



Regional Development Framework for The Tirana-Durres Region, 2008-2027



Action Plan, December 2007

Regional Development Framework

For

The Tirana-Durres Region,
2008 to 2027

Frontispiece

It was a big day for Genti, March 21st 2028: the first day of spring, his sixty-fifth birthday, the start of his retirement and a huge party for relatives, friends and colleagues, all on the same day. But now he had a few minutes to reminisce and evaluate the years, after all he was an experienced Albanian journalist specialising in public policy and urban issues and had written a few news stories in his time. He remembered growing up under communism: shortages and fear but some good times for a boy who could make his own simple entertainments, becoming a junior reporter on the local newspaper in Durres and then moving to Tirana just before democracy was re-established. The 1990s were heady times, a real roller-coaster ride: freedom and celebrations, building new government systems and uncertainty, pyramid schemes and the ensuing lawlessness followed by strong economic recovery and then the rapid, chaotic, often illegal, growth of both Tirana and Durres. It was this that brought on his interest in urban planning but life had changed early in 2008 when he went to a Press Conference to launch a **Regional Development Framework** for the region. He thought it ambitious, unlikely to be implemented but with some interesting ideas, especially a 'Vision' for modern prosperous Euro-region. Since then much had happened, some good, some bad...

<p>Is it....</p> <p>The government had responded positively, partly because the public had liked the ideas put forward and came to believe in the Vision. So it had set up and funded the Regional Development Agency as recommended. Its early days had been difficult and some mistakes were made but it had gradually learnt how to do its job and success had followed. The early breakthrough was working with ALUIZNI to take schools, electricity, water and public transport into informal settlements like Kamza. Then in 2011 the new bus-based mass transit scheme started and revolutionised travel for rich and poor, old and young, alike. The enforcement of parking restrictions - and of planning decisions - had been major controversial decisions but had worked.</p> <p>Now Tirana-Durres region has become a very good place to live with many small parks and improved access to the seas, mountains and hills. The cities may be densely populated but they offer residents excellent access to local services, they look clean and the designs of the new buildings are good and much praised by visiting architects. The traffic is still dense but moves well most of the time and the associated air pollution had fallen. The new high tech incinerator that produces electricity is an unsung hero in the region's efforts to improve the environment and reduce carbon dependency.</p> <p>His brother, who had lived in New Zealand for decades, was in town for the first time in ten years for Genti's birthday and could not believe the transformation, especially the new arts and sports facilities. He was also amazed by the huge white sculpture on the side of Mount Dajte designed to symbolise the region's success. Mind you, he had not yet been to Kruje and its spectacular open air Museum of Traditional Albanian Life that attracts half a million visitors a year.</p>	<p>Or Is It</p> <p>The government had accepted the RDF but tried to implement it using the local authorities. Time had shown that they did not have the resources, skills or vision for the job. They were distracted by other responsibilities and there were so many of them they could rarely agree on priorities amongst themselves or with the government, which had lost patience with them and not made sufficient funding available. The EU and other aid organisations had tried valiantly to give support but had found that it was wasted far too often and so had used it elsewhere.</p> <p>A lot of money had been spent improving the airport and the port but so few visitors came these days and the economic problems were causing even the freight traffic to dry up. And, of course, another illegal settlement had been built on the approach road.</p> <p>Public transport had been totally neglected and little had been introduced in the way of traffic management and new roads. The congestion had become awful - a three kilometre journey regularly took over half an hour and that usually involved seeing at least one accident - and Skanderbeg Square and the Boulevard to Mother Teresa Square looked like giant surface car parks, the traffic moved so slowly along them. Air pollution was dreadful, traffic police often fainted despite wearing masks and many ordinary people tried to avoid walking on the streets because the air was so choking. Mind you, parking on the pavements and even the increasingly common trend of building extensions of adjacent houses over them made them unpleasant places to walk. And that was without taking account of the awful stench of rotting waste every few hundred metres. His brother over from New Zealand for the first time in years for Genti's birthday was boring everyone silly with his stories of how clean the Antipodes were but there could be no doubt that the rats living in the rubbish were a health hazard.</p> <p>The consultants on the original RDF study had calculated that drivers in Tirana were fifteen</p>
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Genti's own favourite improvements were the pedestrianisation of Skanderbeg Square, the Boulevard and Mother Teresa Square and the landscaping, footpaths and cafes along the River Lana, not just through the City Centre but out to the west where it had become a green oasis through the houses. His daughter, who worked for a new firm of international lawyers in Durres, said that the revitalised waterfront there, with its up-market hotels, restaurants, little theatre, small open air performing space and boutiques was her favourite. A passionate community activist, she is very proud to be involved in a very successful initiative to foster the role of women in the labour force and another for education of the children of Roma. His son claims that the new golf complex in the new seaside resort on the coast west of Manez is the best new facility, but he would: not only is he crazy about golf but he is the Deputy Manager there.

That is the other interesting thing, the remittance money has almost dried up but it seems to have made no difference - the economy still powers on. He had real national pride over that last documentary he had made for television that tracked the region's economic success and announced that it now had a higher GDP per capita than Greece.

Tirana-Durres had become a real hub: serving not just the whole of Albania but the surrounding countries. Italians were coming on the ferries in ever larger numbers to their apartments in the new resort, for the festivals - especially the Durres Sea Food Festival of course - and the opera. The airport had just signed up NorthWest Airlines and Air China so Boeing Dream-liners and Airbus A380s had started bringing in rich American and Chinese tourists - and business-people. The new road from Pristina was extremely busy - with ever more people and freight, going both ways.

Even the rural areas seemed to be being revitalised at last, even the farmers had stopped complaining about how hard life is, rural tourism - for so long rejected by the region's newly urbanised population - had become fashionable, olives were being turned into oil that the new regional marketing co-operative was selling around the world, farms could not produce enough sheep for local consumption and aromatic and medicinal herbs for the world and the region had even started exporting tomatoes to Italy! The EU's Centre For Balkan Development being built in Durres and its Islam Liaison Initiative's Headquarters proposed for Tirana, the new expansion plans for Mother Teresa Airport - the fourth ones in 22 years - and the new international schools in the Universities suggested that the future was bright. Things seemed to be on a virtuous circle and growth and success seemed sustainable.

times more likely to be killed per kilometre spent in a car than in Britain, and while the fatal accident rate had fallen there it had doubled in Tirana.

The government's efforts to provide services in the illegal areas of the early part of the century had been successful but its efforts to plan new settlements for fresh migrants to the region had failed. The Regulatory Plans it had made mandatory for local authorities had been of variable quality, not surprising when so many had less than 10,000 residents and cannot afford trained staff. But more importantly, there had been no-one to enforce planning decisions. New settlements were still being built in areas with no plans. Schools were still not available for their residents, nor was access to electricity, water and sewers.

Even though everyone hated the sprawl of development along the Tirana-Durres hroad, nothing was done to prevent a repetition on the southern route via Ndroq. But in a narrower valley the development was less pleasant, comprising an incompatible mix of industry and residential areas. And the road was never dualled so the traffic moves so slowly that it has become a downmarket area and a centre of violent crime. This area is best avoided.

When his brother asked how the economy was doing, Genti had to admit that the remittance money had dried up a lot as Albanians working abroad either settled into their new homes and established families and mortgages there, leaving them with less money to send home. Others had returned with their new skills but found the region unpleasant, jobs difficult to find and profits hard to make. Many had gone back abroad.

Even the long property boom of the first quarter of the century seemed to be over. It had become a boom and bust industry but eventually, without remittances, demand had dried up, making many skilled workers redundant. Various efforts to develop tourism and even modern high-tech had been tried - and had failed.

The region's official unemployment rate had reached 25% although the grey economy and criminality seemed to be increasing. Getting a job for graduates, women or minority groups like the Roma had become virtually impossible and the 'Brain Drain' of graduates had become critical.

Money had become in even shorter supply, especially for the government. It could no longer afford many programmes it wanted to finance. Environmental improvement and conservation had been worst hit. Old derelict industrial estates from the communist days still littered the region. Contaminated soils had begun to leach into the water supply in ever greater amounts causing outbreaks of illness and even deaths.

Genti felt very depressed, as this future did not look sustainable. He felt very sorry for his grandchildren - his generation had let them down.

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Project Output Reports

This report is one of a family of output documents from the Project. That full set is:

- Main **Regional Development Framework** (RDF) with Full Executive Summary
- Freestanding concise **RDF Summary** in project Progress Newsletter format
- Appendix 1: **Action Plan**
- Appendix 2: **Strategic Environmental Assessment** (SEA)
- Appendix 3: **Planning Standards Report**
- Appendix 4: **Synthesis Report** (Summary of Layer Reports)
- Appendix 5: Layer Report - **Agriculture And Forestry**
- Appendix 6: Layer Report - **Cultural Heritage, Tourism And Leisure**
- Appendix 7: Layer Report - **Demography And Sociology**
- Appendix 8: Layer Report - **Economy and Business**
- Appendix 9: Layer Report - **Environment**
- Appendix 10: Layer Report - **Housing**
- Appendix 11: Layer Report - **Land and Property**
- Appendix 12: Layer Report - **Territorial Planning**
- Appendix 13: Layer Report - **Transport**
- Appendix 14: Layer Report - **Utilities**
- Appendix 15: **Transport Technical Report**
- Appendix 16: **Results of Supporting Surveys**
- Appendix 17: **Training Needs Assessment and Institutional Capacity Training Modules**
- Appendix 18. **Database of Thematic maps, GIS Maps and Satellite Photos Maps**
- **Appendix 19:Regional Photographic Library**

These are all available on the project website: <http://www.landell-mills.com/Tirana-Durres/>

Username: kiddm

Password: tdcorridor



Sustainable and Integrated Development of the Tirana-Durres Region

EuropeAid/120779/C/SV/AL



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Executive Summary

Background - What Is The RDF Being Summarised?

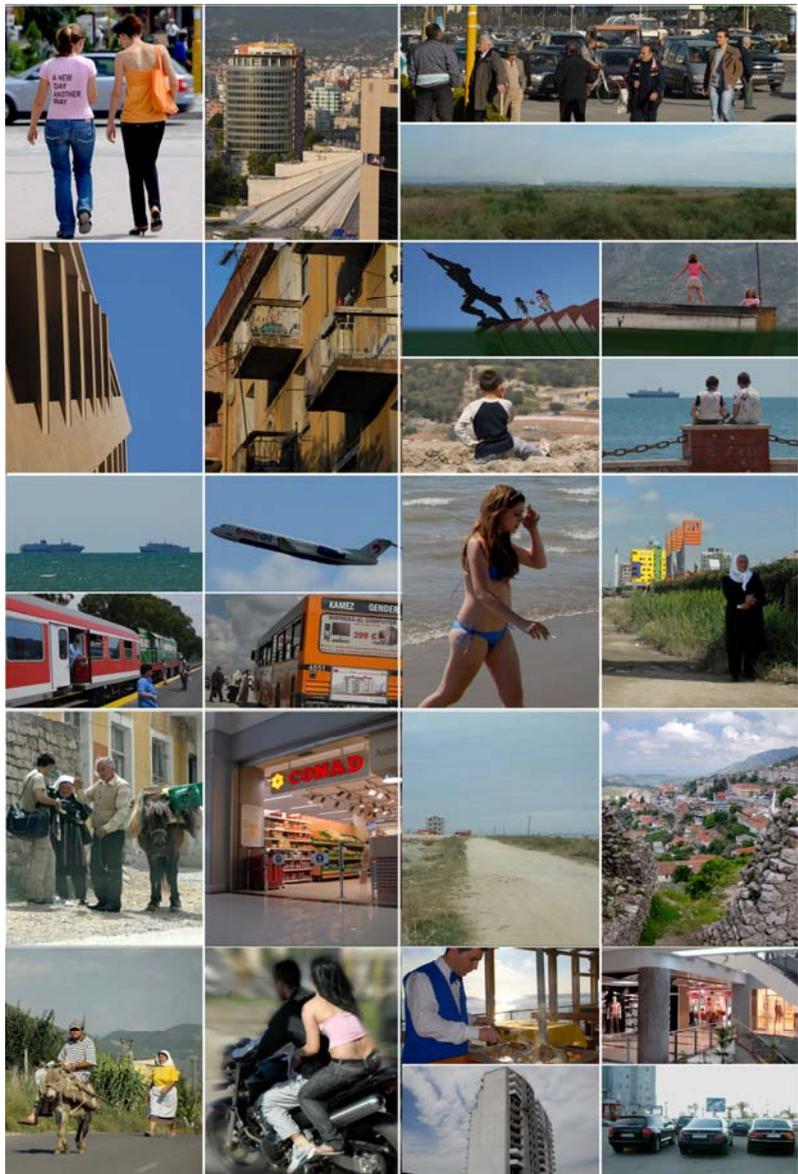
The document summarises a Regional Development Framework prepared over 2006 and 2007 for the Tirana-Durres region of Albania by a European Union Technical Assistance project.¹ It is the main output of a project funded by the EU and prepared against Terns Of Reference (see Annex 7) agreed between its Delegation in Tirana and the Government of Albania. The work was undertaken by a consortium of two British consultancies experienced in regional, urban and rural planning: Landell Mills Ltd (www.landell-mills.com) and Buro Happold (www.burohappold.com). The work was carried out by a team of over 25 international and local experts, supported by specialist local enterprises in GIS mapping, survey work, etc. between summer 2006 and the end of 2007.

A draft report was published in September 2007 for consultations via three workshops for stakeholders and written requests to them to offer observations within five months. Those that were received were incorporated into this document which presents the team's final proposals. These are deliberately not utopian, but by definition have to be optimistic. In effect, it is a clarion call to action and only time will confirm the expectations of many observers and team members that it will fall on deaf ears.

The Tirana-Durres area of Albania is Europe's fastest growing region. Covering the two qarku (counties) of Tirana and Durres, which are the home of the country's capital and main port respectively, a quarter of its population and probably two-fifths of its economy. It is a region of contrasts: beautiful idyllic countryside and huge stinking waste tips, beaches and mountains, villages with few services mainly populated by old people and under-employed farmers close to urban centres that are the workplaces and playgrounds of a new cadre of young urban professionals. There is poverty and affluence; there is good design and hideous buildings. The collage of photos alongside show this diversity.

More importantly, there are opportunities amongst the problems.

Migration from the rural areas of the country and massive amounts of remittance money entering the region from Albanians abroad are being used to fuel consumer and construction booms. These generate the opportunities but both are inherently unsustainable and cause the problems. These relate mainly to



¹ CARDS Project: "Sustainable and Integrated Development, Tirana Durres Region", Europeaid/120779/C/SV/AL; Contractors: Landell Mills Limited and Buro Happold Ltd; Team Leader: Lyn Arnold; Beneficiary: Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications of the Government of Albania



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urban sprawl as a result of the Albanian planning system being caught unawares by the migration and unable to supply the land needed to accommodate the growth. Individuals and construction companies simply solved the problems for themselves. Thus, the success created by economic growth, actually caused the problems: mainly massive unplanned expansion of the urban areas of the region made up of illegal buildings often with unlawful connections to utilities and poor access to schools, public transport and services while good agricultural land is being permanently lost and the environment damaged and the roads congested.

The solutions must by definition be sophisticated, complex, integrated (i.e. wide looking and maximising synergy between their many components) and sustainable i.e. capable of remaining effective into the long-term.

In simple terms, the RDF needs to reintroduce respect for the law in urban development in the region by showing how 'planning' can be positive and contribute to the quality of life of residents and the prosperity of businesses. The Albanian government is introducing an upgraded national Regulatory Planning system which is a vital first step but in such a rapidly growing region Regulatory Planning, which merely controls building and undesirable development, cannot be enough. The planning system needs to anticipate needs and design for them. The solutions will take many years to become fully effective but growth is predicted to continue so the RDF, put simply, must literally be a framework that will remain relevant for decades (twenty years is proposed as the 'plan period') into which new unanticipated actions can be hooked alongside the ones that can be identified now. This means recognising that, in such dynamic circumstances, all needs over such a long period cannot be anticipated and so a classic 'Master Plan' is inappropriate. It also means that the RDF must be designed to serve as its own Management Information System (MIS) to manage and monitor progress. It also means that a completely new capability will be needed to implement the RDF, given its sophistication, breadth of interest and geographic coverage of the areas of many local authorities.

How Was The RDF Prepared?

The RDF was prepared using a tried and tested process that combined thorough research and systematic analysis with creative thinking. That process is described in full in **Section 1** of the main part of the RDF. It is summarised on the diagram overleaf.

The Region Summarised

Each of the layer reports comments on the international backdrop and the national context for the region and Sections of the RDF presents this information in a summarised form.

Section 3 then describes the situation in the region itself and Section 4 presents a 'Strategic Regional Assessment'. These are summarised, non-statistically, as:

- has a strategic location in the western Balkans;
- is Europe's fastest growing region;
- is the rapidly growing Albanian economy's powerhouse;
- has economic growth based on remittances and an ensuing property development boom - both of which may not continue, service sector growth (financial services, retailing and leisure) and not manufacturing or modern knowledge based industries,
- has a balance of payments problem balanced by huge potential for the development of tourism;
- is a magnet for Albanians living in rural areas of the country;
- may not have a long-term sustainable economy;
- has an immature land market and suffers from a failure of its territorial planning system;
- has too many informal (unplanned settlements with illegal buildings, poor services and inadequate utilities;
- is suffering from serious problems with regard to energy and water supplies and waste water and solid waste management and disposal;
- enjoys a very pleasant climate, great scenic variety and good landscapes, mountains with national parks and coastal beaches;
- has a degenerating natural environment and large areas of physical dereliction;
- has rapid growth in car ownership and use, poor traffic management and a lack of an integrated public transport system, too many motoring accident and inadequate urban parking provision;
- has poorly developed public social services;



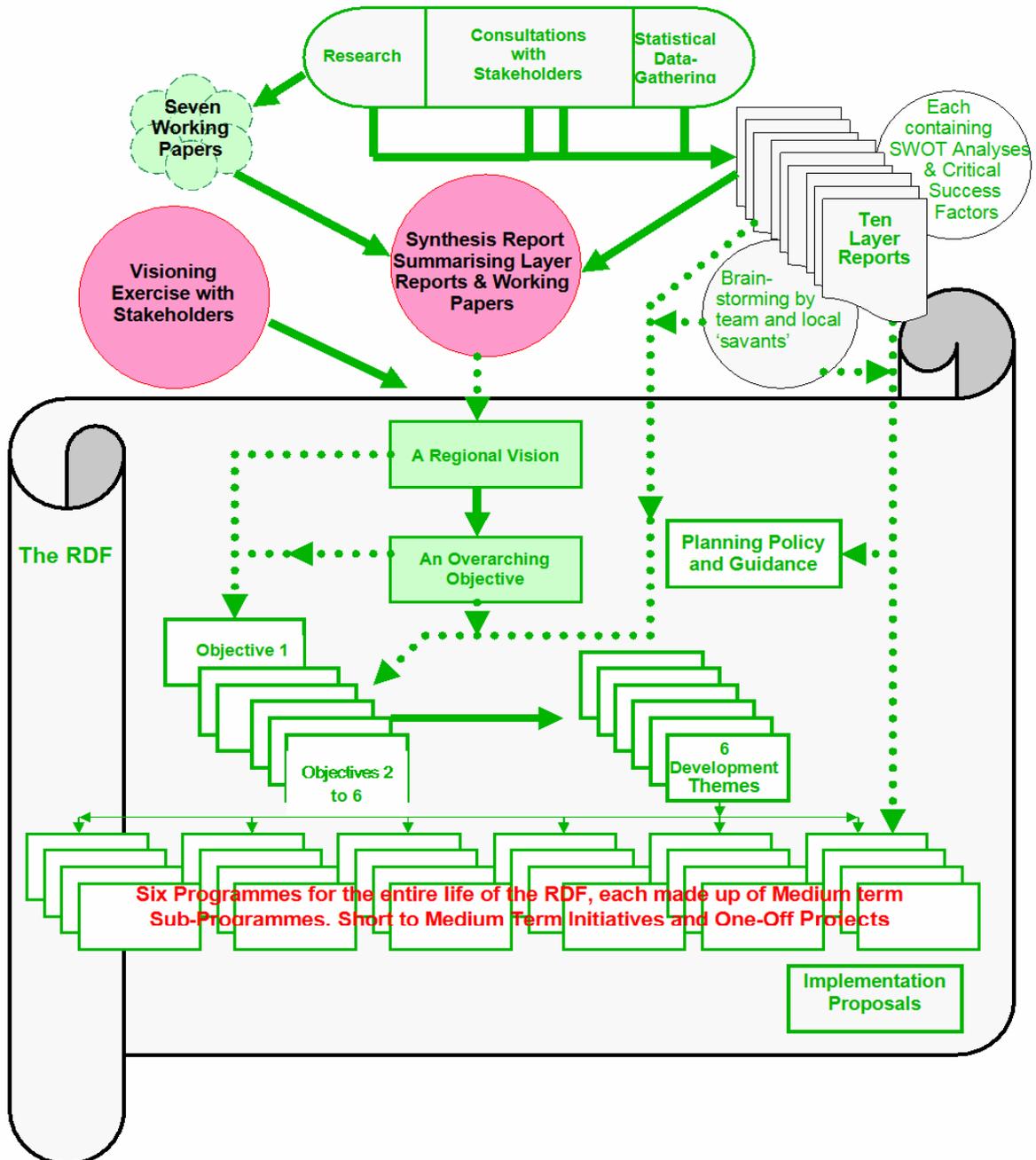
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- has an education system that needs improving in qualitative terms and that is likely to struggle to keep pace with demand;
- has further growth potential but its rural communities may not be sustainable and the quality of life in its urban settlements may deteriorate; and
- needs a pro-active - rather than responsive - planning system with a wider range of tools, greater enforcement, more integrated and an emphasis on sustainability.

Section 4 also identified the six Development Themes for the RDF.

The Issues, Regional Vision And Objectives For The RDF

Section 5 sets the scene for the RDF itself by outlining what it must do, including quantifying the main parameters that it must accommodate over its proposed twenty year life.

It begins by identifying eight 'Planning objectives' for the region to be pursued through the RDF:

1. all main land uses but especially, housing, employment, open space and high level facilities like universities, hospitals and city centre retail and leisure;



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2. to restrict further urban sprawl;
3. to maximise development on brown-field sites;
4. to facilitate cost-effective provision of new utilities and public services in newly planned areas and retro-fitted into existing areas;
5. to ensure that there is effective integration between urban planning, the design of the transport system and the public transport network;
6. to ensure that the urban areas meet the needs of the population of the region for urban facilities, but especially their poorer people;
7. to encourage good quality design in terms of building finishes, landscaping and planting, outdoor spaces, etc., and access for the disabled and discourage over-intensive uses of sites and insensitive design which increases health hazards and otherwise negatively impacts on neighbours, users of buildings and passers by; and
8. introduce a battery of local planning tools such as local area action plans, improvement areas, conservation areas, restricted height zones, etc;

It then outlines a set of ten principles for the RDF itself:

1. it must deal primarily with **Big Issues**, matters of importance affecting a large part of the region probably for some time, not short-term superficial problems that affect a single piece of land or a village, etc.;
2. **Integrated** i.e. broad, coving all relevant issues in linked ways;
3. **Sustainable**, not at risk from shocks, and its components can be expected to remain important for many years;
4. **Sustained**: it must plan for 20 years ahead and be implemented in a context whereby the resources it needs are likely to be available for that length of time whilst it is implemented by a mechanism with a life of at least two decades;
5. covers the **two qarkus of Tirana and Durres**;
6. it should be **'guiding'**: setting parameters for local regulatory plans and other regional and local initiatives;
7. it should be **'complementary'** and avoid contradicting existing plans;
8. it should be **'transparent'** i.e. is based on under-standing and has a compelling logic to its structure and contents;
9. is **'ambitious but achievable'**; and
10. it should have a **public service, long-term ethos** but should **also be opportunistic and commercial**, ready to make a profit where possible to facilitate or subsidise unprofitable objectives.

Section 5 then quantifies the future of the region. This reveals very dramatically the scale of what the

RDF must accommodate by 2027:

- ½ million more people;
- twice the current number of homes;
- 285,0000 more jobs;
- three times as many cars, university places and hospital beds;
- a new primary school every five months and a new secondary school every two years;
- 3,350 hectares of land (1,900 for residential and 1,450 for ancillary uses like roads, parks, schools, employment areas, parks etc); and
- residents will be about four times richer on average than today in constant money terms, triggering a massive growth in demand for entertainment and retailing and entertainment facilities.

The full detailed conclusions of this comprehensive forecasting exercise are:



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Mainstream Forecast	2007	2027	Change, 2007-2027		Average Annual Change		Average Change Every 5 Years	
			Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Population	820,000	1,335,000	530,000 (±100,000)	64.6	26,500 (±5,000)	3.2	132,500 (±25,000)	16.2
School children	207,000	267,000	60,000	29.0	3,000	1.4	15,000	7.2
Primary schools			50		2½		12	
Secondary school			10		½		2-3	
University places			2-3 times					
Health care			2-3 times					
Dependency ratio	52:48	49:51						
Households	202,000	445,000	243,000	120	12,150	6.0	60,750	30.1
Housing	213,000	460,000	247,000	116	12,350	5.8	61,750	29.0
Development Land (has)	n/a	n/a	3,350	n/a	170		840	
Labour force	310,000	565,000	255,000	82.3	12,750	4.1	63,750	20.5
Jobs needed			285,000		14,250		71,250	
GDP (mainstream - €)	(2005)	17.5-26bn	14-21bn	406	Compound growth rates make such calculations misleading			
GDP (max - €)		61bn	57.5bn	1600				
GDP per capita - €	3,450 - 5,150	13,250- 19,000	9,800- 13,850	370-380				
Car fleet	57,500- 70,000	530,000- 720,000	472,500- 650,000	820-930				
Car Usage				300				
Electricity				300				
Water (litres/sec)	4,200	Sufficient if leakages reduced						

This section then goes on to outline a series of eleven recommendations called ‘**Planning Guidance Recommendations**’. The first of these outlines where development should take place across the region over the next two decades and is therefore worth presenting in full in this summary:

Planning Guidance 1: Location of Development at the Strategic Level

This is based on a two stage approach as circumstances change. Following a theoretical review of possible future forms for the settlement pattern of the region it was concluded that the best option is to constrain further sprawl and loss of agricultural land by ‘infilling’ the new informal areas and increasing density in the older parts of the two main cities and expanding Durres to the north east of the city to the coast east of Porto Romano. But, as the capacity of these areas cannot be accurately predicted second, later, element should be used, based on major expansions of the more outlying towns and cities of the region **if necessary**. Protection of Mt Dajte, the hills between Ndroq and Vlora and the coastal hills between Durres and Porto Romano, virtually by banning almost all development except those related to outdoor leisure in these areas would provide the green lungs that will be needed by such dense cities as Tirana and Durres would become.

The first stage would see a policy of increasing density (called ‘**Densification**’) in which undeveloped land in the new informal areas are filled and small old buildings in the older parts of Tirana and Durres are replaced by larger ones, plus a **Major Extension at Durres**, as follows:

- i. probably for 15 years into the future (depending on exact capacity) and probably providing capacity for up to 400,000 more residents;
- ii. initially, develop to the capacity that can be accommodated only within the existing built up areas of Tirana, Durres, Kavaje and Fushe Kruje and impose and enforce a ban on development outside (with defined exceptions, e.g. rural employment or tourism projects);



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- iii. pursue major planned 'regeneration programmes' in older derelict (mainly former industrial) areas of both cities, by 15 years into the future; these will almost certainly include early developments alongside the Tirana-Durres highway and/or the first informal settlements;
 - iv. pursue a vigorous programme of improvement of older residential areas, shopping areas and employment areas and of informal settlements with poor levels of services and also 'Linear Improvement Area Plans' along major visible routes such as the Railway Station to Mother Teresa Square in Tirana, along Elbasan Road, Boulevards Zhan D'Ark/Bajram Curri/Gjergji Fishta in Tirana, the road to Kavaje Rocks in Durres, the rest of the river Lana in Tirana, the main road through Kamza, etc. that improve the land use, appearance and facilities of the areas;
 - v. then start to build - after three to five years (so start planning in 2009) - a major mixed use expansion of Durres on the large area of undeveloped land between the north east of the city and the coast east of Port Romana for employment and residential uses;
 - vi. develop a major programme to increase public open space, sports and leisure facilities and public access to the rivers, hills, mountains and rural valleys to compensate for the high density of the cities;
 - vii. prioritise car parking and public transport while curbing car use within the transport strategy; and
 - viii. increase the population by Kruje by up to 50% in the next 15 years by linking it by a new road to north Tirana, as proposed by the commune, developing new up-market residential areas to the east of the castle hill, to support the leisure offer of the city (restaurants, bars, etc.) at a speed determined by demand.
2. From about fifteen years in the future build major **Enlargements of Outlying Settlements** to accommodate a total of 50,000 to 100,000 more residents depending on demand and capacity - but start planning them three years earlier - as follows and probably in this order:
- i. Kavaje: double population to 45,000; and
 - ii. increase the population of the Koder Thumane and Fushe-Kruje area by 50,000 to 100,000, either by increasing the size of each settlement by 50% to 100% or, preferably, by combining them into one major new integrated 'new city' with its own university, major hospital, leisure and shopping facilities, public transport system and transport links to Tirana, Durres, the airport and national road network, and most important, local employment area(s).

Any major extension must be preceded by Master Plans and SEAs. These must be preceded by seismic risk and flood risk assessments.

This proposal is shown on the maps overleaf, which also show the pattern of development in the region from 1900 to 2007 and projections to 2027 :



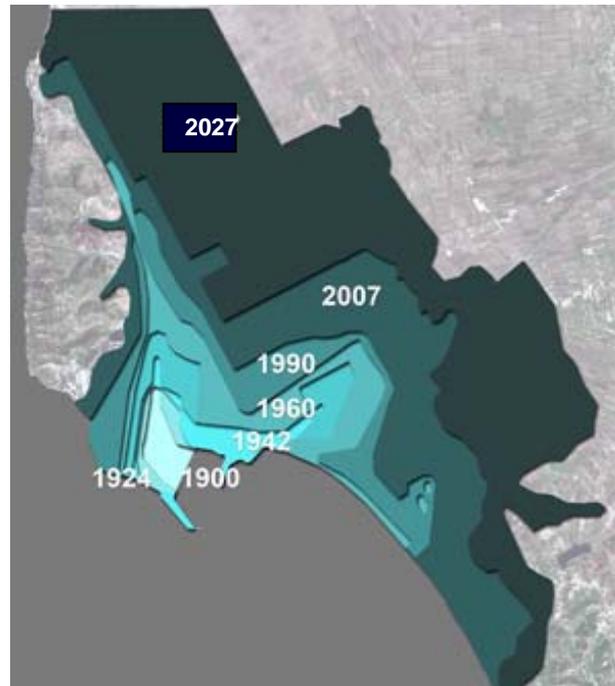
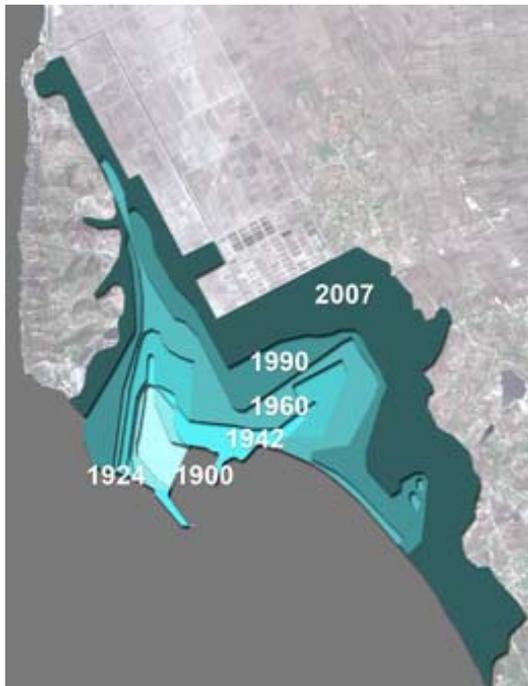
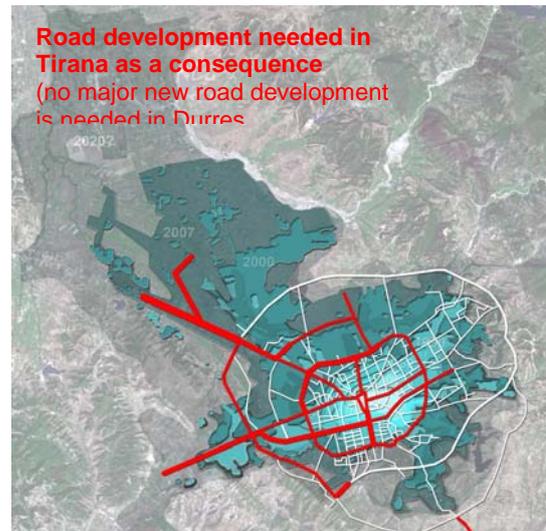
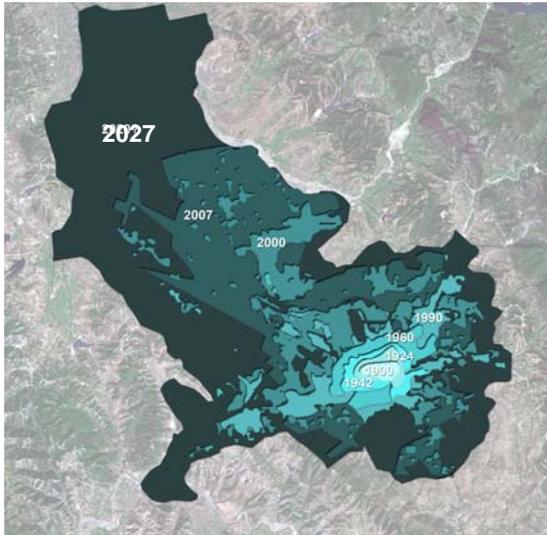
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Planning Guidance Recommendation 2: Growth of Individual Settlements

Where the additional ½m people expected in the region will live is obviously the most important issue for the RDF. Based on the preferred settlement pattern identified above **Section 5** identifies principles as follows:

1. rural areas outside the main cities and their new informal suburbs should grow by only 3% over the 20 years if they are in the more remote parts of the region (this being the natural increase that can be expected after some allowance for residents to move to the cities) and rural areas that are less remote should grow by 5% over that period as they may lose less people to the big cities;
2. rural areas near to urban areas should be allowed to grow by 10% over the two decades;
3. rural areas that have become urban and the new rapidly growing informal settlements of the region should expand by 60% over the twenty years;
4. as should Tirana, by infill within the built up area and redevelopment of older properties at higher densities, and Kruje by the same methods plus the development of a new planned area east of the castle hill - the bulk of the growth of these cities to be within the next fifteen years;



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5. Durres should grow by the same amount (60%) over those 15 years but then continue to expand and double its population by the end of the 20 year period by expanding to the north/north east towards the coast east of Porto Romano, where contaminated land will need to be reclaimed first; and
6. Fushe Kruje and Koder Thumane be doubled in size over the twenty years but with 80% of this growth in the last third of the period, possibly by creating a new city with its own new shopping and service centre in between the two existing small centres.

In terms of average gross residential development (gross densities are those within the curtilages of development sites, excluding roads, etc.) it is assumed that the densities will be:

- villages in rural areas: 125 people per hectare (pph);
- areas defined as switching from rural to urban and all communes except Tirana and Durres: 200 pph;
- Durres: 300 pph; and
- Tirana: 400 pph.

The subject of the relationship between gross residential density and wider city-wide net densities that allow for development of major transport infrastructure, employment areas, educational and health establishments like universities and district hospitals, city scale open space, etc, does not appear to have been systematically examined by academics or practicing planners (unlike the relationship between gross residential density and net residential density which allows for neighbourhood roads, local open spaces and local facilities like shops and schools). What information is available suggests that these would add 70% to the land needed for development outside the gross residential density area. So this is the assumption used to calculate the full amounts of land needed both in total and to achieve the target growth of individual settlements.

This comes to just over 3,300 ha across the region over 20 years, or 170 ha a year, on average.

Annex 7 shows the results of applying these principles and should become a very important Planning Guidance for the region, one that local government should apply, with central government monitoring closely that it is applied.

If new unplanned free standing settlements are to be created to deliver specific objectives, e.g. the construction of rural or coastal tourism developments, then the above targets will have to be adjusted appropriately.

In any case, they should, of course, be reviewed in the light of experience and new trends emerging during the life of the RDF.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 3: Development in the Countryside

All forms of building, at any scale, large or small, should be precluded unless the construction is needed to ensure the survival of an existing use or to achieve a specific Development Objective such as construction of a tourist village.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 4: Development in Villages

All villages you be given a yellow line which follows as closely as possible the current built-up area boundary but encloses enough land to accommodate the growth targets set in Planning Guidance Recommendation 2. The land for future development should be recycled, 'brown-field' land whenever possible.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 5: Agreeing Programmes For The Release Of Development Land For Housing

In conjunction with representatives of local house-builders, each local authority should agree an annual development target and amount and sites of land to be released for four years ahead and roll it forward every two years. Such targets should be formally approved by central government before being applied.



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Planning Guidance Recommendation 6: Provision of Employment Areas

Every local authority should be required to designate an employment area of at least 10ha in any settlement of over 15,000 people, while city authorities (communes) should undertake demand studies and designate the appropriate amount of land for this use and in small remote areas further than 15km from a designated 10ha employment area a smaller area of 5ha should be designated, located in a suitable area with good local transport links.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 7: Building Heights

The maximum height of new buildings should be 4 storeys in villages and 6 storeys elsewhere except in zones identified in Regulatory Plans where a minimum or maximum height should be laid down. These must ensure that sensitive buildings, monuments or neighbourhoods should not be overlooked or the skyline damaged.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 8: Parking Standards

Every building should be required to include at least one parking place per dwelling and one parking place per 100 sq metres of non-residential use within its curtilage.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 9: Road and Pavement Widths and Standards

In new developments minimum road widths and unobstructed pavement widths are:

- 4.5 metres road width with a 2 metre pavement width totalling 6.5 metres for a small residential development (up to 50 residences);
- 5.5 metres road width and 2x2 metres pavement widths totalling 9.5 metres for a more substantial residential development (up to 150 residences); and
- 7.3 metres road width and 2x2 metres pavement widths totalling 11.3 metres for a more significant residential or commercial development where buses and goods vehicles are likely to use the road as a distributor road.

Kerbs over 20cm high should not be allowed and drop kerbs used. If necessary underground parking should be accessed by vehicle lifts if this requirement cannot be achieved by other means.

A comprehensive set of other urban standards should be adopted. This can be based on recommendations which accompany this document.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 10: Other Planning Standards

Developments should conform to a comprehensive set of standards of provision of facilities, distances between buildings, etc. to be developed and adopted by the government.

Planning Guidance Recommendation 11: Enforcement of Planning Permissions

Planning law and parking restrictions must be applied and infringements penalised heavily. Therefore an elite (i.e. incorruptible) enforcement capability should be established and used, and then its activities secretly monitored to check that they are effective and not corrupt.

The Main Elements Of The RDF

Section 6 of the main report then presents the main elements of the RDF in more detail. These are:

The Vision: 'Tirana-Durres: The Balkan Hub' which emphasised the benefits of growing the role of the region as a service centre for Albania's Albanian speaking neighbours, the development of logistics and international tourism and seeking to develop European links and perhaps institutions like business schools or scientific research centres of European status

The Over-arching Objective: To position the region as a major hub in the Balkans and wider in order to give its residents a better quality of life with an ever growing choice of homes, leisure activities and jobs, while allowing its businesses to be successful and its visitors to have memorable and pleasant experiences and to do so in a sustained and sustainable way that enhances the environment of the region.



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This is Vision of the region as a hub does not just relate to transport, it is about a mindset, that the people and enterprises of the region see it as there to serve surrounding regions-both inside Albania and outside, and therefore sees the region developing as a hub for modern services like, administration, education, health, finance, consulting and advice- and to do so whilst d creating places and communities residents are proud to live in..

The Six Primary Objectives:

1. To create a new 'Hub' within the Balkans that serves as an entrepôt for the whole of Albania and countries inland and provides their citizens, visitors and enterprises with services of inter-national standards
2. To rebuild the region's cities so they look good, are safe, facilitate easy and quick movement, provide sufficient homes of all types in well planned neighbourhoods that offer a high quality of life, access to open space, and, especially in the short-term, have working utilities
3. To ensure the rural areas of the region provide economic opportunities, attractive living environments and communities worth living in for their residents, whilst also providing the region's cities and other visitors with opportunities for outdoor pastimes
4. To secure the long term sustainability of the growth of Tirana-Durres by building a strong modern diversified economy that provides the full range of jobs needed for all of the growing workforce which is increasingly skilled
5. To restore all damage to the region's environment, prioritising dangerous conditions, and then to enhance that environment to high standards, protecting sensitive areas and maintaining bio-diversity while allowing local people and visitors to appreciate it
6. To ensure that the benefits of living in a caring society are enjoyed by all citizens and that local communities across the region can play effective roles in determining their futures, solving their problems and seizing their opportunities

The Six Development Themes:

1. Making The Region An International Hub
2. Pro-Active Planning For Better Cities
3. Successful Modern Rural Areas
4. A Competitive Economy And Workforce
5. Restoring The Environment to Health
6. A Just, Cohesive Society with Engaged Communities

Each Development Theme would contain Sub-Programmes, Initiatives and Projects, as described in detail in the Action Plan that accompanies this RDF. This and **Section 7** show the timing proposed for each element of the RDF.

The Development Programmes (DPs), Sub-Programmes (SPs), Initiatives (Is) and Projects (Ps) initially proposed for each Development Theme is shown below:

Development Theme 1 Making The Region An International Hub

DP1.1 Communicating The Region's Success

DP1.2 Bringing The RDF Vision To Life And Differentiating The Major Settlements

SP1.2.1 Development Projects Of International Significance

P1.2.1(i) A Floating Marina Facility in Durres



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- P1.2.1(ii) An International Tourist Resort/Marina/ Sports Village
- SP1.2.2 International Symbols Of The Region That Are Not Just Symbolic**
- SP1.2.3 International Events Programme**
- SP1.2.4 Spatial Planning The Differentiates The Settlements**
 - I1.2.3(i) When Tirana And Durres Should Compete And When They Should Co-operate
 - I1.2.3(ii) The Roles Of Kruje
 - I1.2.3(iii) The Roles Of Fushe Kruje
 - I1.2.3(iv) The Roles Of Kavaje
 - I1.2.3(v) The Roles Of Koder Thurmane
- DP1.3 Improving International Travel Facilities And Services**
 - SP1.3.1 A Truly International Hub Airport**
 - I1.3.1(i) Tramway Connection To Airport From Tirana/Durres
 - SP1.3.2 Durres: The South Adriatic's Main Sea-Port**
 - P1.3.2(i) Logistics Re-distribution Centre At Port
 - P1.3.2(ii) Customs Area for Road Based Freight Traffic
 - SP1.3.3 Strengthening The Region's Role As A Hub In International And National Travel**
 - I1.3.3(i) Improved Strategic Routes The Region to International Neighbours
 - P1.3.3(i) Tirana to Elbasan Road Improvements
 - I1.3.3(ii) Main Road Maintenance
- DP 1.4 Better InterCity Transport In The Region**
 - P1.4.1(i) Short-term Improvements To The Tirana-Durres Highway
 - P1.4.1(ii) Long-term Improvements To The Tirana-Durres Highway
 - P1.4.1(iii) New Kruje To Tirana Road
 - I1.4.1(i) Replacement Of Tirana-Durres Railway With Tramway
 - I1.4.1(ii) Improved Regional Rail Services For Passenger Traffic
 - I1.4.1(iii) Improved Rail Service For Freight Traffic
- DP1.5 Becoming A Major Logistics Centre**
 - SP1.5.1 Logistics Development Study**
 - P1.5.1(i) Durres Logistics Park
 - P1.5.1(ii) Airport Logistics Park And Freight Re-Distribution Centre
 - P1.5.1(iii) (Inter)National Logistics Research And Training Centre
 - I1.5.(i) Haulage Business Initiative
- DP1.6 Attracting And Re-Attracting Foreign Visitors**
 - SP1.6.1 Quality Assurance for Visitor Attractions**
 - SP1.6.2 Quality Assurance for Hotels and all Accommodation Facilities**
 - SP1.6.3 Marketing and Information - Tourist Information Centres**
 - SP1.6.4 A Regional Signage Strategy**
- DP1.7 International Networking And Attraction Of Foreign Investment**
 - SP1.7.1 Cultural And Political Twinning**
 - SP1.7.2 International Economic Twinning**
 - SP1.7.3 Targeted FDI Attraction Campaigns To Secure Priority Projects**
 - SP1.7.4 General FDI Attraction**
 - I1.7.4(i) Establishing Businesses That Serve A Wider Area
 - I1.7.4(ii) Establishing International Education Facilities
- DP1.8 Promoting the Region's Utilities Design and Construction Skills**

Development Theme 2 Pro-Active Planning For Better Cities

- DP2.1 Pre-Requisites of Success**
 - SP2.1.1 Property Registration**
 - SP2.1.2 Immediate Improvements to Utilities**
 - I2.1.2(i) Immediate Improvements to Electricity Supplies
 - I2.1.2(ii) Immediate Expansion Of Alternative Energy Supplies
 - I2.1.2(iii) An Energy Usage Reduction Campaign
 - SP2.1.3 An RDF Implementation Capability**
- DP2.2 Improved Local Areas Based On Pro-active Local Planning**
 - SP2.2.1 Regeneration Zones**
 - SP2.2.2 Linear Planning Zones And Other Local Planning Areas**
 - SP2.2.3 Areas Of Special Historical, Scientific Or Artistic Interest**
 - SP2.2.4 Large Single User Reserve Areas Programme**
 - SP2.2.5 Greener, More Beautiful And Safer Cities**



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- I2.2.5(i) Landscape Master Plan For Tirana City
- I2.2.5(ii) Landscape Master Plan For Durres City
- I2.2.5(iii) Albania Abloom Pilot
- I2.2.5(iv) Open Space And 'Pocket Parks'
- I2.2.5(v) Green Roofs
- I2.2.5(i) Pedestrian Zones
- P2.2.5(i) Pedestrianisation Of Part Of The Bllok, Tirana
- P2.2.5(ii) Pedestrianisation of Skanderbeg Sq, the Boulevard and Mother Teresa Sq, Tirana
- P2.2.5(iii) 24 Hour Pedestrianisation of Durres Boulevard

SP2.2.6 Planning to Improve the Quality Of Life

- I2.2.6(i) Schools Building Programme Focussing On Informal Areas
- I2.2.6(ii) Medical Facilities Building Programme
- I2.2.6(v) The Arts
- P2.2.6(i) Waterfront Arts and Leisure Area North Of The Port In Durres
- I2.2.6(vi) Sports Facilities
- P2.2.6(ii) Outdoor Activities At The Lake In Tirana
- P2.2.6(iii) Outdoor Activity Area at Paskuqan near Kamza

DP2.3 Better Urban Transport

SP2.3.1 Urban Streets for Both Vehicles And Pedestrians

- P2.3.1(i) Tirana Partial Ring Road
- I2.3.1(i) Formalising On-Street Parking
- I2.3.1(ii) Safer Street Junctions
- I2.3.1(iii) Giving Pavements Back To Pedestrians
- I2.3.1(iii) Parking Standards in New Developments
- I2.3.1(iv) Provision Of Off-Street Parking: Residents Parking, Pay And Display, and Park And Ride
- I2.3.1(v) Rationalisation Of On-Street Parking: Residents; Limited Waiting And Pay And Display
- I2.3.1(vii) Enforcement Of Parking Regulations

SP2.3.2 An Integrated Public Transport System

- I2.3.2(i) Rationalisation And Integration Of Regional Bus Services
- P2.3.2(i) New Segregated Bus Priority Routes Through Tirana City Centre
- P2.3.2(ii) New Segregated Bus Priority Routes Through Durres City Centre
- P2.3.2(iii) Tirana: Tramway From Railway Station to Mother Teresa Sq Via Boulevard Deshmoret E Kombit

SP2.3.3 Traffic Management and Safety

- I2.3.3(i) Road Maintenance Programme
- I2.3.3(ii) Speed Reduction Within Urban Areas
- I2.3.2(iv) Driver Training and Re-Training

SP2.3.4 Reducing air Pollution Caused by Vehicles

DP2.4 Utilities That Are Fit for Purpose

SP2.4.1 Water Supply

- I2.4.1(i) Sustainable Financing of Water Supplies

SP2.4.2 Managing And Cleaning Waste Water And Urban Sewage

SP2.4.3 Regional Solid Waste Management Strategy

- I2.4.3(ii) Proper Management Of Hazardous And Hospital Waste

SP2.4.8 Electricity

- I2.4.1(i) Sustainable Financing of Electricity Use

Development Theme 3 Successful Modern Rural Areas

DP3.1 Protecting The Rural Way Of Life

SP3.1.1 A Rural Development Strategy for The Region

SP3.1.2 Village Community Plans

SP3.1.3 Village Community Development

SP3.1.4 Maintaining Rural Traditions And Skills

- P3.1.4(i) An Outdoor Albanian Country Life Museum

DP3.2 Improving The Rural Economy

SP3.2.1 Developing The Food Processing Sector

- P3.2.1(i) Development Of An Abattoir

SP3.2.2 Establishing Co-operatives

SP3.2.3 Farmers' Markets

SP3.2.4 Irrigation Schemes



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- SP3.2.5 Farm Consolidation And Diversification**
- SP3.2.6 Promoting Forestry And The Wood Using Industries**
- SP3.2.7 Tele-cottaging**
- SP3.2.8 Funding Rural Businesses**
- DP3.3 Raising Skills Levels Of Farmers, Farm Workers and Forestry Workers**
 - SP3.3.1 Extension Services**
 - SP3.3.2 (Virtual) Agricultural College**
- DP3.3 Improving the Rural Environment**
 - SP3.3.1 A Regional Action Plan For Sustainable Agriculture**
 - SP3.3.2 Rural Area Landscape Strategy And Plans**
 - I3.3.2(i) Encouraging Planting
 - SP3.3.3 Green Lungs For The Region**
 - I3.3.3(i) Mountain Dajte Development And Management Master Plan
 - I3.3.3(ii) Vlorë/Ndroq Hills Development And Management Master Plan
 - I3.3.3(iii) Durres-Porto Romana Coastal Hills Development And Management Master Plan
- DP3.4 Rural Roads And Access To The Cities**
 - I3.4(i) Maintenance Of Rural Roads

Development Theme 4 A Competitive Economy And Workforce

- DP4.1 Business Development And Entrepreneurship**
 - SP4.1.1 Pillar Companies Programme**
 - SP4.1.2 Developing Sophisticated B2B Services**
 - P4.1.2(i) A Tirana Exchange?
 - SP4.1.3 Import Substitution**
 - SP4.1.4 Promoting Exports**
 - I4.1.4(i) Export Promotion Training, Information And Advice For Companies
 - I4.1.4(ii) Trade Missions
 - SP4.1.5 Start Up And Enterprise Promotion**
 - I4.1.5(i) Bringing The Diaspora Back
 - I4.1.5(ii) Finance for Start Ups And SMEs
 - I4.1.5(iii) Promoting innovation and Good Product Design/Packaging
 - I4.1.5(iv) Promoting IPR And Technology Transfer
- DP4.2 Developing Strong Sectors**
 - SP4.2.1 Tourism Development Resource Programme(s) for Durres, Kruje and Tirana**
 - I4.2.1(i) Regional Action Plan For Sustainable Tourism
 - SP4.2.2 Film And TV Programmes Sector**
 - SP4.2.3 Renewable Energy Sector**
 - SP4.2.4 Identifying Other Potential Clusters**
- DP4.3 Employment Space**
 - SP4.3.1 A Hierarchy Of Business Parks And Industrial Estates**
 - SP4.3.2 Developing The Office Market**
 - SP4.3.3 Business Incubators**
- DP4.4 Developing Skills, Life-Long Learning And Vocational Training**
 - SP4.4.1 Education For Work**
 - I4.4.1(i) Schools Enterprise Programmes
 - SP4.4.2 Universities For The Future**
 - SP4.4.3 Business Management Training/Education Programmes**
 - SP4.4.4 Developing Vocational Education**
 - I4.4.4(i) Training For The Hospitality Business
 - I4.4.4(ii) Training For Property Professionals
 - SP4.4.5 Promotional Campaigns Extolling The Virtues Of Education And Training To Children, Parents, Teachers, Employees And Employers**
- DP4.5 Accelerating Development of IT Skills and Use of IT**
- DP4.6 Improving Business and Economic Data**
 - SP4.6.1 Economic Data**
 - SP4.6.2 Business Information**
 - SP4.6.3 Property And Land Research And Information**
 - SP4.6.4 Improving Forecasting Capabilities**



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Development Theme 5 Restoring A Quality Environment

DP5.1 Reducing Pollution and Environmental Damage

SP5.1.1 Management And Rehabilitation Of Contaminated And Brownfield Land

SP5.1.2 Achieving Good Air Quality

SP5.1.3 Clean Beaches and Coastal Waters (Integrated Coastal Zone Management)

SP5.1.4 Fees And Bonds For The Environmental Rehabilitation Of Areas Affected By Quarries

DP5.2 Improving the Environment

SP5.2.1 Local Environmental Action Plans

SP5.2.2 Actions Related To Climatic Changes And Ozone Depleting Substances

SP5.2.3 Action Plan For Private Sector Environmental Participation And Cleaner Production Approaches

SP5.2.4 A Regional Environmental Monitoring System

SP5.2.5 Protection Of Land From Erosion

SP5.2.6 Floods And Natural Disasters Protection Strategy

SP5.2.7 Encouraging Bio-Diversity

DP5.3 Strengthening Environmental Institutions And Capacity Building

SP5.3.1 A Better Network Of Public Sector Environmental Organisations

SP5.3.2 Short Term Strengthening Of The Environmental Units Within Qarkus And Local Authorities

SP5.3.3 A Regional Eco-Funding Mechanism

SP5.3.4 Charging Polluters

DP5.4 Fostering Involvement In Environmental Issues And Raising Awareness Of The Environment

SP5.4.1 Regional Public Information And Participation Service

SP5.4.2 Encouraging Environmental NGOs And Activists

Development Theme 6 A Just, Cohesive Society with Engaged Communities

DP6.1 Including The Excluded

SP6.1.1 Inclusion Strategy

I6.1/1+Programmes To Include Specific Groups of Excluded People

SP6.1.2 Transport for the Immobile

SP6.1.3 Community Development In Poorer Neighbourhoods - Pilot Project

SP6.1.4 Establishing Credit Unions

SP6.1.5 Virtual University

DP6.2 Providing The Homes Needed

SP6.2.1 Social Housing Programmes

SP6.2.2 Housing Finance

SP6.2.3 Controlling The Release Of Land For Housing

DP6.3 Strengthening Civil Society

SP6.3.1 Encouraging The Formation Of Sustainable NGOs

SP6.3.2 Community Information Services

SP6.3.3 Sustainable Councils Of Voluntary Action For Tirana And Durres

New elements can, of course, be added into the framework as needed in the future.



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Getting Started And Then Delivering Real Results

The above is an ambitious programme, especially as there is no current capability or precedence for implementing such a 'sustainable and integrated' development framework in Albania. **Section 8** therefore makes comprehensive and detailed proposals for how the RDF should be delivered.

At the heart of the proposed solution is a recommendation to set up a large Regional Development Agency (RDA) responsible to the Prime Minister or a Deputy Prime Minister (i.e. reporting to the Government in the same way as ALUIZNI, as a an executive agency of government, not an NGO). Section 8 makes detailed recommendations for the overall management of that Agency, for its staff structure and for how it related to key stakeholders.

Section 8 also recommends that the RDA should not be the only new body needed to implement the RDF, proposing the establishment of:

- a regional transport body;
- a Regional observatory to gather and disseminate information about the region; and
- a regional 'Learning Network' to disseminate best practice and exchange of ideas between planners in the region.

Section 9 completes the document by describing the different phases that will be need ove the twenty year life of the RDF.



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1. Introduction

The Task

The Tirana-Durres region of Albania is a great success story. It is Europe's fastest growing region and has a dynamic and creative but still rapidly maturing private sector. Unfortunately, such success can bring problems and, over the last fifteen years, the governance system of Albania has failed to keep up with the growth of the region and plan its development.

This has resulted in sprawling shambolic settlements with large areas of illegal dwellings having few basic utilities, little public transport, inaccessible public services, roads and pavements over-run by vehicles that create pollution, degradation of the environment, and significant losses of good quality coast-line and agricultural land. Rubbish piles up in the streets, the river through the capital stinks, too many people are killed on the roads, businesses cannot operate efficiently because there are regular shortages of electricity and water. But GDP per capita continues to grow; homes, hotels, shops, offices, factories and warehouses are being built by private developers; new businesses provide jobs; private mini-buses and taxis provide transport; and new leisure facilities like bars and cinemas provide entertainment.



As little effective action has been taken to control the situation in future, although a major government initiative is tackling the problems of illegally constructed buildings, the European Union has funded a sophisticated aid project to develop a long-term solution. Called '**Sustainable and Integrated Development, Tirana-Durres Region**' (SIDTDR), its main purpose is to prepare proposals for the future development of the region.

Of course, writing and publishing a 'plan' is a pointless use of scarce resources and skilled manpower unless the proposals are actually implemented, so the project also makes recommendations for the institutional set up needed to deliver the improvements needed.

The project was undertaken by a consortium of two British consultancies experienced in regional, urban and rural planning: Landell Mills Ltd (www.landell-mills.com) and Buro Happold (www.burohappold.com). The work was carried out by a team of over 25 international and local experts, supported by specialist local enterprises in GIS mapping, survey work, etc. between summer 2006 and the end of 2007.

This draft final report, published in September 2007 for consultations, presents the team's proposals. It is deliberately not utopian, but by definition has to be optimistic. In effect, it is a clarion call to action. Only time will confirm the expectations of many observers and team members that it will fall on deaf ears.

Why Plan?

Spatial planners like to see order, efficient use of resources, limitations to urban sprawl, etc., but such issues are not always important to ordinary people, especially those for whom simply surviving and earning a living is top priority. In short, 'planners' -including politicians, engineers and other policy- makers - may be distinguished by their desire to plan. It is their inclination, interest, source of self-esteem and/or income. But, in Albania, the impact of post-communism 'planners' has been extremely limited, and so the private sector has taken the initiatives needed to meet the needs of the people of the country.

It is therefore legitimate to ask the question 'is a plan needed?' The answer may, in reality, be a political or philosophical issue but there are also very practical and pragmatic reasons why Tirana-Durres needs an over-arching strategy or plan. In simple terms those are to:

- ensure economic use of scarce public resources;
- avoid destruction of agricultural land; and



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- guide both the public and private sector on where to develop services.

The project team consider these to be valid reasons for producing an over-arching strategy for the region. Planning for planning sake is not needed but a good planning process and system that produces helpful plans should improve the quality of life of the region's people and the success of its businesses.

Background Issues

Albania experienced a quite unusual form of communism in most of the second half of the 20th Century - one that isolated it from the rest of the world and restricted the development and freedom of its citizens even more than most authoritarian regimes.

For example, it was very difficult for them to move from one part of the country to another and car ownership was impossible, rather than simply unaffordable, for ordinary people, with there being less than 2,000 motor vehicles in the country in 1990. As a result, citizens had even less experience or respect for the values and processes of democratic governance, were less likely to question authority and make decisions for themselves than in most countries. Their natural resilience and creativity in the face of adversity was so suppressed that the country was the poorest in Europe when a free market democracy was re-established in 1991.

Since then, the normal widespread movement from the countryside to the cities of poorer people in search of economic opportunities has become a flood in Albania. This caught everyone by surprise, overwhelming the planning system, utilities and public services. The problems were exacerbated by the Albanian tradition of very high levels of home ownership using cash payments and/or self-build and the new development of the receipt of very large amounts of remittance money from Albanians working abroad. This was used to fuel day-to-day consumption - and therefore demand for shops, restaurants and bars - and purchases or construction of homes. Post-communism land restitution aggravated this by giving rural dwellers several small and scattered plots which were not economic to farm, so sought to sell their land for house construction and by the 'asset rich, cash poor' new urban land owners seeking to put their land into deals with developers in return for a share of the profits.

Tirana, as the capital of the country, and Durres, its main port, bore the brunt of these trends. Together, they have grown from a population of just below 670,000 in 1991 to over 820,000 in 2006. Massive whole new suburbs of up to 90,000 people (e.g. Kamza) have developed since the mid 1990s, most of the buildings being illegal in that they do not have planning permission and many have been built on some-one else's land. Many have illegal electricity and/or water connections and few have waste water connections. Most ownerships have not been registered. Many plots in the city centres have been intensively redeveloped with twelve story apartment blocks sometimes replacing two storey ones. A huge 20km long industrial area has developed along-side the eastern end of the highway joining the two cities, matched by one half that long at the western end. A strip of holiday homes of nearly similar length has sprung up along the beach south of Durres. About a dozen private universities have opened. Car ownership has increased at least three times since 1990, traffic congestion has made movement painfully slow and the resulting air pollution at key junctions is serious enough to damage health.

While this has been happening, existing regulatory plans have become completely irrelevant and none has been replaced while no major new planned residential areas have been developed, no new planned industrial areas have been completed, no major new roads except the Tirana-Durres highway have been built and no major new traffic management schemes introduced. No major new investments in electricity supply, water distribution, waste water treatment and disposal, electricity supply or solid waste disposal have been delivered. There have been no significant improvements in the state university sector. In many - but not all - of these fields, plans to cope with the growth of recent years have not even been prepared. As growth is predicted to continue at a significant scale, the situation will only worsen until appropriate action is undertaken.

The purpose of this EU contract is to improve the chances of the problems of the recent past being overcome in the future, although, frankly, it is naïve to think that few foreigners working with some locals can quickly overturn years of inactivity and failure by the governance system of Albania.



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What Does 'Sustainable And Integrated' Mean?

The Terms Of Reference (ToRs) for the EU Project, Sustainable and Integrated Development Tirana-Durres Region (SIDTDR), states its overall objectives as producing proposals for *'the sustainable, integrated and legally regulated development of the region in compliance with environment protection norms'* through the preparation of *'a realistic Master Plan (designed under the environmental and sustainable development strategic approach) in conformity with the future demo-graphic growth of the area that regards the growing needs for industrial, commercial, infrastructure, residential, social and recreational activities and in line with the protection of resources and environment is being provided as a useful and applicable tool to policy and decision-makers of the region'*.

Given the state of the region, those words 'sustainable' and 'integrated' must be taken very seriously, defined well and used to underpin all aspects of the project.

There are many possible definitions or relevant usages of the word 'sustainable'. In this context, it is best used to mean 'having longevity' and 'capable of surviving shocks and both predictable and unanticipated developments' without becoming obsolete.

'Integrated' should be used to mean that all aspects have been considered and addressed by being woven into one, consistent and mutually supportive, set of proposals for positive change. The elements within such a holistic approach must combine the economic, social, environmental, territorial planning, public and private funding capabilities of the region to maximise the impacts of all actions proposed. The 'Art' needed to develop this approach - and it is an 'Art', like haute couture, not a science in which solutions are reached by applying formulae - must be to be to make the whole or the end state more than the sum of the parts. The problem is that such an approach makes a plan designed to be integrated very sophisticated in terms of coverage, methodology and 'inter-dependence'. This renders it very vulnerable because failure to implement one aspect is likely to have major knock-on effects in others and jeopardise achievement of the overall objective.

What Is A Regional Development Framework?

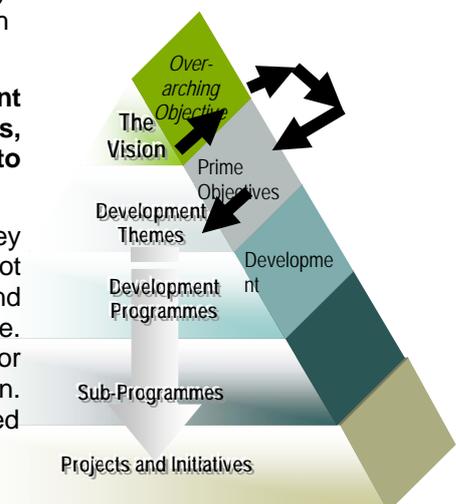
It is in this context that the SIDTDR Project must present the 'Regional Master Plan' for Tirana-Durres required in its ToRs. Clearly, that Plan must be sustainable and integrated and acknowledge that results will take time - there is no 'quick fix'. Equally clearly, it must be very wide-ranging. In such changing circumstances it would be very arrogant of the planners to believe they can anticipate every eventuality - especially ones a decade or more in the future. Recent experience in Albania should have exposed the risks inherent in such an inflexible approach.

'Master Plan' may be the phrase currently used in Albania for such long-term broad planning exercises but it is not only inappropriate, it is potentially dangerous. When the EU first started funding such studies in Member States in the early 1980s, they were called 'Regional Integrated Programmes' because they comprised a series of programmes which would themselves be made up of sub-programmes or projects. Today such exercises - which are usually for whole countries in their pre-accession phase or for disadvantaged regions of Member States - usually produce 'Frameworks'. This is because a framework allows completely new activities to be added during the implementation phase, if needed. Adopting this terminology therefore also has the added advantage that it is compatible with current EU jargon.

That is why this document is called 'The Regional Development Framework (RDF) for Tirana-Durres': Tirana-Durres is where it is, 'regional' is its scale, 'development' is what it is intended to foster and 'framework' is what it is or its 'format'.

Such 'frameworks' are intended to address the 'Big Issues' - they are, for example, rarely concerned with the use of an individual plot of land or the rules for the disbursement of grants to SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) within an economic development initiative. Instead, they comprise a number of top level areas for action or 'Development Themes' intended to remain relevant for their lifespan. It is those initiatives and projects that deal with the more detailed and/or local issues.

The RDF Components





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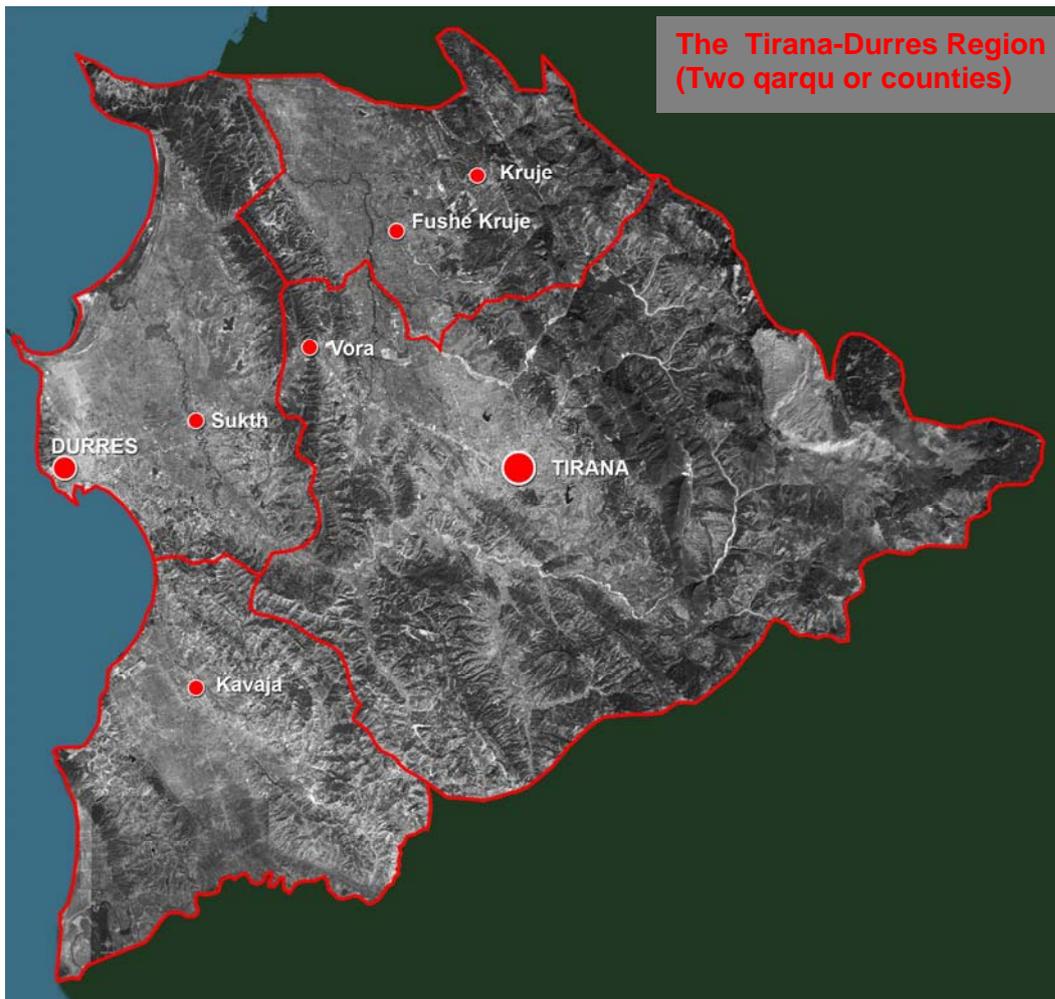
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An RDF is, however, more than simply a strategic plan - it is a command system that creates a basis for a management information system or self-monitoring capability. An RDF should therefore be a hierarchical cascade down from a Vision and an associated Overarching Objective through Prime Objectives that are to be achieved using 'Development Themes' made up of Development Programmes containing Sub-Programmes and - at the lowest level - specific Initiatives or Projects. The Vision, Overarching Objective, Prime Objectives, Development Themes are intended to remain relevant across the entire lifetime of the RDF - giving it stability and sustainability - while and Development Programmes, Sub-programmes, Initiatives and Projects may have shorter lives - giving it flexibility and the ability to respond to new issues, whereupon new Programmes, Sub-Programmes, Initiatives and Projects can simply be 'hooked' onto the Framework in an appropriate position.

What Area Will The RDF Cover?

The ToRs for the SIDTDR do not specify the geographic area it should cover. The project team considered a number of options including a fairly tight corridor along the Tirana-Durres highway plus the two main cities, a larger but still nebulous oval that adds the road linking Durres and Tirana via Ndroq in the south. Another option was to prepare an RDF for the two qarku: Tirana and Durres. This has the advantage that data should be available for such well-defined local authorities, local decision-makers and stake-holders are easy to identify and work with and it covers a wider area than the current prime development corridor, providing flexibility, space for new growth and the potential to spread prosperity across a wider area. Another possibility considered was a wider 'study area' that included Elbasan and Lac qarkus to the south-east and north-west respectively, as these areas already have good transport links and economic ties to the Tirana-Durres region.

On balance, the most appropriate region is the Tirana and Durres qarkus and this is therefore the area for the RDF:





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How Far Ahead Will the RDF Look?

As stated above, it will take decades to tackle the 'Big Issues' affecting this area - after all they have been evolving for decades during which little has been done to address them. Clearly, a long-term strategy should be detailed and complete in its early years and then become more general and flexible in the longer term. Such an RDF should therefore include a detailed action plan for the next five years but it will also need to look forward at least twenty years and quantify needs that far ahead in order to provide a flexible approach. Monitoring and evaluation can then show how the original proposals should be modified in the light of medium term developments.

The RDF should not be an unstoppable, unchanging juggernaut. It will comprise several phases with clearly different objectives. It should therefore be comprised of Five Year Strategic Plans, which should be seriously revised towards the end of each such 'plan period', and Annual Business Plans.

However, the Project Team has concluded that it is best not to give too great an emphasis on an end date for the RDF given the pace of change in the region. Instead, it has prepared an RDF for a capacity, not a time period. So, although that RDF seeks to anticipate the scale of growth for 20 years ahead in order to know expectations for the long-term future of the region, it has been designed for regional population growth of half a million from 2007. Whether that takes 15 or 30 years is then irrelevant, except for the issue of the pace of public investment, making the RDF able to absorb major changes or shocks to the demographic and economic factors shaping it.

A Style And Philosophy For The RDF

The RDF will have no statutory or regulatory role. Its status in the new territorial planning system to be introduced in autumn 2007 by the Government of Albania is unclear. The RDF should therefore be officially designated as an 'umbrella' plan above the new Regulatory Plan that each commune and municipality must prepare to set targets, outline principles to adopt and identify action programmes to be followed by lower tiers of government and relevant central government initiatives.

The RDF must therefore be prepared with much consultation to maximise buy-in from local authorities in the region. It must be fully aware of local plans, government initiatives and donor projects. More importantly, it must adopt the philosophy of accepting those activities, rather than contradicting them and causing uncertainty, except in very rare cases where their continuation would jeopardise achievement of major RDF objectives. The RDF therefore accepts and builds on existing and in-preparation plans in the region.

Recommendation 1, to Government:
The Ministry Of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications should require each local authority's Regulatory Plan to conform to the RDF.

It must also be recognised that the RDF will be much broader than a land use or zoning map - although a general one will be a vital output from it.

Programmes that address economic, social and environmental issues will be its core. More importantly, these - and the analysis behind them - can help local authorities to address those same issues at the local level within an agreed and well-researched context. Indeed, the government could require every local authority to prepare an integrated strategy for its area to deal with those wider issues:

Recommendation 2, to Government:
The Government, through the Ministry of The Interior, should consider requiring each local authority to prepare a 'Community Plan' which would consider and then address local social, environmental and economic issues as the backdrop to the preparation of the local Regulatory Plan.

Another issue for the Tirana-Durres RDF is its role of being the first holistic multi-qarku strategy implemented in Albania. It must therefore be an exemplar for other such documents. This requirement is not just an ideal - it acknowledges that EU Accession will require the preparation of similar documents for each of the Strategic Regions that will be defined within the accession process to release EU Structural Funds to the country. Current EU practice probably means that Albania will have three to five such regions, of which Tirana-Durres might be one but is more likely to be at the core of a larger region.

Recommendation 3, to Government:
The Government should consider encouraging the preparation of RDFs for other parts of the country, prioritising those areas where there is uncontrolled growth and those where migration to the growth areas is a major problem weakening the economy, family ties and agriculture while resulting in decreasing use of government investment in roads, schools, etc, and their expensive replacement in the growth areas.



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The RDF must also make allowance for the difficulties of seeking implementation of its proposals. There are several difficulties here. Firstly, there is no tradition of preparing such plans at any level, only a few smaller examples in other parts of the country. There is even less tradition of implementing them. So, decision-makers and 'planners' may not understand what the RDF is, what it is trying to achieve, that it is at least as much about seizing opportunities as about eradicating negatives or how it should be implemented.

Secondly, there are few experienced professionals to manage its updating or implementation, which needs 'developers, not 'planners'.

Manpower will not be the only resource needed: funding of implementation must be planned and procured. The RDF must therefore fit into the government budget and planning cycle and be compatible with other plans, especially the new NSDI (National Strategy for Development and Integration) in preparation.

The RDF must therefore include proposals for its own implementation and funding. For that reason, as well as making explicit recommendations about implementation mechanisms, the RDF will also estimate the costs of each proposed activity and identify appropriate sources of funding - or help in kind - for each. These may be the private sector, central government, local government or donors. The latter must be based on knowledge of donor programmes and priorities. However, it must be remembered that a rich region can afford more or bigger programmes, so the RDF must encourage sensible investment in opportunities whilst also addressing problems.

Those recommendations for implementation and funding must recognise that, since democracy was introduced, governance has failed to prepare plans to tackle the problems of the region whilst the private sector, while in a way contributing to the intensity of the problems, has been able to respond to the needs of the people, building large numbers of houses, factories, etc. This means that great reliance should be placed on releasing the brain-power, energy, organisation and assets of the private sector. At the same time, the RDF must help change this situation by showing a realistic way forward for the government institutions of the country and region to play an increasingly effective part in delivering results, often in sophisticated public-private partnerships.

The Methodology Used To Prepare The RDF

Preparing an RDF is a complex exercise. The process used was divided into two main phases, each comprising several specific actions. Those two phases were 'analysis' and 'planning'. However, particular attention was paid to *the link between the two* to identify appropriate conclusions from the analysis stage to guide the plan preparation.

The full project methodology combines the 'scientific' approach of rigorous quantification of the situation, with creativity and thinking, consultation and careful drafting of the RDF so that every word plays its proper part. A Draft RDF was prepared and subject to consultations with stakeholders before being finalised. Of particular importance is the fact that an SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) was prepared alongside this RDF. A draft SEA was prepared in the light of proposals in the draft RDF and then this final version of the RDF produced, after which the SEA was finalised.

Report Structure

This document describes how the RDF has been prepared, its purpose and how it should be implemented.

It starts by describing the context for the RDF in terms of global trends and recent developments in Albania before presenting a brief overview of the region and the issues it faces.²

To establish that link between analysis and proposals for action it then goes on to present a *Strategic Regional Assessment*. This summarises SWOT Analyses³ presented in each of the layer reports and Critical Success Factors (CSFs) derived from them before discussing a small number of other issues important to the region in order to reach conclusions regarding *the Big Issues facing the region* and a *set of Prime Objectives for the RDF*.

² A full review of the region is available in associated volumes which presents the in-depth assessments of ten different topics (Layer Reports) and a 'Synthesis Report' drawing them together

³ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis (SWOTs) are a strategic business and territorial planning tool used to assess issues to be addressed by proposals



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The next section offers *Regional Planning Guidance and Policies* for Tirana-Durres. It presents a quantification of future demands that can be expected in the region and an assessment of the best future settlement pattern for it before making a set of recommendations called Planning Guidance and Policies that are proposed to be adopted by the government and conformed to by the Regulatory Plans to be prepared by each local authority in the region.

The document then outlines a Vision for the region, An Over-arching Objective for the region that is accompanied by a set of Prime Objectives, each interpreted, respectively, as a 'Development Theme' and 'Development Programme' of the RDF to be implemented through the hierarchy of Development Programmes, Sub-Programmes, Initiatives and Projects described earlier (see table overleaf). Each of these has its own objective and a nominated individual - a position in a stakeholder organisation, not a person - responsible for managing the delivery of that element of the hierarchy. Each component within that hierarchy is presented using a standard template so that new projects can be incorporated in a standard way as the RDF evolves in future years.

As psychological research shows that that the human brain struggles to deal with more than about seven ideas at any one time, it is normal practice to restrict the number of 'themes' in an RDF to six - seven at the most - and six are used. In this case

The main part of the report then ends with recommendations for implementing the RDF.

A series of Annexes supporting earlier sections then completes the entire volume.

Funding, Beneficiary and Acknowledgements

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Activities Undertaken to Formulate The RDF

The table overleaf shows the full process used to prepare the RDF.



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Phase	General Activities	Specific activities	Outputs
Analysis	➤ Read and look to understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build library of relevant reports ○ Site visits across country ○ Meetings with stakeholders ○ Undertake photographic survey 	
	➤ Gather and analyse information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Secure statistics ○ Design mapping ○ Prepare ten Layer Reports (Appendices 5 to 14) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Territorial Planning 2. Demography and Social Issues 3. Housing 4. Economy and Business 5. Land and Property 6. Environment 7. Transport 8. Utilities 9. Agriculture and Forestry 10. Cultural Heritage, Tourism & Leisure
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare seven Working Papers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is Tirana-Durres Europe's Fastest Growing Region? 2. Strategic Demand Estimates 3. Options For The Development Of The Settlement Pattern 4. Possible Mechanisms For Implementing The RDF 5. Scoping Study for a Strategic Environmental Assessment 6. First Thoughts On Structure & Contents Of The RDF 7. Greening Urban Transport
	➤ Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bi-Monthly Electronic Newsletters distributed to stakeholders, etc ○ Layer Reports and Working Papers put on Project Website and stakeholders asked for comments 	
	➤ Synthesise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Synthesis of information in layer reports and relevant working papers into one document which is placed on Website and stake-holders invited to comment 	'Synthesis Report' prepared, summarising the layer reports and appropriate working papers
	➤ Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SWOT Analyses and Critical Success Factors prepared by team members and Key Performance Indicators and stakeholder involvement included in Layer Reports to inform planning process 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CSFs grouped into five 'Development Themes' a 'Strategic Aim' drafted for each a set of Planning Guidance and Policies drafted for recommendation for adoption by Government 	
	➤ Identification of Strategic Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forum participants briefed by being given electronic copies of all project outputs to date and given opportunity to comment on them 	Two outcomes papers, agreement on Vision that Tirana-Durres becomes a 'Balkan Hub'
	➤ Think and 'Vision' the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two Visioning Fora with stakeholders ○ Vision given an over-arching aim and achieving it detailed as a sixth, leading, 'Development Theme' 	
	➤ Drafting of the RDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team members draft report based on above three activities 	Draft Regional Development Framework
	➤ Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshops for stakeholders in Tirana and Durres and for Association of Communes ○ All stakeholders invited to offer comments via Newsletter distributed to them 	
	➤ SEA Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment prepared and conclusions used to improve RDF prior to production of final RDF for publication as Appendix 2. 	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
	➤ Finalisation of the RDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team members prepare final report ○ Press conference ○ Report published 	Press pack Final Report of Regional Development Framework



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