
INTRODUCTION

The 2004 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia is the 8th Edition of the publication. This year the Index reports on 26 countries, plus Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo (each of which is reported on separately.)

In order to provide readers with analysis of trends suggested by the scoring and country reports, the Index features an Executive Summary discussing regional highlights and examining methodological questions that arose during this year's scoring process. This year's Index also includes a new feature. For the first time, the Index provides articles exploring key issues relating to NGO sustainability in the region. This year, Robert G. Herman considers the current environment for building NGO sustainability across the CEE/Eurasia regions, continuing impediments to further sectoral development, and some of the innovative ideas and initiatives that could be employed to meet the challenges posed in "*NGO Sustainability in a Time of Hope and Apprehension.*" David Moore highlights laws and other mechanisms that have been used to promote NGO financial sustainability. And Stephen Larrabee summarizes significant writings relating to civil society generally and in the region, identifying the year's "must read" books and articles for practitioners. It is anticipated that future indices will include similar articles, with topics reflecting the most significant issues arising that year.

The index includes another new feature – a questionnaire (appearing at the end of the Index) seeking information about how readers are using the Index. This information will be used to improve future editions of the Index. We ask all readers to take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire (which can be completed on line as well).

Other features will be familiar to readers of prior editions of the Index. The 2004 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, this year encapsulated in easy-to-read charts. The Index further includes statistical appendices summarizing this year's dimensions scores as well as scores for 1998-2004.

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.