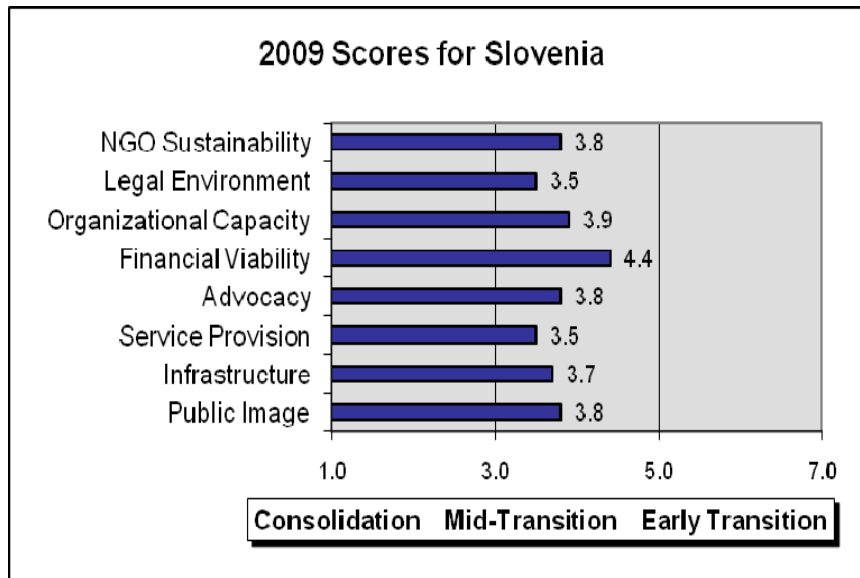


SLOVENIA



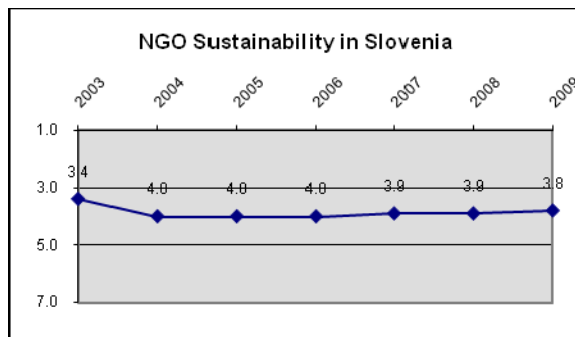
Capital: Ljubljana

Polity:
Parliamentary Republic

Population:
2,003,136 (July 2010 est.)

GDP per capita (PPP):
\$27,900 (2009 est.)

NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 3.8



Due to parliamentary elections and a change in government at the end of 2008, the year 2009 resulted in NGOs and the government redefining their cooperation. NGOs were involved in political dialogue with the highest decision makers and became more active. Nonetheless, the real impact of these activities is not yet apparent.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 3.5

The year brought no major changes to NGOs' legal environment. At the beginning of the year the 2006 Law on Associations was slightly altered, largely to harmonize it with EU directives. In the past three years its shortcomings have become known, but they

Since Slovenia's NGO sector is used to dealing with a difficult financial situation, the global financial crisis has not affected it greatly. The level of donations to organizations decreased, but the level of assigned donations (in-kind gifts, or financial contributions to be distributed directly to beneficiaries) increased.

Slovenian NGOs say that the government missed a major opportunity to redefine the role of NGOs in the country's public space. NGOs wrote a memorandum outlining their potential contributions to the implementation of anti-crisis measures, but their ideas were not used at all.

Slovenia has approximately 22,000 NGOs.

were not taken into account when the revision was passed this year.

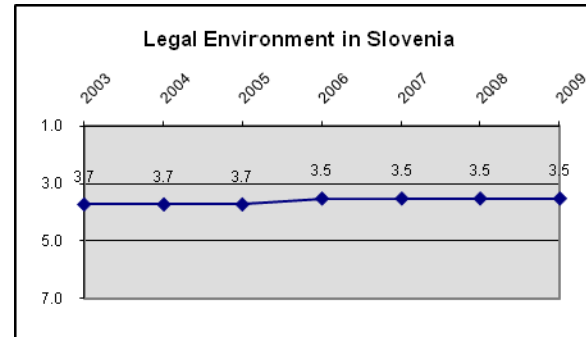
The Resolution on Legislative Regulation, which sets minimum standards of consultation, was passed at the end of 2009. The main goal of

the resolution is to commit public officials who are preparing legislation to collaborate with the public, and to ensure a suitable timeframe for public debate. The resolution emphasizes key principles of good legislative policy, such as the need for legal regulation, proportionality, accountability, accessibility, and transparency when drawing up regulations and policies. The resolution presents a major opportunity for NGOs to provide comments and help shape emerging legislation.

Changes to regulations concerning definitions of profitable and non-profitable activity were also passed. Among other things, a two-year-old decision stating that public funds were part of profitable activity, which meant stricter taxation for NGOs, was retroactively abolished.

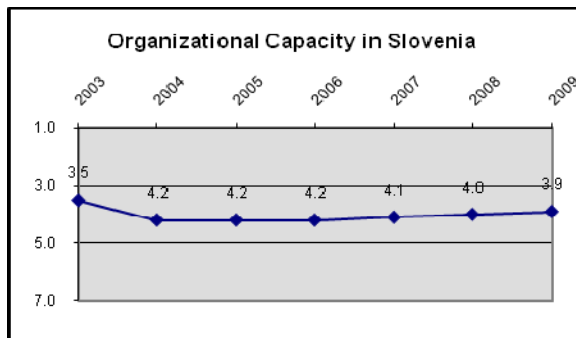
A minor change concerning volunteers and their remuneration was also included in the Personal Income Tax Law. The Personal Income Tax

Law passed in 2006 considerably changed the regulation of dependents; if a volunteer who was also a dependent (a minor or a student under twenty-six years of age) received a small payment, the parents were no longer able to declare him or her as a dependent. The regulation resulted in a decrease in volunteering among dependents. After the change, dependents can again receive limited payment and are thus more motivated to volunteer.



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 3.9

In 2009, the Association of NGO Managers was established with the objective of building the capacity of NGO managers through specific trainings and sharing of experiences, strengthening the whole sector.



Due to the establishment of new regional NGO support centers, local and regional NGOs have better access to a variety of trainings. National and regional NGO support centers in 2009 implemented more than 120 workshops with more than 1,400 participants. Local grassroots organizations are now more aware of funding possibilities and have gained skills writing project applications. One of the regional NGO

centers reported that with their help, six local NGOs received a total of €2 million through cross-border EU projects.

The majority of NGOs are aware of the importance of strategic planning, but rarely fully engage in it. If they manage to plan the development of their activities, their strategic plans still fail to outline the organization's structural development. The internal management structure of NGOs is defined in legislation that clearly outlines responsibilities. In practice, though, boards of directors are rarely active in fulfilling their strategic roles.

If the competence of NGO staff is increasing, the number of employees has remained more or less the same. There were some new employment options due to the financial crisis such as special programs for graduate candidates, co-financing of jobs for new graduates of social work programs, and 100 percent financing of public works in some regions, which brought approximately 200 new jobs.

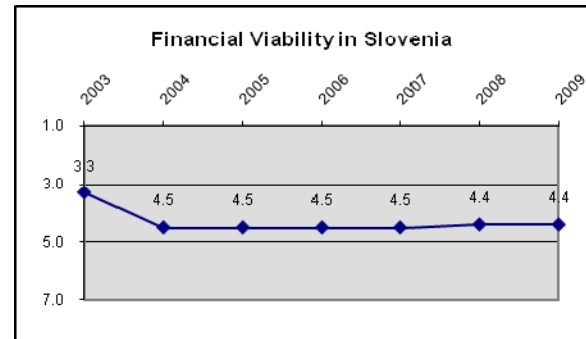
NGOs frequently use electronic communication tools. With the establishment of regional NGO support centers, which offer office facilities and rent technical equipment, NGOs have better

access to computers and the Internet. They are also buying more technical equipment on their own as part of their projects.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 4.4

The extent of the effect of the financial crisis on NGOs is not fully clear. NGO income remained the same from 2008 to 2009, but funding from local sources is decreasing. On one hand, this is due to the fact that local governments need to reallocate their budgets because of the financial crisis; on the other hand, the number of local NGOs is increasing, while the amount of funding distributed at the local level remains the same. Furthermore, NGOs active in more than one municipality have to face different formalities to obtain funds in these municipalities, which results in a bigger administrative burden.

Yugoslav countries, other NGOs from those countries are asking Slovenian NGOs to partner with them on EU projects.

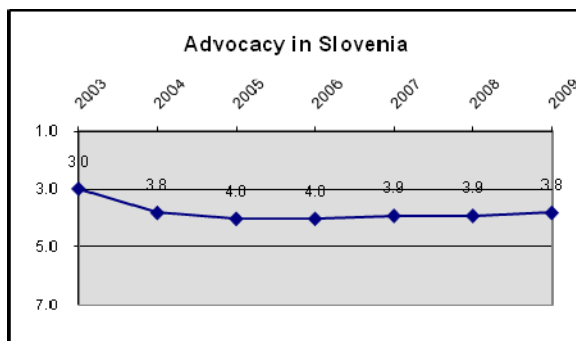


Cash donations decreased in 2009, although humanitarian organizations received more in-kind donations like food and clothes. As a consequence, they were able to expand their services, though organizational capacity has remained at the same level.

In an effort to broaden funding sources, President Türk encouraged citizens to increase their donations to humanitarian organizations. In a similar vein, the campaign “It Doesn’t Cost You Anything to be Charitable” promoted the use of the 0.5 percent law (citizens can donate 0.5 percent of their income tax to political parties, trade unions or public benefit organizations). Although the action was well received by the target groups, its impact will not be visible until the middle of 2010 when the dedicated amounts will be disseminated among beneficiaries.

NGOs are becoming increasingly competent at obtaining EU funds. A key financial source is the EU Structural Funds (mainly the European Social Fund). NGOs in partnership with other EU countries can access funds directly from the European Commission as well. Furthermore, as pre-accession EU funds have opened to former

ADVOCACY: 3.8



After last year’s parliamentary elections and the subsequent change in government, informal communication with national decision makers became more common. NGOs now have better access to ministers and other politicians, and were included in the “development dialogue” on how to deal with the financial crisis, as well as in debates with different interest groups that were held by the prime minister. However, the real impact of improved access remains to be seen.

The earlier-mentioned Resolution on Legislative Regulation sets minimum standards of consultation, which may result in a more transparent and coherent consultation process. Even before it was passed, some results were visible when the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs was preparing a draft Family Code. After the consultation, the ministry sent feedback to all those who submitted comments to the draft that included explanations about why the comments were or were not accepted.

The NGO sector was very active in trying to open up a formal decision-making process and build constructive and stable dialogue with the government. At the prime minister's invitation, NGOs submitted a memorandum on the sector's potential contributions to anti-crisis measures,

SERVICE PROVISION: 3.5

NGOs still carry out only a small percentage of public services, and mostly on the basis of short-term contracts, but the financial crisis stimulated debates about transferring more public services and functions to the NGO sector. The government plans to reorganize the system of public services and outsource some services to NGOs. The debate will continue into the next year, when the government and the NGO sector expect to reach a consensus on the reorganization.

Some organizations report that NGOs are retreating from service provision because they cannot compete with the private sector as a result of a lack of financial experience. If this is true, it could be a threat to the ongoing reorganization of public services.

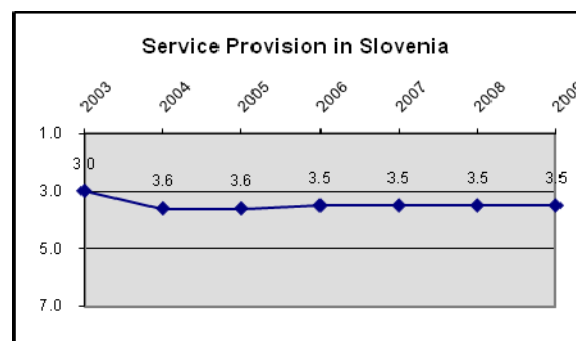
NGOs finance public services from public funds through different projects and long-term contracts. If the services are funded by public money, NGOs usually cannot bill for them, even though the project may not cover all its costs. NGOs solve this problem through private or corporate donations or volunteer work.

and established working groups corresponding to different support areas to better prepare for a dialogue with the government. The government responded slowly, however, and NGOs' proposals were not taken into consideration.

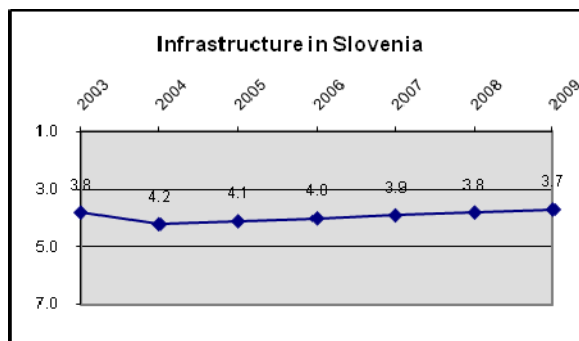
Environmental NGOs carried out the successful campaign "Act Now!" in order to pressure the prime minister to push for an ambitious and fair global climate deal, guarantee Slovenia's immediate transition to a low carbon path, and personally take part in the Copenhagen climate talks. With over 10,000 signatures and two visible media actions, the campaign was successful in triggering a parliamentary declaration on the climate deal and prompting the prime minister to attend the Copenhagen talks.

Because of the system of funding, NGOs' activities are more often project-driven than based on a genuine assessment of need. NGOs carry out public services mostly in the social field, working with people with health problems, both mental and physical, and with youth. Since these are public benefit organizations, they have to provide services to everyone in need rather than only their members.

Because of the financial crisis, there has been an increased demand for charities. The biggest charitable organizations in Slovenia, like the Red Cross and Karitas, receive in-kind and financial donations from the government and the private sector, which they then redistribute to beneficiaries.



INFRASTRUCTURE: 3.7



In 2009, four new regional NGO support centers were established, and consequently NGOs in those regions have better access to information, training, counseling, and technical assistance. These centers also promote the NGO sector among local governments, businesses, and the media.

One new community foundation, Community Foundation Courage, was established in the

PUBLIC IMAGE: 3.8

Local NGOs receive relatively good media coverage, not only in local media but also in the local pages of national media. National NGOs, however, still face problems when trying to publicize their events and views.

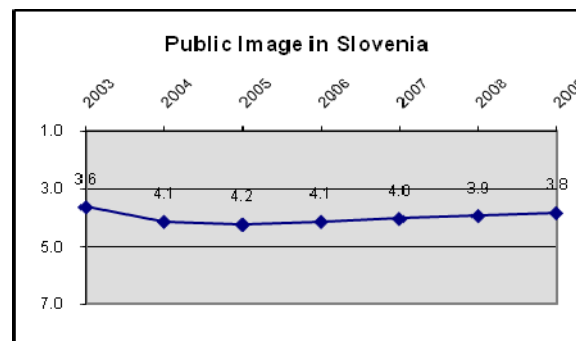
In 2009, a new NGO e-newspaper was established, www.cnvos.info, which covers important NGO events and publishes columns by different people connected with NGOs.

The number of NGOs with web pages increased significantly, which contributes to their improved visibility and public image. The public still has a rather bad perception of NGOs; the term NGO is often used negatively, with an implication that the organizations are simply engaged in money laundering or are squandering public funds. Additionally, the public does not connect local grassroots activity with NGOs and therefore does not recognize several important associations as NGOs. The sector as a whole suffers from a lack of recognition.

center of the country with a mission of collecting donations from local entrepreneurs and private citizens and awarding them as grants to NGO beneficiaries.

From the EU Structural Funds, the Ministry of Public Administration also finances twelve networks that work in different policy fields such as the environment, culture, international cooperation, and health. These networks operate as advocacy organizations on one hand, and on the other, conduct different types of trainings for their members.

With financing from the EU Structural Funds, NGOs have access to a broad range of training and counseling. Several trainings of trainers aimed to improve the skills of existing and new trainers.



On the other hand, the public image of humanitarian organizations improved as a result of the recession. The media regularly report on their charitable work and their needs for financial and in-kind donations to help beneficiaries. Also, environmental NGOs dealing with climate change issues received a lot of media coverage in 2009. Most often, their representatives are used as shadow reporters and critics who comment on the government's decisions on large infrastructural projects.