**AUTORITETI PËR INFORMIMIN MBI
DOKUMENTET E ISH-SIGURIMIT TË SHTETIT**

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2020

June 2017

Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Albanian Authority on Access to Information on the former State Security Service (hereafter referred to as the 'Authority') is established by Law No. 45/2015: "On the right to information on the files of the former state security services during communist times – Sigurimi." Its mission is to provide access to Sigurimi files and preserve the record of oppression in order to educate the public and support the democratic values of justice, truth, reconciliation, and responsibility for future generations.

In fulfilling its mission, the Authority is guided by the values of transparency, integrity, collaboration, and proactive learning and engagement. It embodies the European Parliament's call to keep alive the memory of the past, since there can be no reconciliation without truth and remembrance; reaffirms Albania's stand against totalitarian rule of any form or ideological background; and respects the European values of human rights and dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law.

The Authority aims to consolidate into a single archive all documents produced by the Sigurimi; provide orderly access to the information on file in keeping with the provisions of the law; conduct research, develop educational courses and curricula, and engage with the public through strategic communication; as well as screen individuals that seek public office for ties with the former state security service.

In order to attain those goals, the Authority will:

- identify, collect, and establish a single integrated archive of all known documents produced by or related to the activity of the Former Sigurimi;
- make records available to the public as per the provisions prescribed in the law, including providing access to information in digital form;
- establish the Authority as a central archival source for research on Sigurimi activities;
- conduct public outreach designed to establish the Authority as a platform for engagement with and understanding of the Communist past in Albania;
- support the work of documenting the crimes of communism, including contributing to justice;
- support the process of identifying and recovering the remains of those who disappeared or were executed during communism;
- support the vetting of officials running for elected office or appointment to public office.

This mandate requires that the Authority be established as an effective professional body with engaged, resourceful personnel who are able to enter into partnerships with domestic and international counterparts.

The Strategy document presented here for the years 2017-2020 will serve as a guiding document for the activities of the newly established Authority. It is meant to provide direction and focus for the activities of the Authority, while also enabling periodic reviews of the goals and objectives.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

To inform the Albanian public on the activity of the communist dictatorship State Security Service (Sigurimi), provide unfettered citizen access to Sigurimi files, and preserve the record of oppression in order to support the democratic values of justice, truth and responsibility for future generations.

Vision

The Authority will provide a reliable and credible platform for accessing the large documentary heritage of the former Sigurimi; engaging Albanian citizens of all backgrounds by providing data, information, and context from the Sigurimi archives on the experience of communist oppression; and serving as an accessible and vital source for evaluating the Albanian experience under communism.

Values

- Transparency: Create an open atmosphere in all professional dealings that promote transparency about the past
- Integrity: Demonstrate a commitment to honesty and integrity in all dealings with the public, officials, and staff
- Collaboration: Work closely and creatively with individuals and institutions that share commitment to human rights and objective research
- Learning & Engagement: Pursue public enlightenment through continuous learning as a way to encourage democratic engagement

3. INTRODUCTION

The Albanian Authority on Access to Information on the former State Security Service (hereafter referred to as the 'Authority') is a newly established institution based on Law 45/2015, passed by the Albanian Parliament in March 30, 2015. It is guided by its statutory mission of providing information on the activities of the former State Security Service (hereafter referred to as 'Sigurimi') as well as the European Parliament Resolution of April 2, 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism. The Authority aims to release information on the activities of the Sigurimi; increase public awareness about the communist regime in order to help prevent intolerance, extremism, anti-democratic movements, and the recurrence of totalitarian rule in the future; and encourage an open discussion about the communist past and its consequences.

In its work, the Authority strives to respect all victims of the totalitarian regime and pay tribute to those who fought against tyranny and oppression; embody the European Parliament's call to keep alive the memory of the past, since there can be no reconciliation without truth and remembrance; reconfirm Albania's stand against totalitarian rule of any form or ideological background; and respect the European values of human rights and dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law.

The Authority will consolidate into a single archive all documents produced by the Sigurimi; provide orderly access to the information on file in keeping with the provisions of the law; and conduct research, develop educational courses and curricula, and enter into partnerships with other research centers and public authorities, both domestic and international, that pursue the goals of transitional justice and remembrance.

Law 45/2015 broadly defines the tasks of the institution as ensuring the collection and management in a single archive of all documents regarding the activity of the Sigurimi and the provision of access to the files for all those affected. The law was drafted with reference to the German law on access to STASI records passed in early 1990s following German reunification. As in the case of Germany, Law 45/2015 made the deliberate choice to separate the question of access to Sigurimi records from that of lustration, which had bedeviled earlier attempts in the 1990s and 2000s to elucidate the operation of the Sigurimi. The drafters of the bill have tried to avoid the constitutional and judicial pitfalls that undermined these earlier legal efforts, which were either overturned by domestic and international courts or tainted by accusations of political manipulation and expediency.

In order to ensure the long-term viability of the law, the bill was informed by the 2009 Albanian Constitutional Court and Venice Commission decision as well as best international practices for enabling access to former communist intelligence service documents. It also provides, through 2020, for the vetting of those seeking high or elected office in Albania by requiring the Authority to respond to all institutional and individual requests for background information on candidates. In these cases, the task of the Authority is limited to making the candidate information available. It does not impose sanctions or cast judgment on the worthiness of the individual for office.

According to preliminary information, there are over 20 million pages of Sigurimi documents on file that need to be collected in a single archive and managed by the new Authority. These documents are currently scattered across multiple agencies, including the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, and the Albanian Intelligence Service. Additional document funds related to activities of the Sigurimi can be found in the archives of the former Labor Party Central Committee, stored in the Central State Archive. And still more documents may exist in the archival system of the Ministry of Justice and elsewhere. According to current information, all of these documents are in or just outside Tirana, and no archival funds produced by the Sigurimi remain in any local branches of operation. The Authority will conduct an exhaustive search to ensure that all existing Sigurimi records are transferred to and preserved in the new institution. Law 45/2015 requires all institutions and citizens to hand over to the Authority any Sigurimi records that they possess.

While all of these agencies manage their document collections, their institutional staff is ill prepared to provide the archival organization and procedural regulation needed to ensure access. In addition, the dispersal of archives across multiple agencies with uneven procedures for access and cataloging imposes tremendous practical difficulties on the location and identification of individual records. Thus, even the legal call for transparency, which Law 45/2015 mandates, is insufficient to ensure access without the safe collection, storage, and management in one facility of the Sigurimi's extensive archival remains. This institutionalization of transparency is one of the Authority's most important legal responsibilities.

The task of populating the Authority's archives will require the identification of all Sigurimi documents, wherever they are currently stored, and their professional transfer and safe management for generations to come. While the consolidation of extant archives already presents logistical challenges related to transport and organization, the continued identification of unknown documents stored elsewhere, the verification of their integrity, and the compilation of information in records that are partially damaged or destroyed presents an even greater challenge for the Authority as it seeks to make information available to the public. An equally important reason for unifying files under one management is to prevent the misuse of sensitive documents by individuals that may have gained possession of them, illegally or otherwise.

The Strategy presented here for the years 2017-2020, along with the accompanying Action Plan, will serve as a guiding document for the activities of the newly established Authority. It seeks to define clearly the context in which the Authority will operate, provide a roadmap for navigating its complex goals and objectives, set out clear and measurable tasks for achieving those goals, and present strategic priorities for the purposes of resource mobilization and stakeholder partnership. This Strategy is not meant to supersede the decision-making responsibility of the Authority's five-member governing committee, Secretariat, or other staff, but rather to help serve Authority members as they seek to respond to the challenges of establishing a new institution. Setting out realistic and measurable tasks will help improve organizational efficiency and provide clear indicators for self-assessment.

4. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The Authority begins its work in a context of public fatigue and lack of trust surrounding the state management of Sigurimi files, since previous legal initiatives were deployed largely for political purposes or have faced constitutional and human rights challenges. The success of the new Authority, therefore, depends on its ability establish a reputation for integrity, impartiality, and transparency.

Since the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, efforts to access secret police files have typically been motivated by two distinct aims: lustration and access. From 1990 to 2015, legal initiatives in Albania prioritized lustration. None of these efforts succeeded, ultimately falling victim to both legal (constitutional) and political challenges.

A 1993 Law on Lustration directed at the legal profession was rejected by the Constitutional Court. This failure was followed by the most extensive laws to date dealing with the Sigurimi files: the Law on Genocide and Crimes against Humanity committed during the Communist Regime for Political, Ideological and Religious Motives ("Genocide Law") and the Law on the Verification of the Moral Character of Officials and Other Persons Connected with the Defense of the Democratic State ("Verification Law"), both passed in 1995. The 2008 law "On the cleanliness of the figure of the High Functionaries of the Public Administration and Elected Persons" experienced a fate similar to its 1993 predecessor: It was suspended by the Constitutional Court, then received further censure from the Council of Europe's Venice Commission.

As a result, despite early attempts to introduce transparency, there has been no access to the Sigurimi files for the majority of Albanians. With the partial exception of the Verification Law (1996-2001), which served primarily for lustration, most of those affected by the Sigurimi have never seen their files. Even that law involved only selective review authorized by a committee. Instead, access has been either restricted to privileged users or used to tar political opponents. This politicization of Sigurimi records has led, a quarter century after communism's fall, to a general skepticism regarding the ability of any state agency, including the new Authority, to open communist files in a fair and impartial manner.

What distinguishes Law 45/2015 and the Authority it establishes from earlier efforts is its separation of the question of access and transparency from that of lustration. Such a distinction helps once and for all to protect the initiative from any question of non-compliance with the Constitution, ensuring for the first time a process whereby any person affected by the activity of Sigurimi has the right and ability to view that information. While the law does enjoin the vetting of candidates upon request, this limited process is carried out in keeping with the best international practices, constitutionally aligned norms, and the boundaries established in the Strasburg Court of Human Rights Decision and Venice Commission Recommendations. Consequently, the Authority's primary role is to ensure citizen access to Sigurimi files and to foster a greater awareness of the functioning of communist

dictatorship, knowledge that is essential to the preservation of Albania's young democracy.

Law 45/2015 was drafted in 2013 and passed in March 2015. The timing of the law is crucial. While twenty-seven years marks a significant passage since the fall of communism, many people affected by Sigurimi activities are not only still alive, but also active professionally. They are, however, in the late stages of their careers, and it is important that the five-year vetting period enabled by this law – limited by European standards and human rights conventions – be concluded as soon as possible in order to have social and political relevance. Under the current law, the provisions related to the vetting of candidates conclude in 2020.

It is important in reviewing the context of this law to stress the seriousness and complexity of entering the Sigurimi files and interpreting its findings. As noted in the law itself, the mandate to ensure citizen access supersedes competing provisions related to protection of privacy or other related legal provisions. The implementation of the law, however, must be informed by the general legal framework in force in the country.

As demonstrated in the extensive literature on transitional justice, achieving truth and clarity about past crimes is essential to promoting individual reconciliation and cultivating the social trust needed to maintain democracy. At the same time, Sigurimi files contain information that embarrasses, compromises, and even indicts many people still alive. File excerpts read in isolation from the wider context give a distorted picture of the past, both individual and societal. Given the uncertainties about the reliability of the information found in the files and the difficulties of interpreting it (both issues discussed more below), the Authority staff must be vigilant about balancing the competing principles of transparency and privacy. If there is conflict, laws of transparency may prevail over the privacy of former collaborators, yet many disputes about how to understand the information found in the files will not be so clear-cut. The Authority and the supporting secretariat will be required to navigate these complexities while ensuring that the intent and purpose of the law is carried out in full.

The first challenge of interpretation comes from the incompleteness of the archives. During the years surrounding the end of communism, regime agents destroyed many documents either by failing to ensure standard preservation procedures or in the deliberate attempt to protect themselves. In some cases, the most damning files may no longer be in existence. In addition, the passage of time – many documents date back to the mid-1940s – has led to the degradation of paper and microfilm. Suboptimal storage conditions have exacerbated the quality of documents. It is therefore imperative that the Authority in collaboration with other institutions take immediate steps to prevent further decay and to ensure preservation of te existing archival material. The potential gaps in Sigurimi files have consequences for individuals affected by the communist oppression as well as for a thorough understanding of Albania's national history in the twentieth century. The current law mandates the consolidation and preservation of Albania's available documentary

heritage, using international best practices for document preservation, including digitalization.

As significant as the loss of information is the challenge posed by interpreting the data that does exists. Sigurimi files cannot be properly understood without a nuanced awareness of the personal and social context surrounding each case, though generally not reflected in them. Two interpretive challenges must be highlighted: distortion and motivation. Police had many reasons for distorting information about individuals in communist Albania, from fear and careerism to ideological conviction or malice. Their roles in surveillance and enforcement necessarily skewed their view of individuals, leading to simple musunderstandings, exaggerations, and even outright falsehoods. (See the neighboring textbox.) For users encountering their own files for the first time, it is important to understand that the data they contain cannot be taken at face value.

The second challenge – that of informer motivation – is even more sensitive. Even if those revealed in the files did inform as indicated, it is crucial to understand that Sigurimi informers provided information on fellow citizens for a variety of reasons. Some acted for personal gain; others because of dire threats to their family and safety. These motives may not appear in the files, but they are essential to consider when assessing past behavior, especially as these assessments will affect people's lives and reputation in the present if they are discussed in wider social circles or with the media. Recognizing extenuating circumstances can be challenging. Those opening their files for the first time will almost surely have an emotional response – anger, distress – when they read the information gathered on them and the names of those who informed; they may be more inclined to condemn than to consider complexities. Staff will have to work with users during this charged process, respecting their intensity of their reactions but also interpreting the findings in ways that respect the complexities of the context and the pressures on other people. This effort will require enormous staff sensitivity.

Similar challenges confront the Authority's goal of shaping the public narrative surrounding the Sigurimi and the communist era. At a time when much of the population simply dismisses the communist period as uniformly bleak, the Authority will have to emphasize context and change, and stress that the Sigurimi acted differently in different eras. The period of open terror and regime consolidation from 1945-1950 involved different police tactics and public coping strategies from those employed in the subsequent decades of maintenance and oppression. From the 1970s until 1990, Sigurimi activity changed again and was directed increasingly against fellow communists as well as the population at large. If the Authority is to establish itself as a credible arbiter of disputes surrounding Albanian communism, it must cultivate a reputation as thoughtful, objective, thorough, and nuanced in its presentations, exhibits, courses, publications, and media events. Fulfilling this need while maintaining the interest of a public used to simplified media presentations will be a challenge for Authority members and staff.

That balance is all the more challenging due to prevalent suspicions about state handling of communist files, a product of the politicized laws noted above. As a state institution, the Authority will have to work diligently to rebuild public support and interest. From the start of its activities, Authority staff members must demonstrate professionalism, integrity, and impartiality in their public

and private dealings. There is little room for lapses or mistakes. A reputation for integrity, however, can become the Authority's most valuable asset, allowing it win domestic and international trust; partner with respected institutions and generate resources; and, most importantly, strengthen Albania's democracy by confronting its troubled past.

5. GOALS OF THE AUTHORITY

5.1. Ensure Access to Sigurimi Records

A primary goal of the Authority is to ensure the right of every citizen to view the information produced or collected about them by former Sigurimi. Under certain conditions, relatives may also view the files on a deceased or missing family member. Citizens will be able to gain access to these files upon submitting a request to the Authority and proof of identity. Provisions will be in place to protect the right to privacy of any third parties and ensure that the human rights and dignity of all persons is respected. Providing access as soon as possible to these documents remains the first priority of the Authority.

Protecting the right to access, however, is not the same thing as ensuring that people do access their files. The goal of fulfilling access is complete only when the Authority reaches the people it is intended to serve. To do this, the Authority must have sufficient staff, resources, and training to serve efficiently those who seek to access their files. In addition, it must have the staff and capabilities to manage public relations and outreach, since interested persons will not engage with the Authority unless they know of its services and trust its abilities. Thus, public outreach is just as important to the goal of ensuring access as client service.

Strategic Objective 1.1 – Identify, collect and establish a single integrated archive of all known documents produced by or related to the activity of the Former Sigurimi.

Tasks:

Action		Indicator
1	Identify existing records in various locations	Complete list of records in known locations
2	Assess condition of records	Report on current condition of known documents
3	Secure authorization to remove records to a new location (Authority building)	Official agreements with relevant agencies to transfer authority over document files
4	Transport records to Authority building	Complete inventory of records on site
5	Process un-catalogued documentation produced by or related to Sigurimi and integrate the documentation into the Authorities Archival System	Identify un-catalogued archival documentation; sign agreements with relevant archival funds to catalogue and transfer relevant material to the Authority
6	Develop a plan for preservation of material records	Completed preservation plan
7	Develop a plan for organizing and cataloging records for accessibility, including a historical analysis of the structure of Sigurimi files	Completed organization plan, with historical analysis
8	Develop digitization plan	Completed plan

Strategic Objective 1.2 – Make records available to the public as per the provisions prescribed in the law, including providing access to information in digital form.

Tasks:

	Action	Indicator
1	Organize and catalog the material documents according to international archival and library science standards	Inventory of organized files with completed catalogue
2	Develop a digitization plan and digitize documents according to access and preservation priority and resources in place.	Digitized documents available at computer terminals
3	Develop user-friendly manuals for patron use of material and digital documents	Completed manuals
4	Identify a small focus group to beta-test user interface and manuals	Revised user interface and manuals
5	Develop reference and access policy for the public based on Law 45/2015, which establishes who can access files and how to do so	Completed policy document
6	Develop procedures for protecting the identity of third parties (blacking out names, etc.)	Completed procedures
7	Develop rules for on-site use of accessed documents as well as for copying documents	Completed set of rules
8	Develop introductory materials for presentation to all users that explain access regulations, rules, context, and sensitivities surrounding documents, including signature pages required for clearance to use	Complete set of paperwork to share with each patron who views the files
9	Train staff in rules and regulations	Records of completed training sessions; evaluation of training sessions
10	Launch an awareness campaign with regard to truth and transparency, and the services provided by the Authority. Organize a press conference around the launch including preparation of a press release and share with all media outlets in Albania.	Records of advertisements, press clippings//briefings, stories, events, social media postings used to publicize the Authority
11	Establish an Authority Advisory Board made up of high-profile individuals from various professions	Advisory Board established; records of public event raising awareness of the Authority

Discussion of Challenges

Preeminent among the challenges associated with providing access to the Sigurimi archives are the extraordinary sensitivities connected with the security service operation and the social impact of the new transparency. For many Albanians who were victims of Sigurimi oppression, illuminating the past is essential to the process of establishing psychological closure, both individually and for families. And for Albania as a whole, the social trust and cohesion necessary to maintain democracy in a society where former victims and perpetrators live side by side requires confrontation with the ghosts of the past.[1]

At the same time, however, revelations from the files can open old wounds, both individually and socially. Law 45/2015 distinguishes between 'collaborators,' 'favoured persons,' and 'affected persons,' legal categories that must be clearly defined in operation. For interpretive purposes, however, the distinctions are finer still. People informed and collaborated in various ways and for various reasons. While some abused their positions and committed egregious violations for personal gain, others may have done so under duress, fearing for their families, their safety, or their lives. While these circumstances do not excuse collaboration, they do provide important context in a society in which threats were serious and fear was pervasive. Authority staff must pay close attention to how these contextual issues are presented to applicants seeking to view their dossiers, since revelations from the files could lead to unfair or one-sided characterizations of people's actions and motives under communism.

A second problem, as noted above, is the question of incomplete or false information in the files. Countless documents were destroyed in the months and years following the collapse of communism, as regime officials and Sigurimi agents sought to erase incriminating files. In addition, documents produced over the four decades of communism have degraded and deteriorated as a result of time and improper storage. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Sigurimi files contain significant biases and distortions. The secret police often made selective use of evidence, fabricating or exaggerating claims and filtering information through the distorting lens of a surveillance program in a totalitarian state. While the files are a critical resource for understanding the communist past, their information must not be taken at face value.

Law 45/2015 protects the privacy and identity of third parties named in personal files, but it allows citizens to see the names of those who informed or spied on them. It will, therefore, be incumbent on the members and staff of the Authority to develop clear operating procedures for conveying nuances and uncertainties of the documents to applicants who view their personal files, so that they do not draw rash conclusions about fellow citizens named as informers.

There are also, of course, a series political and logistical challenges associated with the consolidation of the archives. Establishing a reputation for professionalism, integrity and steering clear of political agenda will be the key elements that will determine the Authority's ability to deliver on its legal mandate. This reputation can only be won over time through the provision of effective services.

---

1. The extensive literature on Germany after World War II testifies to importance of historical transparency for in laying the foundation for strong democracy.

Reaching out to all the Albanians who stand to benefit from the operation of the Authority through well thought and well planned public outreach activities will play an equally important role. But these must be carefully organized, in partnership with media, universities, and other organizations, so as to highlight not just the services offered but also the values of the new Authority and how those values differ from previous efforts at lustration and file access.

In addition, there may be problems of jurisdictional contention, as agencies resist turning over document funds (and the jobs they sustain) to a new inter-governmental authority. And there may also be complications with regard to enforcing the requirement that private citizens turn over documents in their personal possession. Both of these tasks will require careful negotiation and public explanation in order to quell any fears of agency overreach.

Finally, it will be important to determine, based on financial and logistical considerations as well as need, whether to outsource some of the technical tasks required to set up the archive (library science, digitization, document preservation techniques, printing, computer programming, public history) or hire agency staff and purchase equipment to deal with them.

5.2. Promote Research and Public Education

A second goal of the Authority is to support the right of academic institutions, researchers, and media representatives to view Sigurimi records in order to promote rigorous and objective research on Albania's past, and to provide for public education more generally. This access will be granted under conditions that ensure respect for the human rights and privacy of individuals named in the files. The Authority will support research work that contributes to reappraising the activity of the Sigurimi and assessing the impact of its activities on the history of Albania under communism. In addition, the Authority will engage in public education, reaching out to the public through activities such as a Sigurimi Victims Remembrance Day, through partnerships with schools and the Education Ministry, and through social and traditional media platforms.

An activist research and public education agenda can help position the Authority within the wider domestic and international academic landscape. In the first years of its operation, the Authority should consider defining areas of particular research interest and establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for cooperation with researchers, universities, and organizations that work in these areas. It may also want to organize conferences, educational courses, and publications relevant to Albanian communism as well as connect to wider research networks that focus on human rights, the legacy of communism, and totalitarianism internationally. In all these endeavors, it will be crucial to secure the reputation of the Authority and its affiliates for complex analysis of historical events and legacies.

Strategic Objective 2.1 – Establish the Authority as a central archival source for research on Sigurimi activities.

Tasks:

Action		Indicator
1	Define research areas the Authority would like to support	List of areas with descriptions
2	Establish partnerships with universities, archives, and research centers, domestically and internationally, that work in these research areas	Memoranda of Understanding or Letters of Cooperation
3	Set up an access policy for scholars, including rules for access and for document use (plan must address the type of projects encouraged, requirements for access, rules on privacy and citation, and rules on the physical use of manuscripts)	Completed policy with related documents for use
4	Establish an on-site reading room where documents can be used under supervision	Room established and supplied computer terminals, tables, and other equipment
5	Build an on-site library of supplemental materials – both physical and online – relevant to the study of the Sigurimi, Communism in Albania, and totalitarian rule in general	Library established
6	Develop advertising materials and online catalogue on the holdings of the Authority. Place select documents online, and determine appropriate levels of external access.	Completed materials (brochures, pamphlets, etc.) and library catalogue. Selected files uploaded and access protocols established.
7	Advertise the holdings at universities and research centers domestically and internationally	Number of researchers and institutions who report knowing about the Authority
8	Explore possibilities for international grants that enable research at the newly established center	Funding proposals; and ultimately grants
9	Commission a local scholar-historian to write a short study of the significance of the holdings; translate it into English and other relevant languages	Completed study
10	Consider establishing a conference and publication series	Series established
11	Work with Albanian embassies and consular sections abroad to reach local universities, research institutes, NGOs, and expatriate Albanian	MoUs with Albanian embassies; records of embassy or consular events related to the Authority

Strategic Objective 2.2 – Conduct public outreach designed to establish the Authority as a platform for public engagement with and understanding of the Communist past in Albania

Tasks:

	Action	Indicator
1	Establish Exhibition in the Authority Building open to the public	Opening exhibition along with exhibition catalogue
2	Development a Media Outreach plan with materials, including brochures, messages, and images; consider establishing a Press Club with journalists specialized in related issues	Complete media plan with attendant materials (print materials, press briefings, electronic mailings and newsletters, blogs, etc.); Press Club established
3	Develop an Outreach Plan and Communication Strategy for relevant domestic public and private stakeholders (public agencies, NGOs, universities) as well as foreign audiences (using embassies and consular sections)	Completed Plan, with lists of materials (print materials, electronic mailings and newsletters, blogs, etc.) and events targeting different audiences
4	Develop Social Media Plan for the Authority, including plans for Apps, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, as well as afternoon and evening talk shows	Completed plan with attendant materials
	Kryerja e informimit dhe ndërgjegjësimit edukativ në shkolla, duke përfshirë futjen e çështjeve të transparencës historike në kurset e "qytetërimit"	Anketimi në shkolla u arrit; MoU me Ministrinë e Arsimit
5	Conduct Outreach and educational awareness in Schools, including introduction of historical transparency issues in 'civilization' courses	Survey of schools reached; MoU with Ministry of Education
6	Conduct Citizen, Family, and Youth Engagement activities, such a Victims Remembrance Day	Register of events
7	Identify Staff, Board members, and Volunteers to conduct outreach activities (events and person-to-person)	List of staff responsibilities
8	Compile an email list of interested persons and organizations (domestic and international) and conduct regular distribution of relevant brochures and information	Email list created and register of regular mailings and replies
9	Establish partnerships with museums and media outlets	Memoranda of Understanding or Letters of Cooperation
10	Develop further exhibitions, educational courses, and film projects related to Authority holdings and interests	New exhibitions, courses, project outlines

Discussion of Challenges

The challenges to achieving this goal are more technical than political in nature. Establishing the Authority as a research center will require adequate resources to hire appropriate staff, consultants, or contracting firms; cultivate technical expertise in library sciences, public history, and media campaigns; and develop a strong reputation for academic integrity and rigor. Key will be the cultivation of inter-organizational partnerships designed to raise the profile, reputation, and capacities of the Authority.

Establishing the Authority as a center for public engagement requires a different type of effort from that aimed at bolstering its reputation as a research center, and the Authority may choose to prioritize one or the other during year 2 of its activity. Accomplishing the former requires outreach to the wider Albanian citizenry, rather than to universities, scholars, and research centers, and thus involves public campaigns and activities designed to highlight the work and the themes of the Authority and establish its presence within Albanian civil society. Particularly helpful in this area will be collaboration with various media outlets, new and traditional (social media, television, etc.)

5.3. Foster Transparency and Transitional Justice

If Goal 2 focused on research into the past – the traditional functions of a museum or archive – the Authority's third goal serves is to serve more legal and judicial functions: shedding light on past crimes; supporting the process of identifying and recovering the remains of Sigurimi victims; and facilitating reconciliation, rehabilitation, and transitional justice. It reinforces the right to justice sought by all those affected by Sigurimi activities.

The Authority will examine any evidence suggesting serious violations of human rights during the Communist period, including crimes against humanity, and cooperate with law enforcement institutions in the proper investigation of these crimes. It will undertake initiatives that facilitate a respect for truth and meaningful participation of the public, including women, in the national dialogue around transitional justice. It will assist in initiatives to identify missing or disappeared persons, rehabilitate victims, and highlight human rights abuses and crimes committed by members of the former regime. These services, while focused on redressing past crimes, are essential to the consolidation of Albanian democracy for future generations, since an understanding of past crimes and abuses is necessary if a country to avoid them in the future.

As part of this effort, the Authority needs to establish itself as an important center for human rights and transitional justice in Albania. To do so, it must link up with the extensive international network of human rights and transitional justice organizations internationally. This outreach is related to but distinct from the research and public engagement outreach discussed under Goal 2. Establishing links with human rights organizations may be the most efficient way to launch the Authority's international profile if only because these NGOs often have clearer and more rapid processes for partnership than do universities and research institutes, which may take longer to cultivate. Thus, if the Authority wants to prioritize its international outreach in the first year, it may want to privilege organizations working in the areas of human rights and transitional justice, allowing research connections to proceed more slowly.

Strategic Objective 3.1 – Support the work of documenting the crimes of communism, including contributing to justice.

Tasks:

Action		Indicator
1	Identify domestic and international human rights organizations working on transitional justice, as well as independent bodies such as Ombudsman and the committees of relevant conventions to which Albania is party	Completed table of organizations with thematic interests and contacts laid out; include staff members responsible for making contact (responsibility chart)
2	Develop materials that lay out the holdings of Authority in terms of human rights	Completed pamphlet designed for outreach to human rights organizations
3	Establish partnerships with human rights organizations interested in crimes of communism	Collaboration agreements with relevant organizations
4	Launch a speaker series on issues related to the Sigurimi and Albanian communism	Speakers identified and invited to speak; series established
5	Organize a conference in the first year that invites domestic and international scholars, journalists, and organization interested in human rights and the communist legacy	Conference event; program; invitations sent
6	Develop a media outreach campaign focused on the transitional justice value of the holdings	Media plan, advertisements, evidence of outreach to and partnership with relevant media outlets

Strategic Objective 3.2 – Support the process of identifying and recovering the remains of those who disappeared or were executed during communism. (Legal changes are needed

Tasks:

Action		Indicator
1	Establish a family protocol for the Authority, including special procedures, brochure, and staff	Completed policy and protocol, along with attendant paperwork for sharing with public
2	Include information on tracing disappearances and identifying remains in the rights awareness campaign	Plan for a domestic rights awareness campaign
3	Establish links with other state and local organizations needed to complete the tasks of identification of missing persons	MoUs or other forms of partnership
4	Foster links with legal, psychological, and media professionals to whom families may turn once identification is complete	Referral lists
5	Establish legal procedures for certification of death, transfer of remains, and transfer of property, in the event that identification is complete	Policy on confirming remains; referrals to relevant legal offices

Discussion of Challenges

The Authority is poised to become a lead agency in the areas of transitional justice and family reconciliation by dint of the document fund that it holds. However, it will not be able to accomplish the tasks that fall under this goal on its own. Thus, in its early years, Authority staff must place emphasis on establishing partnerships and working relationships with relevant organizations, domestically and internationally. This will require not only formal Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), but also a clear outline of steps in the processes of media outreach, missing person's assistance, and psychosocial assistance.

Internationally, it should involve aggressively trying to cultivate relationships with international NGOs (such as the International center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)) and engage in conferences and outreach that explain the Albanian situation and the work of the Authority to a broader global audience.

5.4. Facilitate Use by Public Institutions and Citizens Seeking Public Office

A fourth goal of the Authority is to provide for the vetting of candidates for high office. On the request of state institutions or individuals running for or seeking appointment to high public office, the Authority will examine the documents in its possession to determine whether any evidence

exists to suggest that these individuals collaborated with the Sigurimi. The Authority does not recommend sanctions or consequences based on its findings. It is the responsibility of the requesting office to decide what consequences should be drawn from the results based on their respective statutes. This goal will remain in force until 2020, when the vetting statute elapses per European law.

The Authority may want to initiate an awareness-raising campaign with relevant government agencies and political parties in order to explain the vetting process and establish it as a norm for the next three years, so that one agency or party does not appear to use it more than others. If one party uses the service to demonstrate its cleanness while another avoids it for fear of being tarred, the files risk becoming politicized. While the Authority may not entirely be able to avoid these issues, it is crucial for staff to insist on the complexity and nuance required to interpret findings from its files.

Strategic Objective 4.1– Support the vetting of officials running for elected office or appointment to public office.

Tasks:

Action		Indicator
1	Establish partnership with the Electoral Commission in order to routinize the vetting process as well as any other relevant agencies explaining the potential value of vetting	Partnership agreement(s)
2	Establish procedures for vetting candidates, including determination of what information can be included reports and the format of report presentations	Complete Vetting policy
3	Develop operational definitions for the distinctions in Law 45/2015 between 'collaborator,' 'favored person,' and 'affected person.'	Clear and nuanced definitions publicized
4	Establish a formal vetting request form and distribute to appropriate agencies for use	Forms completed and distributed
5	Through public announcements, make it clear that the vetting function lasts only until 2020 and that the Authority only provides information but does not determine consequences	Public campaign and Meeting with affected agencies and parties
6	Raise awareness of all potential user agencies and political parties as to what this service can and cannot do	List of meetings and awareness raising events; registry of the use of this service, broken down according to requesting agency, party, and individual

Discussion of the Challenge

The Authority's vetting function is one of its most immediately actionable services, but it is also one of the most loaded, since it is the goal that most resembles the failed lustration laws of recent decades. The Authority must remain vigilant that vetting does not grow politicized as lustration was in the past. It should be careful to monitor the use of its service by various agencies and candidates to make sure that it does not appear to favor or disfavor one party over another. This was one of the downfalls of past laws, and the appearance of politicization could lead to renewed suspicion and mistrust among segments of the Albanian populace.

At the same time, the Authority has a duty to present information as it stands in the archival files, without regard for the party or agency affiliation of those named. Balancing the need for veracity with the desire for relative parity and impartiality will be crucial, especially if archival findings are more damaging to one party than another. In light of this concern, the law has made the Authority responsible for vetting but not sanctioning. Equally important, the Authority does not initiate vetting processes until an outside agency or candidate makes a request. As noted above, however, relying on this mandate alone to secure a reputation for impartiality is not sufficient, and Authority staff must vigilantly review the use of this service and actively encourage all parties and agencies to use it, so that it does not make look unduly politicized.

6. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

In addition to the Objectives associated with the Authority's four Goals, there are three Management Objectives to which it must devote attention. Some of these have been discussed in the programmatic goals above, but they cut across all the goals and functions of the Authority, they are noted here as well.

Objective 1 – Establish the authority as an effective professional body

To accomplish its wide-ranging missions and attract top quality employees, the Authority must operate as a collegial and decentralized organization that draws on the expertise of diverse staff members and allows them to operate with a great degree of autonomy. As opposed to a hierarchical or pyramidal management structure in which staff primarily carry out decisions made at the top, the Authority's staff – including its five person coordinating committee, Secretariat staff, and other experts – will expect significant individual freedom within their professional domains of expertise. In order to maintain the Authority as an effective professional body, it will have to establish clear protocols for making decisions, collaborating on projects, and resolving conflicts in a collegial and non-hierarchical manner. This managerial challenge requires balancing efficient decision-making with the diffusion of authority among staff experts.

Action		Indicator
1	Develop a personnel handbook with sections on hiring, termination, decision-making, conflict resolution, and other pertinent areas	Personnel handbook
2	Hold meetings with staff members to roll out handbook	Survey of staff members to make sure they know handbook policies
3	Establish clear lines of dialogue and employee input to Authority policy	Policy statement
4	Development clear management plan, with staffing plan that includes roles and responsibilities	Management Plan

Objective 2 – Enhance Employee Engagement, Development, and Productivity

The Authority's expansive mandate requires a wide range of staff expertise, from knowledge of history, politics, and human rights literature to technical skills in IT, document preservation, library science, and media outreach, each a distinct field of study with its own professional credentials. To attract and retain sufficient numbers of qualified staff, the Authority must develop clear and progressive personnel policies that encourage professional development and initiative, collaboration within and beyond the organization, and engagement with the wider public. These policies and practices must make the Authority a desirable place to work, where expert staff can advance their own professional interests while serving the wider mission of the institution. The establishment of an efficient, non-hierarchical management structure, discussed under Objective 1, is one factor in attracting qualified employees. Equally important is the development of human resources policies encouraging both autonomy and collaboration; and recruitment strategies that target the most highly qualified candidates in various fields.
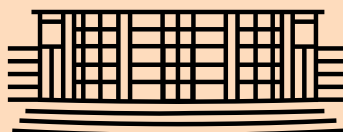
Action		Indicator
1	Develop clear list of priority hiring needs for the first year	List of needs
2	Develop advertisements for pertinent positions and disseminate them to relevant universities, NGOs, and agencies	Advertisements and records of dissemination; hires made
3	Regularly attend events (conferences, agency meetings, NGO forums) where potential future employees might meet	Event attendance records
4	Develop clear personnel policies as part of the Personnel handbook, based on a study of domestic and international institutions with similar goals and mandates	Personnel policies in handbook

Objective 3 – Leverage Assets to Build Partnerships and Resources

In addition to personnel, the Authority needs resources if it is to achieve its goals. Media outreach campaigns, research conferences and publications, document preservation and exhibitions – all require sufficient funding and a strong reputation. Since the government provides only 25% of its estimated budget, the Authority must devote some of its staff time and resources to fund-raising. Tapping other funding streams – such as grants – can also help ensure that the Authority has sufficient independence to be able to initiate projects and partnerships when opportunities arise. Key to this fundraising endeavor will be establishing partnerships with domestic and international universities, foundations, NGOs, rights organizations, and funding agencies. These relationships may not only lead to new funding; they may also boost the Authority's reputation as a rigorous center for the promotion of research, human rights, and public awareness. The enhanced reputation that comes from enhanced international standing will help to increase funding opportunities, which in turn will contribute to greater outreach – a virtuous circle. One decision the Authority may want to consider in the next year is whether to create a separate division with employees devoted to grant writing and fundraising, or whether all staff should be expected to devote a certain percentage of their time to development efforts.

Action		Indicator
1	Decide whether to establish a development/fund-raising division	Division established and personnel hired; or clear statement of fund-raising responsibilities of Authority staff
2	Establish relations with external universities, NGOs, and agencies, both domestic and international	Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or other agreements of partnership
3	Raise external fund to meet needs	XXX funds raised in first year from XXX external entities
4	Raise profile of the Authority domestically and internationally	Record of use and citation of Authority resources and expertise by external organizations