

People on the Move, Lives on Hold:
Mapping of Donors Active in the Western Balkans

Country Summaries – Stakeholder Views

Report Addendum

September 2019

The following country reviews are intended to provide country-specific details to accompany the summary regional report.

The graphs are drawn from data collected through desktop research. The qualitative elements are based on analysis of stakeholder views gathered in interviews conducted in June and August 2019.¹

Stakeholders included people from the 6 countries who are involved with larger CSOs, networks (where relevant), the media, local foundations, think-tank organizations, and, where possible, Offices for Cooperation with CSOs, a non-elected representative of government. (Note: the latter are directly involved with civil society, and are thus not broadly representative of public officials/administration.)

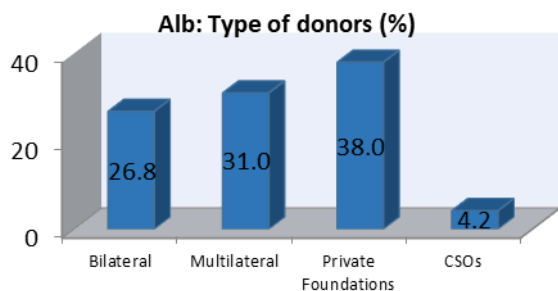
Despite attention having been paid to creating a diverse and relevant list of stakeholders, the 4 to 7 interviews per country can only be taken as suggestive of broader views.

We thank all the interviewees for sharing their views and for their commitment to improving their societies.

¹ The list of interviewed stakeholders is given in Annex 5 to the main report

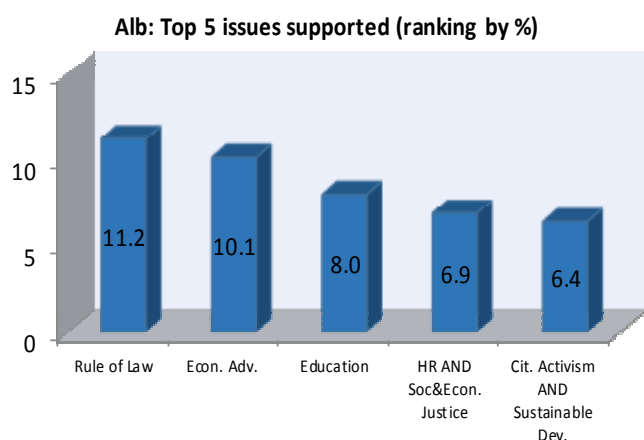
ALBANIA – PAST

Number of donors identified: 71



According to stakeholders, the issues most supported by donors in 2016-19 were rule of law, human rights, social issues and, for a few, also economic advancement. They did not mention education despite it being identified as a top theme in the research data.

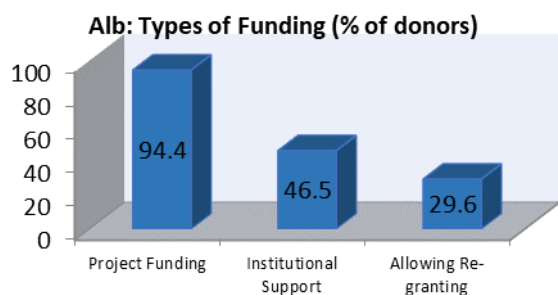
The state was seen to have received the largest amount of financial support from donors, primarily for local government reform, although with questionable results. In addition to the state, larger CSOs were identified as major recipients.



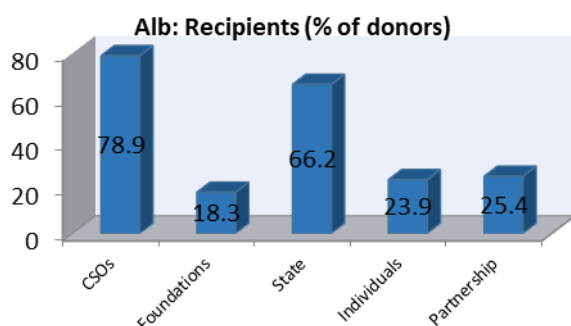
Opinions on what results were achieved differed among stakeholders. Some progress was noted on the local level (pressure for good governance, good results of grassroots initiatives), in placing certain issues on the agenda (such as trafficking) and investment in entrepreneurship and start-ups.

Informal, grassroots movements and initiatives of non-formal groups in various thematic areas (most notably in environmental protection) were pointed to as positive developments. They are seen as a development and opportunity to be nurtured as they increase the participation of 'ordinary' citizens in public life.

Gaps were identified in the areas of support for the delivery of social services, citizen's participation, youth and their economic inclusion, the environment, support to small and mid-sized organizations, advocacy, think tanks and research.

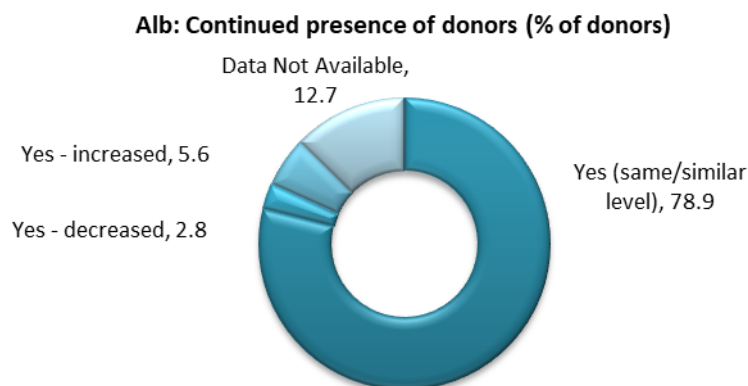


In terms of the approaches taken by donors, it was noted that what was beginning at the time the previous report (2016) was prepared now prevails: donors are providing large CSOs and international intermediaries with funds for re-granting. However, this practice is not felt to be bringing the expected results. Several issues arising from this approach were mentioned: spending on operational costs is too high among international intermediaries; insufficient outreach is being conducted with smaller and medium size CSOs, outside of capital, and large CSOs that had begun re-granting in this period are gradually "becoming administrators and losing their programmatic focus". In addition, it was noted that long-term, core support (rather than short-term, project-funding) would be needed to achieve lasting change.



ALBANIA – FUTURE

Key words for future approaches in Albania: participation; informal and grassroots movements; long-term strategies and investments



Key issues/needs for the next 3-5 years

- Rule of Law, particularly the fight against corruption and for good governance and governmental accountability; The building of institutions and electoral system and practices
- Education – a systematic approach; Continuing to improve vocational education
- 'Brain drain', especially among young people and professionals
- Citizen's activism
- Support for social services
- EU integration process and continuing the reforms
- The Environment

Approaches to be considered in the future:

- Coordinated approach by donors, which would include developing and implementing long-term strategies with greater inclusion of stakeholders in planning processes and providing longer-term funding (as results are difficult to achieve with short-term, one-year support). This is especially relevant for complex issues such as education
- Support further dialogue between the state, donors and civil society
- Support for economic development through vocational education and assistance to SMEs
- Support service providers and the provision of services, while at the same time seeking sustainable funding solutions in coordination with the state
- Provide core funding to enable all types/sizes of organizations to build their capacity
- Provide funding for research and evidence-based advocacy to help mobilize people around issues
- Support grassroots, informal groups on the local level so they can pursue issues important to people at community level and, in this way, nurture citizen's activism and participation

Key opportunities & challenges

Opportunities: EU integration process and fulfillment of conditions required in the negotiation process; A higher level of citizen's awareness of social, political and environmental crisis which can increase pressure for reforms.

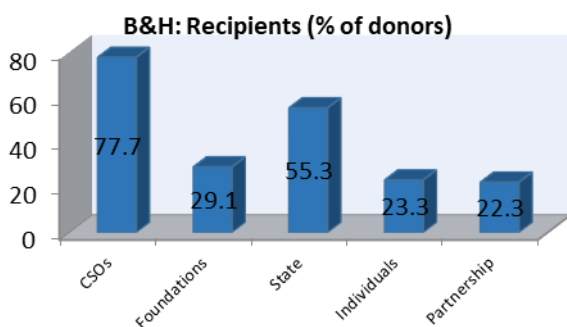
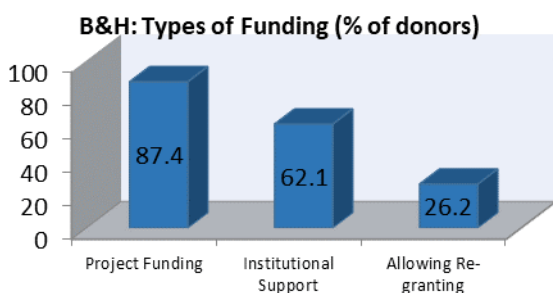
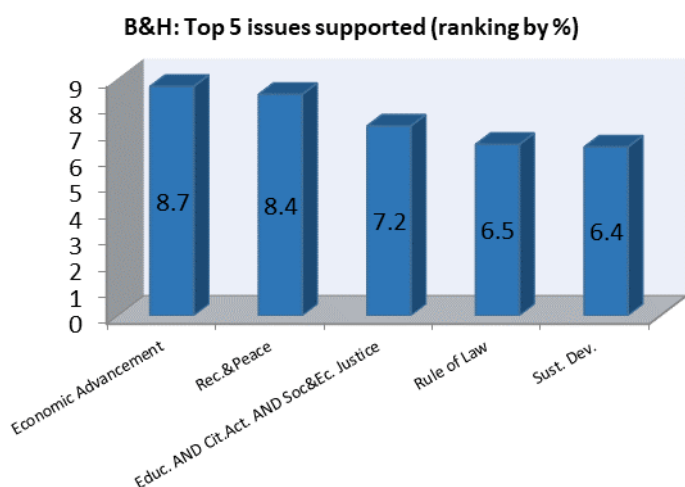
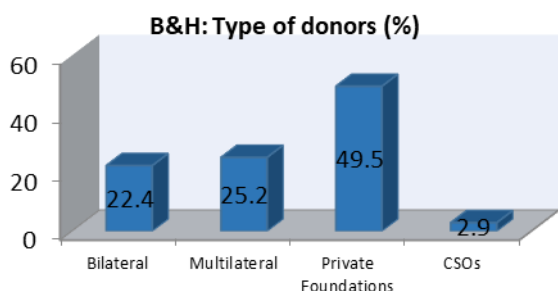
Challenges: Economic development and a social crisis that are placing pressure on marginalized groups; A lack of genuine governmental commitment to reforms, particularly regarding corruption; Time wasted on political battles instead of real issues; Achieving a coordinated approach by donors to some of the issues, such as corruption.

Recipients to focus on more

Youth, young professionals and youth leaders in all sectors (public, corporate, non-profit). Among civil society actors: think tanks, grassroots movements, advocacy organization. Individuals in communities that can lead change: "I've seen people growing through support".

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – PAST

Number of donors identified: 103



Stakeholder views on issues that had received significant donor support varied quite a bit. Issues mentioned included education, democracy and rule of law, (including anti-corruption), human rights, youth activism, independent investigative journalism and others. Contrasting opinions were common. Some expressed the view that media and investigative journalism had received significant support, others felt it had not. Some said that gender justice & women rights had been supported, others that this issue was somewhat neglected. This was also true for the area of reconciliation & peace and other issues explored in the research. The only issue on which most agreed was economic advancement. Apart from identifying a wide range of supported themes, several pointed out that levels of funding had decreased and access to funding was more difficult: *“What is given is not nearly on the level of what was provided before, or what is needed.”; “There is a smaller amount of money, but I am not sure if it is too small, or if we are just used to larger amounts and finding it difficult to adapt.”*

The state, large CSOs and CSO coalitions were seen as key recipients of donor support, especially large and longer-term grants. It was pointed out by some that recipients tend to be a fixed group of organizations and that it is almost impossible for others to obtain support.

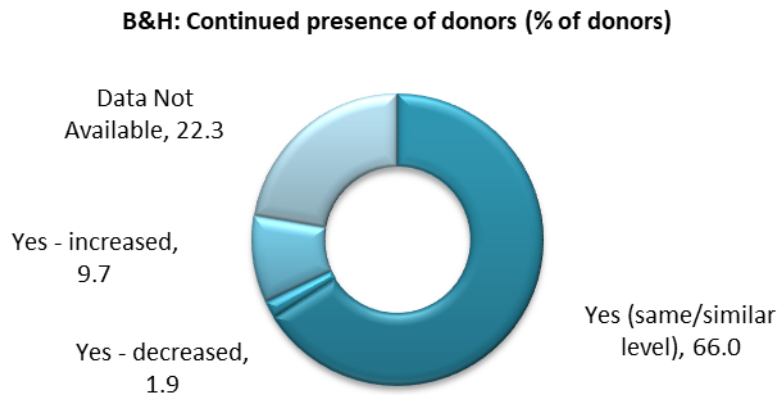
Once again, there were divergent views on changes achieved in the past period. While some saw progress on a number of issues, most often in entrepreneurship and start-ups, philanthropy, rule of law and social & economic justice, others felt that no significant impact had been made. Among the reasons given repeatedly for this were the political situation and instability.

Support to small and mid-sized organizations, seen as *‘the backbone of civil society’*, was pointed to as an important gap. Other areas included migration, anti-corruption, target groups such as youth and trade unions, and the media. However, the impression conveyed was that the gaps in specific issues or target groups were not as important as revising approaches to achieve better results: *“The biggest gap might be between large amounts invested and results achieved.”*

Concerning donor approaches, it was noted that without a systematic approach it is difficult to achieve real change: *“Education, now an issue that attracts attention and investments, is not really being tackled – it is like we are decorating the surface of the cake, but there is chaos inside”;* *“Rare are the examples of donors that have strategies and indicators for what they want to achieve.”* As in other countries, supporting multilaterals or foreign agencies to implement large programs and re-granting is seen to have intensified and is not seen to have brought the expected results in terms of outreach to mid-sized and smaller organizations.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - FUTURE

Key words for future approaches in BIH: cooperation and dialogue; coordinated approach; stopping the youth brain drain; a real understanding of what democracy means; foster citizen's activism



Key issues/needs for the next 3-5 years:

- Economic development - start-ups, business development, job creation, new technologies, vocational education; Educating for the needs of the market
- Education - all types on all levels – but with a coordinated and systematic approach
- Brain-drain - creating a strategy and finding ways to keep young people in the country
- Citizen's participation and the political awareness and involvement of citizens
- Democracy and rule of law, transparency and, in particular, access to information
- Freedom of speech and the media
- Reconciliation & peace
- Human rights
- Social & economic justice
- Philanthropy

Approaches to be considered in the future:

- Building intervention strategies based on proper needs assessment and consultations with all sectors
- Coordinated approaches to complex issues involving various stakeholders and all sectors: *"create music, not noise!"*
- Complex issues demand complex solutions- *"Issues such as corruption cannot be impacted by campaigns."*
- Improving real coordination among donors and avoiding overlap in funding; Increase consultations with civil society
- Be more open to innovative approaches and accepting the accompanying risks
- Strengthening local communities and local people
- Supporting organizations and movements to learn how to obtain funding from local sources and local people: *"This is the way to build trust and awareness."*

Key opportunities & challenges

Opportunities: EU integration – IPA funds; Informal movements of citizens (such as those for environmental concerns); Digitalization; Data-driven decision-making; Brain drain especially as it is an issue that everyone (even politicians) knows must be tackled.

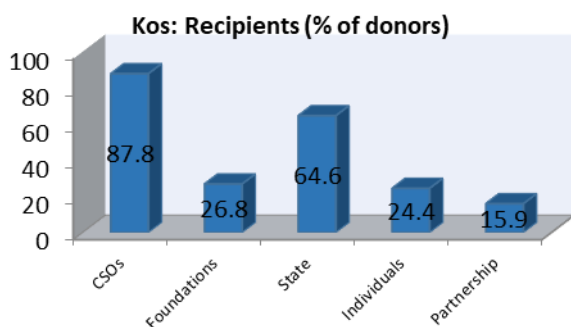
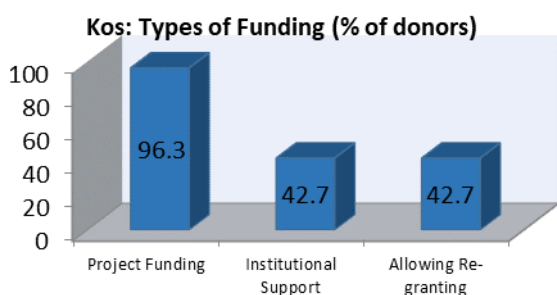
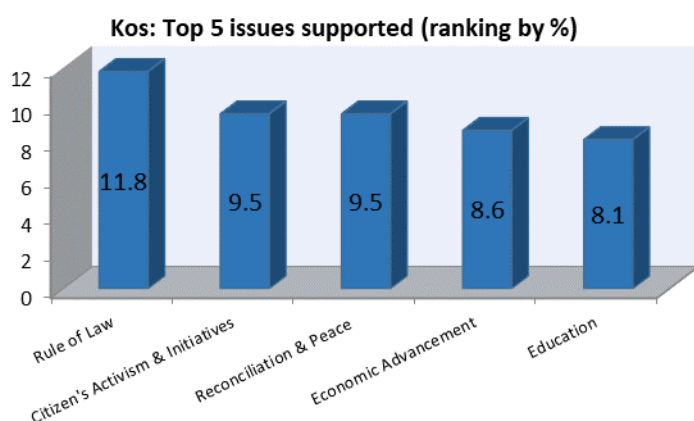
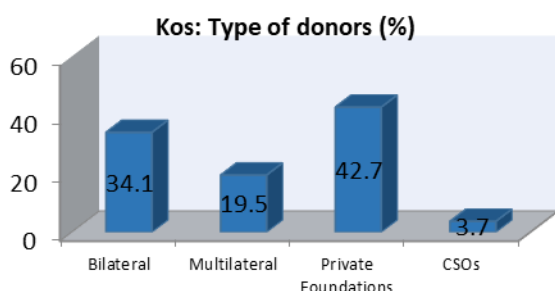
Challenges: Lack of true commitment by government/politicians and political will for reforms; Dysfunctional nature of the existing complex governing structure; Corruption and lack of transparency; Potential for a new economic crisis; Nationalism and its manipulation by politicians; Absence of a coordinated and systematic approach.

Recipients to focus on more

Youth. Informal movements. Women. Businesses and Start-ups, Journalists, The media, Trade unions. Actors that promote partnerships between different sectors.

KOSOVO - PAST

Number of donors identified: 82



The stakeholders interviewed from Kosovo perceive democracy and rule of law as the issue that has attracted the majority of donors. They stressed good governance, transparency and accountability. Other issues identified in the research were also mentioned, including: reconciliation (relations between ethnic groups), education and, to a lesser extent, economy and citizen's activism. Asked if the investments addressed the needs, one interviewee responded: *"We are a young state and there is a need for all those investments, but the issue is if the needs were responded to in the best way."*

Government is seen as one of the main recipients of donor funds, as well as large CSOs, think tanks, advocacy organizations working on the priority issues. As in other countries, the concentration of funding among a smaller group of CSOs was noted by some. The issue of international intermediaries was again mentioned; they are seen as recipients of significant funds, while it is felt that local organizations could do the same at lower cost.

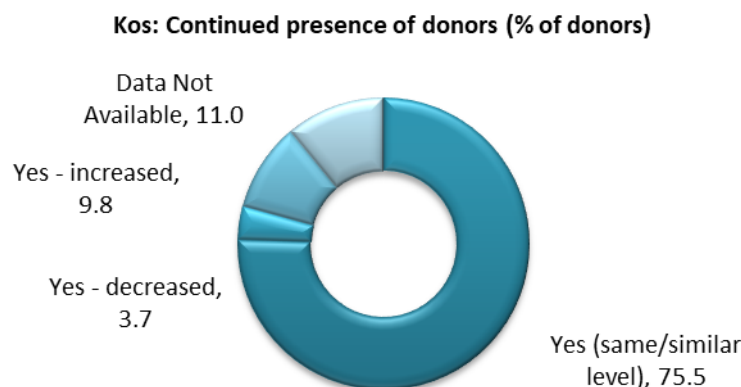
Increased government transparency on national and local level is seen as the most important change or result achieved in the past period. Investigative journalism, independent media and watchdogs are also viewed as having contributed to significant results: *"The mayor said proudly that one of the watchdog organizations assessed his municipality as transparent."* An improved enabling environment for civil society, achieved through strong coordinated action of CSOs, was highlighted. Elections and gender justice were also mentioned.

When it comes to identifying gaps, issues such as reconciliation, citizen's participation, systematic approach to education, violation of human rights were among those where greater efforts need to be made. Outreach to small organizations, local communities and ordinary people needs to be stronger. As in other countries, a number of stakeholders touched upon the approach selected as key to achieving impact.

Related to approach, it was noted that re-granting through large CSOs had increased, but was not always providing the best results. The need for strategic, long-term and coordinated approaches was mentioned repeatedly. Another issue seen to be of great importance was the scarcity of needs assessments or lack of thorough understanding of context prior to intervention: *"Donors seem to apply the same approach in different countries and repeat the same mistakes. Please do a needs assessment before you go to the country, proper research before investing. There are lessons learned, we need to use them."*

KOSOVO – FUTURE

Key words for future approaches in Kosovo: a systematic and strategic approach; focus on real needs and priorities; dialogue on human and minority rights; institutional capacity building; citizens and activism



Key issues/needs identified for the next 3-5 years:

- Reconciliation & peace and transitional justice approached in systematic way: *“We have to stop treating transitional justice as simply a football game between two ethnic groups.”*
- Democracy and rule of law (good governance, transparency and especially the fight against corruption)
- Human rights and minority rights
- Gender equality
- The economy - developing small businesses and social entrepreneurship, agricultural development
- Education - systematic changes to the entire system (in other words, not just building schools, but what is taught in the schools); Education in society – changing perceptions and mindsets
- Freedom of media and expression; Independent media

Approaches to be considered in the future:

- Interventions based on an in-depth needs assessment and understanding of the context: *“Donors have built the capacities of public institutions through infrastructure and technology – but it turned out that people did not know how to use it.”; “Violent extremism – lots of papers, research, conferences, but no one went to communities to talk to people, explain what this is.”*
- Outreach to people in communities and grassroots organizations
- Long-term, strategic approaches- avoid superficial solutions that don’t address the causes of problems
- Improved donor coordination on a national level so as to avoid overlap: *“We have parallel interventions in the same field which are not coordinated. It impedes progress.”*
- Further support for coordinated efforts of CSOs as these have already brought results in several areas
- Support of donors and international actors for constructive dialogue between state and civil society, possibly through a Council and/or coordinated efforts of CSOs

Key opportunities & challenges

Opportunities: Human potential, especially of young people. Increased readiness of people to react and act, willingness to engage; The country’s economic potential; Build on the rather strong legislative base to improve implementation.

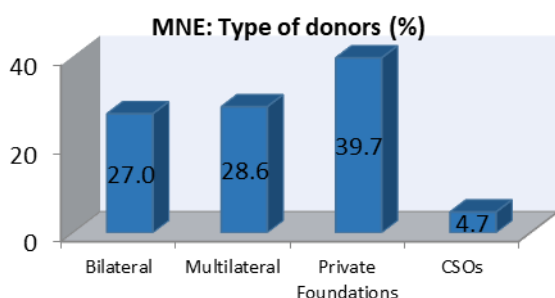
Challenges: Lack of stronger institutions and established structures; Unresolved “big issues” used by Government as excuses for not dealing with issues affecting people’s quality of life or pursuing reforms: *“We are all waiting for these issues, life is on hold. If this continues, people will lose their initiative and begin leaving”*; Corruption, private interests and nepotism that block real reforms in education, health and the judiciary.

Recipients to focus on more

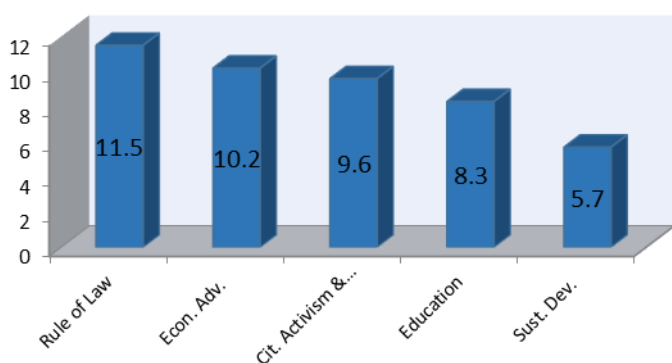
Youth. Women. Ethnic groups/minorities. Informal movements. Religious communities. Small grassroots organizations. Coalitions & coordinated work among CSOs. Individuals (professionals, civil servants). The independent media.

MONTENEGRO - PAST

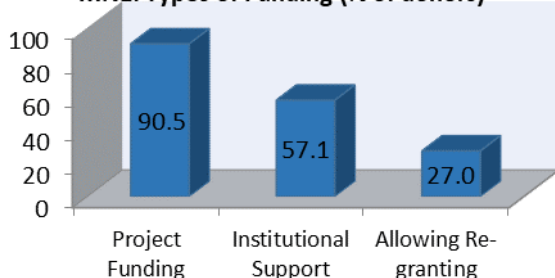
Number of donors identified: 63



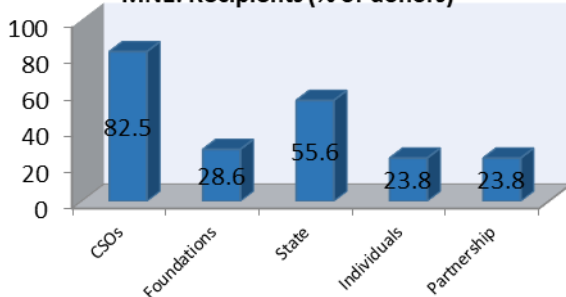
MNE: Top 5 Issues (ranking by %)



MNE: Types of Funding (% of donors)



MNE: Recipients (% of donors)



The issue identified as having received the most support was the same as the one identified by the research: rule of law and particularly the fight against corruption. Civil society, the environment, human rights and investigative journalism were also mentioned. Education was seen as a well supported field, but only in terms of education for the state administration. Stakeholders felt that while investments have generally responded to needs, there are areas that would benefit from greater support.

The state and its institutions were viewed as the principal recipients of donor funds. As in other countries, large CSOs were perceived to be the most frequent recipients within civil society.

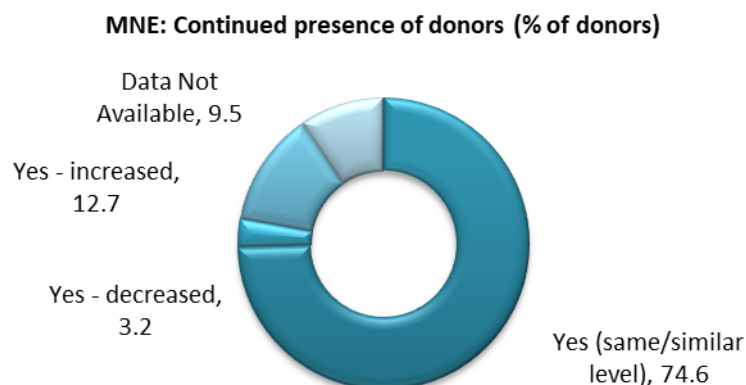
As the most important changes achieved, stakeholders pointed to greater visibility and increased awareness of corruption, violations of human rights and accountability: *“It is now very difficult to hide something, people are empowered and faster to react and inform.”* Independent investigative journalism and organizations that work on these issues were seen to be the main contributors to this progress. Free access to information was an area where *“significant progress was achieved”*, although it was noted that government regularly develops new strategies to slow or reverse what has been achieved.

Gaps were identified in areas such as service provision and delivery, social & economic justice and youth activism. It was also noted that more and sustained investment is needed in areas such as education, economy and investigative journalism. Small and mid-sized organizations and partnerships should be assisted. It was felt that efforts focus mainly on the national level, while the local level is somewhat neglected: *“It is like two systems, two different countries. All these issues need to be addressed on the local level as well.”*

With regard to donor approaches stakeholders felt that there was a lack of donor coordination and consultation with civil society: *“Meetings are happening, but suggestions are rarely included.”* International intermediaries and large agencies were again identified as costly and not sufficiently effective. Finally, though re-granting has intensified, as in other countries, results are felt to be mixed. The issues identified were the level of outreach to small and mid-sized organizations and not very flexible terms for re-granting (limited amounts, durations of projects and the number of times that organization can be supported through regranting).

MONTENEGRO - FUTURE

Key words for future approaches in Montenegro: rule of law; continue fighting for anti-corruption & access to information; inclusion and synergy of all actors; a focus on local level change & capacities



Key issues/needs identified for the next 3-5 years:

- Democracy and rule of law and particularly reform of the judiciary; anti-corruption efforts and the fight against organized crime
- Environmental protection, especially as Chapter 27 has been opened
- Social & economic justice and service provision and delivery
- Youth and IT, digitalization and the education of young people (encouraging work from Montenegro, stopping brain drain)
- Citizen's activism and initiatives
- Education
- Economy
- Human rights as a cross-cutting issue
- Enabling environment for civil society
- EU integration" *"People are starting to be skeptical. We need to get this issue back on the table."*

Approaches to be considered in the future:

- Greater attention to the design of interventions; Real inclusion of actors in consultation processes
- Improved coordination among donors
- Support for cooperation between actors: *"We need to learn how to cooperate both among CSOs as well as with government."*
- Establishing and maintaining long-term, strategic partnerships with CSOs
- Support for the local level in parallel with reforms on the national level

Key opportunities & challenges

Opportunities: The EU integration process, particularly Chapters 23, 24 and 27; Informal movements and people who are protesting and have an increased *"sense of citizenship"*; Use of internet community *"there is potential there for some good influence."*

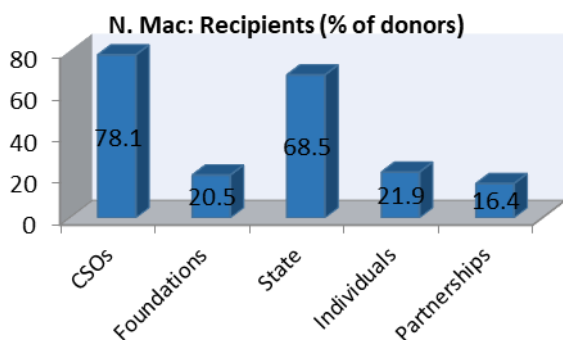
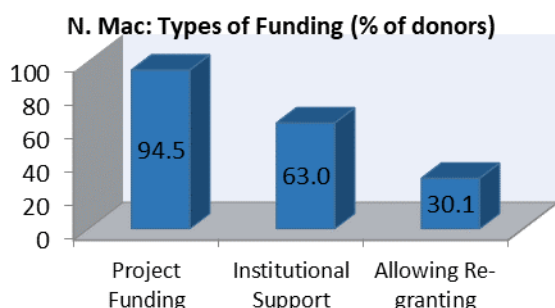
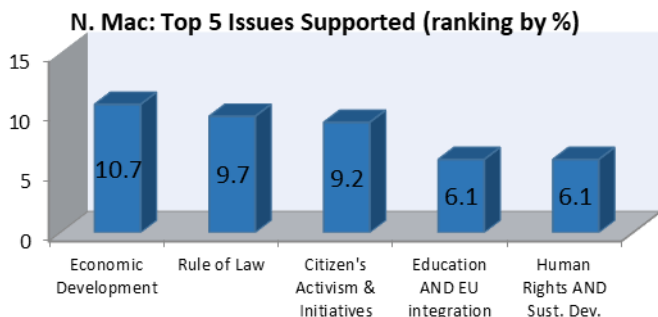
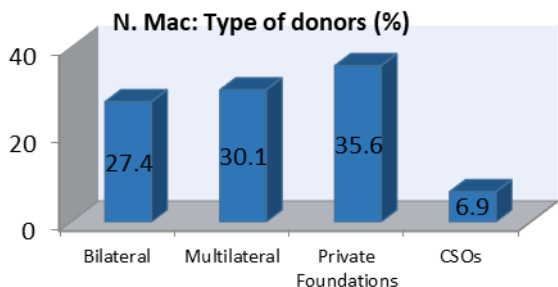
Challenges: Lack of coordination among donors: *"If we had exact data on investments, I am certain that we would see that investments are not proportional to effects."*; Government attempts to reverse progress made in free access to information, as well as tactics to use EU Directive on privacy of data to limit other freedoms; Still slow implementation of laws.

Recipients to focus on more

Local actors – government, CSOs and communities. Large CSOs that can fight on national level and in the courts. Partnerships between sectors. Informal movements that can work with people directly. Educational institutions and academia.

NORTH MACEDONIA – PAST

Number of donors identified: 73



The issues receiving the most support according to stakeholders were rule of law, education, human rights, economy, civil society strengthening, cooperation with governmental institutions (various aspects), monitoring of public administration and the environment. However, the degree to which interventions were seen to be responding to the needs varied. Education, especially work on vocational education, was given as a good example, while investments in economic advancement were assessed as less effective because, for example, tangible employment opportunities were still lacking. It was noted that the period in question had been characterized by *“Donors [being] caught in the same cycle as the state due to issues with the name of the country... They were preparing exit strategies and then coming back. It was forward-backward exercise for much of the time.”*

Large CSOs and the state were viewed as the main recipients of support. Re-granting was seen as an attempt to bridge the distance to small and mid-sized organizations, though it was felt that results varied. Some donors were seen to be providing support based on their *“political agendas”*, thereby leaving parts of the sector *“outside”* and limiting access to needed funding.

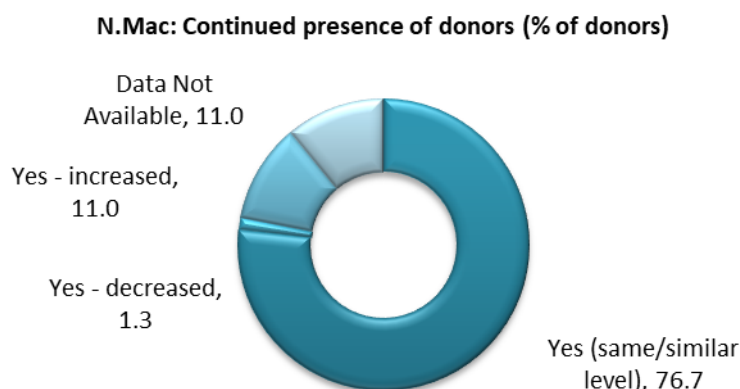
The results mentioned were: more open and responsive institutions and donor support to CSO efforts having brought about the inclusion of civil society in design of a new anti-corruption law and mechanisms for the fight against corruption. Stakeholders also recognized the increased capacity of CSOs to influence policies; they had *“become a credible partner and resource”*. The appearance of informal movements, referred to as *“pockets of resistance”* and linked especially to civic protests and more recently to environmental protection, was seen to show increased awareness among citizens.

While recognizing support for economic advancement, gaps were seen in terms of addressing unemployment and poverty. Grassroots organizations were insufficiently supported. Capacity building for civil society and public administration was felt to be inadequate given needs.

In terms of donors’ approaches, it was felt that coordinated approaches among donors and the state were essential to achieve results in complex areas such as the economy. Greater recognition by donors of the capacities of local organizations was recommended, especially as they had helped to build them. Finally, a project-based approach was seen to be making it difficult for organizations to address issues fully: *“The chain has lots of gaps, it’s broken in several places and we can’t provide full service under one project.”* However, in contrast to all other countries, donor coordination was recognized as having very much improved and to be bringing results.

NORTH MACEDONIA – FUTURE

Key words for future approaches in North Macedonia: a new name – a new political reality; maintaining the course of reform; prepare for EU integration; trust and support local capacities; citizen’s activism and understanding democracy



Key issues/needs identified for the next 3-5 years:

- Economic development, in particular employment for youth so as to stop brain drain
- Rule of law, particularly good governance and democracy building
- Citizens participation in decision-making processes, citizen’s activism, participation and understanding of democracy
- Education
- Social & economic justice - particularly services and worker’s rights, especially protection from exploitation
- EU integration, now that the process has been accelerated. Capacity building of public administration and CSOs. Preparing people and increasing levels of information of what to expect
- Philanthropy development
- Freedom of the media

Approaches to be considered in the future:

- Needs assessment and research prior to interventions; Adaption to the new political environment and the specificities of local contexts
- Cooperation between donors and government to work on complex issues, such as economic advancement
- Efforts to institutionalize the role and support for civil society organizations
- Capacity building on all levels and in the public and non-profit sector that is adapted to needs
- Working on the local level: *“Bringing power to the people in the places where they live is critical.”*

Key opportunities & challenges

Opportunities: The ‘renewed’ EU integration process; On-going reform process; Stronger involvement of local communities and ordinary people: *“Opportunity comes from stronger involvement of local communities and people.”*; Increased awareness of citizens and activism as evidenced by examples of protests and *“pockets of resistance.”*

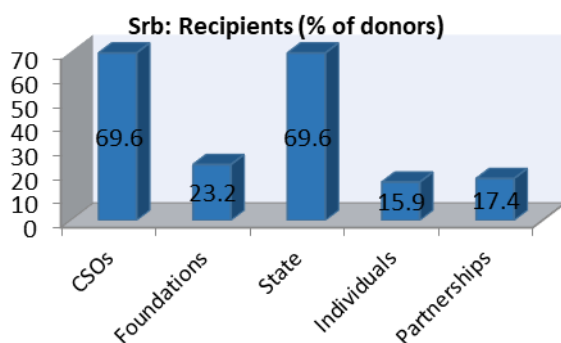
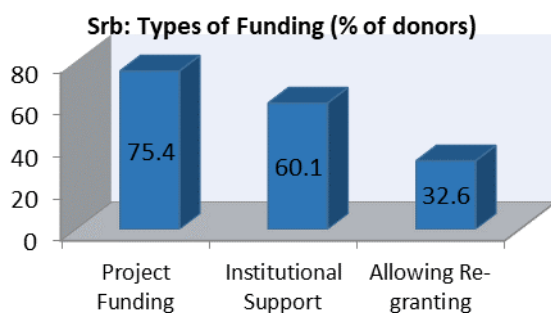
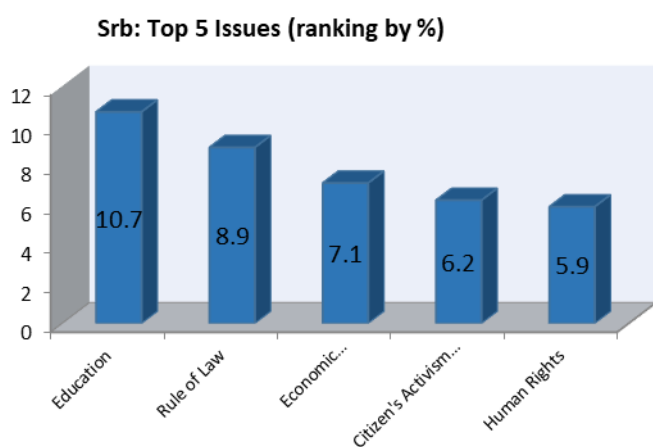
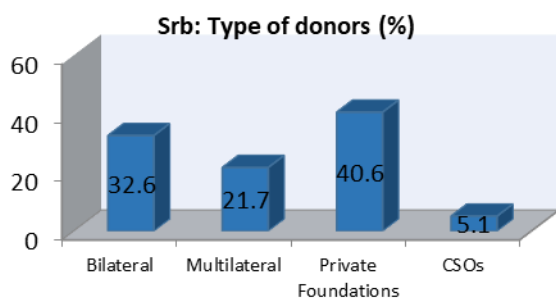
Challenges: Potential change in government commitment to the reform process; Young people are becoming tired of waiting for better times; Support for elements of civil society that are not yet ‘institutionalized’: *“Core reform of systems of support for CSOs in terms of (financial) resources, access and influence on decision-making are still lacking.”*; Lack of preparedness and insufficient information on EU Integration: *“The bigger the expectations, the bigger the disappointment”.*

Recipients to focus on more

Local level actors. Government as well as communities. Informal, local initiatives and movements. Political parties. Trade unions. CSOs, especially those with a membership base and/or strong constituency.

SERBIA – PAST

Number of donors identified: 138



Stakeholders had mixed views on the issues most supported by donors. Rule of law, human rights, economy, and the environment were mentioned. However, for a number of people, key was not the issues supported, but the relatively slow donor reaction to quite dramatic changes in Serbia under the current government. They also acknowledged that a recent shift in donor responses was encouraging, but that its effects were yet to be seen.

Apart from the state, large CSOs are seen as the primary recipients of donor support. A significant shift recently has been increased resources granted to a small number of organizations. As in most of the other countries, an increasing trend to support international intermediaries that then engage with local organizations was felt to lead to a *'deterioration of the position of credible local organizations that have capacities for implementation.'*

The strengthening of social entrepreneurship, placing media freedoms higher on the agenda, the increased visibility of women rights, philanthropy development, and a new wave of activism were mentioned as areas where some results had been achieved. In the area of social entrepreneurship, the cooperation among donors, corporate donors and CSOs was praised.

Gaps were found in the areas of culture & the arts and education, addressing a rise in violence in the society as well as state capture, the closing space for civil society, and support for media content production. Small, local CSOs and informal groups were seen to be neglected in terms of access to continuous, more flexible support. However, the biggest gap was felt to lie elsewhere: *"We miss innovations. In all issues, all levels of organizational development, in service provision, advocacy... The problem is that both donors and CSOs are often repeating the same ineffective practices, and, for some reason, they expect different outcomes."*

Stakeholders noted the significantly increased practice of re-granting in the approach donors use. It was commented that: *"This is not a natural role for many CSOs."*, sometimes resulting in problems during implementation. Additionally, concentrating funds in a small number of organizations we seen to cause *"polarization among organizations"*. The short-term funding of projects is leading to *"donors becoming the true constituency of civil society"*. Taken together, this results in lack of change and sustained effects as well as an *"alienation from citizens and their lack of trust in the civil sector"*. While some donors were said to be lacking in transparency when it comes to criteria by which they allocate funds, it was also noted that some donors have started to be more flexible and accept innovative ideas.

SERBIA – FUTURE

Key words for future approaches in Serbia: rule of law; preventing further deterioration (state capture, basic freedoms and human rights); increasing support for civic activism; innovation, flexibility and constituency building

Srb: Continued presence of donors (% of donors)



Key issues/needs identified for the next 3-5 years:

- Rule of law, and in particular fighting the captured state, weak institutions, the centralization of power, corruption; Freedom of expression and access to information
- Citizen's participation, civic activism, the involvement of citizens in local actions
- Environment, particularly protecting natural resources from privatization and opposing concessions that are against the public interest; Climate change and alternative sources of energy
- Economy advancement and social entrepreneurship
- Media freedom; Investigative journalism
- Human rights
- Philanthropy and funding from local sources
- Social & economic justice and worker's rights (especially protection from exploitation)

Approaches to be considered in the future:

- Increased focus on local groups, informal movements; Citizen's activism
- Support CSOs in introducing more flexible, innovative approaches; Experimenting with different ways to solve problems and build relations with people
- Longer-term support based on comprehensive strategies
- Better donor coordination - coordination of efforts and investments beyond just the exchange of information
- Support for cooperation between different informal local movements and initiatives

Key opportunities & challenges

Opportunities: The EU integration process and more pressure (such as through the EU progress report); New technologies and their application in the work of CSOs as well as the media; New informal movements

Challenges: Concentration of political power; Rising economic power of organized crime and people close to the government; International actors providing (on occasion) legitimacy to the processes such as state capture, etc; Government control over the media

Recipients to focus on more

Informal movements. Local groups. Citizens with strong, concrete demands in areas that needs support (but not always funds). Women and women's organizations. The independent media. Trade unions.