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# Albania Final Report

The Europe and Eurasia  
Regional Family Planning Activity



April 2009

EUROPE AND EURASIA REGIONAL FAMILY PLANNING ACTIVITY is a three-year initiative funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development through contract GHS-I-05-03-00026-00. The Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity is a regional effort to leverage best practices in family planning in order to accelerate program implementation across the region to increase modern contraceptive use and decrease abortion rates.

John Snow, Inc. implements the Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Acronyms</b> .....	4
<b>PROJECT RESULTS</b> .....	6
<i>Element One: Improve Human Capacity in Logistics Management Information System</i> .....	6
<i>Element Two: Improve the LMIS system</i> .....	7
<i>Element Three: Improve Resource Mobilization for Contraceptive Security</i> .....	8
<i>Element Four: Collaboration</i> .....	10
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b> .....	10
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	11
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	12
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	14

## ACRONYMS

<b>CSTWG</b>	<b>Contraceptive Security Technical Working Group</b>
<b>EERFPA</b>	<b>Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity</b>
<b>FEFO</b>	<b>First Expiry, First Out</b>
<b>FIFO</b>	<b>First In, First Out</b>
<b>FP</b>	<b>Family Planning</b>
<b>FSP</b>	<b>Financial Sustainability Plan</b>
<b>GIS</b>	<b>Geographical Information System</b>
<b>GOA</b>	<b>Government of Albania</b>
<b>IPH</b>	<b>Institute of Public Health</b>
<b>LMIS</b>	<b>Logistics Management Information System</b>
<b>M&amp;E</b>	<b>Measure and Evaluation</b>
<b>MOH</b>	<b>Ministry of Health</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-governmental Organization</b>
<b>NRHC</b>	<b>National Reproductive Health Committee</b>
<b>OC</b>	<b>Oral contraceptives</b>
<b>PHD</b>	<b>Public Health Directorate</b>
<b>PMP</b>	<b>Performance Monitoring Plan</b>
<b>POP</b>	<b>Progestin-only pills</b>
<b>PSP-<i>One</i></b>	<b>Private Sector Program-<i>One</i></b>
<b>RH</b>	<b>Reproductive Health</b>
<b>RHU</b>	<b>Reproductive Health Unit</b>
<b>SDP</b>	<b>Service Delivery Point</b>
<b>UNFPA</b>	<b>United Nations Population Fund</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>
<b>WG</b>	<b>Working Group</b>

## SUMMARY

This report details the activities and work completed between December 2007 and March 2009 in Albania, implemented by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity (EERFPA, hereafter referred to as the "Regional Activity"). The Regional Activity is a regional effort to strengthen the family planning environment in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The goal is to replicate, accelerate, and expand FP throughout the region based on the successes, innovative approaches and lessons learned from current and past regional projects and recent state-of-the-art advancements in family planning programming.

USAID/Albania committed funds to the Regional Activity to strengthen and institutionalize Albania's efforts to guarantee itself contraceptive security and contraceptive independence. The Ministry of Health (MoH) demonstrates a commitment towards the provision of family planning products by setting a goal to achieve contraceptive independence by 2010 when all public sector contraceptives will be financed by the Government of Albania (GoA). The challenge facing the MoH and health authorities in Albania is to ensure that contraceptive procurements are done in a timely manner and are based on accurate forecasts to avoid a repeat of the stock-outs experienced in recent years. Furthermore, achieving contraceptive independence is linked to the availability of financing for contraceptives.

The Regional Activity worked with the MoH to address these issues, develop strategies for contraceptive security, including looking beyond the public sector and engaging the private sector – social marketing and commercial providers – to establish a longer term financial sustainability of contraceptives in Albania.

Specifically, these are the key technical areas that Regional Activity focused on:

- *Human capacity improvement* to foster the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices necessary to operate contraceptives logistics management information systems and conduct effective forecasting.
- *Logistics management information system improvement* to upgrade the procedural components necessary to ensure the availability of contraceptives at service delivery points.
- *Resource mobilization for contraceptive security* to develop long-term strategies for effective forecasting, procurement, distribution, and the financing of contraceptives.
- *Collaboration and coordination with the public and private sectors* to ensure and strengthen effective communication between different sectors with the overall goal of strengthening contraceptive security.

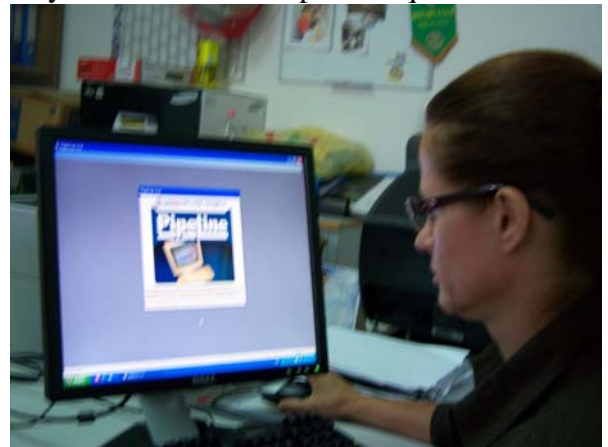
## PROJECT RESULTS

### *Element One: Improve Human Capacity in Logistics Management Information System (LMIS)*

To improve human capacity in logistics management, the Regional Activity provided series of formal and on the job trainings to district and central level LMIS managers on various themes, including procurement, budgeting, and logistics management as well as on the use of LMIS.

Training on logistics principles and techniques: The Regional Activity held a series of training sessions with the LMIS IPH team on main logistics elements such as major activities to logistics cycles, how to access Stock Status in the different level of pipeline, Storage Procedures, and the Max and Min Inventory Control System.

Training in Contraceptive Forecasting and GIS: We conducted practical training sessions with the LMIS IPH team on Pipeline Forecasting Software and its use. Additionally, the Regional Activity provided support in training the IPH's LMIS team on GIS software. Both, the Pipeline and GIS mapping software supplement the capacity to accurately forecast contraceptive requirements and present performance feedback to decision-makers. Graphs produced with the Pipeline software facilitated the presentations by the managers of the Contraceptive Procurement Tables results. These results are presented on a regular basis to stakeholders and donors.



*Training on Pipeline Forecasting Software*

Training on budgeting: To improve contraceptives budgeting capacity, the Regional Activity organized two formal training courses on budgeting for the LMIS IPH team. The LMIS IPH team was tasked by the Public Health Directorate of MoH to prepare the contraceptives budget for 2009. The trainings focused on the procurement of contraceptives, following UNFPA procurement regulations and guidelines. With the technical assistance from the Regional Activity, the LMIS IPH team was able to endorse the public sector's procurement budget for 2009. As a result, the MoH has a budget line for the procurement of contraceptives in 2009. The hands-on training on budgeting and practical task was a very effective way to build the capacity of IPH's LMIS team in budgeting and ensure the future ability of the team to perform similar tasks.

LMIS training: To further improve the LMIS and address existing deficiencies in the system, the Regional Activity conducted refresher trainings for 33 district LMIS managers on LMIS. Moreover, Regional Activity also provided need-based trainings and technical support to the Management Information System Unit of the IPH for efficient LMIS operation. The Regional Activity together with IPH LMIS and MoH/RH Unit staff conducted field monitoring visits to all districts. During these joint field visits, we provided on-the-job practical trainings to 20 LMIS managers at the district level and 76 FP service providers at the service delivery point (SDP) level. We covered all practical questions, gaps and issues in LMIS management and reporting faced by district LMIS managers and service providers. As a result of such capacity building activities, IPH LMIS team is able to fully and effectively operate the system.

## *Element Two: Improve the LMIS system*

Infrastructure and Distribution: The Regional Activity provided significant technical support to the IPH's LMIS team to improve efficiency in the warehousing and distribution of contraceptives. The major results of these activities included:

- Improvement of the central warehouse's storage conditions. Through comprehensive discussions with the director of the IPH, a small budget was allocated for the central warehouse. The contraceptives are now stored based on crucial supply chain management principles: First In, First Out (FIFO) and First Expiry, First Out (FEFO).
- A Quarterly Distribution Plan was developed. An electronic version of the distribution plan was developed to help the IPH LMIS team with the timely distribution of contraceptives.

Forecasting: We provided series of technical assistance to the IPH LMIS team on forecasting contraceptive needs. The Regional Activity prepared the 2008 Contraceptive Commodity Requirements, endorsed by the MoH. The timely forecasting enabled the MoH to prepare and submit a request for contraceptives needed to UNFPA. The other notable achievement was the establishment of collaboration between the IPH and the MoH/RHU to review and adjust the forecasts annually on the basis of consumption data and program priorities.

Procurement: At the MoH's request, UNFPA placed an order for the procurement of contraceptives to cover the needs of the public sector for 2008. The GoA has contributed its committed share of 60% of the total cost, based on the contraceptive security strategy and the actual cost for procuring these contraceptives, to the public sector. The Regional Activity supported the MoH and UNFPA in preparing the relevant documentation and procedures for custom clearance and warehousing.

Management Information: In order to achieve the goal of an improved logistics system, specifically, as it relates to management information, Regional Activity undertook following activities described below.

- After a thorough review of the LMIS reports, Regional Activity found number of gaps that showed a need for an upgrade of the LMIS software. We upgraded the LMIS software which resulted in significant improvement of the LMIS report. The upgraded software helps the IPH LMIS team generate reports on main FP indicators at the SDP level. The inventory control system can also be modified to help the central warehouse better manage the level of stock available.
- We assisted IPH LMIS team in writing, printing, and disseminating the LMIS Data Book and Feedback report. IPH distributes the Data/Mapping Book quarterly to the MoH, donor community, NGOs, commercial and private companies as well as social marketing agencies. The information included in the data/mapping book consists of contraceptive coverage by district, stock-out rates, FP visits, and the reporting rate. The data/mapping book helps to better understand full scale of FP services from the national to the community level. Also, we institutionalized feedback report system to all 36 district directorates. The feedback report provides information on compliance and performance as well as recommendations for further improvements. Therefore, this helps district directorates to improve client services.
- Regional Activity revised supervision tools and updated them based on best practices in

- LMIS. These revised LMIS monitoring and supervision tools help central and district level LMIS managers to:
- Monitor the performance of all processes involved in the logistics management of contraceptives
  - Evaluate the outcome of the computerized system
  - Provide ongoing supervision and performance monitoring
  - Monitor the availability of contraceptive commodities
- We produced two user manuals in the local language, LMIS software and Pipeline forecasting system manuals. The LMIS software manual will make it easier to understand and use the LMIS software, both from a higher and lower level. The forecasting pipeline software manual will provide guidance and step-by-step instructions on how to install and use the Pipeline Monitoring and Procurement Planning System (Pipeline), a software tool designed to help IPH LMIS managers regularly monitor the status of contraceptives and procurement plans.

### ***Element Three: Improve Resource Mobilization for Contraceptive Security***

The Regional Activity in partnership with USAID/Albania and the MoH undertook a number of activities toward strengthening contraceptive security in Albania.

High Level Roundtable Meetings: Regional Activity conducted roundtable meeting with key stakeholders from the MoH, IPH, donor agencies and representatives from the public and private sectors to discuss priority issues affecting contraceptive security in Albania. This was a first meeting devoted to contraceptive security since early 2007, when National Reproductive Health Committee discontinued meetings on contraceptive security.

The Director of Public Health/ MoH chaired the roundtable meeting. The USAID Health Officer, IPH, and other stakeholders discussed set of issues that affect the ability of men and women to choose, obtain, and use quality contraceptives dispensed from SDPs and the identification of the gap between financing requirements for contraceptives and the current and projected commitments.

Addressing these issues will require efforts to increase the use of contraception on the one hand, while the public sector focuses on the poorest of the poor on the other. Efforts are also required on the part of the public and private sectors to work together to increase the use and availability of contraceptives.

Over the course of the Regional Activity's work in Albania, three regular meetings of the RH Committee Chaired by the vice-minister were held. The Regional Activity presented contraceptive security issues, LMIS performance analysis and contraceptive financial sustainability research and other hot topics.



*IPH LMIS manager presents LMIS performance analyses at the RH committee meeting*

Contraceptives Financial Sustainability Research: At the MoH's request, the Regional Activity conducted a study on contraceptives financial sustainability; on how contraceptive financial sustainability could be achieved through the resources available to Albania.

The study included two parts:

- (1) Projections for demand, method mix, prices/costs, and identifying financial gaps (or surpluses) based on historical trends and key informant interviews;
- (2) Development and presentation of a series of five-year financing models based on projected demand, method mix, and new and existing resources.

We conducted intensive interviews with in-country stakeholders to explore how the financing strategy exercise could help design a plan for improved sustainability. We gathered preliminary information on country-specific financing sources and financing trends, existing financing mechanisms, the proportion of government and private funding, method/brand restrictions, contraceptive method mix and preferences, and the most current contraceptive forecast. In addition, we reviewed household contributions through social marketing, private insurance coverage of contraceptives and public sector cost recovery programs.

Subsequently, Regional Activity created several scenarios to take into account future demand, method mix, prices/costs, and identifying financial gaps. In addition, we conducted an “ability to pay” analysis to reveal household income and the affordability of available contraceptives in the social marketing and private sector markets. This helped to identify the most feasible financing model by demonstrating the strengths and weaknesses in the market in terms of people's ability to afford and to have access to a range of contraceptives in the social marketing and private sectors.

The study team presented initial findings, including the projections and possible long-term financing models at the RH Committee meeting.

Moreover, at the request of the Contraceptive Security Technical Working Group (CSTWG), we developed a financial sustainability implementation plan. The intent of the implementation plan was to provide the CSTWG with an initial guidance on suggested action steps. Also, we provided recommendation implementation role.<sup>1</sup> The recommendations and initial guidance provided in the report intend to support, not supplant, a subsequent work planning process.



*Presentations of Contraceptives Financial Sustainability Study to the RH committee*

<sup>1</sup> Tien, Marie and Raja, Rao. 2008. Albania: Sustainable Financing for Contraceptives 2009-2013: Analyses, Findings, and Implementation Plan. The Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity. John Snow, Inc.

We provided report to the MoH, IPH, and the donor community and to social marketing and private sector members. The expectation is that the MoH will lead the process, with support from the CSTWG, in viewing the recommendations within the context provided in both the current report as well as the previous one issued by USAID's Private Sector Program-*One* (PSP-*One*) team. The CSTWG will need to follow a deliberate work plan to determine which recommendations, among those listed in the report, they will accept and how these recommendations will be integrated, implemented, and monitored, in addition to the other activities in the contraceptive security strategy.

Joint National Forecasting: We conducted national forecasting exercise bringing together the public and private sectors, MOH, NESMARK, NGO, OSE and other private sector, to determine contraceptive needs for 2009-2011. A joint forecast lends insight into the whole contraceptive market where shared data among the sector can help inform the contraceptive forecasts. It also helps to facilitate a stronger working relationship between all sectors. With this activity we wanted to establish the forecast as an ongoing activity carried out by national stakeholders without external assistance, on, at a minimum, an annual basis. Results and recommendations of this national forecasting are provided in the detail report.<sup>2</sup>

National Reproductive Health/FP Strategy Draft Development: MoH tasked Regional Activity to provide technical assistance on elaboration of National Reproductive Health Strategy's Family Planning part. We provided technical support to the technical working group on contraceptive method mix, market segmentation, services targeting and financial sustainability for contraceptives – elements that have a potentially larger impact on long-term contraceptive security in Albania.

#### ***Element Four: Collaboration***

In an effort to support the achievements of contraceptive security throughout the country, the Regional Activity built a partnership and collaborated with multiple partners, such as the MoH/RHU, IPH, UNFPA, and USAID projects: Pro Shendeti, ACCESS/JHPEIGO and PSP-*One*. Moreover, the Regional Activity held intensive dialogue with private and social marketing agencies, such as Schering, O.E.S. NESMARK and conducted a series of meetings, including the national forecasting with the private sector to strengthen the collaboration among the public and private sectors, thus sharing information on contraceptives sales data and contributing to the goal of contraceptives security.

The Regional Activity's work and partnership with the UNFPA office in Albania was particularly prominent. The results of such great donor coordination are remarkable: the Regional Activity and UNFPA worked together on supporting the IPH's procurement of contraceptives for the public sector; the regular technical meetings with district health authorities resulted in better LMIS and family planning program performance, a clear result of effective collaboration.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are key aspects of the continued success of the Regional Activity. M&E are fully integrated into all aspects of the Regional Activity and not seen as stand-alone activities. The purpose of the M&E activities is to keep track of the progress of the project in

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<sup>2</sup> Albania National Forecasting Report. Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity. March 2009

achieving its goals and to assist with the overall project management.

The Regional Activity developed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan that follows the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) guidance on Performance Monitoring Plans\* and JSI's own Basic Management Package which was developed to assure quality to JSI's clients. The Plan details the Regional Activity's approach to M&E, data sources, data collection methods, and indicators of performance and effectiveness. Based on the Albania workplan and timeline, we developed specific indicators to track the progress of the efforts in this country.

Activity *performance indicators* measure the direct outputs of one or more activities, and are designed primarily to inform management decisions and ensure that activities are on track. We use specific indicators for each component of the Regional Activity. For the Albania activities, one such indicator is, "Number of LMIS staff at the IPH trained on GIS." *Effectiveness indicators* measure the direct effects that should stem from completion of program tasks, and are indicators of the desired results for the Activity. "Percent of SDPs reporting LMIS data" is an example of one effectiveness indicator. For the Albania component, progress on these indicators is available from program records as the activities whose progress they measure are completed. The table in Appendix A shows the status of all the Albania indicators. From this table, we can see that the project is on target and completed all of its activities.

## CONCLUSION

The Regional Activity accomplished its initial goals and objectives and managed activities effectively in such a way that was able to provide further technical assistance well beyond the original scope of work.

Each of the core areas of focus had remarkable success. Ability to not only find partners within the country but to collaborate and to maximize the resources and skills of other agencies so as to provide a synergetic influx of training and resources had positive effects and were mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

Advocacy and mobilization of both, public and private sectors for discussion of the importance and vulnerability of contraceptive security and furthermore, development of a financial sustainability plan for contraceptives and new market model for financial sustainability, as well as first ever, national joint (public and private, including social marketing sectors) forecasting, were important advancements in contraceptive security that highlights our work in Albania.

The active leadership by the MoH and GoA as well as collaboration with social marketing and private sector, USAID, UNFPA and other key partners is essential in positive and sustainable results and meeting the contraceptive security in Albania.

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\* Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2001). *The Performance Monitoring Toolkit for USAID*, under the Integrated Managing for Results Contract.

## Appendix A

Indicator Number	Indicator Name	Frequency of Collecting or Reporting	Goals and Actual Achievements				
			FY 2008				
			Achievements				
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
<b>1. PLANNING AND WORKPLAN DEVELOPMENT</b>							
A1.1	Number of consultative meetings held with USAID, list of meeting attendees	Quarterly	1	1	2	1	5
A1.2	Action plan (based on needs assessment) developed	As completed	completed				
<b>Logistics Management Information System (LMIS) Improvement</b>							
A2.1	LMIS software manual developed	As completed		completed			
A2.2	USAID/ DELIVER pipeline software use manual translated	As completed			completed		
A2.3	Number of LMIS monitoring and supervision tools revised, by type	As completed			completed		
A2.4	LMIS data/mapping book produced	As completed		completed			
A2.5	LMIS data/mapping widely distributed to stakeholders, by location and type (e.g., MOH, social marketing organization)	Quarterly		completed			
A2.6	LMIS software updated	As completed			completed		
A2.7*	% of service delivery points (SDP) reporting LMIS data**	Quarterly	94%	94%	94%	93%	N/A
A2.8*	% of districts reporting LMIS data electronically**	Quarterly	0%	33%	57%	62%	N/A
<b>Human Capacity Improvement for LMIS and Contraceptives Forecasting</b>							
A2.9	Number of contraceptives forecasting trainings conducted	Quarterly	1	1	2		4
A2.10	Number of MOH and IPH staff trained on forecasting	Quarterly			3		3
A2.11	Number of on-the-job trainings for LMIS team conducted, by topic of training	Quarterly	4	1	2		7
A2.12	Number of LMIS staff at the IPH trained on GIS	Quarterly					2
A2.13	Number of technical meetings with LMIS managers and RH Inspectors conducted	Quarterly			1		2
A2.14	Number of meetings held to discuss issues related with institutionalization of LMIS and contraceptives forecasting trainings, by type of stakeholder (e.g., MOH)	Quarterly	3				1
			2				
			1				
			1				

Coordination					
A2.15	Assessment of possibility of integration of LMIS to the HMIS conducted	As completed		completed	N/A
A2.16	Results of integration assessment discussed with stakeholders, by type (e.g., MOH)	Quarterly			N/A
Mobilization for Contraceptive Security					
A2.17	Forecasting of contraceptive needs for 2008 conducted	As completed	completed		N/A
A2.18	Roundtable meeting with MOH and IPH to discuss logistics, services, and demographic data to identify issues and trends affecting contraceptive needs for 2008 held	As completed	completed		N/A
A2.19	Research on Contraceptives Financial Sustainability conducted	As completed		completed	N/A
A2.20	Roundtable meeting with private and public health sector stakeholders to discuss the FSP analyses findings and future of contraceptive security in Albania held	As completed		completed	N/A
A2.21	National Forecasting Exercise***	As completed			
Technical Assistance					
A2.22	Technical assistance provided to central and district LMIS managers to strengthen their managerial capacities, by type	Quarterly	supply chain management	monitoring and supervision	
A2.23	Technical assistance provided to MOH/RHU on elements that affect contraceptives needs, by type	Quarterly	forecasting	logistics	budgeting

\* Denotes outcome indicators, all others are process indicators.

\*\* Data source is MOH

\*\*\*The National Forecasting Exercise took place in February 2009.

**Data source for indicators comes from project records, unless otherwise noted**

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