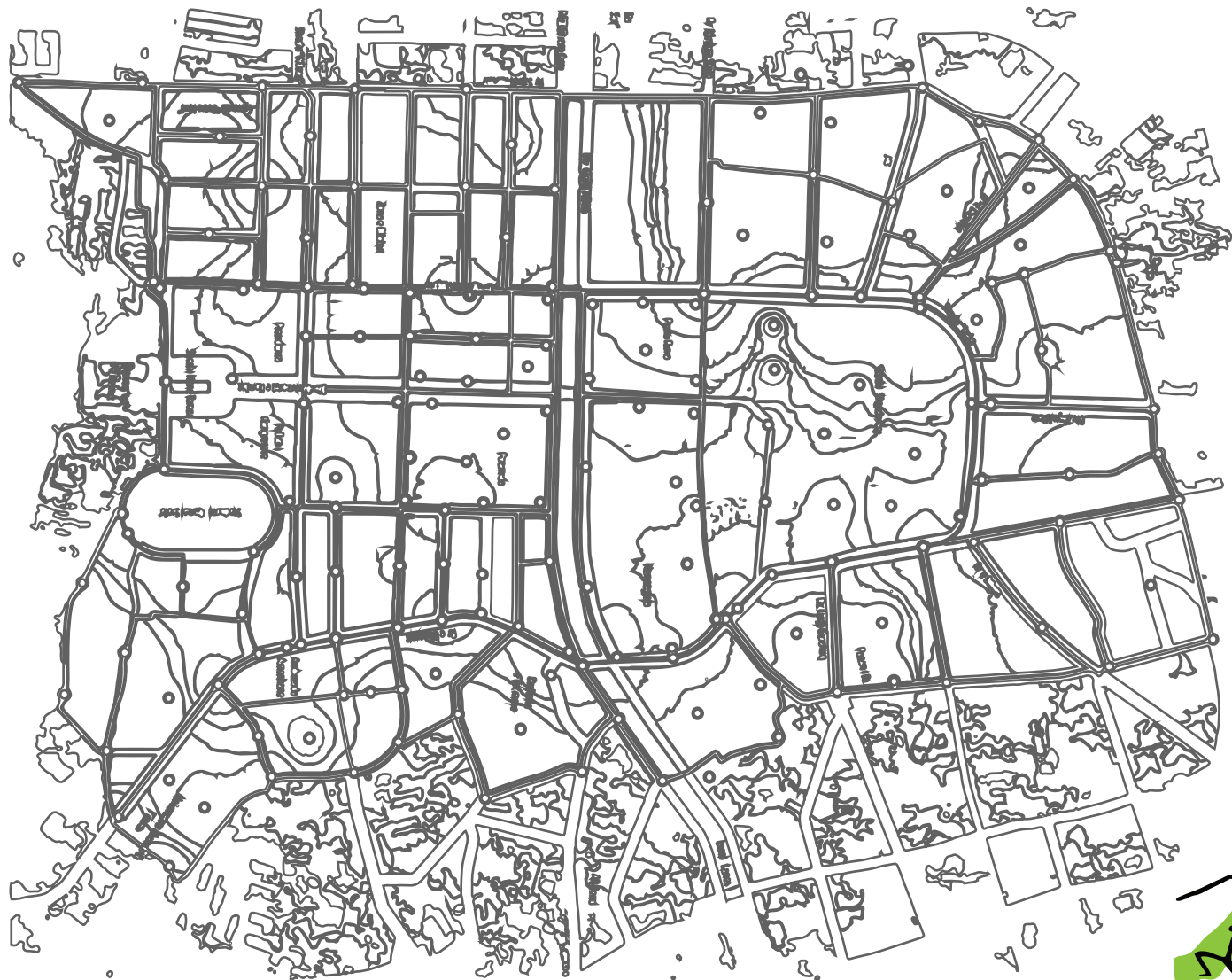


ANNUAL REPORT 2019





Annual Report 2019

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Prepared by:

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01 About Co-PLAN

Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development (hereinafter referred to as Co-PLAN) is a pioneering and leading know-how non-profit organization in the field of city-making and good governance. Co-PLAN has a long-standing experience and an extensive research portfolio in the realm of local government service provision; capacity development, development strategies; informal settlements integration, preparation of urban regulatory plans; environmental assessments, territorial management, preparation of strategic plans, etc. In addition, over the years Co-PLAN has been involved in strengthening of civil society, as a cross-cutting approach. The activity of Co-PLAN is built upon four key expertise areas, namely:

- (1) Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning;
- (2) Decentralization and Local Regional Development;
- (3) Environmental Management and Planning;
- (4) Research and Policy Influencing.

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.

KEY FACTS

- Working with municipalities and communities, promoting best values and good governance since 1995.
- Approximately 200 projects implemented in Albania, the Western Balkans region, and internationally.
- Extensive research portfolio in the realm of local government service provision; capacity development, development strategies; informal settlements integration, preparation of urban regulatory plans; environmental assessments, territorial management, preparation of strategic plans, etc. Some of these projects include:
 - *Planning and Local Government Project*
 - *LevizAlbania*
 - *Regional Development Program III*
 - *Regional Development Program I and II*
 - *Municipal Financial Data Platform*
 - *Social Sustainability and Citizen Engagement - Urban Partnership Program II*
 - *Monitoring Municipal Budgets for the municipalities of Fier and Shkodër*
 - *Integrated Support for Decentralization, etc.*
- Established partnerships with over 80% Local Governments across the country, as well as regional and central government actors; consolidated network of partners locally, regionally and internationally.
- A number of capacity development projects (over half the project portfolio) specifically aimed at increasing Local Government Authorities' skills in improved public service provision, strategic planning and project acquisition.
- Experience with several donors including: EU, World Bank, USAID, SDC, ADA, Italian Cooperation, Open Society Foundation, Cordaid, Novib, GIZ, etc.
- A team of 22 in-house professional experts, with the majority having acquired post-graduate studies abroad, and an additional consolidated pool of varied expertise to tap into as needed.
- Embedded in POLIS University, a strategic partner, having the possibility to tap into the infrastructure (laboratories)

and human resources available at the university.

- Implemented projects ranging from 10,000 to 5 million Euro, all implemented with the same dedication and accountability.
- High employee retention rate at the range *90 percent range*.

DIRECTING BOARD

Co-PLAN is run by an Executive Director, who constantly consults the Directing Board of the organization as well as with the Strategic Collaborators and Advisors. However, it is the staff who constitute the core of the organization through direct engagement in implementing various projects and achieving visible and tangible results, while the board structures work to increase collaborative networks as well as to position the organisation more effectively in the Albanian civil society. The Board is a decision-making structure composed of three members:

Floreta Pirushi

Head of the Board

belongs to the first generation of idealistic young experts who joined the founding group of Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development in the challenge of consolidating a qualitative, professional civil society organization. She is a lawyer by profession, and has conducted her postgraduate studies in the field of urban social matters and human resources in the Netherlands. She is qualified also in matters of institutional administration.

Her professional experience includes: working for Co-PLAN particularly in community development, and later POLIS University, as well as experience with UNCHR and INSTAT projects. Since several years, she is part of the POLIS University Press team and part of the coordinating group for Tirana Architecture Week and Tirana Design Week.

Tom Passero, Ph.D.

Board member

is a Professor of Marketing and Supply Chain at Owens Community College in Toledo, Ohio, USA. He is also an adjunct instructor of marketing strategy for the Bowling Green State University Masters of Business Administration Program. Prior to a career in academia, Tom spent the first 15 years of his professional career as a supply chain manager for Mead, Newell-Rubbermaid, Huffy, and Ernst & Young, LLP.

During his second 15 years Tom has provided customer service, leadership, teaming, and organizational development consulting services for a list of global clients that include Coca-Cola, Lockheed-Martin, and Calphalon, and more locally, Wood County Health Services, Northwest Ohio Tax Commission Association, WSOS, the City of Oregon, and the Owens Leadership Academy. He is a qualified practitioner of several assessment tools, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and TRACOM Social Styles.

Ester Caco

Board member

is a lawyer by qualification and experience. She was born in Tirana, where she completed her higher education, specializing in Law (1995), and worked for the Ministry of Local Government, and later for VNG International as a project manager. In 2001, Mrs.

Caco and her family migrated to the United States, where she started working for the only Albanian Law Firm in New York City "Law office of Isejn Marku, PC" and later "Marku, Beno & Tsamblakos, PLLC", where she currently works as an Office Manager primarily specialised in migration related matters.



Dritan Shutina

Executive Director



Rudina Toto

Territorial Governance



Anila Bejko

Urban and
Regional Governance



Ogerta Gjijnuri

Finance Management



Aida Ciro

Acquisition and
Communication



Merita Toska

Economic Development



Zenel Bajrami

City and
Regional Planning



Ledjo Allkja

Spatial Planning



Rodion Gjoka

Environmental
Mangement

Meet the Team



Lorena Gjani

Communication
and Visibility



Fiona Imami

Urban Planning



Kejt Dhrami

Urban Planning



Rovena Plaku

Urban Planning



Esmerina Hidri

Research Assistant



Erion Vesho

Environment Expert



Gerti Delli

Urban Planning



Imeldi Sokoli

Spatial and
Environmental Planning



Anisa Doko

Finance Assistant



Oreola Caliqi

Accountant



Pranvera Rira

Executive Assistant



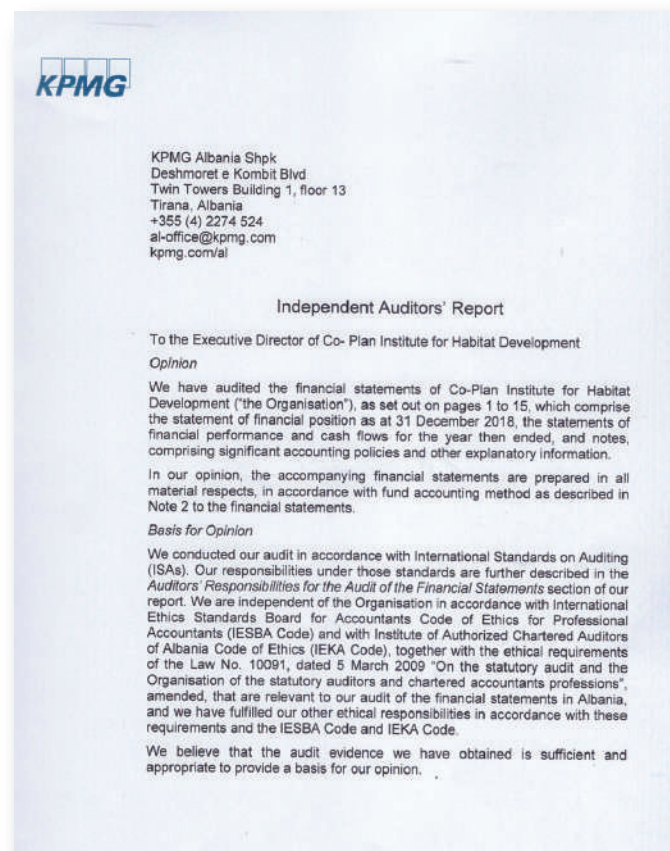
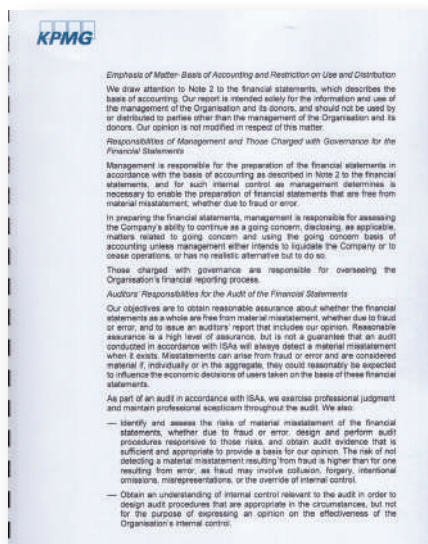
Altion Qirko

Logistics

2019 in Figures

Transparency and accountability are key values for Co-PLAN, and closely related to the consolidation and success of the organization. Co-PLAN's financial transparency is based on strong financial management.

Each year, Co-PLAN is audited by an authorized international auditing company. The auditing reports are made available to all the interested parties upon request.



02 Highlights 2019

- European Week of Regions and Cities 2019: Territorial Governance as Development Chance for Western Balkans
- Network Conference - Territorial Development in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe - Places that do not matter' and inner peripheries
- Regional Conference on Circular Economy (Albania)
- National Activism Day #nad2019
- Promoting Economic Development Planning and Implementation - Conference
- Phase III on the Pilot Regional Grant Scheme and Kick off of phase IV
- Annual Conference Green Lungs for Our Cities

European Week of Regions and Cities 2019: Territorial Governance as Development Chance for Western Balkans

Almost 100 participants of the EU Regions Week 2019 joined the Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance session on 9 October, in Brussels. The session aimed at discussing territorial governance practices as a route to EU integration for the Western Balkans. The session included

presentations of network members and other organizations supporting territorial governance in the Western Balkans, such the European Commission's DG REGIO and DG NEAR, the Slovenian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, the Albanian Association of Municipalities, and

INTERACT. These discussions helped to raise awareness on the territorial governance in the Western Balkans and to further the network's mission.



Network Conference – Territorial Development in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe – Places that do not matter and inner peripheries

On September 26–27, Co-PLAN and Polis University held the annual conference of the Network on Spatial Research and Planning in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe – Spa-ce.net. As the societal actors strive to achieve sustainable territorial development by reducing territorial disparities and fragmentation, promoting

growth and competitiveness, and building socio-ecological resilience, the theme of the event was: "*countries that do not matter*" and the inner peripheries. For two days, a series of presentations were held with examples from different European countries addressing issues of planning, economy, tourism, and various territorial policies.



Regional Conference on Circular Economy (Albania)

For the second year in a row on the framework of ENV.net Factoring the Environmental Portfolio for WB and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda, was held in Tirana: *"The Regional Conference on Circular Economy"*, with 9 representatives from CSOs of Western Balkan Countries and Turkey. The conference served as a momentum to

further feed the discussion regarding Circular Economy by each country introducing analyses, followed by discussions on the European perspective, the challenges when it comes to application of the Circular Economy principles, and the role municipalities can play in further promoting this economic model.



National Activism Day #nad2019

National Activism Day 2019, a dedicated day to activism, served as a platform for organizations to show themselves, to acknowledge all the good examples, to engage different organizations to create a network with one another, and most importantly to take a moment to show that Activism and Community Organizing are possible whenever there is willpower and collaboration among communities and civil society organizations. This year's edition was focus on Youth and the need to strengthen the relations between student /youth groups and representative form local CSOs. Through a dedicated, artistic program on October 22nd, we showcased examples of the potential that lies within such partnerships. The key message of this year's edition of NAD, was: The positive

energy youth have paired with the know-how and experience of CSOs can drive tangible change in our local communities.

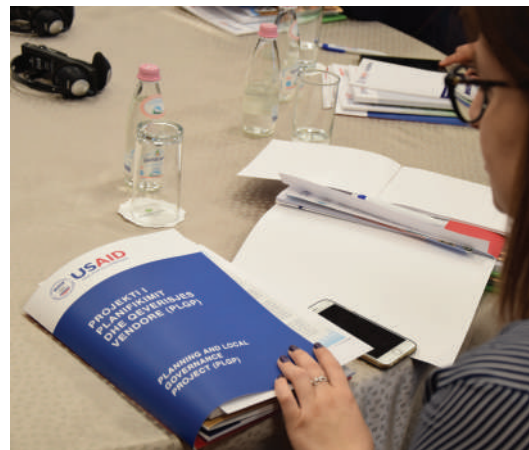


Promoting Economic Development Planning and Implementation – Conference

In March 2019 was organized, the final closing conference for the 'Promoting Economic Development Planning and Implementation' component of PLGP Albania. The conference brought together high level representatives of planning institutions at the national and local level. The conference served as a medium for

sharing experiences of the project over the last 3 years, as well as for disseminating two project products, namely the Benchmark on the Implementation of GLTPs in Albania and their Impact on LED, and the Toolkit on the Preparation of Local Detailed Plans (LDPs) and Implementation of Financial Instruments for Land Development (FILDs). The

conference hosted two panels and a number of key-note presentations, where representatives of partner municipalities could share their experience, and discuss on current issues of territorial planning and governance with the wider audience.



Highlights of RDPA

1. RDPA phase IV Kick Off

On April 1, 2019, the Project Steering Committee of Regional Development Programme Albania was held, in the presence of the representatives of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Albanian Development Fund, Embassy of Switzerland and Austrian Development Agency. The Project Steering Committee brought together the main actors of the Programme providing an opportunity to discuss and reflect on results of Phase III and on the kick off of phase IV of the Programme.

2. RDPA Grant Scheme - Project Inauguration Events

During April 2019 – May 2019, a series of events related to the finalizing of inauguration activities of projects financed under Pilot RD Grant Scheme implemented during phase III, took place. In this regard, out of 16 financed projects, 6 inauguration events were organized in April 2019, and 6 other events during May, with the participation of both Swiss and Austrian Ambassadors to Mirdite, Diber, Shijak, Tirane, Librazhd, Kucove, Shkoder, Tropoje, Ura Vajgurore, Kelcyre, Patos and Vlore. The final inauguration event was organized in 6th of June 2019 in Durres Municipality.

3. Presentation on the Internal and Management Control Assessment (kick off meeting)

In September 2019 a kick off meeting held in the premises of ADF Offices was held. This kick off meeting, was followed by several meeting (technical level) between RDPA experts and ADF staff aiming the preparation and conduction of a baseline assessment on ADF capacities in order to draw-up a well-defined plan for the implementation of the "Management and control system" exercise as the basis for execution of future Managing Authority functions for implementation of Regional Policy

4. Ongoing preparation of the legal framework for Regional Development and Cohesion

Based on the agreed milestones to achieve outcome positive progress has been made in preparing and finalizing the legal framework and institutional set-up during 2019. Technical meetings, several workshops and continuous discussion have brought up a final version of the draft law on Regional Development and Cohesion on September 2019, which will further follow all the consultation processes and administrative procedures towards approval.



Annual Conference Green Lungs for Our Cities

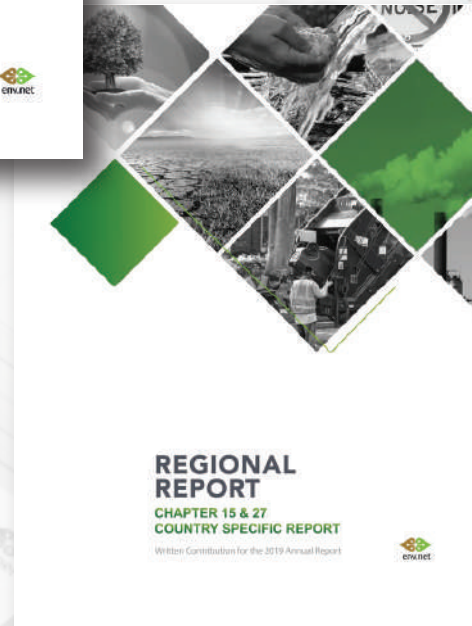
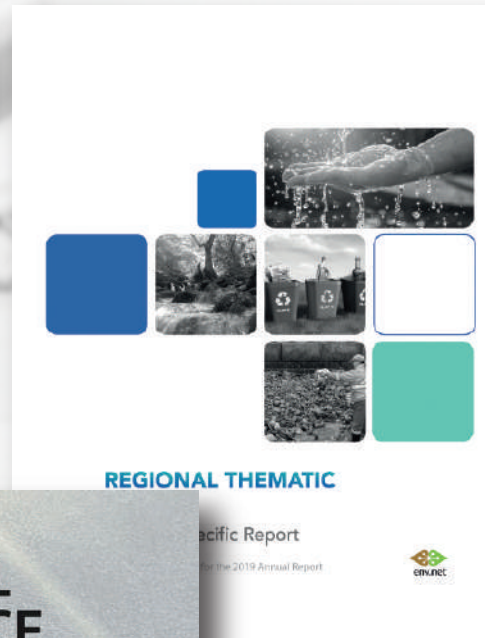
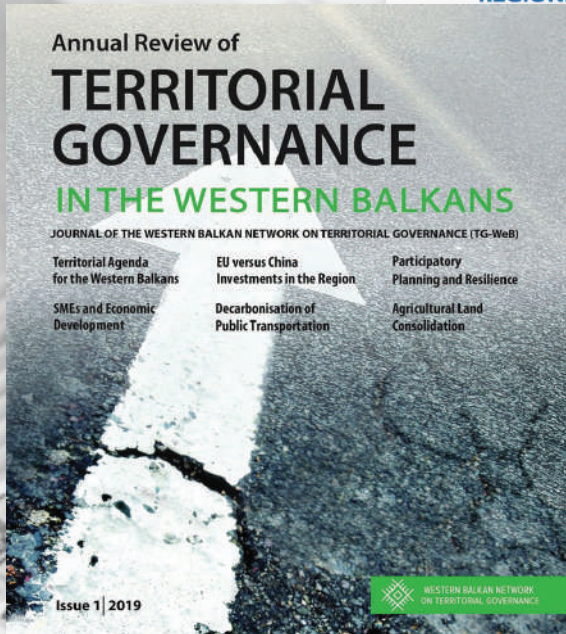
On May 3, 2019, took place Annual Conference "Green Lungs for Our Cities" within this project implemented by Co-PLAN, the Institute for Habitat Development and Milieukontakt Albania, and funded by the European Commission in Albania. The conference was a good opportunity to get acquainted with the

first results of the monitoring in Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan and Shkodër in cooperation with: EPER Center and Ekomjedisi Durrës; Elbasan Ecological Club; Green Center Albania and Aarhus Shkodra Information Center. Green Lung aims to develop and pilot alternative methods for monitoring air quality, noise

pollution and urban greenery in our municipalities. Collaborating locally with civil society organizations focusing on environmental issues, Green Lung aims to influence environmental policies through advocacy and awareness campaigns at the local and national levels.



PUBLICATIONS



03 our Projects

- Planning and Local Governance Program (PLGP) in Albania 2019 RDPA
- Regional Development Programme Albania (phase IV)
- ENV.net Factoring the Environmental Portfolio for WB and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda, (phase III)
- Europeanization Beyond Process: Albania's Territorial Governance
- Austria Urban Partnership Program (UPPIII) Strengthening Local Government Capacity in SEE
- Green Lungs for our cities - alternative and bottom-up monitoring platform for air quality, noise pollution and urban greenery for policy influencing at local level
- Local Democracy Promotion Project - Lëviz Albania
- WSOS Professional Fellows Program
- Assessment of current municipal performance measurement system and identification of potential complementarities
- Increasing employment opportunities for seasonal workers
- Case studies of lagging regions in Western Balkans
- Urban Waste Management - Bashki të Forta

Planning and Local Governance Program (PLGP) in Albania 2019

Implementation Period: 2 October 2017– 30 September 2019

Donor: USAID

Fund: 984,599 USD

Implemented by: Tetrattech ARD & Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development.

Implemented in: Albania

USAID's "Planning and Local Governance Project" in Albania (PLGP) works both at the national policy level and at the local level to promote acceptance of the principles of decentralized governance, and to disseminate and institutionalize practical and effective methods and techniques for municipal management. The PLGP 'partner' local government units include: Tiranë, Durrës, Fier, Lushnjë, Berat, Kuçovë, Patos, Vlorë, Sarandë, Elbasan, Korçë, Vorë, Kamza, Kashar, and Paskuqan. The program works in four main areas, and

Co-PLAN contribution is in the first component and at the same time leads the fourth component of the project. More specifically the components are as below:

1. Support the government of Albania to implement effective decentralization policies and legislation – PLGP promoted an inclusive dialogue and help build a bipartisan consensus on issues of strategic importance to local governments.

2. Improve local Governance – PLGP provided technical assistance and on-the-job training to staff in 15 target municipalities and communes on a variety of management and governance issues. A special focus was on information and communication technology (ICT) that will help build e-government solutions.

3. Improve management of Local Services – PLGP assisted the GOA and local governments to ensure that laws,

policies, procedures, and services such as water, wastewater, and solid waste management are consistent with EU standards and environmental standards in particular. It will assist selected local governments, and supervisory boards, in developing skills, defining roles, and building knowledge needed to effectively manage and oversee jointly-owned utility companies dealing with these services.

4. Assist the Government of Albania and Local Governments to plan and manage urban and regional growth - PLGP provided technical assistance to the GOA and selected local governments in developing skills and knowledge to draft territorial plans in accordance with the Law on Territorial Planning.

As part of USAID's PLGP, Co-PLAN worked on preparing the first five General Local Territorial Plans, for five of the new

municipalities, namely Fier, Elbasan, Lushnjë, Kuçovë, Berat including the Strategic Environmental Assessments for all five municipalities and Public Expenditures and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessments for the Municipalities of Fier and Kuçovë. The methodology used, which was developed by Co-PLAN, served as a reference methodology for the national authorities and the GLTP drafting processes that were to follow.



RDPA – Regional Development Programme Albania, (phase IV)

Implementation Period: : April 2019 – April 2023

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Fund: 7.575.000,00 CHF

Implemented by: : ECORYS NL and Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Implemented in: Albania

Regional Development Programme Albania IV (RDPA) is a joint continuous effort to support the Regional Development reform in Albania, co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), implemented in partnership with the Government of Albania.

The main purpose of the RDPA programme is to reduce disparities in Albania by

supporting the development of strong regions, so they can advance their potentials and provide better social and economic conditions for their citizens. As an effective regional policy for Albania is vital, both to tackle the historic regional disparities and to respond to the challenges of the modern knowledge economy, RDPA phase IV continues to support the Albanian Government in successfully setting up and implementing Regional policy.

In this context the programme also aims to increase regional cohesion, reduce inequalities in resource utilization, productivity and social/environmental standards. This will increase management effectiveness and create an inclusive society with higher skills and better jobs for women and men. As a result 3 main outputs (with their responding activities) are set for the implementing period of RDPA phase IV as following:

1. The central government successfully defines, coordinates and implements the institutional and legal framework for Regional Development.

For this Output the Programme will:

- *Provide support to the Government central institutions to coordinate, plan, monitor and evaluate Regional Development Policy application (NFRD planning and implementation);*
- *Provide support to the Central Government institutions to coordinate and implement Regional Policy through a transparent and needs oriented financing mechanism;*
- *Support the international exposure of Regional Development of Albania.*

2. The ADF as managing authority and other competent institutions and bodies for regional development, prepare and approve the Programme frame for future use of EU funds and make effective and strategic use of increasing funds for the development of regions through partnership approach. As such, the Programme will:

- *Provide Support to the preparation process of Regional Development Planning and Programming documents through a participatory way;*

- *Support the partnership mechanism and approach for strategic use of increasing funds for the development of regions;*
- *Support Regional Development bodies and institutions capacities to manage the implementation of Regional Development Policy.*



3. The socio-economic conditions for Albanian citizens are improved through the implementation of Regional Development projects reflecting regional needs and priorities. As a result the Programme:

- Supports the Albanian Authorities capacities to establish a sound management and control system for managing public funds;

- Supports potential grant beneficiaries to improve their capacities to develop project proposals addressing regional competitiveness and cohesion needs;

- Supports Regional Development Units to strengthen their operational capacity to be engaged in preparation, implementation and monitoring of regional development

grant schemes in partnership with national, regional and local level institutions.



Env.net Factoring the Environmental Portfolio for WB and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda, (phase III)

Implementation Period: Phase III: January 2018 – January 2021

Donor: European Commission

Fund: 975,000.00 EUR

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development (As the Lead of project) and Punto.sud (Italy), European Environmental Bureau (Belgium), 4x4x4 Balkan Bridges (Macedonia), LIR Evolucija (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Green Home (Montenegro), Advocacy Training & Resource Center – ATRC (Kosovo), Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development (Serbia), TEMA (Turkey), as partner countries.

Implemented in: Western Balkan countries and Turkey

ENV.net, an active regional network and advocacy actor for five years now, has started working on the “ENV.net factoring the environmental portfolio for WB and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda”. This project aims to work on improving evidence-based policy-making and policy-influencing on climate change and

environmental legislation in each of the ENV.net partner countries. The network aims to generate region-representative evidence-supported input to contribute to EU discussions on matters of climate change and environment, and to explore and introduce to the region new inter-related aspects such as circular

economy. In the process, the network foresees to support technically and financially the civil society organisations and media in each of the network partner countries, to better understand and work on these issues. The project specifically works on the strengthening of the network as a leading panregional actor in the WB

and Turkey in orienting and influencing environmental and circular economy policy discussions at an EU level. It also supports local CSOs and media in the process of improving their skills and work related to environmental issues. Several publications, reports and research

papers were produced as part of the project objectives. Co-PLAN as the Lead Applicant for this project is responsible for coordination among all network members; coordinating outreach and dissemination particularly through the newsletter and promotional events; ensuring scheduled communications, and monitoring processes take place; producing country specific reports based on monitoring results, status of circular economy in Albania; preparing

the newsletter based on the input received from each partner; delivering guest lectures in universities based on a agreed calendar with partners; organizing annual advocacy campaigns in Albania; contributing with environmental news to the YouTube channel/and platform; organizing the fieldtrips for media, local CSOs and local authorities; finalizing and managing the sub-granting scheme for Albania.



Europeanization Beyond Process: Albania's Territorial Governance

Implementation period: December 2017– December 2019

Donor: Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE) & Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Fund: 325,553 USD

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development.

Implemented in: Albania

Co-PLAN engages with the 'Europeanization Beyond Process (EBP): Albania's Territorial Governance' project dynamics as a timely effort to establish strong, multi-lateral, policy-influencing bridges with governmental and intergovernmental institutions as well as national, regional and international partners committed to the European Union (EU) integration processes, aiming at providing bottom-up inputs on Albania's path as a candidate country.

Co-PLAN has undertaken an active role in contributing to the advancement of the territorial development and governance discourse (in line with its expertise and experience), by feeding evidence to policy dialogues and debates, facilitating knowledge-sharing among stakeholders especially between communities and institutions, as well as establishing communication and collaboration bridges with relevant institutions at EU level.

Co-PLAN informs, activates participation and influences territorial governance discourse as pertaining to the Europeanization agenda to successfully approach the Europeanization process beyond formal, politico-technical processes and actions burdened by intense bureaucracy.

Austria Urban Partnership Program (UPPIII) Strengthening Local Government Capacity in SEE

Implementation Period: 10/08/2018 – 30/07/2019

Donor: World Bank Institute

Fund: 38,090 USD


Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Implemented in: Albania

Intensive reforms, under the umbrella of decentralization, undertaken over the last five years added pressures on municipalities for services provision and investments, under limited financial resources. The latter, faced also with limited space for borrowing calls for efficient and effective financial management in the Albanian municipalities. Addressing these challenges and support local governance capitalize on their strength has been the

main objective of the Urban Partnership Program III (UPPIII), launched by the World Bank and Government of Austria and implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The implementation of the MFSA-component aimed at equipping the municipal officials with a practical and versatile diagnostic tool enabling for an effective and efficient financial management.

It also facilitates the decision-making process, budgeting process and communication with constituencies. In Albania, 13 municipalities have been engaged with the Municipality Financial Self-Assessment (MFSA) tool (Berat, Lushnjë, Kuçovë, Fier, Elbasan, Himarë, Sarandë, Vlorë, Kamëz, Divjakë, Shijak, Përmet, Gjirokastër) and 7 municipalities engaged with the Urban Audit (UA). During the period October 8, 2018 – June 30, 2019, Co-PLAN experts engaged in the



project contributed actively in the revision of the former MFSA excel template, aiming to an enhanced well fitted new version of the MFSA toolkit, called the MFSA 2.0. The Urban Audit component was revised by 5 municipalities, namely Fier, Lushnjë, Berat, Kuçovë and Elbasan. Following, two new municipalities adapted the UA framework for the first time: Vlora and Himara.

Green Lungs for our cities – alternative and bottom-up monitoring platform for air quality, noise pollution and urban greenery for policy influencing at local level

Implementation Period: April 2018 – March 2021

Donor: Delegation of the European Union in Tirana

Fund: EUR 305,248

Implemented by: Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development (Coordinator);

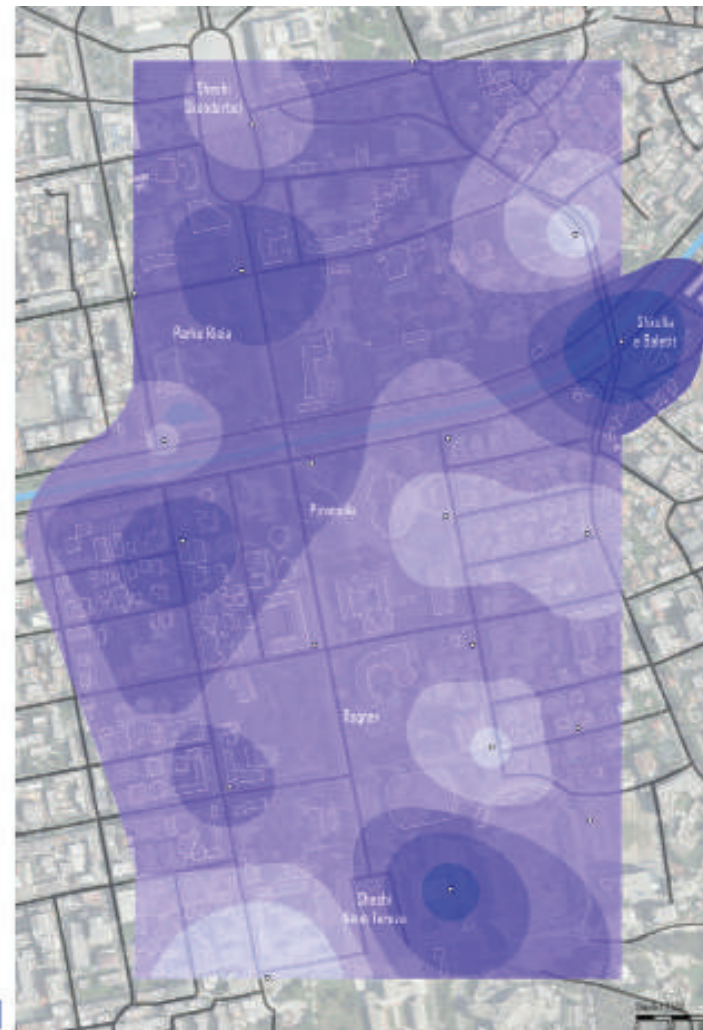
Implemented in : Albania (Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodër)

Co-PLAN is implementing a project funded by the European Delegation in Albania, Green Lungs for our cities – alternative and bottom-up monitoring platform for air quality, noise pollution and urban greenery for policy influencing at local level. The project's overall objective is to strengthen local environmental Civil Society Organizations to impact environmental policies and performance at local level in line with the EU accession

requirements, through enabling them to carry out evidence-based advocacy and policy influencing in the environmental protection realm. In the first year of its implementation, it was drafted an alternative monitoring methodology in collaboration with environmental experts from NGOs, local and state institutions, and citizens. This methodology can be easily applied by both local environmental organizations and activists. Monitoring

data/findings that can be easily understood by citizens will be produced. The proposed alternative methodology provides a number of additional components within the air-noise pollution and urban greenery spectrum that are not covered by the current official data. This methodology was first piloted in the Municipality of Tirana.

Ndotja e ajrit- niveli i PM10
(08 dhe 16 janar 2019)



Local Democracy Promotion Project and The Municipal Financial Data Portal: Open Governance is Accountable Governance – Lëviz Albania

Implementation Period: 2014 – 2019 & 2016–2019 for “The Municipal Financial Data Portal”

Donor: Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)

Fund: 6.600.000 CHF & 154,625.67 CHF for “The Municipal Financial Data Portal”

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Open Society Foundation Albania (OSFA), Partners Albania.

Implemented in: Albania

The project “Local Democracy Promotion Project – Lëviz Albania” was approved during 2014, bringing together The Open Society Foundation in Albania (OSFA), Co-PLAN and Partners Albania as implementing partners. The Swiss Development Cooperation supports the project, aims to have a catalytic impact on the local democracy in Albania, through support to various drivers of change, such as citizens, community based groups or

civil society organizations cultivating a locally rooted, demand-driven and influential civil society at sub-national level across Albania. More specifically, the project objectives are: To establish and strengthen platforms which enable various drivers of change to increase their interaction and engagement with their representatives and demand accountability from them and To mobilize and engage civil society.

- To establish and strengthen platforms which enable various drivers of change to increase their interaction and engagement with their representatives and demand accountability from them;*
- To mobilize and engage civil society.*

To achieve this, the project consortium has fashioned a strategy that will:

- Mobilize local change agents in creative ways,
- Spotlight national attention on their ideas and activities,
- Foster horizontal and vertical stakeholder coalitions to address vexing challenges, and
- Promote strategic synergies between projects building demand for good governance and those strengthening the ability of public institutions to supply good governance.

The expected result is a vast increase in citizen engagement and oversight of local governance leading to far greater transparency, accountability and improved public services. As a strategic instrument that is being used for this project is :*"The Municipal Financial Data Portal: Open*

Governance is Accountable Governance". In order to increase transparency in how local authorities manage local finances, the first systematic and easily accessible platform, www.financatvendore.al, was established in 2015. The platform, which started as a cooperation between Co-PLAN, OSFA & the Ministry of Finances, and later supported by LevizAlbania, aimed at informing stakeholders such as CSOs, media, citizens, institutions of the financial system, the municipalities themselves, research institutes, universities

on how public funds are used. Currently, the municipal data platform offers a complete picture on the status of local finances: revenues – how much in taxes and tariffs is paid by citizens, and expenditures – how money is used in each municipality. Since its establishment, a continuous work is being carried out in the enrichment, update, automation and population of the platform. This instrument enables different categories of users to access reliable, timely and real data on revenues sources of municipalities and on



how they are allocating and spending the available financial resources. This allows for independent monitoring of municipal financial performance, increasing transparency and accountability, thereby improving the positive pressure for effective and efficient public service delivery.

Some of the main achievements of the past year have been:

- Enable for a clear, timely and periodic overview of the status of local finances in 61 Albanian municipalities, through the preparation of 3 quarterly reports and one status (annual report) in each year;
- Feed the public debate through the participation in media (written and broadcast) and thematic studies

related to financial management in municipalities and the impact of relevant reforms in local governance;

- Population of the platform with data on a quarterly basis for the period 2010-2016 and onwards;
- Population of the platform with the recent updated and changes in the legal framework on the local governance; publish MTPB programs, annual budgets and fiscal packages etc.;

- 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.



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WSOS Professional Fellows Program

Implementation period: 15.10.2017 – 30.12.2019

Donor: U.S Department State

Fund: 33,027 USD

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Implemented in: Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia.

Co-PLAN coordinates the Professional Fellows Program for Albania, financed by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and is organized by the WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc. – Great Lakes Consortium for International Training and Development (GLC). This program is a two-way exchange involving 38 professionals from five selected European countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) and 19 mentors from the United States who will effect positive change in their communities. The overall goal of the program is to provide

a professional development opportunity for mid-level emerging leaders and build a global network of professionals able to work effectively in an interconnected environment. The fellowship program was opened to professionals who are actively involved in programs related to citizen participation and advocacy (NGO/civil society development), civic education organizations, citizen advocacy groups, community activists and/or community organizers who work with marginalized or rural communities.



Assessment of current municipal performance measurement system and identification of potential complementarities

Implementation period: April – August 2019

Donor: UNDP Albania

Fund: 105,500 USD

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development and MetroPOLIS

Implemented in: Albania

The aim of the project was to support the Ministry of Interior (the Agency for Support of Local Governance ASLG) and other actors to understand specificities related to local government and governance, as a precondition for engaging in informed decision-making. The overall objective was achieved in two phases and through implementing the following activities:

- Validation and re-shaping of the proposed approach and methodology, clearance on the scope of the assignment on local data and indicators;*
- Identification and assessing of the on-going initiative undertaken from different actors dealing with local data and indicators, performance measuring systems, benchmarking systems and applying methodologies;*
- Reviewing of international literature and experience on performance indicators systems / benchmarking systems for local services, government and governance;*
- Surveying of a representative sample of municipalities through direct semi-structured interviews, aiming at further understating of current data availability and quality, processes in place and to be added for better*

data collection and processing within municipalities, municipal experience with different actors on data collection, storage and reporting;

- Continuous consultation and coordination through workshops and thematic meetings in order to share information and ensure for integration and joining forces for a comprehensive local governance data and indicators system;

- Proposal for Local Governance Data and Indicators (LGDI), as a system of indicators addressing the need of Ministry of Interior (MI) and UNDP (STAR2) to read and understand how local governance is being implemented from 61 municipalities in Albania.

- Presentation of LGDI to Ministry of Interior, municipalities and other

stakeholders ensuring for a constructive consultation process;

- Concept, design and develop a roadmap for UNDP (STAR2) of LGDI in a user-friendly platform using the web service technology.



Increasing employment opportunities for seasonal workers

Implementation period: 20 August 2019 – Ongoing

Donor: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Fund: 19,050 EURO;

Implemented by: Co-PLAN and National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED)

Implemented in: Albania

“Increasing Employment Opportunities for Seasonal Workers” project, implemented by NALED and GIZ, seeks to research on the existing framework of the engagement of workers on casual or temporary jobs of seasonal nature in three countries of the WB economies; Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro

A preliminary research study on seasonal workers in Albania was previously

conducted by Co-PLAN (local experts) in the period September – October 2019, in the framework of the same project implemented in Serbia. The results of this preliminary research have shown that there is certainly potential for implementing the reform on increasing seasonal worker opportunities and streamline hiring of seasonal workers in Albania modeled on the system in Serbia. Yet the dimensions of the potential effects

of introducing the system remain unknown due to the lack of precise data on the current number of seasonal workers.

For this reason, the research study to be conducted by Co-PLAN in this second phase, aims to determine whether there is a need and potential to conduct reforms in the field of seasonal workers' employment in Albania.

A group of people are seated around a large conference table in a meeting room. The room has wood-paneled walls and a large window in the background. Several people are looking at laptops or documents on the table. A woman in a red blazer is visible on the right side of the frame. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

The local partners (Co-PLAN), through a comprehensive study, will aim to reflect the multidimensional approach and complexity of issues related to formalizing undeclared seasonal work in agriculture and tourism sectors in the country. The action will give specific attention to sustainability, gender equality issues and rights of the grass root and unrepresented communities, as women and minorities are most often undeclared seasonal workers.

C

ase studies of lagging regions in Western Balkans

Implementation period: 1 December 2018 – 15 January 2019

Donor: World Bank

Fund: 11,000 USD

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Implemented in: Albania

As part of an Urbanization Review in the Western Balkans, the World Bank carried out research on 'lagging regions', defined by various outcomes measures, notably related to per income levels, growth, and social outcomes (including access to services). The research involved a benchmarking of regions across key variables and a mapping of these regions using a 'lagging regions' framework, measuring both structural and policy-oriented factors which are likely to influence development outcomes.

The World Bank intended to carry out case studies in at least two 'lagging regions', namely Kukës and Dibër, in order to complement the quantitative analysis and dig deeper to understand the factors that shape opportunities and constraints in representative regions. The objective of the case studies was to provide evidence on the factors that have shaped the evolution of regional economic performance over the past decade, and the likely implications for future growth and social development, particularly in the

context of EU integration. Based on the aforementioned, the purpose was to develop case studies for the Qark of Kukës and Dibër (equivalent to the NUTS 3 level).

The case studies, which was the deliverable of this project, cover and present a clear story from both of the regions development situations, highlighting critical factors that might shape their future development trajectory, associated risks and key requirements.

Co-PLAN provided services as following:

- Inform and complement the situational analysis of the World Bank task team (economic outcomes, poverty and social, demographics trends, economic structure, infrastructure/ connectivity, enterprises and trade, employment dynamics, human capital assessment, institutions/governance).
- Undertook field work including interviews and focus groups with all relevant stakeholders (local government employees, development agencies, entrepreneurs, civil society...).
- Identified most problematic areas / challenges to address.
- Identified potentials and what obstacles exist for their realization.

- Focused on resolving potential issues related to decentralization (i.e. for example FDI being mainly driven by the central government due to comparative advantage, discussion of innovative ideas such as channelling diaspora remittances, driving entrepreneurship in tourism etc.).
- Discussion of how these developments fit into the 100 villages program or other programs of the government and how the analysis could inform them.
- Identified how developments in Kukës and Dibër relate to other counties in those regions and found differences between municipalities in those areas (any most promising developments...).

- Any other areas of analysis that informed the overall analysis and the adapted lagging.
- Relevant policy recommendations provided in the regions framework.

Urban Waste Management – Bashki të Forta

Implementation period: April 2018 – December 2019

Donor: Helvetass Swiss Intercooperation (HSI) Albania-Bashki të Forta Programme

Fund: 40.200 Euro

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development and MetroPOLIS.

Implemented in: Albania (Municipality of Shkodër-Lezhë, Tirana-Durrës, Fier, Elbasan)

Waste management is one of the core support packages of Bashki të Forta (BTF). The project plans to intervene in waste management in almost 30 municipalities, all of them included in 4 "catchment areas" situated in the North and the Centre of the country (Shkodër-Lezhë, Tirana-Durrës, Fier, Elbasan). "Catchment areas" are characterized by having each one a unique point for final disposal and treatment of solid waste (landfills or incinerator). The project tended to help the national government, and the

municipalities to plan and improve the collection, transport and treatment of waste. The scope of the project was the regional scale by building a regional institutional set up and to enhance and adapt local approaches (local planning, rules and regulations, public information, etc.) in order to align local practices at a regional scale. The intervention of BTF promoted the dialogue with and the involvement of the private sector, to contribute to the objectives of the draft "National Strategy of Waste Management"

related to the reduction of waste production, separation at source and composting of organic waste. By promoting participatory processes, the project aims to contribute to enhance citizen and municipal council participation, with a focus on gender and social inclusion. The overall objective of this intervention was the preparation of local waste management plans for 6 municipalities.

Co-PLAN and Metro-POLIS as Consultant on this project, assisted the municipalities in the preparation or update of Local Plan on IWM and supported them through a coaching position; gave technical assistance through a number of workshops and working sessions gathering the municipalities of the waste zone and specific technical assistance based on demand. We proposed the methodology to reach the objective of the mandate, within the given general framework; adapted this frame and proposed our own approach and timing, in consideration with knowledge of the waste zone and the possibilities of the municipalities.





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