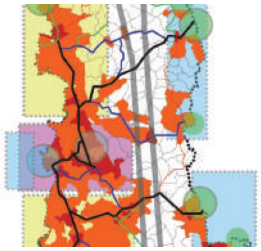
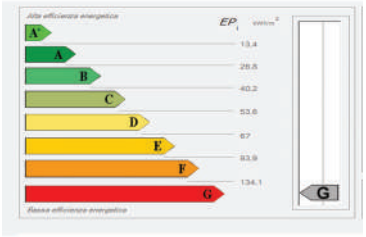
Co-PLAN GAZETTE

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The Territorial Reform

On important aspects to consider in the Territorial Administrative Reform discourse that go beyond the physical dimension of the reform. ***(More on p. 1-5)***



Talking Energy Efficiency

Important conclusions and findings on energy efficiency in the residential sector in Albania, and recommendations for improvements and steps in this sector. ***(More on p. 6-7)***



TDW & Urban Art

Important lessons on Urban Art as a means of change in our communities and some highlights from the Tirana Design Week 2013 organised by POLIS University and partners. ***(More on p. 8-9)***



Bold City - Comics

Absurd episodes, humour, and urban experiences from our daily urban life in Albanian cities compiled in an original Commics Book. ***(Supplement)***

Territorial Reform Beyond the Physical Dimension

Territorial Reform over the years…

The 90s - Government decentralization in Albania started back in the early 90s, when the local governments were elected democratically for the first time. Although it was still too early to talk of an administrative or fiscal autonomy, the reforms of 1992 set the basis for the establishment of the democratic local authorities, which slowly started assuming responsibilities and functions. The unconditional ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Governance (8548/1998), and the approval of the Law on Organization and Function of Local Government (8652/2000) mark the second important development concerning government decentralization, setting up the framework for a full administrative and fiscal decentralization. Both these documents define the need of Local Government Units to be able to offer the newly acquired functions to the citizens, as one of the main decentralization objectives.

2000 - For this reason, the Law on the Administrative and Territorial Division of Local Government Units (8653/2000) was approved. In essence, the administrative division of 2000 tries to preserve the historical boundaries of municipalities, communes, districts or prefectures (referring to early 20th century) merging the district boundaries with those of the *qarks*.

This reform package, which served to determine the main decentralization framework in Albania, built on the assumption (we cannot quite say that it was articulated as a strategic objective) that the Local Government Units that would be unable to offer themselves the functions and responsibilities delegated to them, could employ the opportunity offered by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania (8417/1998) and the Law on the Organization and Functioning of the Local Government Units to unite into a single unit, or enter into inter-LGU collaborations.

Based on this assumption, a number of law and directives were prepared in an effort to complete the fiscal decentralization and administrative framework, and inter-governmental transfers and grants were designed and prepared until 2006. Despite the possibility, with the exception of a few cases[1], such mergers did not happen.

1. In 2003 the Communes of Barbullush and Bushat, both in the *qark* of Shkodra, were merged into a single Local Government Unit, the Commune of Bushatit (9123/2003).



Source: Co-PLAN based on the official water basin borders.

How to reach Regionalization - Approach no. 1
This is a possible regionalisation approach, where the region borders are marked in blue. Based on this approach, there are six regions emerging from a division based on the water basins of Albania's main rivers, namely: that of river Drin, Mat, Erzen - Ishëm, Shkumbin, Seman, and Vjosa.

The Institute for Research and Development - IKZH_POLIS

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Territorial Reform Beyond the Physical Dimension . . .

2003 - In such circumstances, the discourse on territorial administrative reform was reopened in 2003, and based on a political document prepared by the Council of Europe, in 2004 a draft law on the territorial administrative reorganization of the country was prepared. The draft law defined a number of criteria, which in essence were aimed at the accomplishment of the aforementioned objective for the local government units able to generate revenue and offer functions as defined by law, in an efficient manner. The draft law was not approved due to lack of political consensus.

2005 - Marks another important moment in the process of governance decentralization, and with the change in government, the strategic approach to fiscal decentralization also changed. The grants and inter-governmental transfers were reformed, introducing the fiscal equalization (almost in full) as the instrument that would solve the problem of the small and smaller units in generating revenues and offering services to the the citizens. This approach, which relied on a democracy preservation and improvement approach, in fact resulted in confusion when it came to how good and effective governance was defined in the decentralization strategy.

Important dimensions to take into account as part of the Territorial Reform

The current discourse on the Territorial Reform revolves around the dilemma on establishing bigger local government units so that to offer services in a more efficient manner, and make use of financial resources in a way that best address the citizens' needs. Yet, there are a number of other issues, which should be addressed through the territorial administrative reform:

(i) High fragmentarization of the country - 10% of the population live in 41% of the LGUs with fewer than 5'000 inhabitants – resulting in significantly higher service provision cost;
(ii) Limited human resources in small LGUs, resulting in inability to perform its functions, generate revenue or offer services;
(iii) The process of leaving the administrative and fiscal process incomplete, to some extent because of poor local capacities, but also because of frequent chaotic interventions in the legislative framework, a decrease in fiscal autonomy and failure to cover financial responsibilities;
(iv) The ambiguous and unclear role of qarks (second tier local government units) as coordinators and supporters in the exercising of local functions;
(v) The need for a domestic policy on regional development in full compliance with the EU integration process requirements, and with the need for multi-tier governance, including the regional one, etc.

A number of projects, donors, and local actors have nurtured and in some cases also initiated the discourse concerning the territorial administrative reform, or administrative and fiscal governance decentralization.

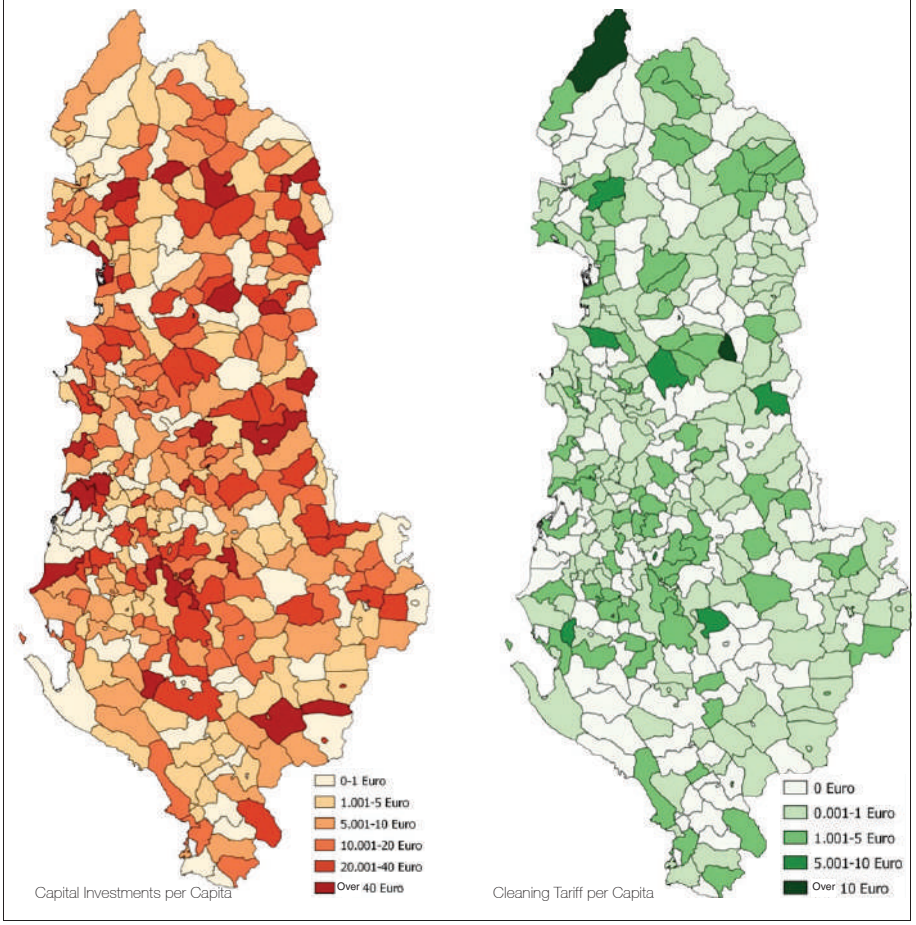
After the European Council Secretariat in 2003, the World Bank undertakes a deep evaluation of Governance Decentralization in Albania, and proposes a number of reforms vis-à-vis administrative and fiscal decentralization and the territorial reform, where among others there is one particular recommendation stands out: distribution of functions and responsibilities of LGUs based on their fiscal and human resources.

OSBE, UNDP and SIPU during 2005 – 2010 reopened the discourse on the need for a territorial administrative reform, connecting it to the regional development and the establishment of economic regions, considering it as one of the pre-conditions in the EU integration process.

PLGP/USAID, most recently brought to the attention of Albanian policymakers the need for an administrative reform closely connecting it to the improvement of decentralization in governance and the improvement of local service provision. Special attention is paid to the negative impact of the reforms undertaken in the grant and inter-governmental transfer system, fiscal autonomy, the transfer of responsibilities and functions and the bottleneck they have created for the local government.

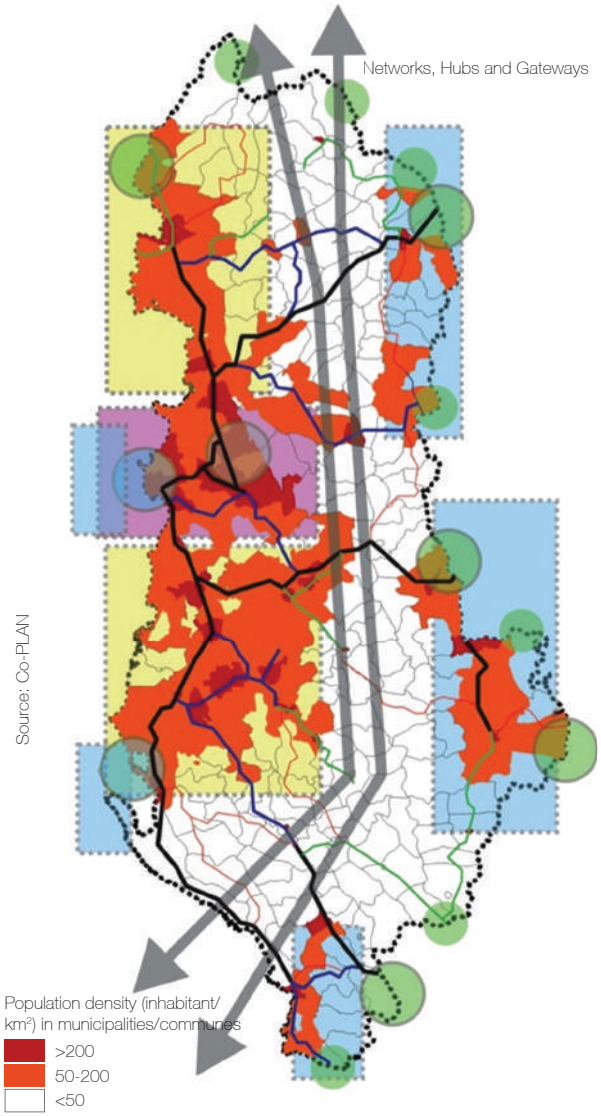
RDP/SDC & ADA enriched the discourse vis-à-vis the need for a territorial – administrative reform, focusing on the role of the second-tier local government, and thoroughly analyzing the role of the sub-national governance from multi-tier governance and regionalization standpoint, presenting the findings in a study.

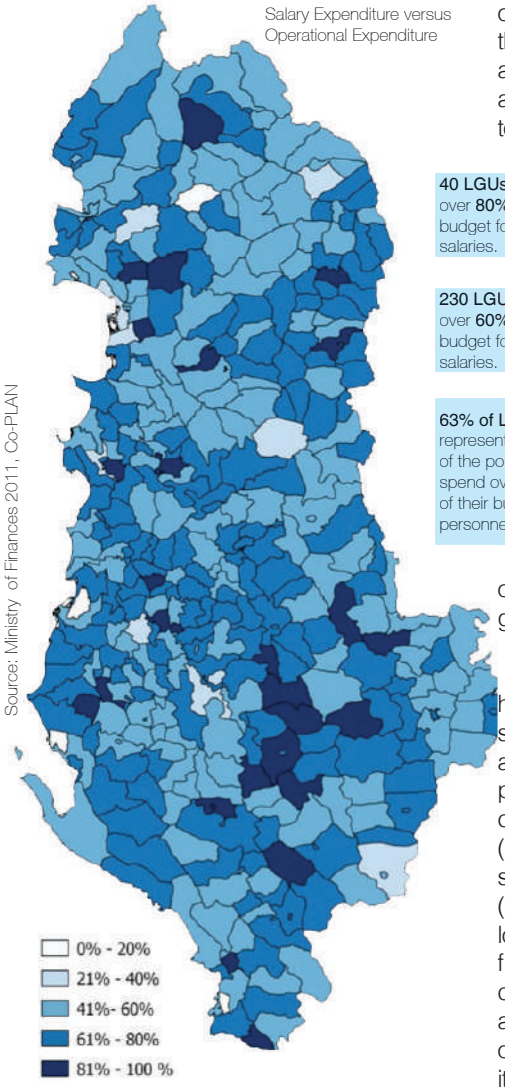
Efficiency in Public Service Provision to Citizens



Source: Ministry of Finances 2011, Co-PLAN

2. KE (2003); WB (2004); OSCE (2006); UNDP (2010); SIPU (2006); USAID (2012); SDC&ADA (2012).





40 LGUs spend over **80%** of their budget for personnel salaries.

230 LGUs spend over **60%** of their budget for personnel salaries.

63% of LGUs which represent **34%** of the population spend over **60%** of their budget for personnel salaries.

SKL International & ACA / SIDA recently added to the discussion yet another study, based on the contribution of preceding studies, consisting of recommendations for a territorial-administrative reform on the first-tier local governance.

The Territorial Reform vis-à-vis the Fiscal Decentralization Strategy

Through its program "*Albania of the other generation*', the Government of Albania commits to support decentralization and the strengthening of the local government, in function of increased efficiency of local governance, through the realization of the territorial-administrative reform, and the improvement of the administrative and fiscal process (p. 20 of the Government Program).

The territorial administrative reform is not an end in itself; rather an instrument to improve governance, full and quality access of citizens to public services, local democracy and local economic development. In order to achieve all these, the reform needs to develop in two parallel directions: (i) territorial consolidation (merging of units of the first tier – municipality/ commune and those of the second tier – qarks; and (ii) a division and clarification of the functions and competences between of local government tiers (a deepening and consolidation of decentralization).

Consolidation of local government units is necessary, as the current fragmenting of services and natural resources has resulted inefficient. The current legislation foresees the merging of units on a voluntary basis as a means to address the efficiency and quality of public service provision. Left on a voluntary basis, such merging has not happened. Through the territorial reform, the merging can happen generating all the necessary grounds for solutions to be through a bottom-up approach.

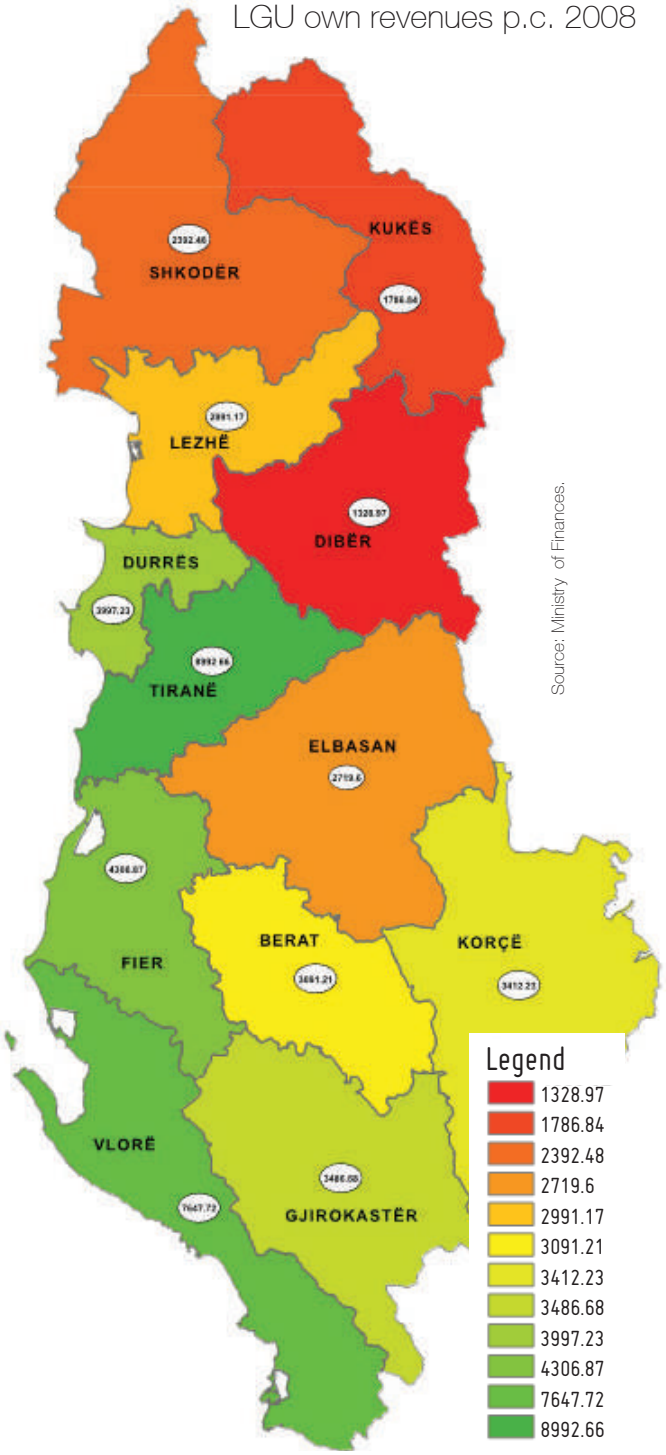
This territorial change however does not solve the issue of *qark* competences when it comes to planning *(as a second tier unit)*. Even following the reform, the first tier units may decide to delegate to the *qark* the planning competence, which raises the question: What will be the *qark's competence in planning beyond* what delegation enables?

Unconditional of the 'physical' territorial administrative reform, in order for the new local government units to achieve the desired efficiency and quality in public service provision, the decentralization strategy ought to be reviewed, particularly focusing on the fiscal decentralization. So basically, the quality and efficiency is conditioned not only by the physical magnitude of the territory and population, but also by the type of function, the ability of the local government tiers to offer such function, the fiscal and sectoral policies, etc. So it is imperative to the success of this reform that, the type of services offered on each tier is clarified (particularly when there are changes in coverage), at what standard, and how they will be financed. Only if we look at the reform in all its complexity, it will be possible to modernize governance, putting a clear relation of reciprocity between voters, local government and central government.

However, a change in functions has a mutual impact on both first and second tier local government, but also on sectoral and administrative policies and legislation. A point in case is that of territorial planning (and not of all territory) as per law stipulations on local government (8652/2000), this constitutes a local government function for the first tier. To date, municipalities and communes alike have not had the adequate and sufficient capacities to offer this service and have delegated it to the qark. The establishment of bigger local government units of the first tier, is expected to improve the ability of local authorities to offer this service (at least by fulfilling the required number of staff). This territorial change however does not solve the issue of qark competences when it comes to planning (as a second tier unit). Even following the reform, the first tier units may decide to delegate to the qark the planning competence, which raises the question: What will be the qark's competence in planning beyond what delegation enables? If the qark is granted the competence to prepare spatial territorial plans of a strategic nature pertinent to its administrative unit, and these plans are considered as an imperative framework for the first tier plans, that would result in a newly added link in the territorial planning hierarchy (currently it does not exist, at least not in an imperative form). That is to say the planning legislation would have to take this into account, but also, ensure that there would be no issues or discordance between the qark plan (which by nature is a regional plan for an administrative territory)

Disparities and Regional Development

LGU own revenues p.c. 2008



Source: Ministry of Finances.

% of own revenues to othe total per LGU



Source: Ministry of Finances and own calculations

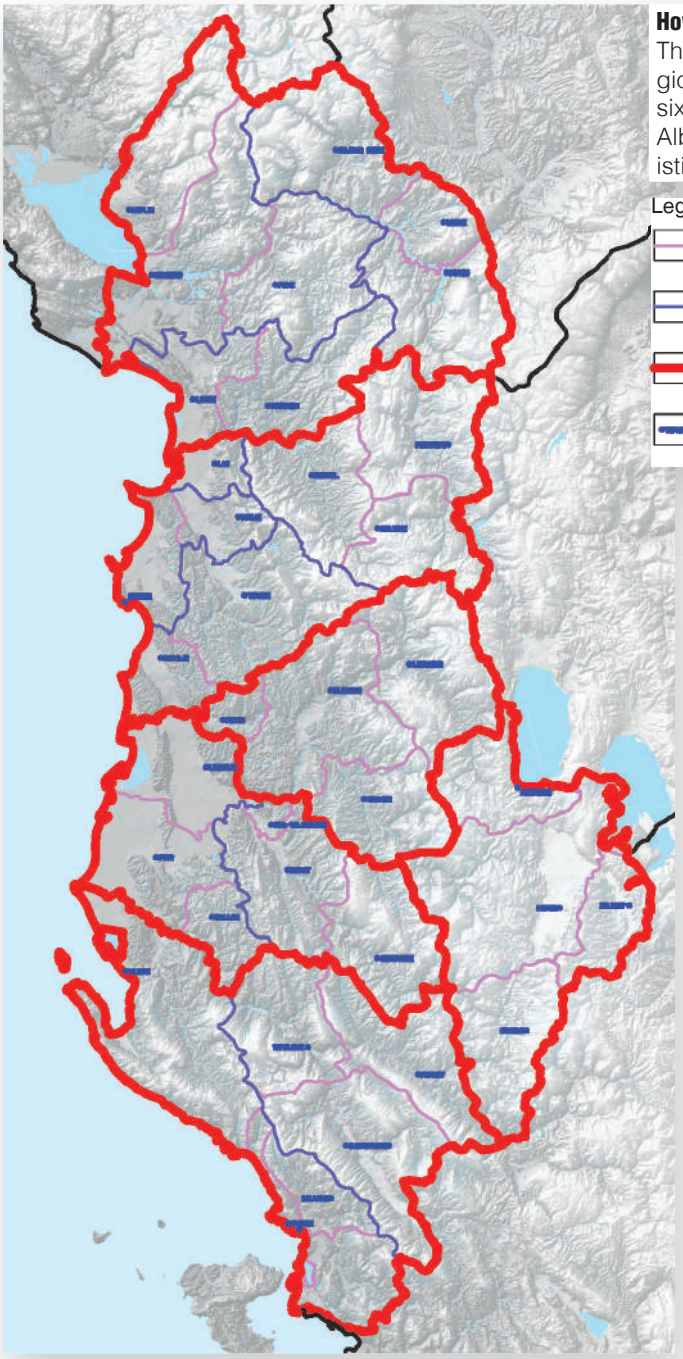
and the integrated plan (which by nature is a regional plan for an undefined administrative territory, and is a central competence). Also, the magnitude and the natural and functional space the plan will cover (after the territorial administrative reform) ought to be such that it does not create clashes with the spaces that are subject to the integrated plan.

A brief analysis (as above), helps us understand the complexity of the territorial administrative reform, beyond the physical merging of the local government units. As with the case of territorial planning, other services also would have to be reviewed during the reform, in terms of central-local competence ratio. Functions such inter-city urban transport (regional/or on a qark level), solid waste management, protection of natural resources, tourism, healthcare, professional education/ vocational training, regional development, etc.

Such services need a regional approach, which remains yet to be defined. From this perspective, the second-tier territorial reorganization (qark level) would have to be closely related to the clarification of competences among governance levels, and representation form on a second tier. That is to say the quality of competence realization on a second-tier level depends on the authority of the institution and its budget, which are closely related to its autonomy and its legitimacy towards its voters.

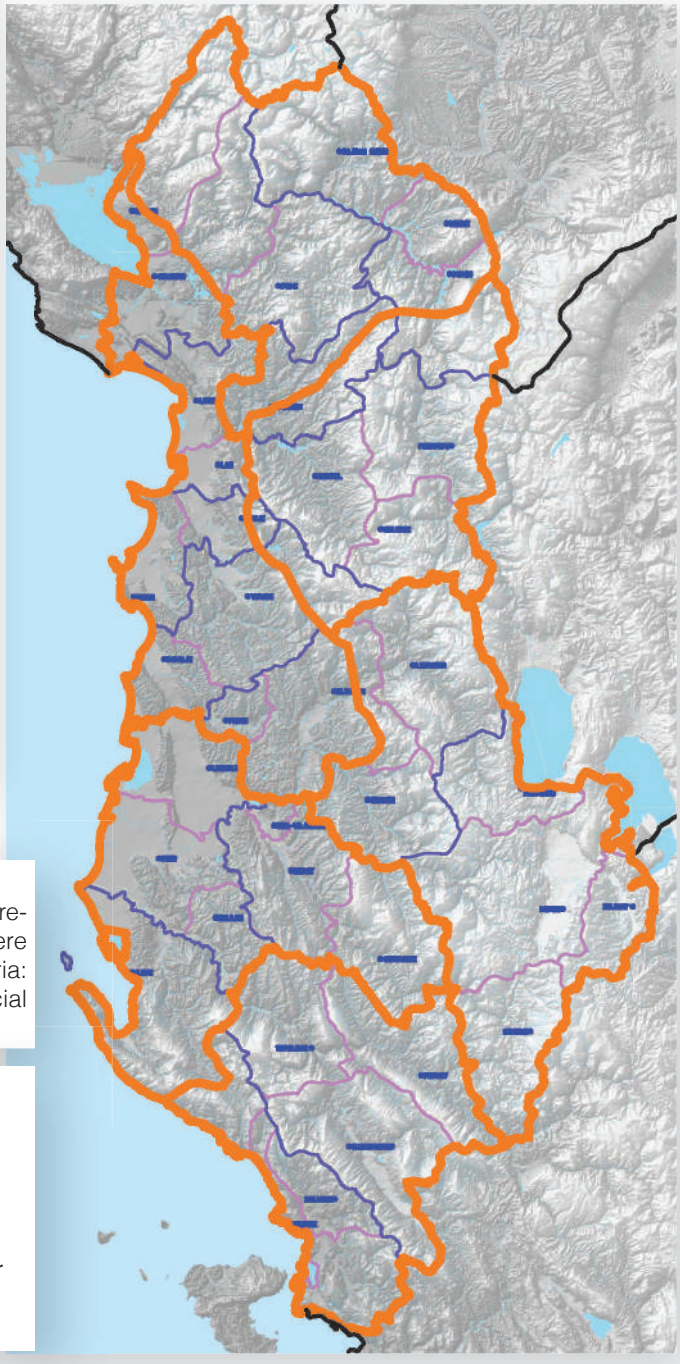
This chronology takes the discourse a step further into the possible constitutional changes, or electoral system. So, although we may keep the same term 'qark', the reviewing of competences and functions, and the change of administrative boundaries on a first and second tier, creates a rather complex platform, which requires a complex approach and a complex solution. Nevertheless, challenging as it might seem, this platform remains a necessity, if the end result (as a society) is the modernization of governance and the qualitative service provision to citizens.

How to Reach Regionalization - Approach 2 & 3 (continued from p.1)



How to Reach Regionalisation - Approach no. 2
This is a possible approach to reach regionalisation, where the region borders are marked in red. Based on this approach, there are six regions, the devision of which is based on: the water basins of Albania's main rivers, the main mobility axes in the country, the existing district borders, and the historical regions.

Source: Co-PLAN



How to Reach Regionalisation - Approach no. 3
This is a possible approach to reach regionalisation, where the region borders are marked in orange. Based on this approach, there are six regions, the devision of which is based on four main criteria: physical access and barriers, urban poles, economic and social interaction, and the existing district borders.

Source: Co-PLAN

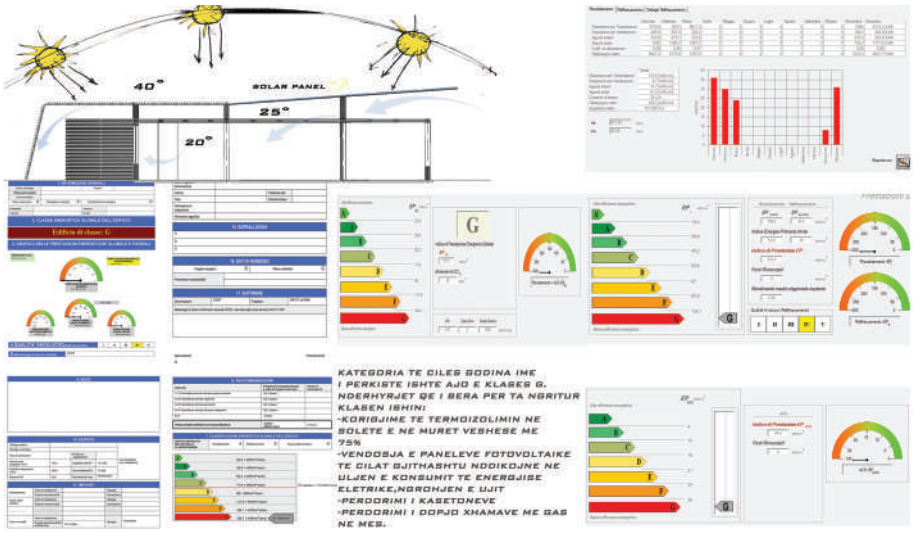
Improvement of Energy Efficiency in the Residential Sector in Albania



POLIS University, December 12, 2013.

Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, in cooperation with three environmental organizations, namely Ekolëvizja, MilieuKontakt Albania dhe EDEN Center, organized a national workshop in frame of the EU funded "Development of the ENV.net in West Balkan and Turkey: giving citizens a voice to influence the environmental process reforms for closer EU integration" project through the Partnership Programs for Civil Society Organisations.

The workshop gathered numerous civil society representatives, specialised in matters of energy efficiency in the residential sector in Albania, high profile representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Industry in Albania, the EU Delegation in Albania, the United Nations Development Program in Albania, the World Bank, etc.



The overall aim of the workshop was to:

1. Provide an analysis of the institutional and legislative progress to date, in the energy efficiency sector in condominiums;
2. Present recommendations to improve the current legislative and institutional framework for increasing energy efficiency in condominiums in Albania;
3. Raise awareness among citizens, civil society organizations, and institutions on the necessity for progress in this field and,
4. Strengthen the role of civil society in improving legal framework on energy efficiency and facilitating its implementation.

At first, the Delegation of the European Union to Albania offered an expose of its stance concerning matters of energy efficiency in general. The representative of the Delegation of the European Union to Albania, Mr. François Begeot stressed the importance of the necessity for Albania and other countries in the region to promote energy efficiency in order to achieve the 20% objective by 2020, particularly focusing on the use of domestic energy sources. Mr. Begeot highlighted the need for an effective domestic market, financial resources and more investments in the energy efficiency sector, the transmission infrastructure and the production of renewable energy.

Mr. Simaku, representative of the Ministry of Energy and Industry, during his introductory speech, expressed the full engagement of the Ministry and the Albanian Government in addressing the problematic of energy efficiency. He also expressed the demand for the contribution of all the actors present in the meeting and interested on the energy efficiency issues.

Co-PLAN offered an analysis of the legislative and institutional framework concerning energy efficiency in the residential sector, particularly focusing on the institutional and legislative hindrances that need to be addressed in the near future in order to increase energy efficiency in compliance with the national objectives.

Further, Milieukontakt Albania shared the results of a survey conducted on the Albanian citizen knowledge and demand for energy efficiency vis-à-vis thermal isolation of residences, lighting, heating and cooling systems, and the use of green household appliances. EDEN Center, introduced a model on how to calculate energy efficiency, which is expected to help the Albanian institutions calculation of energy efficiency in the residential sector, and in establishing a set of measures needed for the accomplishment of the national objectives. ProCredit Bank Albania, introduced its environmental policies and approach regarding the facilitated loan and crediting options designated for citizens, private sector, or public institutions willing to increase energy efficiency.

Lastly, the representative of the Ministry of Energy and Industry outlined the approach and steps to be undertaken on a policymaking level for the transposition of the Energy Efficiency Directive through the Energy Code.

The Conclusions of the National Workshop on the Improvement of Energy Efficiency on the Residential Sector in Albania:

1. The legislative framework for Energy Efficiency needs to be reviewed and updated in compliance with the most recent EU Directive for Energy Efficiency. The legislative framework needs to be unquestionably improved also through the immediate approving of its bylaws, which would eventually enable the implementation of the law, particularly on matters of energy efficiency calculation methodology, for the auditing and certifying parties, and any financial incentives. The Ministry of Energy and Industry, as well as other policymaking institutions ought to propose and approve fiscal implementing policies to draw the consumer closer to energy efficiency measures or investments. All such legislative framework, and respective bylaws, would need to be discussed beforehand with all interest groups, particularly with civil society.
2. Policymakers ought to set up a functional system/register building on the auditing of energy efficiency performance of existing residential building stock, so that to be able to determine a set of concrete objectives for the future.
3. The support of any incentives for the fulfilment of the national objectives on energy efficiency in the residential sector requires for the establishment of an Energy Efficiency Fund, as foreseen by the current legislation, and the draft law. The









The energy efficiency system needs human resources, vocational or professional, be them educated in the country or abroad, in order to fulfil the central and local institutional needs, as well as those of public entities, and the private sector. In fact, educational institutions in the country do offer solid curricula dedicated to energy efficiency in residences, and other sectors. In the meantime, policymaking institutions, as well as implementing ones, ought to identify and present their needs in terms of dedicated human resources, and ought to get to know the current educational programs available, and use them for raising capacities, and certifying the required expertise in the field of energy efficiency in residences and other sectors.

participants supported the idea of collaboration between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Energy and Industry for the establishment of a common Fund for the Environment and Energy Efficiency, similarly to other countries in the Balkan region. The establishment of such structure will benefit from the preliminary legislative, institutional, and financial work conducted to date by national and international structures. The establishment of the Environmental and Energy Efficiency Fund would reduce the number of funds created, would encourage the absorption of both foreign and domestic funds, and would better coordinate all various institutional efforts, governmental or not, foreign or domestic, for energy efficiency in general, and the residential sector in particular.

4 Elements of energy efficiency would most certainly have to be integrated in the Building Code in order to include energy efficiency at a design and projection level. The Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, as the core proposing and implementing party of the Code of Construction, would have to address with priority the issues of energy efficiency in the residential sector. Furthermore, it is important that certain construction norms are put in place, which take into account increased energy efficiency performance in residences. Energy efficiency ought to be viewed as an inter-sectoral responsibility, demanding the involvement of the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism together with the Ministry of Energy and Industry, and the Ministry of Environment.

5 The energy efficiency system needs human resources, vocational or professional, be them educated in the country or abroad, in order to fulfil the central and local institutional needs, as well as those of public entities, and the private sector. In fact, educational institutions in the country do offer solid curricula dedicated to energy efficiency in residences, and other sectors. In the meantime, policymaking institutions, as well as implementing ones, ought to identify and present their needs in terms of dedicated human resources, and ought to get to know the current educational programs available, and use them for raising capacities, and certifying the required expertise in the field of energy efficiency in residences and other sectors.

6 Public institutions ought to integrate and coordinate their plans and projects with civil society, in order to benefit from its cumulative experience in the field and its wide-felt impact in the community.

7 Civil Society ought to create its alliance for increased pressure on public authorities concerning all the measures and responsibilities to be undertaken for the implementation and fulfilment of the strategic objectives and legislative framework. This alliance would be used to also share among partners projects and programs implemented for the promotion of energy efficiency among the public, and to promote its civic reaction.









Valuable lessons for Urban Art *with a difference*

Just like art, a city can mean many different things, to the eye of the beholder: a city can mean a home to some; it can mean a feeling of experience; a city can be all the basic services one expects, or the thread of culture, historical legacy and art holding a place together. A city can also mean, a state of mind!

As Neal Shusterman puts it: "Cities are never random. No matter how chaotic they might seem, everything about them grows out of a need to solve a problem. In fact, a city is nothing more than a solution to a problem, that in turn creates more problems that need more solutions, until towers rise, roads widen, bridges are built, and millions of people are caught up in a mad race to feed the problem-solving, problem-creating frenzy."



Despite our perception, as in most cities around the world, the Albanian cities have been subjected to profound changes due to rapid urbanization, increasing needs and demands for services, and changing socio-political contexts. Such changes affected the social values, and how city-zens relate and interact with the city. The rise of informal settlements in most Albanian cities, such as in Tirana, Durrës, and the coastline, meant that a significant part of the urban development was driven by individualistic behavior manifested in countless shapes, colours, styles and efforts and annexing of public space. In some cases, individuals dared to experiment with art, embedding it in their individually tailored solutions in the territory.

Unconditionally of this somewhat *questionable art and cemented chaos,* one trait is shared in common by all such development, be it in Tirana, Saranda, Lezhë, or Berat: this is a testimony of unguided, unplanned use of energy. So, over the past 20 years through over 140 projects and esteemed partnerships, we have learnt a great deal about community, public space, what makes a city work, and how art makes for a recipe for success.

Use cultural activities and art to enhance social cohesion

Festivals, community plays, and other public events have shown how cultural activities can bring people together. In conditions when social cohesion has been slow to catch up with the rapid urbanization*, Art & Cultural* events have been regularly used to encourage citizens to overcome barriers arising from differences. Because art is about meanings, it can enable dialogue between people and social groups.

Make it participatory!

If we want the cities to offer something for everyone, it is important to engage people in city-making processes. Cities should be designed to accommodate people's needs, and respond to local problematics.

As Jane Jacobs beautifully puts it: *"There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans."*

Use art (in public spaces) to explore identities

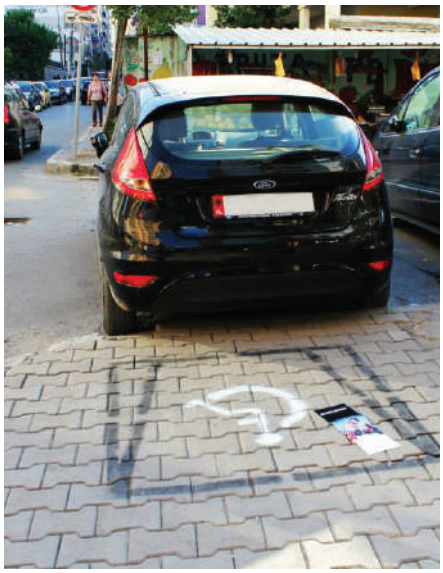
Art based activities and events have been used by communities of all sorts to explore and affirm their identities, particularly in countries in transition where rapid socio-political changes can have implications in the way a city conveys or reinvents itself.

Use art to improve local image

Art and culture can offer an alternative lens to how we view a city. Through international events, such as Architecture Weeks, held in Tirana, Sofia, Belgrade, and the like, it is possible to promote an image that goes beyond the problems we associate to a particular city, and focuses more on the positive aspects such as values, and prospects for growth.

Keep it low-cost and accessible

In order to ensure that such activities are accessible by the community, design your activities to be accessible by the community. Keeping them low-cost can encourage participation. One interesting, increasingly used form is that or



urban activism in the form of street art, or small yet impactful interventions in various parts of the city, depending on the theme.

Try to not reinvent the wheel!

One will find that there are infinite ideas, projects, and practices implemented in various parts of the world, when it comes to public space and city making. So much so that it is difficult to come up with a completely *new idea.* Why not look at past experiences, learn from their mistakes, capitalize on their gains and feel inspired. Although innovative ideas are attractive, one does not have to reinvent the wheel to make impact, or to cause a positive change in the society.



Tirana Architecture Week (2012), and Tirana Design Week (2013) serve as a platform to launch and exchange such experiences, and nurture creative thinking when it comes to the role art, design, know-how, and communities can play, in shaping public space and contributing to city-making. One such example is that of *'A Colourful City for Citizens!'* intervention performed during Tirana Design Weeks 2013.



'A Colourful City for Citizens!

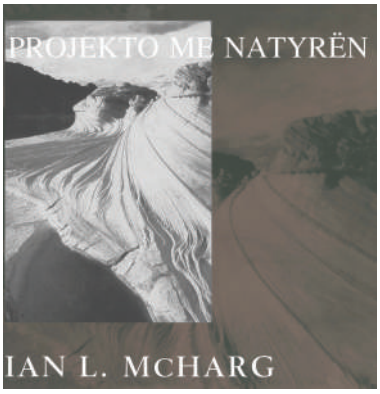
Public spaces in Albanian cities over the past 20 years, have been transformed into parking lots, cafeterias & bars, or piles of uncollected waste. More often than not, they are also transformed into additions to existing buildings, or multistory buildings. Along with the public space, gone are the chances for people to stay in them and socialize, play, or simply watch the world go by. Today, children and the elderly make for two of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to lack of public space.

In order to showcase that community willingness is enough when coupled with commitment, creativity and recyclable materials, Co-PLAN, POLIS University and the Slovak Governance Institute, under the City for Citizen project financed by the EU, decided to build a playground for children and a modest recreational area for the elderly.

POLIS University students, together with architects, urban planners and engineers, with the support and collaboration of the Municipal Unit 11, Tirana, worked for three weeks to produce a multifunctional, colorful playground. The project built on children's wishes, and suggestions from the residents of the area, which were then transformed into practical games produced by the students and specialists. The project relied on the use of recyclable materials, such as tyres and wooden pallets, all of which are very easy to find.



POLIS IKZH - Publications



Design with Nature
by Ian McHarg

Ian McHarg's book Design with Nature pioneered the concept of ecological planning back in 1969, and it continues to this day to be one of the most widely celebrated books on landscape architecture and land-use planning. In this book, he introduced the basic concepts that were to develop later in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). We find this book will be particularly valuable to the body of Albanian planners, architects, and environmental experts, particularly when taking into account the national territorial planning challenge we are facing and its lack of consideration of nature. In fact, Design With Nature was the first work of its kind «to define the problems of modern development and present a methodology or process prescribing compatible solutions».

McHarg promoted an ecological view, in which the designer becomes very familiar with the area through analysis of soil, climate, hydrology, etc. The book also had an impact on a variety of fields and ideas, such as «environmental impact assessment, new community development, coastal zone management, brownfields restoration, zoo design, river corridor planning, and ideas about sustainability and regenerative design all display the influence of Design with Nature.

Environmental Assessment in Transport and Land Use Planning
by Thomas B. Fischer



Rapid urban development in Albania has taken a toll on environment and natural resources. So, assessing the full scale of environmental impacts is essential for effective planning of transport and land use. Thomas Fischer's book offers an analysis of transport and land-use planning using strategic environmental assessment (SEA). It establishes the effectiveness of SEA through comparative studies of practice in three countries: Britain, the Netherlands and Germany. The author shows that use of SEA is widespread but far from systematic. He demonstrates the advantages of adopting a systematic application of a comprehensive form of SEA derived from all the major current approaches.



Urban Comics
Qyteti Troç (Bold City)

Dedicated to all the dreamers of great cities
The city, where dreams are born, children are grown, and cultures are conceived,
The place where clashes happen, and changes are shaped,
Rules are established, and status quos challenged,
The place where we project our future, and transform spaces.
The city: a place of needs or opportunities?

As citizens we experience the city in various ways, nevertheless, we all receive our dose of absurd, funny, and at times challenging situations. The Comics 'Bold City' brings a flavor of such individual experiences of the city, only to realize that all such individual experiences do in fact shape the collective. Through four different set-ups situated or related to the (Albanian) city, which changes in the twinkling of an eye, Bold City depicts the chaotic city, where energy is often informal and cemented, colorful and varied in shapes, where everyone tends to make it its own. Through a number of representative characters, and original artwork, this comic book tries to increase the citizens' sensitivity to a number of concerning phenomena that pass unnoticed because we have grown tired to understanding and addressing them.

Know-how-at-your-hand online platform

We believe a healthy democracy builds on its citizens and its system of values, which is why we consider improved access to information and increased public awareness concerning local governance issues as priority realms for action.

To this end POLIS University and Co-PLAN and propose a project designed in a way that has a high outreach, and tangible practical value for both the community and its governing authorities. We plan to set-up a free, online knowledge platform on a number of issues and aspects related to governance, environment, planning, public finances, etc.



Public Finance in Developing and Transitional Countries:

Essays in Honor of Richard Bird (Studies in Fiscal Federalism and Stated Local Finance Series) - by Richard Miller Bird and James Alms

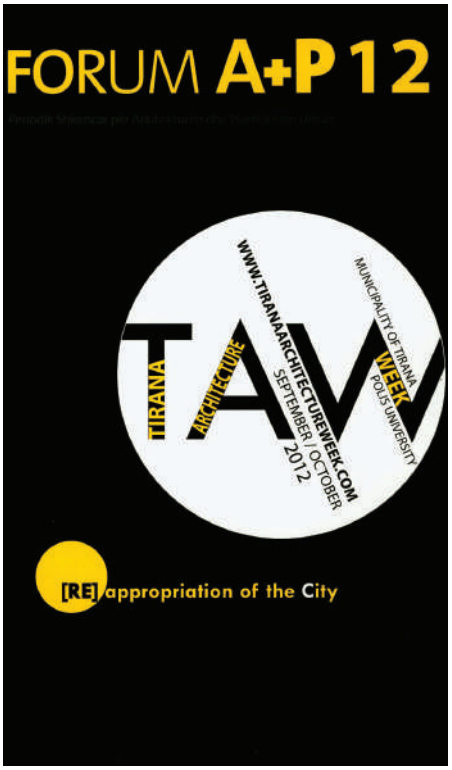
It is hard to think of anyone who has contributed so much and so widely to research in international public finance since the 1960s as has Richard Bird. This volume of essays emerged from a conference dedicated to Bird, and aims to expand our understanding of international public finance. These essays should widen our own understanding of relevant problems and issues in international public finance, much as Bird has been doing for many years, and should be of interest to economists, policy makers and students.

Finances constitute an inseparable element of urban development, particularly in transition and developing countries. Albanian economists, policy-makers, and students will find the book proves a useful addition to the understanding of aspects such as intergovernmental fiscal relations, fiscal policy and tax evasion and tax administration. This is particularly relevant given the ongoing fiscal decentralization processes in Albania.

Inclusive Planning

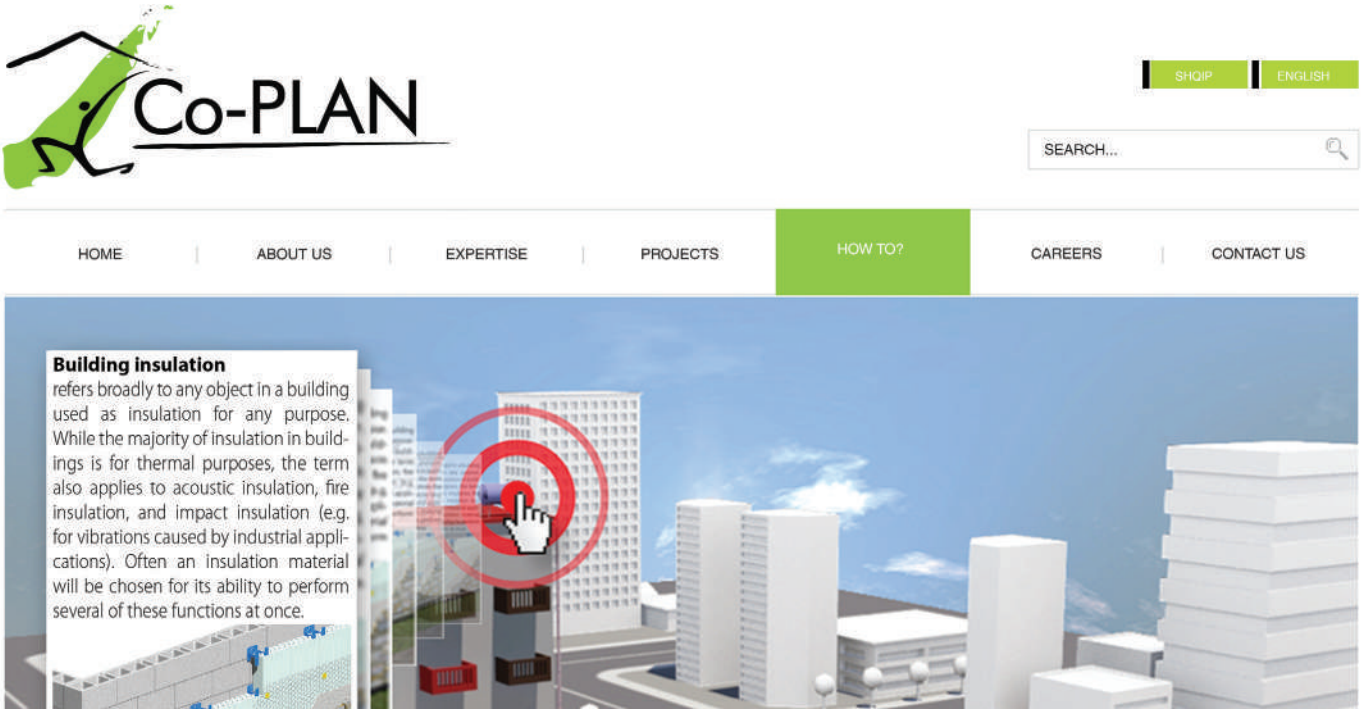
Literature on participatory planning has consolidated over the past 20 years and is an excellent source of scientific and practical information for professionals and decision makers . However, finding a book which builds on local context and experience remains a challenge. One such book is lacking in Albania , while the experience of inclusion in spatial planning and the city dates back to over 15 years ago. This valuable experience, although there is a range in Albania and local authorities working on the basis of this knowledge, it is not used efficiently and is not yet fully distributed among all segments of society and public and private institutions. The Inclusive Planning Manual is a USAID supported initiative, as part of the PLGP project.





Forum A+P no.12

This scientific periodical, a publication of POLIS University, documents the grand scale event in Architecture and Design Tirana Architecture Weeks 2012. The aim of Tirana Architecture Week, a biannual event, is to promote international knowledge exchange among professionals and enhance public interest in architecture, art and design, as disciplines deeply concerned with the contemporary city development. Balkan cities have passed through radical social and economic changes, resulting in a diverse and often uncontrollable development.



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Tirana Architecture Weeks is a joint event of POLIS University, Co-PLAN, and Tirana Municipality supported by a broad network of local and international partners.The aim of Tirana Architecture Weeks is to promote international knowledge exchange among professionals and enhance public interest in architecture, art and design, as disciplines deeply concerned with the contemporary city development serving as a platform, where several local and international participants can disclose useful and vanguard know-how, while the Balkans experience can radiate a unique and inspiring food for thought.

www.tiranaarchitectureweek.com