistical appendices summarizing this year's dimension scores; as well as, scores for 1997-2009.

A publication of this type would not be possible without the contributions of many. Specific acknowledgements of the USAID field personnel and NGO implementers responsible for the Index appear on the following page. USAID would also like to thank the local NGOs who helped to organize expert group discussions and draft reports in many of the countries. We would further like to express our deepest gratitude to all of the local NGO experts, USAID partners, and international donors who participated in the expert group discussions in each country. Their knowledge, perceptions, ideas, observations, and contributions are the foundation upon which this Index is based.