At a time when knowledge and expertise on urban and spatial development, environment and public finances are critical to Albania’s development process, Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development wants to share with you how policies, legislation, practice, and research in all these fields are coming together and changing the picture. Inevitably, the current Albanian reality triggers a natural interest in the matters of urban/spatial planning, environmental management, and public finances. Our capacity to fill the knowledge gap through our research results, project based experience, and a dedicated team of partners, donors and experts alike, has never been greater.

At Co-PLAN, three distinct areas constitute our core-expertise — Urban and Regional Development, Urban and Environmental Management, and Public Finances, all of which with a particular relevance to Albania. Over the past seventeen years, at Co-PLAN we have made concerted efforts also to increase civil society participation in our enterprises and projects. These efforts have resulted in exciting transformations and improvements on the field, some of which were reflected in respective policies.

To better serve our community, partners, and donors, we have prepared this annual report, which reflects the highlights of 2011. This annual report, a long established tradition in the history of the Institute, will showcase our dedication to solutions for current problematic in each of our areas of expertise, and knowledge gained through the projects that promote debates at a governmental level, to possibly impact policy-making.

Dear Partner

Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development
Executive Director - Dritan Shutina
Co-PLAN is a non-profit organization that has contributed to sustainable development by enabling good urban and regional governance, tackling key environmental issues, developing civil society, impacting policies, and promoting community participation since 1995. At the core of Co-PLAN’s activity is the work with people and institutions, to foster tangible social transformation and positive change on the ground by inducing change-driving knowledge in our society for smart management of our habitat. Co-PLAN fulfils this mission through means of pilot activities and advisory services financed by national and international institutions and direct involvement with communities, local government units and other non-governmental organizations in the field of urban and regional management, environmental management, and municipal finance. Although we are based in Tirana, Albania, we have developed a solid-project-outreach-network at a regional and national level.

Core Expertise and Activity Scope
The organizational structure of Co-PLAN is expertise-oriented, whereby each expertise or theme is developed by individual teams. The activity of Co-PLAN is built upon four expertise areas: namely Urban and Regional Development, Municipal Finance Management, and Urban Environmental Management, with Research constituting a cross-cutting, shared feature by all teams.

Urban and Regional Development - Co-PLAN’s ambitions, involvement and commitment

Co-PLAN PROFILE
The Organisation Boards

Co-PLAN Board of Directors

Dr Sokol Çelo, Dr Besnik Aliaj and Sotir Dhamo. The board is headed by Dr Çelo, and takes decisions concerning overall organisational policies and strategies.

The Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is composed of five members, who contribute ideas and advise the Board of Directors: Peter Nientied, John Driscoll, Valdet Sala, Ferry van Wilgenburg dhe Sef Slootweg.

consider leaving them out
Meet the team

text per stafin
Co-PLAN ACTIVITIES
Decentralization

Twenty years* have passed since the start of the Decentralisation process in Albania, yet the picture of the reforms and developments is anything but clear/complete. The current dynamics showcase for an ambitious but delayed process; from a legislative perspective, the Decentralization reform in Albania is based upon a solid body of laws, such is the Albanian Constitution, the law “On the Organization and Functioning of Local Government”, the European Charter of Local Self-Government, approved in 2000, and a series of laws that enforce the functions’ allocation and expenditures and revenues assignment to local government.

Whilst from a fiscal, human resources and policy point of view, the decentralisation process suffers a number of setbacks. Although the fiscal decentralization, initiated in 2002, has experienced an overall positive yet fluctuating progress, there is room for additional reforms. In addition, with the shift of responsibilities for local development to the local government units, the problem of insufficient resources has emerged. Despite the legislation being more or less in place, the real challenge is the transfer of funds together with the competencies as well as the strengthening of local capacities to deal with the newly assigned competencies.

On a policy level, further improvements are needed in order to facilitate and accelerate the decentralisation reforms. Although Albania does not have the highest level of LG fragmentation in Europe, it can still be viewed as having a significantly fragmented local government system, organized in two levels. Whilst the first level, represented by the communes and municipalities, is relatively clear about its roles and responsibilities, and significantly engaged in the accomplishment of the services in compliance with the newly vested competences, the same cannot be said about the second level of the LG system hierarchy – the Qark. Established in 2000, the Qark has yet to acquire a clear role in the LG system hierarchy; as a result to this day it operates in a climate of unclear responsibilities and insufficient (if any) resources. In addition, more clarifications are required regarding service provision standards for LGUs; such amendments on a policy level would lead to increased accountability and performance.

For 2011, Co-PLAN’s engagement and contribution in matters of decentralisation has been intense/steady and particularly focused on the economic, fiscal and administrative decentralisation.

The Regional Development Program in Northern Albania

The Regional Development Program in Northern Albania aims at contributing to an equitable social and economic development of Shkodra and Lezha Regions. The programme is an initiative valued at more than 4 million Euros to be implemented over a 4-year period. Of these, 2 million Euros, are allocated to a special fund, to be used to finance the design and implementation of projects with regional development impact as well as to facilitate Qarks’ access to other available development funding from national or international sources. The expected results of the program are: (1) An effective institutional framework for decentralization, which aims at equitable development outcomes, is supported; (2) Capacities of Qark Councils for regional development planning and delegated functions are strengthened; (3) Comprehensive regional development planning and budgeting process in Shkodra and Lezha regions is developed and institutionalized; (4) Regional development is accelerated through project initiatives and effective implementation.

On the 15th and 16th of June 2011 the RDP program organized a two day round table in the city of Shkodra, marking the end of the inception phase of the project. During this phase, the RDP completed a series of assessments that produced a set of recommendations, meant to affect the remaining RDP activities. The roundtable aimed at presenting and discussing these recommendations among international and Co-PLAN experts, both of whom presented their findings and implications for the program’s plan, fund, and capacity development activities etc.

The roundtable hosted several of the programs stakeholders, including: several authorities and the Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs, officials from the Qark and Municipalities of Lezhë and Shkodër, representatives from the civil society and other international programs operating in the area, etc. The recommendations taken from the discussion between the RDP team and the stakeholders were synthesized into a final program document.

GRAPHIC
For 2011, Co-PLAN’s activity in frame of the dldp II program, focused on the ‘Strategic Planning, Budgeting and Financial Management and Fiscal Performance’ component. The overall goal of this program is: capacity strengthening in the region of Shkodra and Lezha, to contribute to the regional development in northern Albania, and to the reform of decentralization on a national level. To this end, we see the support to LGUs for the improvement of their governing structures and capacities as instrumental, paying particular attention to the sharing of best practices, in an effort to impact legislation and policy making at a national level. In order to ensure optimal impact for the strengthening of local capacities, the above component was dismantled into the following two sub-components: (A) Strategic Planning and its relation to the Mid-term Budget Programming; (B) Financial and Fiscal Management with a focus on Mid-term Budget Programming.

For each of the aforementioned sub-components, 5 training models have been prepared, reviewed, and disseminated through a participatory process with the LGUs in the region of Shkodra and Lezha. Concerning the focus of 2011 ‘Financial and Fiscal Management with a focus on Mid-term Budget Programming’, the following 5 training sessions were organized: (1) The legislative framework and the budgeting system for the Local Government – the Mid-term Budgeting Program; (2) Strategic Development Plan and the Mid-term Budgeting Program; (3) Financial Management – revenues and expenditure; (4) Mid-term Budget Programming, Product Cost Allocation, program activities and the relation to the Strategic Development Plan; (5) Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting – the template of the Mid-term Budgeting Program document.

To further strengthen the capacities, on-the-job-assistance was offered to four LGUs in the regions of Shkodra and Lezha, in preparing the Mid-term Budgeting Program document in coherence with the Strategic Development Plan. The LGUs to have benefited were the Commune of Dajç (Shkodra region) and Balldren (Lezha region), and the municipalities of Vau i Dejës and Fushë-Arrëz (both in the Shkodra region).

Decentralisation – the Local Borrowing aspect

Traditionally Co-PLAN has worked with local government units across the country, assisting them in matters of financial management, with a focus on the preparation of the Capital Investment Plans, Mid-term Budgeting documents, feasibility assessments etc. Following the approval of ‘On Local Government Borrowing’, no. 9869, date 04.02.2008, and building on previous experience, Co-PLAN was recently involved in addressing the challenges posed by local government borrowing, in line with the goals of the Good-governance and Integration Program – Contributing to the strengthening of decentralized finances.

With the support of Open Society Foundation for Albania, and in partnership with the Ministry of Finances, Albania, Co-PLAN is working on the assessment of the situation concerning local government borrowing current developments. Particular focus is placed on the investment purpose, its impact on local economic development, and assisting the LGUs (through capacity building), for the efficient selection of projects meant for financing through local borrowing.

A roundtable was organised as part of the project, on Local Government Borrowing, bringing to an open discussion representatives from local government management involved in public finances in the municipalities that have already applied, representatives from the Ministry of Finances, the Association of Albanian Municipalities, representatives from the Banking sector, and donor representatives – from the program DLDP / Swiss Cooperation, SIDA etc.

This roundtable also marked the completion of the first phase of the project; it offered an overall assessment of the situation concerning the aforementioned fields to be addressed, such as local government borrowing impact on local development etc. In this context, the roundtable served as a catalyst for a constructive debate amongst all interested actors, the possibilities LGUs have to access the domestic borrowing market, the LGU needs, and most importantly, on the uses of the revenues from the local government borrowing, as an instrument to directly impact on local economic development.
Integrated Support for Decentralisation is a UNDP and EU financed project, currently being implemented in Albania by UNDP. The technical assistance is offered by consortium comprising of Ecorys [the Netherlands], [OPM [UK], and Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development] [Albania]

The project, implemented both at a central and regional level, namely Tirana, Diber, Kukës, Berat and Elbasan, has three/four components. For 2011, the main achievements for each component can be summarised as follows:

### Building Capacities at National Level: EU Regional Learning and Professional Development Program (LPD)

The aim of the Learning and Professional Development Program (LPD) was to support the process of competency acquisition and capacity building among officials involved in the preparation for IPA III and IPA IV in particular, and regional development in general. LPD comprised of three workshops and five group coaching sessions, e-learning and one-to-one support. The main competencies covered were: Policy Program Project cycle, Evidence-Based policy, intervention logic in public programs, logic of strategic development, key programming methods and tools, etc. In the process, a number of officials from the central government administration were assessed in March 2011.

#### Building Capacities at Regional Level: Kukes, Diber, Berat and Elbasan Qarks

The qarks of Berat, Dibër, Elbasan and Kukës were provided with Strategic Planning and Project Management support. In December-January 2011, ISD Project entered the regional level component phase: Regional Strategic Actors Programme. The latter consisted of: (a) Trainings focused on designing Regional Development Strategies (April – September 2011). 94 civil servants met all relevant competences and were graduated at the end of the program; (b) Support to qarks in data collection and analysis, preparation of SWOT and development priorities; (c) Identification of a regional project ideas fitting with RD strategy in each region; Launch of Regional Project Development Program in October 2011 aiming at initiating a pipeline of projects. Out of 12-15 ideas per Qark, 10-12 were considered for further project development.

### Regional Development Policy Framework

The review of operations of the Regional Development Fund (a reform package) has been conducted and is under consultations with the Department for Donor and Strategy Coordination (DSDC) - the technical (secretariat for the RDF). In May 2011 a new Regional Development strategic concept was presented to the DSDC in relation the planned revision of the National Strategy for Development and Integration.

### Progress on Albanian preparations for IPA III (Regional Development) - IPA Strategic Coherence Framework and IPA III Operational Program (OP)

ISD supported the Ministry of European Integration and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (as Operating Structure for IPA III) throughout the process of preparation of the Strategic Coherence Framework and the Operational Program, covering transport, environment and regional competitiveness in 2010.

### Learning Regional development from others - Study Visit to Ireland, FYROM and Bulgaria

Decentralization and Local Governance Programme: Solid waste management component
The law on territorial planning has dominated the planning agenda spanning in both time and intensity, in a way that very few laws have managed to. But will this law be the end of the urban bedlam (more of an urban bedlam) or a territorial fix?

In 2006, the Albanian legislative and institutional framework of territorial planning embarked on a reform. Six years on, and the new era of the Albanian territorial planning has a new law, an overwhelming construction stock and a body of institutions almost oblivious to the newly introduced concepts and practices.

The new law on territorial planning attempts to adopt a multi-dimensional approach by introducing new concepts and linking territorial planning with development. This in itself represents an important institutional step, but most importantly a challenge when faced with the possibilities to implement it in the complex urban context, short of capacities and most basic urban technical requirements. A point in case is infrastructure [lack of it], the most under-looked aspect in the wake of this overwhelming construction boom.

In 2010, Co-PLAN participated in a project, committed to assist the National Territorial Planning Agency (NTPA) and all interest groups affected by this legislation, including local governments, in designing three regulations as an essential part of the secondary legislation of the new law. Considering the flaws, both at a technical and contextual level, a solid and well-planned secondary legislation, followed by the necessary amendments of existing, inter-related legislation, becomes a pre-requisite to a somewhat successful implementation of this new law. During 2011, Co-PLAN furthered its contribution in matters of territorial planning, particularly in technical assistance and capacity building. By engaging in various projects, such as ‘Technical Guidance to implement the new territorial planning law and secondary legislation’, and ‘Promoting Partnerships for equitable cities’, this year at Co-PLAN we focused on providing technical support for an efficient and wide applicability of the new law and its regulations on a national scale. We also worked on building capacities among local government units, for an increased understanding of the new concepts and practices elaborated by the new law, particularly evident in the case of the ‘area-based-land-development’ concept, versus the ‘plot-based-land-development’ concept.

National Consultative Meetings to discuss the Territorial Planning Manual

For a most effective implementation of Law no. 10119 “On Territorial Planning”, the National Agency of Territory Planning (NTPA) assisted by Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development, and the World Bank support, organized a series of six consultative meetings with representatives of all municipalities, communes and qarks in the country, to discuss the drafting of the Technical Manual and the Manual for Citizens. The consultative meetings, which were held during the period October-November 2011, in the cities of Tirana, Durrës, Shkodër, and Fier, invited urban planning experts and authorities to discuss on the draft of the Technical Manual, which aims to come to the aid of governing institutions both at a central and local level with the implementation of the new territorial planning law and its respective instruments. Participants were able to raise questions about the application procedures, adjustments to the institutional level and cases provided by their labor practices. During the meetings, the Manual for Citizens was also introduced; this manual, structured in the form of frequently asked questions, aims to help all citizens with notions, questions, and practices under the new law on territorial planning.
Balkans Urban Transformation in a Dutch Context

Can we use and apply knowledge from the Balkans urban transformation process within the Dutch context now that organic land development is being applied in The Netherlands?

This question was at the center of an international meeting in the Netherlands, where the founders of Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, Dritan Shutina and Besnik Aliaj, were invited to share their experiences with their Dutch contemporaries. In order to facilitate the contextualization of the Balkan experience into the Dutch context, the discussion focused on aspects of the Dutch planning culture and practices. An important part of the debate was dedicated to the game ‘Play the City’, developed by Ekim Tan, in which groups of citizens, and interest groups at a local level had to collaborate for the designation of their urban environment in the actual case of Haagse Binckhorst, the Netherlands.

The expert meeting has been organized by a group of artists, architects and designers in the Netherlands.
6 - territorial planning

6 - territorial planning
knowledge making 8

The way we look at city squares in the Balkans today, certainly constitutes a subject of interest for understanding how their role has changed over time. Today, city squares are being used in many different ways from their communities, which in itself generates various types of equally impacting energies

With this in mind, the project ‘Revival of Balkan City Squares’ aims to contribute to the revival of city squares as viable public places that foster cultural identity and promote diversity through enforcement of public policies and active community participation. It also seeks to bring people with diverse ideas into an inclusive process that produces workable recommendations with significant impacts. Through means of workshops, performances, and observation, Co-PLAN aimed to promote and exchange practices on how city squares can be transformed into new, vibrant, creative and livable spaces, and hopefully influence local governments, professional, and citizens to work together and take a proper responsibility in transforming city squares into vibrant communities

Following the 6 public performances in the cities of Durrës and Tirana, it is expected that local authorities and professionals alike, are equipped with knowledge that will enable them to take practical decisions and incentives for the transformation of their city squares. On a wider national level it is expected that, the outcomes of the activities can influence on a policy making level through the practical application of the guidelines and use of the artworks in order to initiate a community – based - creative process in the way public spaces are used
Co-PLAN has long recognized the importance of Local Economic Development (LED) in improving welfare at a local level, and enhancing the competitive advantage of a local government unit. Through previous experiences and current projects it is working on bringing together the local government officials, the private sector, the not-for-profit sectors and the local community to work together towards an inclusive and sustainable growth.

To this end, in October 2011 Co-PLAN organized a study tour to Barcelona for both central and local government representatives to become acquainted with the governing practices of one of the most successful examples of economic development. Moreover, the study tour, designed in collaboration with Cluster Development, Barcelona, served as an opportunity for the Albanian officials to consider local partnerships and networking prospects with the Municipality of Barcelona.
Ligji i ri "Për Administrimin e Bashkëpronësisë në Ndërtesat e Banimit", si dhe shifrat alarmante të konsumit të energjisë të sektorit të banesave aktualisht në Shqipëri, krijuan klimën e përshtatshme për ndërmarrjen e një projekti të ri nga Co-PLAN, në bashkën e efikencës së energjisë. Në partneritet me Bashkinit e Fierit, dhe me mbështetjen e Komunitetit Europian, Co-PLAN punoi për krijimin e një modeli të njëjshëm e efikencës së energjisë në banesat parafabrikat, duke u njohur në fushën e efiçencës së energjisë. Ky projekt, i cili ka qëllim riorganizimin e bashkëpronërisë nësekojë me restaurimin e ndërtesës, kishte si qëllim riorganizimin e bashkëpronërisë nësekojë me restaurimin e ndërtesës dhe përcakton ndonjë qëllim të njohur për përdorimin e energjisë teknike. Komuniteti Europian, Co-PLAN organizoi "Partneriteti Shoqëri Civile – Pushtet Vendor drejt Administrimit të Bashkëpronësisë në Ndërtesat e Banimit", me pjesëmarrjen e Ministrave të Linjës, Bashkisë së Fierit, Tiranës, Durrësit, etj., si dhe të Delegacionit të Komunitetit Europian në Shqipëri. Në aktivitet u prezantua modeli i krijuar për të mirëmbajtur hapësirat e përbashkëta nëpërmjet restaurimit energjetik të ndërtesës, dhe u diskutua potenciali për përhapjen në një shkallë më të gjerë kombëtare të këtij modeli si dhe instrumentave që do t’i u vijnë në një rëndësishëm Njësia për të informuar, ndërtuar kapacitete dhe zhvilluar me sukses kornizën ligjore.

Një pjesë e rëndësishme e tyre ndihmë e një qëllim të njohur për përdorinë e energjisë teknike që kanë palët për të bërë të mundur administrimin e bashkëpronërisë, si dhe vlerësimin e një sipërfaqëse dhe funkcionalitetit të ndërtesave, që ekziston në të përgjithshme, me sukses këtë iniciativë.

Earth Day – A billion Acts of Green”, was held in the new premises of Co-PLAN, in cooperation with U_POLIS and the BELLS Movement / Urban Research Institute, on April 26, 2011. The event hosted distinguished personalities and experts particularly in the field of environment, who shared a number of presentations on matters of energy efficiency, and alternative energy sources in Albania.

The first diplomas were awarded to the postgraduate students of spatial planning, as part of the Master Professional, organized by Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development, in collaboration with IHS / Erasmus University, Netherlands and POLIS University. On November 19, 2011, 36 graduates of the first year of this program were honored at a ceremony organized in the premises of POLIS University. Graduates were welcomed by the Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Henk van den Dool, and Mr. Jan Franzen, Vice-Director of IHS, The Netherlands, in a sign of close cooperation within the MATRA program, IHS / Erasmus and Co-PLAN/U_POLIS. The postgraduate courses are supported by MATRA Program for Social Transformation, for Albania, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The courses in the field of spatial planning focus on issues of sustainable spatial planning, land development and management and monitoring instruments, and theories of urban development for inclusive cities.

These courses serve as a platform for capacity building in spatial planning in Albania, in accordance with the law “On Territorial Planning”, dated 23.04.2009 no. 10119 and its secondary acts. The course participants, who come from both the public and private sector, as well as civil society organizations are well equipped with knowledge of planning policy in accordance with EU guidelines. At the same time, Co-PLAN, in collaboration with IHS / Erasmus University, Netherlands and POLIS University have launched the Joint Professional Master in “Planning and Urban Management”, for the second year running.
INFORGRAPHICS - 4
PUBLICATIONS - 2
FINANCIAL REPORT - 2
ACTIVITY CALENDAR

JANUARY
- DLDP Waste component
- DLDP Financial component
- Energy Efficiency
- Making Policies Work
- ISD
- Mata

FEBRUARY

MARCH
- RDP
- Medium Term Budget
- Technical support / Manuals
- LOGIN
- Local Government Borrowing
- Revival of City Squares

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER