



Co-PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



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REPORT**

2016



Annual Report Co-PLAN 2016

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Greeting Message to Partners



Dear partner,

We are pleased to share with you some of the highlights from Co-PLAN's work for 2016, as well as some of the key developments in the fields of urban and spatial development, public finance and environmental management.

In general, 2016 marked an important year in terms of development, particularly regarding the consolidation phase in the area of territorial planning. Co-PLAN, in collaboration with USAID/PLGP, supported the Municipalities of Fier, Lushnja, Berat, Kuçova and Elbasan for drafting their Local Territorial General Plans. This pilot support came as a necessity following the Territorial Administrative Reform. Strengthening the staffing capacities of these municipalities has been the primary focus of our work, to cope with the above-mentioned reform processes. 2016 marked a key moment in terms of the organization's maturity cycle, as we started working on the capacity building and public engagement of young organisations and activists.

Other important highlights for the year include the contribution to the drafting and consultation process of the new law on local finances and several initiatives in the field of tourism with a focus on destination management. In this context, we have also enabled a number of interest groups to access a complete database of public finance on www.financatvendore.al. The database, which dates back to 2008, provides media, scholars, CSOs, and LGUs to become acquainted with Municipal financial statements for monitoring, analysis, studies, etc.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution and cooperation in the joint efforts to positively change the panorama of urban developments in Albania, and I invite you to browse through this report, why not to stimulate cooperation ideas for the coming years.

Dritan Shutina
Executive Director



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1 ABOUT Co-PLAN

Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development is a non-profit organization that has contributed to sustainable development by enabling good urban and regional governance, tackling key environmental issues, developing civil society, impacting policies, and promoting community participation knowledge-making since 1995.

At the core of Co-PLAN's activity is the work with people and institutions, to foster tangible social transformation and positive change on the ground by inducing change-driving knowledge in our society for smart management of our habitat. Co-PLAN fulfils this mission through means of pilot activities and advisory services financed by national and international institutions and direct involvement with communities, local government units and other non-governmental organizations in the field of urban and regional management, environmental management, and municipal finance.

We are based in Tirana, Albania, and have developed a solid-project-outreach-network at a national, regional, and international level, including many of the Local Government Units in Albania, numerous organizations in the Western Balkans region, Europe, and beyond.



● **Spatial Planning and Land Development** - Co-PLAN's ambitions, involvement and commitment to this field have matured, clearly reflected in the multiple scale activities (i.e. the neighborhood, city, regional, inter-regional, and national levels), and a multitude of actors such as communities, local and central government, businesses, donors, and civil society organizations. Co-PLAN has supported local governments, NGOs, and business communities in addressing urban development issues through the preparation of city development strategies, urban regulatory plans, neighbourhood development plans, and other guiding documents, yet at the same time building capacities. Through its participatory planning approach, in the process it has engaged key actors and interest groups.

● **Urban and Regional Governance** - Finances constitute an inseparable element of any development, and as such since many years Co-PLAN has seized the importance of municipal finance management to the current urban developments in Albania. To this end, Co-PLAN works with local governments to improve municipal finance management practices through the preparation of the capital investment programs, annual budgets generated through participatory practices, cost analyses of public-private-partnerships, and the improved levying of taxes. Social accountability, and transparency matters make for an important part of the Co-PLAN project portfolio, focusing on the importance of open data for improved local government performance in terms of accountability and transparency in quantifiable terms.

Urban Environmental Management - Territorial development, particularly when rapid and informal, has vast and irreversible consequences on the environment. As a result, sustainable environmental management makes for an essential part of Co-PLAN's core expertise and project portfolio. The focus on this particular field has been on the improvement of the environment related service standards and efficiency (particularly in solid waste management, energy, etc.), upgrading capacities, strengthening institutions through the provision of guidelines and on-the- job assistance, connecting environmental management projects to the concept of public private partnerships, etc.

Public Policy, Research and Advocacy- Research forms an integral and extensive part of Co- PLAN's working methodology and project portfolio. In addition to individual research and consultancy projects commissioned by various international agencies, research is always used in the ongoing projects, mainly in the form of feasibility studies, environmental assessments, and audits, focusing on planning, participatory processes, local governance, service provision, etc. Co-PLAN, is part of the POLIS University Research and Development Institute – POLIS IKZH, and has a consolidated, regularly reviewed research agenda, which aligns Co-PLAN's research interests, priorities and efforts on an annual basis.

Directing Board



A/Prof. Sokol Çelo (PhD)
(Head)

Has been acting as the Chairman of the Directing Board since 2002. Currently working as Assistant Professor of Management and International Business at Suffolk University, Boston – USA. A mathematician by qualification, Dr Çelo furthered his studies in the field of business administration, and focused his research on location decision making for international investments of multinational corporations.



Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj
(Member)

A co-funder and current Rector of Polis University, the International School of Architecture and Development Policies, where he also teaches Urban Design. Prof. Dr. Aliaj is an urban planner by qualification and profession, author to numerous publications in this field, and guest speaker in various international conferences. Currently a member of the Municipal Council of Tirana, and 'Citizen of Honour of Kamza Municipality'.



Doc. Sotir Dharmo
(Member)

The Administrator of the founding board of Polis University, and lecturer of two courses: Urban Design and Territorial Analysis and Human Settlements. He is an editor of the scientific journal of U_POLIS 'Forum A+P', and engages in consultancy and research activities in the field of urban planning and urban design, and is author to numerous publications in the field.



Co-PLAN 2016



2 HIGHLIGHTS

- Territorial Development Strategy's launching event
- Approval of the General Local Territorial Plans for 5 pilot Municipalities
- Launching Event of the Project "KINDLE Advocacy"
- #Eja në Gramsh Destination Branding
- Closing Conference Tempus Project
- POLIS University and Co-PLAN at the Triennale XXI di Milan
- ALBANIAN UNIVERSE: Projects between Vacuum and Energy
- Co-PLAN in the Region. Highlights in the frame of UPP II
- The revitalization of the new Bazaar / TID Tirana

Local support for the preparation of the management plan

- Tirana Architecture Weeks 2016

Architecture that matters

Territorial Development Strategy's launching event



On April 1st 2016, PLGP and Co-PLAN organized a national event to launch the just-approved territorial development strategies for 5 pilot municipalities, respectively Lushnje, Fier, Elbasan, Kuçovë, and Berat. These were the first strategic documents drafted for the new municipal administrative territories that will guide the municipal to govern its territory, for the next 15 years, through strategic objectives, policies and pilot / flagship projects. At this event, Ministry of Urban Development took part, represented by Mrs. Eglantina Gjermeni, its staff and also NTPA, by Mrs. Adelina Greca. PLGP organized this event in order to disseminate the findings and share knowledge to the Mayors of municipalities and municipal staff from all the country, which had just started the planning process or will take the initiative of drafting the GLTPs at the near future. Among others, Co-PLAN presented the methodology, roles and functions of each and every involved actor, the timeline to draft GLTPs, the legislation and the scheme how all the involved actors collaborated during the whole process of gathering, analyzing and processing the data for GLTPs

Approval of the General Local Territorial Plans for 5 pilot Municipalities

On 29th of December 2016, the National Territory Council approved all five of the General Local Territorial Plans (GLTP) drafted with USAID support and Co-PLAN's technical assistance. This marks the first-ever GLTPs approved in Albania for the newly consolidated municipalities and now serves as a model, guiding the efforts of other municipalities. A culmination of over 18 months work, USAID and Co-PLAN's assistance included up to seven rounds of participatory public consultations and expert sessions and ultimately resulted in significant outcomes for each municipality: a GIS-based territorial database, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and, most important, a finalized GLTP.



Launching Event of the Project “KINDLE Advocacy”

On December 9, 2016, the International Anti-Corruption Day, the U.S. Embassy in Tirana, in collaboration with Co-PLAN and Partners Albania, organized an artistic event, where it was launched the U.S. Embassy's Civil Society Watchdog and Advocacy Program, through the Public Affairs Office. The Program aims to strengthen the capacity of local civil society organizations to hold government accountable and advocate on key priorities. The event brought together over eighty civil society representatives and activists. Ten Organizations, awarded a grant from the Democracy Commission Small Grants Program, shared their organizational missions and messages for a model of society based on social justice, equality and sustainable development principles. Co-PLAN is part of this program, with Kindle Advocacy Project, which aims to strengthen the internal capacities of local civil society organizations and young activists, for monitoring, analyzing and influencing decision-making.



Closing Conference TEMPUS Project

On 13th of October 2016, it was held the closing conference of Tempus Project, supported by the European Union and coordinated for the very first time by an Albanian Higher Education Institution, POLIS University. The project "Developing and Adapting Professional Programs for Energy Efficiency in the Western Balkans" brings together 11 regional and European partners, in an effort to modernize higher education curricula on energy efficiency. Most importantly, this project focuses on promoting and strengthening vocational training in Albania and Kosovo, particularly timely and in line with the government priorities in terms of higher education and employment. By 2016, two-year post-secondary programs and all necessary laboratory facilities have been established, with a strong career and market orientation and an enhanced applied skills dimension. The attendees of the conference visited the laboratories of energy efficiency at POLIS University.



POLIS University and Co-PLAN at the Triennale XXI di Milano ALBANIAN UNIVERSE: Projects between Vacuum and Energy

For the first time in its history, Albania takes part in the Triennale through an Academic Institution based in the capital, Tirana. POLIS University, a research and development platform in the Western Balkans, together with its founding entity Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, introduce a reflection on the subject of design after design, based on their story in the Albanian context of the past 2 decades. The approach is based on the socio-economic and political situation of a country, a kind of radical cross-section of the Albanian society, where the challenge of design is always coupled with a critical and problematic of that context. Following a brief introduction on what Albania is now, the Albanian pavilion focuses on demystifying the challenges related to the consolidation of a democracy and a market economy through the POLIS and Co-PLAN work, addressed in four main columns. Each column represents a challenge of the Albanian context and its concrete answer as a project of physical and cultural change.



Co-PLAN in the region

Highlights in the frame of UPP II

Nalas Summer School on Local Governance and International Fiscal Relations

Co-PLAN attended Nalas Summer School on Local Governance and International Fiscal Relations – Multiannual and Investment Budgeting at Local Level in SEE, held from 10 to 15 July, 2016, in Ohrid, Macedonia. The summer school focused particularly in the analytical tool (MFSA) developed by the World Bank and implemented by Co-PLAN in

the Albanian context, aiming to deepen the analytical skills of municipal finance experts and stakeholders; facilitate the exchange of information, and deepen theoretical and practical understanding on financial management, investment planning and budgeting.

The World Bank-Austria Urban Partnership Program (UPP) aims to strengthen the capacity of local governments in SEE, and to equip local elected officials, city administrators and technical staff with practical tools for decision-making, to effectively manage urban development for inclusive and sustainable growth. Co-PLAN is synergically implementing in the local governance of Albania three from four of the program's components, respectively the MFSA (Municipal Finances Self-Assessment), UA (Urban Audit) and SSCE (Social Sustainability and Citizen Engagement). Apart from many of the activities at the national level, Co-PLAN has participated in the following regional events:



The “City to City Dialogue” on Municipal Finance and Land Management, Belgrade, Serbia

Co-PLAN participated in “The City to City Dialogue” conference held on October 23–25, 2016 in Belgrade, Serbia. The activity gathered about 120 representatives from seven Western Balkan countries to discuss

findings and problems carrying out the Municipal Finances Self-Assessment (MFSA) and Urban Audit (UA), sharing good practices and challenges facing in the implementation stage.



Mayors Symposium, Collaborative Governance for Inclusive Urban Development in South-East Europe

Co-PLAN participated in the Mayors Symposium held in Graz, Austria on February 29–March 1, 2016. The event gathered over 160 representatives from seven South East Europe countries. Participants included central and local government officials, including 50 Mayors and Deputy Mayors, representatives of finance departments, urban planning practitioners, Local Government Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations, the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe, and other partners and key stakeholders of the Program. The

Symposium showcased what has been achieved on the way to reform and how the Program helps cities move forward based on the application of self-assessment tools for local governments, including: Municipal Finances Self-Assessment. Co-PLAN held presentations regarding three components on which it is working on, respectively Urban Audit (UA), Municipal Finance Self-Assessment (MFSA), and Social Sustainability and Citizen Engagement (SSCE).



Revitalization of the New Bazaar/ TID Tirana



The Albanian-American Development Foundation, working in conjunction with the Municipality of Tirana in a project aiming the development of an Exemplar Mixed Use Quarter at New Bazaar and Avni Rustemi Square, Tirana. The project provided the opportunity to use the prospect of capital improvement – and the value that it will create – to encourage the private sector to participate fully in the establishment of a sustainable place management organization. One of the targeted outcomes would be to provide Tirana with its first Tourism Improvement District (TID) type mechanism. In this framework, Co-PLAN coordinated and conducted the fieldwork research and established a baseline set of data regarding public space and public life along the New Bazaar Quarter. Counts, surveys, questionnaires were at the center of a field study. The list of quantified aspects of the New Bazaar Street included: pedestrian and cyclist movement patterns and volumes, commercial activity in the market place, and age/gender perceptions where possible. 300 pedestrian intercept surveys and 120 business surveys were also conducted to shed light on several aspects of the perception of the New Bazaar’s quality in the eyes of its users and merchants. Co- PLAN provided also a brief, in giving advice on the broader city and national policy context in how planning and other statutory instruments can assist in the development of robust Development and Management Plans.

Tirana Architecture Weeks 2016

Architecture that matters

POLIS University, Tirana
September 26 – October 28.

Tirana Architecture Weeks 2016, architecture that matters, focusing on the intellectual cores of the discipline within a global and local perspective. This event which can be considered a tradition after the two previous and successful editions, will span through the end of September until the last days of October. POLIS University and Co-PLAN, as institutions which are working on the idea of transformation (at an architectural, landscape and urban level), this time aim at creating the conditions for a discussion on architecture and design focused on its specific relevance. This event is made possible by the cooperation between several international and local entities involving both public and private institutions. Architecture that matters, through several events, including public speeches, workshops, roundtable, exhibitions aims to encourage a discussion on architecture, design and urban design, by emphasizing the specific value of architecture and its inherent synthesis.



3 PROJECTS

- Planning and Local Governance Program (PLGP)
- EVN. Net PLATFORM in the Western Balkans
- TTRASACU
Traffic Safety Cultures and the Safe Systems Approach
Towards a Cultural Change Research and Innovation Agenda for Road Safety
- The Municipal Financial Data Portal –in the frame of Lëviz Albania program
Open Governance is Accountable governance
- Urban Partnership Program (UPP II)
Municipal Finance Self-Assessment (MFSa) and Urban Audit (UA)
Social Sustainability and Citizen Engagement
- Planning and Catalytic investments for social cohesion and sustainable tourism development in Gramsh
- Integrated Waste Management Plans for the Municipalities of Puka and Malësia e Madhe

Planning and Local Governance Program (PLGP)

Implementation Period: 2012 -2017

Donor: USAID

Fund: 2,513,341 USD

Implemented in: The Municipalities of Fier, Lushnje, Berat, Kuçovë, Elbasan

Implemented by: Tetra Tech ARD and Co-PLAN

In the framework of Planning and Local Governance Program (PLGP), Government of Albania and selected local governments, was provided technical assistance in developing skills and knowledge to draft territorial plans in accordance with the Law on Territorial Planning. At central level technical assistance was provided to the National Territorial Planning Agency (NTPA) via trainings and coaching how to implement the general local territorial plans; Citizens, civil society groups, businesses, NGOs, and other groups are provided with opportunities to monitor and participate in the process of territorial planning. PLGP also provides technical assistance for five GLTP (General Local Territorial Plans) for the Municipalities of Fier, Lushnje, Berat, Kuçovë, Elbasan. The GLTPs are conceptualized as comprehensive and integrated documents and blueprints, so that local authorities and citizens can better plan for social, economic, physical, political, aesthetic and any other issues that help municipalities to achieve their overall development goal. The GLTPs are conceptualized as comprehensive and integrated documents and blueprints, so that local authorities and citizens can better plan for social, economic, physical, political, aesthetic and any other issues that help municipalities to achieve their overall development goal. Co-PLAN has worked intensively with all five model municipalities to draft the GLTPs, with all their integral documents and approve them on local and central levels. The trainings, as to NTPA, were also provided to the municipal staff and members of local municipal councils, as essential actors in territorial planning process. The key activities and results for 2016 under the Planning and Local Governance Program, are listed as following:

- ✓ Coaching and assisting five model municipalities during the whole process of drafting and approving of the GLTPs;
- ✓ Continues assistance to the five model municipalities on drafting and detailing of strategic objectives and developing policies, foreseen in the Territorial Development Strategies;
- ✓ Launching of 5 Strategies on the Territorial Development, as the fundamental document of planning, foreseeing the objectives of strategic development for each of the municipalities in the next 15 years.
- ✓ Conduction of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for five municipalities – Analysing the existing situation of the environment, assessing the effect of GLTPs' proposals and the measures that are needed to be taken to improve and rehabilitate the environmental conditions for the municipal territory.
- ✓ Conduction of 63 public hearings and consultations with focus groups, with more than 550 local actors involved, for an all-inclusive process.
- ✓ Provision of four trainings to local and central government officials, staff and decision making officials.
- ✓ Approval of all integral documents of the GLTPs for the five model municipalities at local and central level on December 2016.



EVN. Net PLATFORM in the Western Balkans

Implementation Period: December 2014 -December 2016

Donor: European Union

Fund: 644,766.00 EUR

Implemented in: Western Balkans and Turkey

Implemented by: Punto.sud (IT), ATRC (KS) – Partner, Co-PLAN (AL) – Partner, EASD (SRB) – Partner, EEB (BE) – Supporting partner, TEMA (TR) – Partner, BALKAN for BRIDGES 4x4x4 (MK)- Partner

Throughout 2016, Co-PLAN continued with the implementation of the second phase of the “development of the ENV.net platform in the Western Balkans and Turkey: giving citizens a voice to influence the environmental process reforms for closer EU integration”. This phase, among other things, was focused in raising awareness on the sensitive issues regarding environment and identification of possible gaps in the approximation of the environmental legislation. The overall objective of the project is to foster integration of partner countries (including Albania) into the EU and their approximation towards the EU acquis through anchoring democratic values and structures, human rights and social inclusion in a more active and dynamic civil society. Co-PLAN's role in the second phase was focused in giving to citizens a voice to influence in public reform process in the environmental field, through presenting knowledge-based analysis, monitoring reports and advocating. Some of the main activities and result, in both national and regional scale, for 2016 include:

Twelve bulletins/ leaflets were produced at country level and twelve newsletters at regional level, covering key information regarding environmental legislation and the latest developments in this area:

- ✓ Twelve bulletins/ leaflets were produced at country level and twelve newsletters at regional level, covering key information regarding environmental legislation and the latest developments in this area;
- ✓ 4 sub grants were approved for 4 local environmental organization in Albania (IEP, Milieu Contact, CRCO, Ecolëvizja). Their projects focused on sustainable use of natural resources, awareness-raising activities, protection of natural resources in Vlora region, and the implementation of photovoltaic panels in one kindergarten in Tirana;

- ✓ A national training was held at POLIS University, regarding industrial pollution including several local NGOs, students and other groups of interest;
- ✓ The closing conference “Environment challenges, EU enlargement, public participation and media” was held in Struga, where challenges of the process, lessons learnt, good practices, were disseminated with all the participants;
- ✓ Participation in the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) Closing Event in Skopje, discussing issue concerning general development of the civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey;
- ✓ Two major publications were issued during this year, respectively the “Evn.net advocacy toolkit- Climate change and challenges of enlargement, presenting how to influence environmental policy through effective advocacy; and “Guideline of EU Accession Monitoring Tools for CSOs in candidate and potential candidate countries”.



TRASACU

Traffic Safety Cultures and the Safe Systems Approach

Towards a Cultural Change Research and Innovation Agenda for Road Safety

Implementation period: January 2015 - February 2017

Donor: EU Horizon 2020 Program, Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant

Fund: 24, 400 EUR

Implemented in: Vienna (Austria), Athens (Greece), Tallinn (Estonia), Tirana (Albania), Ankara (Turkey), Helsinki (Finland), Pristina (Kosovo), Hague (Netherlands), Blacksburg (Virginia, USA), Bozeman (Montana, USA)

Implemented by: KfV – Austrian Road Safety Board, Road Safety Institute “Panos Mylonas” (Greece), Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia), Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development (Albania), METU - Middle East Technical University (Turkey), Traffic Research Center (Finland), Polis University, AMRKS – Kosovo Association of Motorization, SWOV - Institute for Road Safety Research (Netherlands), TCN - Telecommunications and Computer Networking (Albania), TU Wien - Technical University of Vienna, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (USA), MSU - Montana State University Bozeman (USA)

TraSaCu is an EU-supported project aiming at discovering the cultural background and road user behavior patterns impacting the general road safety and traffic issues in today's modern cities. Co-PLAN and Polis University, together with 11 other academic and non-academic institutions from 9 countries around the world, have participated in this project through staff exchange experiences and research. Since safety culture is identified as one of the main factors affecting road safety, TraSaCu project aims at: *creating a public knowledge platform and building an institutional setting for research, to facilitate information exchange and dissemination between participating countries, and others);conducting methodic and comparable in-depth analysis of various traffic safety culture indicators; understanding the relationship between attitudes and behavior that affect traffic safety for the participant countries; developing a comprehensive model of traffic safety culture and formulating mechanisms of cultural change.*



Following these objectives, the key results for 2016 include:

- ✓ Staff exchange experiences between Co-PLAN and the Technical University of Vienna, and the Austrian Road Safety Board, in creating an institutional setting for research, dissemination and collaboration.
- ✓ Research and Observations on road safety issues in Albania, through literature and legislation review, expert interviews, and road side observations, including compliance with safety measures, through 8 indicators, starting from seat belt use, to red light violations, for all categories of road users.
- ✓ Publication of the Integrated Country Report, pointing out the main cultural issues influencing road user behavior in Albania, Austria and Virginia through an analytical comparison.

The Municipal Financial Data Portal –in the frame of Lëviz Albania program

Open Governance is Accountable
governance

Implementation Period: 2016-2019

Donor: Swiss Development and Cooperation (SDC) in the frame of Lëviz Albania

Fund: 147, 160 CHF

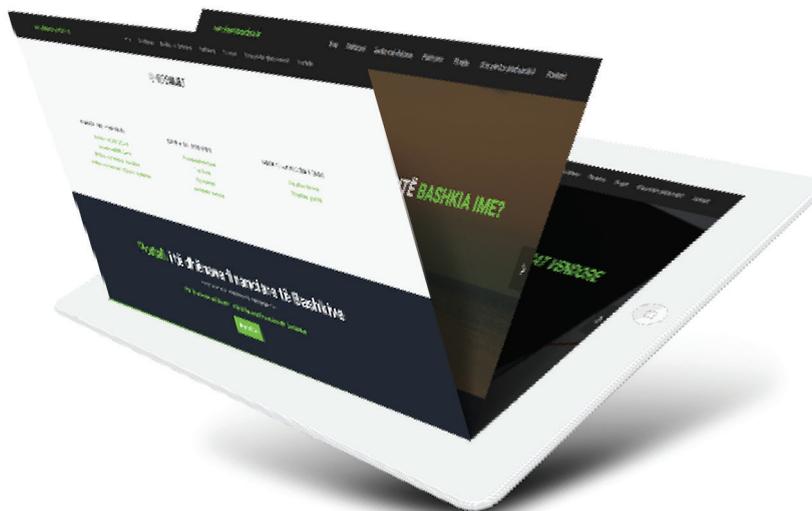
Implemented in: Albania

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Co-PLAN, in cooperation with the Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA), the Ministry of Finance and the Minister of State for Local Government, have launched a digital platform containing financial data (www.financatvendore.al) at the local administrative units' levels, within the project "Systematic Monitoring of the Financial Situation and Practices of Financial Management at the Local Level". Based on this project, Co-PLAN, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and LëvizAlbania is working on the enrichment and further development of the platform, in the form of a Strategic Enabling Instrument, a useful and essential tool in monitoring the financial performance of municipalities in Albania and advocating for informed policies over a period of 3 years. This instrument enables the users to monitor the financial performance of local governments and thus enabling more openness, transparency and greater accountability, improving consequently public service delivery. The main objectives of this platform are: [1] To contribute in improving the understanding of local finances among various interest groups, including CSOs, universities, media, professionals, researchers, etc. [2] To provide a Strategic Enabling Instrument, which enables reliable and systematic data on the financial performance and the fiscal situation of LGUs in Albania; and [3] To provide a platform of dialogue between different actors involved and interested in local government issues. The key activities and results for 2016 were:

- ✓ Publication of a number of analytical reports on the state of local government finances across the country, including 3 quarterly reports, and one annual report;
- ✓ Population of the platform with data on a quarterly basis for the period 2010-2016 and onwards;

- ✓ Population of the platform with the legal framework on the local governance, focusing on finances;
- ✓ Publication of the local budgets and fiscal packages for 61 municipalities in the country
- ✓ Publication of monthly Informative Electronic Newsletters , covering the latest development in the area of local finances, frequent trends and legal amendments, for various bodies of researchers and experts;
- ✓ Conduction of informative meetings with a number of user groups, including CSO organizations, students and academics, activists, etc.



www.financatvendore.al

Urban Partnership Program (UPP II)

Municipal Finance Self-Assessment (MFSA) and Urban Audit (UA)

Implementation period: 2016-2017

Donor: The World Bank

Fund: \$24,800

Implemented in: the Municipalities of Elbasan, Berat, Lushnjë, Fier, Kuçovë, Vlorë, Himarë, Sarandë, Gjirokastër, Përmet

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

The Urban Partnership Program is a unique initiative of the Austrian Government and the World Bank aiming to strengthen local government capacity and to enhance cooperation among municipalities in seven South-East European countries: Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.





Municipal Finance Self-Assessment (MFSA)

One of the key topics of this initiative concerns Municipal Finances and its relation to land and infrastructure investment management. To this purpose, local elected officials, city administrators and technical staff was presented with some practical diagnostic tools facilitating decision making processes, effective and efficient financial management toward sustainable development. Starting in December 2011, a series of City to City Dialogues (C2Cs) brought together municipal representatives and other important actors from seven different countries to discuss about issues of common interest. Under this initiative, Cohort I municipalities (Fier, Lushnje, Kuçove, Berat, Elbasan) were joined by other five municipalities (Permet, Himare, Sarandë, Gjirokastër, Vlorë), the Cohort II municipalities in the second phase of the project. Overall participating municipalities were engaged, on a voluntary basis, in a process of self-assessment using the Municipal Finances Self-Assessment (MFSA) methodology. The key results for 2016 include:

- ✓ Update of MFSA templates in coherence with legislative changes in Albania (the territorial and administrative reform and the new law on local self – governance);
- ✓ Close collaboration with ten municipalities to build financial datasets and their revision;
- ✓ Drafting of improvement action plans;
- ✓ Helping participating municipalities to share their findings, results and lessons with other municipalities in the C2C Dialogue workshops;
- ✓ Organizing of two round tables in Gjirokastër and Tirana to discuss preliminary findings on financial management and identification of improvement action plans in each of the municipalities.

Urban Partnership Program (UPP II)

Municipal Finance Self-Assessment (MFSA) and Urban Audit (UA)

Implementation period: 2016-2017

Donor: The World Bank

Fund: \$24,800

Implemented in: the Municipalities of Elbasan, Berat, Lushnjë, Fier, Kuçovë, Vlorë, Himarë, Sarandë, Gjirokastër, Përmet

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development





Urban Audit (UA)

Urban Audit is a methodological tool from the UPP that offers municipalities a solid ground upon which, rational decision-making regarding prioritizing projects takes place. This tool provides a framework for reducing the gap between capital investments plans, and the medium term budget planning, i.e. a model to help local governments make better decisions on urban projects, regarding their actual and future needs and their financial capacity. In this context, Co-PLAN supported five volunteering Municipalities (Fier, Lushnje, Kuçove, Berat, Elbasan) to draft their Urban Audits, and to design their priority investment programs (PIP) for the next 3 years. The process involved experts from the Urban Planning and Finance Directories of the 5 partner municipalities and was into two consecutive phases. The main activities and results for 2016 are:

- ✓ Data collection and management was conducted in the area of urban development for each of the municipalities
- ✓ Methodical analysis was conducted for all municipalities in the following topics: regional context; urban setting and organization of the city; population trends and projections; urban economy; urban services, assets and maintenance.
- ✓ Assessment studies were carried on the potentials and needs in terms of service provision, evaluation of past priority projects, and prioritization of future ones, by phasing them out in a 3-year timeframe, according to their importance and funding opportunities.
- ✓ Two round tables were organized in Gjirokastrë and Tirana to discuss preliminary findings on financial management and identification of improvement action plans in each of the municipalities.
- ✓ A series of open discussions and community dialogues were conducted in prioritizing future projects in a 3-year timeframe.
- ✓ Discussion of the process and results of the Urban Audit in various international and local events, supported by the World Bank, where municipalities shared their challenges and experiences related to project prioritization and implementation.

Urban Partnership Program (UPP II)

Social Sustainability and Citizen Engagement

Implementation Period: 2015-2017

Donor: The World Bank

Fund: 199,995 (USD)

Implemented in: Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro

Implemented by: Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development and IZUD Institute for International Urban Development

Co-PLAN, in collaboration with the Institute for International Urban Development (IZUD), are implementing the Social Sustainability and Citizen Engagement (SSCE) project, under the Urban Partnership Program (UPP II). The SSCE builds upon the lessons and best practices that emerged during the first phase of the UPP (UPP I), while enhancing the focus on the Citizen Engagement component. The project expanded Social Sustainability Audit in 9 cities in the Western Balkan region to increase knowledge and awareness on social accountability among local stakeholders including civil society, government officials, and marginalized urban residents; and to strengthen integrity in public service delivery by increasing the demand for good governance, social accountability, and civic participation in a regional perspective. The scope of the project for phase II has expanded to include a total of seven countries, namely: Albania (Elbasan), Bosnia & Herzegovina (Tuzla), Croatia (Karlovac), FYR of Macedonia (Kumanovo), Montenegro (Ulçij and Kolasin), Kosovo (Gjilan), and Serbia (Pancevo and Sabac). The envisaged activities are being implemented in synergy with other UPP II components, such as Integrity Building Initiative, Municipal Self-Assessment and Urban Audit. Apart from coordinating the project at the regional scale, Co-PLAN worked closely at the local level with the Municipality of Elbasan, in conducting a thorough analysis on the levels of social accountability and transparency, including various consultation with the community, in the forms of group discussions, interviews and workshops, concluding by drafting an action plan in tackling challenges and increasing citizen engagement in decision-making. Co-PLAN contributed for creating an updated analytical and methodological framework and work plan in measuring Social Sustainability and Citizen Engagement in local governance, and the conceptual coordination between UPP

II components. The key results for 2016 included:

- ✓ 9 City Analytical Reports in the region, giving a full snapshot of the challenges faced in each of the cities by marginalized groups, including a detailed city profile and the level of service delivery;
- ✓ More than 40 FGDs (focus group discussions) and more than 80 IDIs (in-depth interviews) were conducted in all 9 cities of the region, to obtain community-level information about vulnerability, service deficiencies, and social exclusion, which are not found in city surveys or censuses.
- ✓ 9 Participatory Scenario Development (PSD) workshops were held in each of the cities to present initial findings from FGDs and IDIs to a broader range of stakeholders. The workshops also served to map out solutions to reinforce socially sustainable city developments and integrity in public services and consider alternative futures through agreeable and realistic scenarios;
- ✓ Action Plans were drafted for all 9 municipalities of the region in forms of road maps, project proposals, municipality practices, etc.
- ✓ 9 Synthesis Report were prepared for all the municipalities, summarizing the entire process of assessing social sustainability and citizen engagement in local governance and presenting the all-inclusive solutions to the problems identified;
- ✓ Drafting of a Roadmap in collaboration with the Municipality of Elbasan on Participatory Practices at the local levels, a toolkit to support public participation in municipal decision making.



Planning and Catalytic investments for social cohesion and sustainable tourism development in Gramsh

Implementation Period: June 2016- June 2018

Donor: Italian-Albanian Debt for Development Swap Agreement (IADSA)

Fund: 65,773,428 ALL

Implemented in: Municipality of Gramsh

Implemented by: Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development and Municipality of Gramsh

During 2016, Co-PLAN in collaboration with the Municipality of Gramsh worked to implement the IADSA-supported project on social cohesion and sustainable tourism development. Following the approval and implementation of the Territorial Administrative Reform, the newly-formed municipality of Gramsh faces paramount and complex challenges, as it spans across a greater, diverse territory, be it from a topographic, land use, socio-economic composition perspective etc. As a result, one of the of main priorities identified for the overall development of the municipality, is the drafting of comprehensive strategic documents that will guide social, economic and territorial development. This project has an overall objective that seeks to contribute to the promotion of social cohesion on a territorial basis and supporting balanced regional development in the Municipality of Gramsh. In more specific terms, the project aims to: [1] Boost social development in the Municipality of Gramsh through a guiding social development plan and catalytic interventions in the city center and the newly created waterfront area; and [2] Stimulate the development of sustainable tourism in the Municipality of Gramsh through a midterm municipal development strategy and aligned catalytic and promotional interventions. Some of the main activities and key results for 2016 include:

- ✓ Preparation of the design project focusing on increasing social interaction and engagement in the city center, connecting segment “Devolli Road” and the waterfront area of the city;

- ✓ Conduction of a series of analyses including socio-economic, demographic, infrastructure and territorial poverty distribution;
- ✓ Mapping of the existing potentials for tourism development, existing and potential routes and actors involved in various processes of the value chain;
- ✓ Start of a detailed stock-taking of the state of the existing routes from an accessibility, visibility, safety and connectivity point of view
- ✓ Building of a GIS (Territorial) database documenting all assets and potentials for tourism development
- ✓ Conduction of a promotional campaign on social and conventional media of tourism at Gramsh, as a new-emerging destination.



Integrated Waste Management Plans for the Municipalities of Puka and Malësia e Madhe

Implementation Period: February 2016 - December 2016

Donor: Swiss Development Cooperation/dldp

Fund: 49,827.00 EUR

Implemented in: the Municipalities of Puka and Malësia e Madhe

Implemented by: Co-PLAN and Metropolis

During September-October 2016, Co-PLAN and Metropolis supported municipalities of Puka and Malësia e Madhe in auditing the waste services as a first measure to start consolidation of the service after the implementation of the territorial and administrative reform. The processes included the initial findings from the Municipalities of Puka and Malësia e Madhe, field's assessments, consultations with local authorities and recommendations of experts. Both municipalities, received technical assistance in planning and infrastructural support, in order to provide a better service provision. Through an integrated approach and continuous support, the municipalities of Puka and Malësia e Madhe, elaborated and approved the integrated local waste management plans, which it is expected to lead local authorities to improve the performance of service delivery, extend the service coverage area and recover the costs. The projects drew and capitalized lessons which will contribute also to revise and improve tools in planning Solid Waste Management processes, financial management of the sector and communication with the citizens. Some of the main activities and result achieved for 2014 were:

- ✓ Short-term action plans were developed for both municipalities including:
 - the priority list of investments to be procured through dldp support in the Municipality of Puka.
 - the possibility to start a feasibility study, for a Transfer Station in Malesia e Madhe, within the system of waste treatment;
- ✓ A composting scheme was designed in both areas, as part of their waste management plan

- ✓ Public service delivery management (structure, organogram, job description etc.) was designed for both municipalities, intending to build a model of communal service enterprise;
- ✓ A number of trainings were held for the local administrative staff of both municipalities;
- ✓ Awareness raising campaigns were organized on waste reduction and recycling, accompanied with a pre-feasibility study.
- ✓ A Waste management plan was prepared for both municipalities, broadly consulted with the community and groups of interest, approved by the Municipal Council.





