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**Were Bosnian Policy Research Organizations More Effective in
2006 than in 2003?
Did Technical Assistance Play a Role?**

by

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Executive Summary

In 2003 the policy development process in Bosnia and Herzegovina was characterized by international community (IC) dominance. The IC provided the vast majority of the analysis of problems facing the country and drafted many of the laws. When the State parliament did not pass the required legislation, the international community's High Representative could decree it. NGO-government relations were still minimal and Bosnian think tanks were young and played only a marginal role.

This paper reports on developments from fall 2003 to fall 2006 in the use of evidence and analysis in the policy development process and the role of local policy research organizations (PROs—often called think tanks) in it. The paper also assesses the likely relation between these changes and the activities of a PRO mentoring project that operated over the same period. Evidence comes from a series of interviews in both years with government officials and members of parliament, on the one hand, and leaders of PROs and advocacy NGOs on the other.

The broad picture that emerges from the above review is of substantial positive development in the policy development process in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the period. Factual evidence and analysis are playing a much greater role, and PROs have been a major provider of this information. The evidence indicates that PROs have been successful in convincing the policy community that they are purveyors of objective, disinterested advice and analysis, and in this they appear to have distinguished themselves from advocacy NGOs.

The improved attitude toward a more rigorous basis for decision making occurred in a conducive environment that steadily placed greater responsibility for policy formation on domestic officials.

The results show that there was improvement in the quality of locally-provided analysis *and* its targeting on the most important issues. This improvement was certainly produced at least in part by the substantial capacity building efforts of the PRO Project. We do not have the ability to causally link the stronger research and communications by local organizations fostered by the PRO Project with the changed attitudes by decision makers towards the use of evidence and analysis in the policy process. But the coincidence is clear.



In discussing the reconstruction of countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Mariina Ottoway makes an important distinction between the development of organizations and the creation of institutions. As she says

Institution building is a slow process. Donors can create organizational structures that bear a resemblance to the functioning, legitimate institutions of stable states, but converting these organizations into real institutions in states recovering from collapse is an entirely different matter. The first task--establishment of organizations—can be accomplished with money and technical assistance. Their transformation into legitimate institutions is the result of domestic political processes that take time... (Ottoway, 2002, p. 1016).

The goal of the Policy Research Organizations (PROs) project conducted in BiH over the roughly 3.5 year period ending in Spring 2007 is to strengthen the policy development process, in part through mentoring existing or newly forming PROs (often call think tanks) to produce the high quality policy research necessary for addressing priority questions of the day. In this sense the project is about building organizations in order to strengthen the institution of evidence-based policymaking in BiH. Institutional development was pursued through increasing the policy analytic acumen of policy clients in the executive and legislative branches, working with PROs to produce trenchant and relevant policy analyses, and making policy makers more reliant upon using these results as a basis for their deliberations. In addition, the project helped PRO leaders improve management practices to ensure sustainability of their organizations.

The project's strategy for developing the policymaking institution has three related components:

- improving the quality of analytic work produced and the understanding of such work through training courses with mixed classes of government officials and PRO staff and through international monitors advising PROs on research projects funded by the project,
- developing management and stakeholder communications capacities in PROs through training courses and in-house diagnostics and management mentoring.
- creating the view by decision makers that the products offered by PROs contain badly needed information by supplying quality analysis on a just-in-time basis and in accessible formats, and
- establishing working relations between policy analysts and decision makers through formal (e.g., roundtables) and informal events.

Relations among these components are extremely close. Concrete cases of high-quality, focused policy analysis delivered on time can create a demand for more such analysis particularly when analysis's role in policymaking is clear to the policymaking community. At the same time, relevant policy

analysis requires a policy maker client to help define the task to be done (so the work hits the target) and to champion the analytic results.

This paper presents an assessment of the development of Bosnian PROs' role in the policymaking process during the 2003-2006 period and indirectly of the success of the PRO-Project. To our knowledge there are no other studies that have tried to assess the effects of this type of project.¹

Before turning to the assessment itself, however, an appreciation of the dynamics of Bosnia's policymaking environment during 2003-2006 is important. This is the subject of the following section. The next section then describes the data employed and the indicators of PRO development used in the analysis of developments over the period. The third and fourth sections present an assessment of the progress made in two areas during the project: the emerging role of Policy Research Organizations and the use of policy analysis in policymaking at the State level, and the effectiveness of technical assistance in strengthening PROs' capabilities and policy role. Both assessments are facilitated by baseline information collected in the fall of 2003.

THE EVOLVING POLICY ENVIRONMENT

In 2003. The 1995 Dayton Agreement gave the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) significant powers to promote the creation of multiethnic political institutions and create the legal framework for a market economy.² The Agreement was substantially amended in 1997 expanding OHR's powers. Under the new terms, the High Representative (HR) could make binding decisions in several areas, including issuing policy statements carrying the force of law, ensuring the implementation of the Peace Agreement throughout the country, and removing officials from office for good cause.³ In effect, as argued by Bojkov (2003), because of the strong powers accorded to the international community, BiH is a controlled democracy.⁴ The OHR frequently used its expanded powers. By 2002, over 100 laws and decisions were issued on a wide range of topics where governments or legislatures were unable to agree on action. Over 60 officials were dismissed (Bieber, 2002:25). Cox (2001) among others argued that the HR's decisions relieve officials and law makers from having to negotiate and compromise, thereby permitting nationalist politicians to continue to hold extreme positions. More broadly, many saw the active role of the HR and other donors as weakening official institutions.⁵ Moreover, the strong role of the international community also affected the development of civil society institutions, NGOs and think tanks among them (Bieber, 2002:27-8).

¹ Numerous studies of the effectiveness of international technical assistance on the performance of other types of projects have been conducted, however. See, for example, Messick (1999), Godfrey et al. (2000), Fortmann (1988), Batra and Syed, (2003), Low et al. (2001), Stern (2000), and Buss and Vaughan (1995).

² The use of external multilateral organizations to administer post-conflict societies is an evolving practice, as described in Wilde (2001) and Matheson (2001), for example.

³ Specifically, the Peace Implementation Council revised Annex 10 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace signed in Paris in December 1995, after being negotiated in Dayton, Ohio.

⁴ Some would argue that it is better thought of as an international protectorate (Freedom House, 2001; p.96).

⁵ See, for example, Bieber (2002, p.27) and European Stability Initiative (2004, p.10).



The dominant role of the International Community (IC) in policy development was by far the most striking aspect of the environment for policy research in the BiH. The Office of the High Representative and a host of supporting donor organizations drove the policy agenda and provided most of the underlying analysis. The incentives were indeed modest for the State and Entity governments to engage in policy development and to commission the essential policy research to support it when the principal laws were frequently delivered to them in practically final form for passage.⁶

This was not to say that the streamlined policy development and enactment process is without its merits. To become competitive over the next few years BiH must reform its economy very quickly and thoroughly, as well as operate more efficiently as a single country. Hence, the pressure on legislative development has been understandable. Nevertheless, the prominent question of the ability of the Entity and lower level governments to implement these new laws that “descend from heaven” is largely an open question.

What was different in BiH in fall 2006 compared with fall 2003? One can list at least five developments that have altered the policy environment in the past three years.

- The European Union initiated talks with BiH on a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) that places the country on the road to eventually join the European Union. This increased the country's self-confidence significantly and simultaneously pressed the case for accelerated political and economic reforms, particularly in strengthening the relative position of the State because of the requirement of harmonizing Bosnian legislation with the *acquis communautaire* (Foreign Policy Initiative, 2006).
- The Office of the High Representative (HR) that has exercised such strong leadership and control since the Dayton Accords is being phased down. In 2004, for example, of the 159 decisions taken by the HR none imposed a new law and less than one-quarter amended or repealed laws (Bieber, 2005). Probably in the summer of 2007 the HR will be transformed into a much less powerful European Union Special Representative (EUSR). Legislators and elected officials will be increasingly responsible for legislation enacted and the way programs are implemented: they are less and less able to hide behind international community mandates.
- The importance of the State relative to the Entities has increased. There is now a Ministry of Defense at the State level. Another indicator is the 2005 agreement on the creation on a multi-ethnic national police force, although implementation remains problematic. The strong, but ultimately unsuccessful, push by the international community for State-strengthening constitutional changes signaled a strong likelihood of power shifting in the future from Entity and lower level governments. In a less fragmented policy space, policy researchers can better focus their efforts.
- The fall 2006 elections marked a modest shift away from relatively nationalistic leaders, a development that may vindicate those who believed that eventually the Bosnian electorate would

⁶ The role of the international community in defining the legal framework for Brcko District is a striking example in this area (Karnavas, 2003).

move in this direction and that the EU's use of "normative power" will ultimately pay off (Juncos, 2006; Bose, 2005; Tesan, 2006).

- At the State level, the Economic Policy Planning Unit (EPPU) was established within the Office of the Prime Minister in 2005 and is fully operational. The EPPU has provided contracts to some policy research organizations and, more importantly, has become the symbol of the necessity of a stronger analytic basis for new legislation. Additionally, a Parliamentary Research Center was created in 2004 to provide information from non government sources on pending legislation to State-level MPs. The Director of the Center has requested a budget line from parliament for outsourcing work to PROs in 2007.

As measured by the Freedom House Nations in Transit Ratings, BiH has continued its steady development of democracy. The overall Democracy Score improved from 4.54 in 2003 to 4.18 in 2005 (Bieber, 2005, p.136). The Civil Society component changed less but was still in a positive direction—from 4.00 to 3.75.

Similarly, according to the USAID NGO Sustainability Index, the overall civil society environment did not change much, registering a small but steady improvement between the 2002 and 2005 indices (USAID, 2006, p. 216).⁷ Indeed, some commentators see NGOs in particular as weak participants in the policy process (Foreign Policy Initiative, 2006, p. 8). If there is little respect for NGOs in policy formation overall, it may well still be hard for PROs to participate.

Overall, the factors just listed suggest that the environment for receptivity by the State and Entity governments and legislatures for quality, evidence-based policy analysis and advice improved over the period. In other words, 2003-2006 proved to be an opportune time for the PRO development project.

In view of the many changes in BiH's policy environment during the project period, it is not possible to assign any strict causality between improvements in PROs policy activities and the PRO Project, should positive patterns be documented for both. Nevertheless, it is certainly worth exploring if various indicators of PRO policy-activity development are positive, i.e., consistent with them being stimulated by and taking advantage of the improved policy environment, and coincident with useful technical assistance.

INFORMATION AND INDICATORS EMPLOYED

Information acquisition. To chart developments our analysis relies on a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with PRO and advocacy NGO directors and government officials and members of parliament (MPs) at both the State and Entity levels in the fall of 2003 and in September 2006. The general strategy was to explore both the demand for policy research and its supply.⁸

⁷ The advocacy part of the component did improve from 3.9 in 2002 to 3.3 in 2005 (in the index, 1 indicates the most favorable situation and 7 the least). Because greater effectiveness by PROs may be an important element in explaining the change, we did not include this factor in explaining changes in the environment that may affect PROs' effectiveness.

⁸ The 2003 interview guides were patterned on those used in an earlier analysis of think tanks in the region. See R. Struyk (1999).



On the demand-side, In 2003 we conducted semi-structured interviews with 17 individuals or small groups of policymakers at the State and Entity levels that were actively involved in the policy development process; in 2006 24 policymakers from the same groups were interviewed.⁹ The objective here was to understand their degree of interest in and reliance upon locally generated policy research when they address a policy question, including the development of legislation to correct identified problems.

On the supply side of the market, we interviewed 19 (2003) and 15 (2006) existing and soon-to-form advocacy, policy research, and other organizations with public policy interests about their general operations and their involvement in the policy process. We cast our net widely, especially in 2003, in the hope of not missing a relevant organization. In the end, however, five existing organizations in 2003 and seven in 2006 were found at least to be approaching the operational level of PROs at the lower level of development elsewhere in the region. We define a PRO as an organization focused on actively participating in the policy process, conducting research that supports an evidence-based approach to policy development, and sufficiently established that it is likely to continue operations. Among the four PROs interviewed in both years, we interviewed the same person in three cases.

Finally, we held discussions with numerous staff members of donor organizations and their contractors to get their views on Bosnian PROs and the policy environment more broadly. While we talked with many individuals, we cannot claim that our sample is strictly representative.

The section of the 2003 and 2006 interview guides on the policy development process was essentially identical. In the 2006 guide we added questions on perceived changes over the period and in the guide for PROs and advocacy NGOs we added questions on their experience with the PRO Project self-assessed organizational development over the period.

Outcome Indicators. Two sets of indicators are employed: (a) those measuring the use of locally-generated analyses in the policy development process and the change in PRO involvement and effectiveness in the process; and, (b) those measuring the success of the project in strengthening PROs so that they could be more effective.

Greater involvement in the policy process. In the analysis we employ indicators measuring three kinds of policy-involvement development of PROs. The first focuses on PRO development, i.e., their growth, as measured by changes in the number of PROs and in their staff size. The idea is that positive growth comes in response to encouragement. Logically, some of this encouragement should come from their experience in the policy process. It is hard to imagine talented people creating or joining organizations that are unable to fulfill their basic mission. At the same time we recognize that the role of funding availability, particularly from the international community, can be an important factor. Indeed, over this period the creation of one PRO was wholly supported by international donors. In short, we take growth in the number as an indicator of positive PRO experience.

The second developments measured concern the extent of PRO involvement in the policy process. We employed two indicators.

⁹ At the Entity level, only senior government officials were interviewed: 7 in both 2003 and 2006.

1. *Absolute level of involvement in 2006.* All PROs were rated as to the intensity of their involvement, ranging from low to high based on their responses to a series of questions asked in 2006. The ratings are subjective. They took into account whether the PRO worked with both MPs and government agencies, the number of concrete examples offered of where the PRO's work was used in the policy process, and the apparent extent of informal dealings with policymakers indicated. This does not measure change but does help create a context in which to interpret the change measures.
2. *Change based on interview response comparisons.* For all PROs operating in 2003 and still in 2006 the absolute levels of involvement were compared.

The working hypothesis for the second measure is that these PROs will have higher ratings in 2006 than in 2003, i.e., they make better connections and understand where and how to intervene in the process as they gain experience.

The third development measured was the dynamic in the perceived interest in government agencies and MPs in receiving information from PROs and advocacy NGOs. Several indicators were utilized. Policy makers were asked in a series of questions in 2003 and 2006 about the information sources they rely upon for policy decision making. Changes over time were identified. Second, government officials, MPs, and PRO and advocacy NGO directors interviewed were asked to rate this interest on the part of government officials and MPs on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 indicated a strong interest and 1 essentially no interest. The question used in the two survey waves was identical. On the one hand, it can be argued that this is an indicator of the environment in which PROs operate; but, on the other, it is also the case that PRO effectiveness (or lack thereof) is a powerful environmental determinant.

Indicators of project influence on PRO performance. The general logic here is that the greater the value that PRO directors assign to workshops and the mentoring provided by the technical assistance project, the greater the impact on PROs' effectiveness in the policy process. Indicators in two areas were developed to address this point. The first uses information on the eight workshops offered by the project—4 on research topics and 4 on managing PROs, including one on strategies for communicating policy research results. Three indicators were defined:

1. An overall rating on all the workshops attended by staff from a PRO based on responses to questions on each of the eight workshops. (PRO director-respondents were reminded of the specific staff members who had participated in each workshop.) A rating on a three point scale was assigned based on open-ended responses, including specific examples of how the information from the workshop had been used by the PRO. The scale ranges from 3 (clearly useful) to 1 (not very useful). Scores were computed only for the workshops attended by each PRO's staff.
2. PRO directors were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 (best score) whether the right kind of workshops were offered for strengthening PROs.
3. PRO directors were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of the training program for PROs on a scale from 1 to 5 (best score).



The second area addresses PROs' opinions of the utility of specific mentoring provided by the project.

1. Four organizations received a total of eight research grants from the project by the time of this analysis. For each grant the project provided an international mentor who is an expert on the specific topic under analysis. Statements by PRO respondents on mentors' utility were converted to the 3-point scale listed above.
2. A "management diagnostic"—a fairly complete review of an organization's management practices and follow-up memo on recommended improvements--was conducted with three PROs. Statements by PRO respondents on mentors' utility were converted to the 3-point scale listed above.

Clearly, the above indicators will reveal PROs' views of the utility of the various project activities. They do not, however, permit one to draw a causal inference between these activities and changes in PROs' success in working in the policy arena.

FINDINGS ON PROS' POLICY PROCESS PARTICIPATION

Data for the indicators outlined above are presented in three subsections, beginning with information on the number of PROs in 2003 and 2006 and concluding with that on the frequency of use of analytic materials produced by PROs and policymaker receptivity to information from these organizations.

Change in the number of PROs. Table 1 shows that in 2003 there were five PROs--the four listed in the top table panel as still operating as PROs in 2006 plus the Center for Promotion of Civil Society listed last as having moved away from policy research. Over the three year period three additional PROs were created either *de novo* or through the transformation of a pre-existing institution. Thus, in 2006 there were seven PROs compared with five in 2003, a significant increase suggesting that the rewards of participating in the policy process were significant. Note that the team was unable to interview one recently formed PRO; so the experience of six main ones are considered below.

The idea that PROs are prospering is reinforced by the increase in employment in the four PROs operating in both years. Full-time staff increased from an average of 11.9 to 15.5. Staff growth was not universal: one large PRO experienced a decline of about 25 percent in its staff over the period.

PRO involvement in the policy process. PROs and NGOs were rated on a three-point scale as to their involvement based on opened questions on their activities; concrete examples of activities were requested in the interviews. Four of six PROs (two-thirds) were rated as highly active and two as moderately so. The figures for the nine advocacy NGOs interviewed indicate a somewhat lower level of engagement: three were rated as highly active (one-third), four moderately, and two hardly active at all.

Examples of specific involvement among the PROs include the following:

- Economics Institute of Sarajevo reported the results of its analysis of the need for money market instruments, where the Central Bank was the prime policy client, resulted in the necessary legislation being passed and instruments appearing in the market.
- Economics Institute of Banja Luka (EIBL) worked at the Republic Srpska level sued analysis on health care administration in working with the Ministries of Health and Finance on developing health policy programs.
- CEPOS's work on social targeting provided input for public hearings and legal reform.

As a result of these kinds of accomplishments, government agencies initiated or expanded their outsourcing of policy analysis. For example, the EPPU outsourced two policy research projects to CEPOS in 2005 and 2006, including one worth over \$120,000. And various RS agencies have increased their contracting with EIBL.

In 2006 all four of the PROs that were active in 2003 were rated as highly active. In 2003, for the same group, two were rated hardly active and two low-to-moderate. In other words, the more seasoned PROs were leading the way; and, the experience gained over time was paying off.

Use of PROs' analytic material and policymakers receptivity to such PRO input. PROs' success depends on having receptive clients. How interested are decision makers in receiving analyses from PROs? The results for how they rated various analytic sources, summarized in Table 2, show a very substantial shift toward greater reliance on PROs and NGOs and away from government agencies. This pattern exists despite some upgrading of the analytic capabilities of the agencies. (In asking these questions, we did not attempt to distinguish between PROs and advocacy NGOs in the interview because many respondents do not make a clear distinction.) The entries in the third row document the stronger interest in using NGO/PRO analyses, indicating an increase from about 1-in-3 officials in 2003 to 8-in-10 in 2006 saying that they had received useful analyses from them. This pattern is consistent with over half of decision makers in 2006 relying partially or completely on non agency sources for informative analyses compared with practically none three years earlier. One official explained the reason for the change as a combination of stronger analytic education of Bosnian researchers and capacity building by the international community, and more specifically, the PRO project.

The patterns just reviewed are further supported by responses to a question about changes over the period in the use of objective analysis in decision making. Ten of the 18 government officials and 4 of the 6 MPs, or 60 percent overall, rated the change as "big" or "significant." Importantly, nearly all those interviewed rated the information received from PROs as objective and this as a reason for using it.

An important feature in the policy process that emerged over the period is to commonly include public input, either through public hearings or Working Groups. As one official put it, "Working Groups are becoming an everyday practice." In 2003, such practices were very rare (Struyk and Miller, 2004).

The results to the question asking leaders of PROs and advocacy NGOs to rate the receptivity of government agencies and MPs to receiving information from PROs and advocacy NGOs, displayed in Table 3, are highly informative. (This is the same question asked of officials.) In 2006, PROs had a quite



positive view overall, with all ratings at 3 or above on the 5 point scale. In contrast, in 2003, among the 4 PROs present in both years, 2 gave ratings in the 1-2 range. Interestingly, advocacy NGOs gave less positive ratings, with 5 of 9 giving ratings of in the 1-2.5 range.

One factor that may be at work here is that a condition for getting a research grant from the PRO project was that the applicant PRO has an identified government client for the research findings at the time of the application. This meant that the client's needs shaped the research and presumably the utility of the final product. In other words, the research was a topic considered important by the policy client. PROs have therefore been in closer touch with more senior officials. In contrast, advocacy NGOs often pursue agendas emphasizing their own priorities.

It is also possible that the difference in part may be explained by the evolution of policymakers toward more evidence-based information for decision making. The interviews with PROs and NGOs included a question about their perception of the change in use of factual information in decision making during 2003-2006 by government agencies and parliaments at the State and at the Entity level. Respondents were asked to classify change (a big change," "not so big but positive," or "none." Two distinct patterns emerge from the responses:

- The change is greater at the State than at the Entity level. Seven of 15 State-level respondents gave a "big change" rating, and only 2 said there was no change. In contrast, only 3 rated the change in each of the two Entities as a "big change," but again there were only 1 or 2 saying there was no change.
- PROs see greater change than NGOs. For example, at the State level 5 of 6 PROs gave a "big change" rating but only 2 of the 8 NGO leaders who responded.

We can also look at responses PROs and advocacy NGOs gave to a question about future developments in the use research findings from such organizations. As shown in Table 4, there is a sharp contrast between the view of PROs and advocacy NGOs on this point, with the PROs being much more optimistic. Still, 3 of the 9 NGOs gave a positive rating. One NGO respondent made an interesting statement in his response: "Think tanks have better capacity and reputation and have more access to Government." Thus, the comparatively negative ratings of advocacy NGOs may reflect more their sense of a lesser ability to compete for policy influence in the evolving decision making environment.

Evidence of senior policymakers' clear interest is shown by the fact that they are now hosting events on PROs' research findings. In 2003, PROs had to organize their own events and worked to induce policymakers to attend. By 2006 senior government officials were co-hosting round tables and presentations of policy recommendations to relevant officials, media, and other stakeholders. These have included the Director of European Integration Directorate, the Head of the BiH Parliament Research Center, the President of the Foreign Trade Chamber, the Governor of the Central Bank, and the Director of the EPPU together with the Deputy Ambassador of the European Commission.

FINDINGS ON THE UTILITY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The discussion proceeds in two parts. First, we look at the self-ratings by PROs to their development during 2003-2006. Second, we present information on PROs ratings of project activities.

PROs self assessment. PRO leaders were asked to rate their development during 2003 – 2006 in three areas shown in Table 5. These leaders clearly rate their organizations in 2006 as stronger analytically, managerially, and better able to communicate research results to policy clients than they were in 2003. Only one PRO leader rated the increase in analytic capacity as “not so big” and one other gave the same rating to management improvement. All the rest stated there had been a “big change.”

Utility of project activities. The key question is whether the ratings of project activities are consistent with the self ratings of change just presented. Ratings of three project activities are reviewed below: the training workshops, the international mentors for project-funded policy research projects, and the management assessments.

Training workshops. The eight training courses given by the project are listed in Table 6. There were four on management issues, e.g., setting overhead rates and quality control, and the same number on research skills, beginning with a comprehensive course on policy analysis. Most courses were offered 2-3 times. After the first two courses, on policy analysis and program evaluation, PRO leaders were consulted about their priorities for future trainings.

The six PROs were not able to send staff to all courses. Attendance was highest for the policy analysis course, as PROs were told that an important factor in selecting PROs to receive research grants would be staff performance in the course. Generally, PRO leaders participated in the policy analysis course in addition to one or two staff members. Leaders were also particularly interested in the course on setting overhead rates, human resources policy, and quality control. Other staff were typically the participants for the statistics and regression courses.

A key element in all the training activities is that participants were a blend of PRO and advocacy NGO staff, senior and mid-level government officials, staff from the parliamentary research center, and an occasional MP. Mixing participants and other project networking activities helped establish relations among these communities and facilitated later work on specific policy issues.

The ratings by PRO directors for the workshops shown in the table are extremely good. This result read in relation to PROs views about the improvement in their capabilities over the period noted above suggests that the training programs were on target. When asked directly to rate the effectiveness of the overall training program on a 5-point scale, the six PRO leaders gave an average rating of 4.55, the lowest score being 4 (given by 2 raters). All said the selection of topics was correct; no one suggested that a key topic was omitted. Importantly, the project received positive comments on the capacity building program from PRO and government leaders alike, with official stating that the project’s trainings are the most unique and interesting, challenging training experiences that they have ever had.

International mentors. The PRO project provided an international mentor, an expert on the specific topic of the research, for each policy research project supported by a project grant. Each mentor visited Bosnia



twice for 3-4 days—once when the analysis plan was available for review and discussion and once when the draft report was ready for review. In several cases the mentor had a fundamental effect in redefining the issues under consideration into a form more susceptible to rigorous analysis. In all cases they introduced additional experience of their own and from the international literature. The project team identified the mentors but always in discussion with the PRO director for ideas on possible candidates.

Ratings from PRO directors for the mentors for 7 of the 8 research grants were highly positive. In one case, the PRO director was somewhat disappointed with the mentor, stating that someone better could have been found, although in this case the mentor was one of their choosing. Overall, the mentors were seen as very substantially increasing the quality of the products produced.

Management assessments. These assessments consisted of the project director reviewing specific management practices—quality control; tracking costs of research projects; staff practices with respect to assessment, training, and compensation; use of the board of directors; and, preparation of a communication plan for individual projects. Three assessments were conducted, all on-site and with the PRO leadership and selected other staff as respondents. The project director prepared a memo for each organization that summarized findings, made recommendations for improvement, and laid out an improvement program.

Leaders of all three PROs for which assessments were conducted were enthusiastic about them, even if not all made a great deal of progress in implementing the action plan. Nevertheless, the effects are demonstrable. The Economics Institute of Sarajevo said that one result was restructuring the institute to make it sustainable. CEPOS implemented time sheets to better track costs, developed defensible overhead rates, and put a staff assessment process in place. The Economics Institute of Banja Luka developed a defensible overhead rate that is now used in all proposals.

PRO directors clearly highly valued the package of services provided by the PRO Project. It is reasonable to associate their valuations with the utility of the services in improving their organizations. This indicates, but does not “prove,” that the project affected PRO performance in the policy process.

CONCLUSION

The broad picture that emerges from the above review is of substantial positive development in the policy development process in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the 2003-2006 period. Factual evidence and analysis are playing a greater role and PROs have been a major provider of this information. The evidence indicates that PROs have been successful in convincing the policy community that they are purveyors of objective, disinterested advice and analysis, and in this they appear to have distinguished themselves from advocacy NGOs.

We emphasize that the improved attitude toward a more rigorous basis for decision making occurred in a favorable environment.

There is no question that there was improvement in the quality of local analysis *and* its targeting on the most important issues. This improvement was certainly produced at least in part by the substantial capacity building efforts of the PRO Project. We do not have the ability to causally link the stronger research and communications by local organizations fostered by the PRO Project with the changed attitudes by decision makers towards the use of evidence and analysis in the policy process. But the coincidence is clear.

Looking to the future, when the policymakers interviewed were asked whether they thought objective information would become more important in policy decision making, the general response was that it would. They cited two principal reasons: the application process for joining the EU demanded more concrete information and evidence, and the public is becoming more knowledgeable about key issues so that politicians will have to become better informed to be credible. They also noted that locally generated analysis would have to increase to fill the void left by the decreasing role of the international community. In short, the prospects in Bosnia for PRO development appear quite positive.



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Table 1. The Evolution in the Number of PROs 2003 - 2006

PROs in both 2003 and 2006
Economics Institute of Sarajevo ^a
Center for Policy Studies (CEPOS)-Prism Research ^b
Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues (IBHI)
Economics Institute of Banja Luka
<i>New or changed functions towards PRO activity since 2003</i>
ACIPS Center for Policy Research
Center for Strategic Studies ^c
Center for European Integration
<i>Changed activity away from policy research</i>
Center for Promotion of Civil Society

- a. The Economics Institute over the period merged with the former Institute of the Economics Faculty of the University of Sarajevo which was not classified as a PRO in 2003.
- b. Prism created CEPOS (Center for Policy Studies) as a wholly owned subsidiary. The transition was so smooth and the two organizations so integrated that we can treat the responses in 2003 and 2006 as strictly comparable.
- c. Existed in 2003 but altered the nature of its work over the period.

Table 2. Summary Statements by Policymakers in interviews on the Sources of Information They Use, 2003 and 2006

2003	2006
Analysis produced by government institutes and senior academics is generally viewed as not being useful for policy work.	No change.
Most officials do not look beyond their own agency for information or analysis to inform them about policy questions they are addressing; when they do, they consistently turn to other government agencies.	In terms of primary reliance, 7 officials relied on govt agencies; ^a 12 on a combination of govt agencies and PROs; 4 on non government sources only. ^b
About one-third use analyses from the IC and NGOs, including PROs.	80% said they had received useful analyses from NGOs and PROs, about the same share for both officials and MPs.
About one-half could identify event organized by NGOs or PROs, such as roundtables. But, typically, the respondent pointed out that the event originated with an IC organization.	All 24 had attended roundtables, discussions, or presentations by NGOs or PROs. Much greater sense of independence of work.

Sources: for 2003, Struyk and Miller, 2004; for 2006, interviews conducted for this analysis.

- a. Government agencies include the Parliamentary Research Service and the new Economic Policy Planning Unit in Prime Minister's office.
- b. One respondent did not name a primary source.

Table 3. Ratings of PROs and Advocacy NGOs of the Receptivity of Government Officials and Members of Parliament to Information from Such Organizations

Rating Scale: 1 to 5 (best score)

Rater	Distribution		
	1-2.5	3-3.5	4-5
PROs			
-- All in 2006	--	3	3
--Those present in both 2003 & 2006	0	2	2
Advocacy NGOs	5	2	2

Table 4. Ratings of PROs and Advocacy NGOs on the Likelihood of Greater Use of Research in Policy Making in the Future

	Rating		
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
PROs	5	1	--
NGOs	3	5	1

Table 5. PROs Self-Rating of Development, 2003-2006

	Rating		
	Big change	Not so big, but positive	No change
1. Analytically stronger than it was 3 year ago?	5	1	--
2. Communicates research results better than 3 year ago?	6	--	--
3. Is better managed today than 3 years ago?	5	1	--

Table 6. PRO Ratings of Training Workshops

Training Course	Enthusiastic-Positive	OK	Not Very Helpful
<i>Management workshops</i>			
Establishing an overhead rate	5	0	0
Staff Policies	4	0	0
Communicating Results	3	0	0
Quality Control	2	0	0
<i>Research tool workshop</i>			
Policy Analysis	4	0	0
Program Evaluation	5	0	0
Statistics for Policy Research	3	1	0
Regression for Policy Research	3	0	0