

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND
SUMMARY



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1.1 WHAT IS A REGIONAL PLAN?

A regional plan is a strategic framework for the *multi-sectoral spatial development of a large territory* which synthesizes action on **five** topics.

- Delivery of sites for buildings (including all local infrastructure within those sites) sufficient to meet anticipated needs (in terms of population, superficial area and location.)
- Strategic infrastructure, (namely roads, public transport, water, sewerage and power,) which serves these sites and connects them together in regional space.
- An economic development strategy (concerning job creation and business development) which guides and underpins the land and infrastructure proposals by providing an economic rationale for them.
- An environmental strategy which aims to ensure the physical sustainability of the land, infrastructure and economic development proposals.
- Effective implementation proposals concerning organizations of institutions, funding of the necessary financial means and an approach to the management of the plan implementation.

In the present case, we have three other general comments. Firstly, we refer to the basis of 'spatial' planning policy in Europe and mention in particular the European Spatial Development Perspective (ES DP).

Secondly, we point out that a regional plan should (a) provide a framework for the constituent 'local plans', and (b) be compatible with other regional plans within the framework of a 'national spatial plan'.

Thirdly, we argue that (if we have the usual European concept of a region,) there are only four regions in Albania: the north, centre, south-west, and south-east. In figure 1.1, we identify these four Albanian regions and postulate the potential cross-border regions as well.

1.2 CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY

1.2.1 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 summarises the goals and objectives of the plan with regard to 'key themes'.

1.2.2 Chapter 3

Chapter 3 summarises the regional spatial concept. The key idea is the goal of maximizing the scale of the market by creating a cross-border polycentric urban region, and integrating it (in terms of transportation, electronics and public/private institutions,) as a single functional economic space. We call this region 'PodShkod', and base the plan on the twin urban magnets of PodShkod and Kosova. The proposal is to concentrate population growth in those parts of the region with the best employment possibilities.

1.2.3 Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 advances a simple demographic scenario based on three stages. First, we project the historic population change by commune/municipality until 2020 (the time-horizon of the plan.) Secondly, we outline the proposal to create seven 'urban growth areas', namely Shkoder city, Lezhe city, the Koplik - Shkoder Corridor, Shengjin, Velipoje, Bushat and Vau Dejes. Thirdly, we allocate the projected population change to the nearest urban growth area.

1.2.4 Chapter 5

Chapter 5 converts the population growth scenario into land requirements on the basis of a density assumption. The assumption is relatively high, but this density will ensure that local infrastructure is affordable.

1.2.5 Chapter 6

Chapter 6 outlines a local plan for each of the seven urban growth areas, showing where the required land would be located. Strategic road projects are also shown. This chapter additionally estimates the cost of local (i.e. tertiary) roads, water, sewers, power and lighting per hectare and per household. We propose that the investment is financed by land sales, (and the residual is returned to land-owners.) The capital budget is scheduled.

1.2.6 Chapter 7

Chapter 7 outlines and explains the strategic (primary and secondary) projects for water, sewerage, power,

roads and public transport. A phase capital budget is presented, except for electrical power which is regarded as a national matter. We also comment on affordability and cost recovery for water and sewerage.

1.2.7 Chapter 8

Chapter 8 covers economic development. Discussion covers particularly agriculture and agribusiness as well as tourism. We also present proposed development types for business sites (at the various urban growth zones). A project budget is set out.

1.2.8 Chapter 9

Chapter 9 identifies environmental issues and projects. The major projects involve the partial diversion of river flows and dredging of rivers, (so as to reduce flood risk,) but also the protection of ecologically sensitive zones on or near the coast. A project budget is set out, but the funding plan assumes that the matter will be covered by the Environmental Legislation and Planning project (ELPA), which is currently under way (and is also funded by the EC)

1.2.9 Chapter 10

Chapter 10 outlines a development programme for the more remote mountainous areas. Separate policies are stated for different kinds of village, and road maintenance policies (as well as social investments) are coordinated with village types. A phased project budget is set out.

1.2.10 Chapter 11

Chapter 11 synthesises the plan maps and the schedule of projects and budget costs from Chapters 6 to 10. So as to present a comprehensive picture, institutional arrangements are proposed, and in particular we argue for fewer, larger development authorities. Funding sources for phase 1 are set out. Finally, as regards the management of plan implementation, we propose the creation of a database for plan monitoring.

1.2.11 Chapter 12

Chapter 12 presents a short account of the key difficulties and risks. We try to focus attention on the main challenge, which we see as the creation of an 'urban land management system' which is able to (a) deliver planned and serviced land to meet demand and (b) stop building which is not in accordance with

plan policies. Lastly, this chapter postulates the most important investments in the first phase, and recommends that donors and the GOA give attention first to them.

1.3 THE KEY ARGUMENT

The main message of the plan is this: that significant private investment will never begin in the absence of a functioning land market and that such a land market is impossible without a functioning planning system. These preconditions do (to some extent) exist in Central Tirana, (on the foundation of the Plans and the planning system created between 1920 and 1939,) but probably nowhere else in Albania and certainly not in Shkoder and Lezhe regions. This is not so much a technical challenge as a political one.

