

Introduction

The 2005 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia is the 9th Edition of the publication. This year the Index reports on 27 countries, plus Montenegro and Kosovo (each of which is reported on separately.)

This year's index continues a feature begun last year – inclusion of articles examining trends affecting NGO sustainability. This year, in “*Civil Society under Threat: Common Legal Barriers and Potential Responses*,” David Moore and Catherine Shea examine an issue that has affected NGOs not only in the region but around the world – the use of repressive NGO laws to stifle NGO activities and free association. Robert Herman considers the evolution of NGO advocacy in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as challenges to advocacy organizations, in “*Advocacy in the E&E Region: Progress, Promise and Peril*.”

Other features will be familiar to readers of prior editions of the Index. The Index as in prior years measures seven dimensions of NGO Sustainability on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 indicating a low or poor level of development and 1 indicating a very advanced NGO sector. The 2005 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 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.