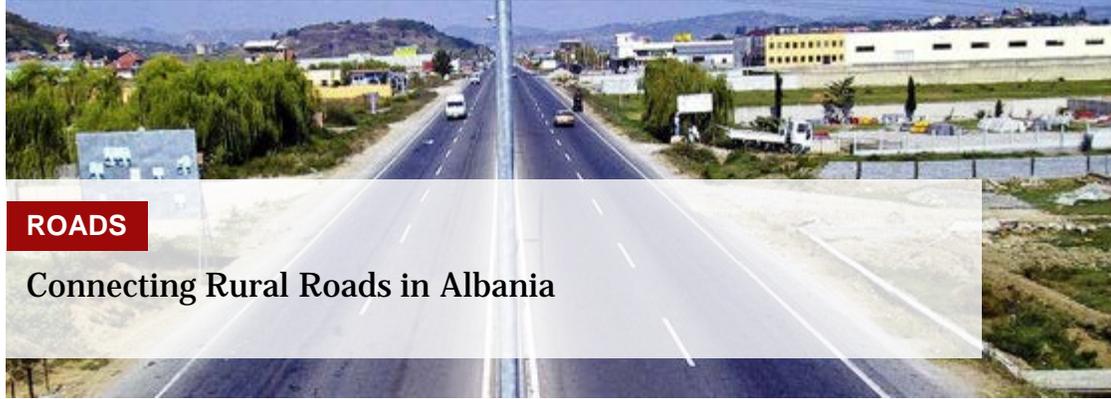


## Connecting Rural Roads in Albania



ROADS

### Connecting Rural Roads in Albania

#### Overview

Albania is a lower middle-income country with a gross domestic income per capita of \$3,684 in 2010 (source: IMF). The country has made significant progress since its transition from a communist regime towards a market-based economy. The country has pursued major structural and economic reforms and has pushed ahead with the establishment of democratic institutions. With the exception of the pyramid crisis of 1997, it has achieved and sustained strong economic growth, while containing inflation almost every year. The economy has shifted from agriculture and industry to services and construction. [Albania](#) joined the World Bank in 1991. Since then the World Bank became one of the country's main sources of development assistance, and its program aims to contribute to poverty reduction and improvement in living standards, job creation, government accountability, infrastructure, and social services.

#### Challenge

Despite impressive progress in economic development in recent years, the Albanian population remains predominantly rural, where poverty remains endemic. A survey of poverty, and its causes, noted that, after employment and income, many Albanians considered infrastructure problems to be the main cause of their difficulties and a significant factor in their low standard of living. Forty-nine percent of rural producers stated that a lack of adequate transportation, primarily all-weather roads, was their biggest marketing problem. Rural inhabitants and leaders also acknowledged that poor road access contributes to migration from rural to urban areas, and negatively affects the delivery of health and education services. The problems facing the secondary and local road network in Albania were summarized in a study by the World Bank (2007b): little of the local road network was found to be paved, and about three quarters of the entire secondary and local road networks was found to be in a poor or very poor condition, there was little maintenance – and many sections became impassable in inclement weather.

#### Approach

The Government of Albania recognized the extent of the problem and requested support from the World Bank in the

#### MULTIMEDIA

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More Results



**26**

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preparation of a program to develop the secondary and local road infrastructure in Albania, and contribute in parallel to the financing of the program. In response, the [Secondary and Local Roads Project \(Cr. 4459-AL\)](#) was prepared to improve access to essential services and economic markets for the resident population in the hinterland of the project roads by improving priority sections of the secondary and local road network across Albania, supporting the introduction of the private sector in the maintenance of the road network, and strengthening the management and financing of the network. The Project was approved by the Board in June 2008 and became effective in September 2008.

## Results

The implementation of the project has been well underway. Over the past 17 months, the Project has achieved significant results. The key results so far include:

- As of March 2010, 26 communities have access to all-weather roads for the first time. As a result, those communities have improved access to health and educational facilities and regional markets. The construction of additional 110 km of secondary and local roads by the end of the project is on schedule, which will provide an all-weather connection to over 50 communities.
- 33% (out of 34% target) of roads are in good and fair condition as a share of total classified roads, resulting a proportional reduction in vehicle journey time in free flowing conditions; and increase in traffic volumes on project roads.
- Over 150 people in the local communities have been trained to procure and undertake maintenance activities.
- The 'lifeline' regional and local road network has been identified, an inventory undertaken, and the functional classification reviewed, resulting in a simplification of the ownership and management of secondary and local roads.
- A road database and asset management system for secondary and local roads, to facilitate the planning of expenditures and the management of the roads, has been established, and the program prepared for the development of the secondary and local road networks.
- The road users are more optimistic about the quality of project roads than before.
- The capacity of local construction industry was significantly strengthened through the introduction of modern, cost-effective technologies and hands-on support and trainings by supervision consultants and the Bank task team.

## Toward the Future

The parallel finance totaling \$530 million has been committed from a number of other donors, including the Council of Europe Development Bank (CoEDB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Japanese Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC), the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), and the European Union (EU). The entire program will improve over 1,700 km of secondary and local roads.

This ongoing project and the broader program represents a substantive step to placing the

### MORE INFORMATION

- » European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- » Council of Europe Development Bank
- » Japanese Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC)
- » OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)

### MATERIALS

- » Project and Operations

### MAP

- » Distribution of rural and secondary roads supported by rural & secondary roads project

management and financing of the secondary and local road network on a sustainable basis for the future, and more importantly making a real impact on the quality of lives of many rural inhabitants, who have suffered poverty, limited opportunities, and poor or deficient services for too long.

**Distribution of Rural and Secondary Roads Supported by Rural and Secondary Roads Project" Yellow indicate World Bank's funded projects**



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