

STRATEGIC
PLAN
OF VLORA
REGION



■ “The Zero Emissions
Territory”

■ Adopted on 28 September 2018

Regional Council of Vlore

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STRATEGIC PLAN OF VLORA REGION

“The Zero Emissions Territory - ZET”

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Executive Summary

1.1. Administrative Territorial Reform

The Albanian Government and Parliament have undertaken the Administrative and Territorial Reform with the ad-hoc Parliamentary Committee in close coordination and cooperation with the local government units. The Minister of State for Local Government is in charge of leading the Government work for the development and implementation of the Administrative-Territorial Reform in Albania, in line with the national legal framework, Albania's international commitments to local government autonomy, and the best international practices for such a reform.

The Administrative and Territorial Reform aims to increase the cost efficiency of local units, so that they can provide better services and make sure that citizens and communities enjoy more access to such services. The current territorial division does not reflect the pace of economic and social, demographic and infrastructural developments in our country since 1992, migration, technological progress and the growing expectations of citizens regarding public services to be delivered by the local government. The great fragmentation and the smaller units capacity regarding service provision have hampered the development of a democratic local government.

The territorial consolidation shall enable the delegation of more services to the local government, which through larger local government units will have more capacity to exercise a greater range of functions and have a more opportunities to promote local democracy. The primary aim of this territorial consolidation is the establishment of economies of scale, absent up to now, which shall enable the larger local government units to provide more effective and cost-efficient services.

Decentralization of the government in Albania dates back at the beginning of the '90s when local authorities were for the first time elected democratically. Although we may not yet speak about administrative or fiscal autonomy, the 1992 reforms set the grounds for the establishment of democratic local authorities, that gradually paved the way towards taking over more responsibility and functions. Unconditioned ratification of the European Charter of Local Self - Government (8548/1998) and the approval of the Law "On Organisation and Functioning of Local Government" (8652/2000) mark the second important moment in the decentralization of government, thus establishing the framework for full administrative and fiscal decentralization.

Both these documents determine as one of the main objectives of the decentralization reforms in Albania the need for Local Government Units to be able to provide the transferred functions to the citizens. In this context, the Law "On administrative-territorial division of local government units" (8653/2000) was approved as part of the government decentralization reforms. Basically, the 2000 administrative division seeks to preserve the historical boundaries of municipalities, communes, districts or prefectures (referring to the beginning of the 20th century) by merging district administrative boundaries with regional ones.

This package of reforms, which defined the main government decentralization framework in Albania, was built upon the presumption that local government units, unable to provide the transferred functions and responsibilities on their own, would make use of the option provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the Law “On organization and functioning of local government” and merge, or engage in inter local cooperation. It was upon this presumption that the laws and instructions that completed the fiscal and administrative decentralization framework were compiled, and the intergovernmental transfers and grants were designed until 2006. However, except for a few cases 1, no voluntary mergers of LGUs have occurred in these 14 years of their functioning.

Under these circumstances, in 2003 the discussion on the administrative and territorial reform was restarted, and pursuant to a policy paper prepared by the Council of Europe, in 2004 a bill on the administrative-territorial reorganization of the country was drafted. The bill provided for a number of criteria, basically aiming to meet the aforementioned objective for local government units capable of generating revenues and efficiently providing their functions stipulated in the Law.

The bill failed to find political consensus and therefore was not approved in Parliament. The year 2005 marks another significant moment in the government decentralization process, and the change of government also changed the strategic approach to the fiscal decentralization process. The intergovernmental transfers and grants system was reformed, introducing the almost full fiscal equalization as the instrument that would solve the problem of small and very small local government units to generate revenues and provide services to citizens. This approach, supported by the idea that it preserved and improved democratization of government, created instead confusion as to what was defined by decentralization strategy as good and effective government.

The dilemma on establishing larger local government units, able to provide more efficient services, make better use of financial resources and respond to the need for representation closer to the citizens (government decentralization) in fact constitutes the main topic upon which the discourse has focused so far.

But there are also a number of other issues to be addressed by the administrative-territorial reform: (i) large level of fragmentation - 20% of Albania’s population live in 232 LGUs or over 75% of the total LGUs have less than 5,000 inhabitants - resulting in very high administrative costs in providing services to citizens; (ii) (ii) the issue of limited human resources frequently faced by small local government units, resulting in the inability to exercise local functions, generate and collect revenues and provide services; (iii) the pending administrative and fiscal decentralization process, resulting to some extent from poor local government units capacity, but also from frequent and chaotic interventions to the legal basis, the reduction of fiscal autonomy and lack of financial coverage of mandates for shared functions;

(iv) unclear role of regions as coordinators and supporters in exercising local functions;
(v) the need for an internal regional development policy that complies with the EU integration requirements and the necessity for multi-level governance, including the regional one; etc. 7

A number of projects, donors, local stakeholders have, over the years, nourished the discourse on administrative-territorial reform or that of administrative and fiscal decentralization of government. Thus, following the 2003 Secretariat of the Council of Europe, the World Bank undertook a comprehensive assessment of the Government Decentralization in Albania and proposed a number of reforms pertaining to administrative and fiscal decentralization and the territorial reform, among which prevails the recommendation on asymmetric allocation of LGUs functions and responsibilities regarding human resources and fiscal capacity.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU) during 2005 - 2006 reinstated the need for administrative and territorial reform, associating it to the regional development and the establishment of economic regions, also regarding it as one of the preconditions towards EU integration and accession.

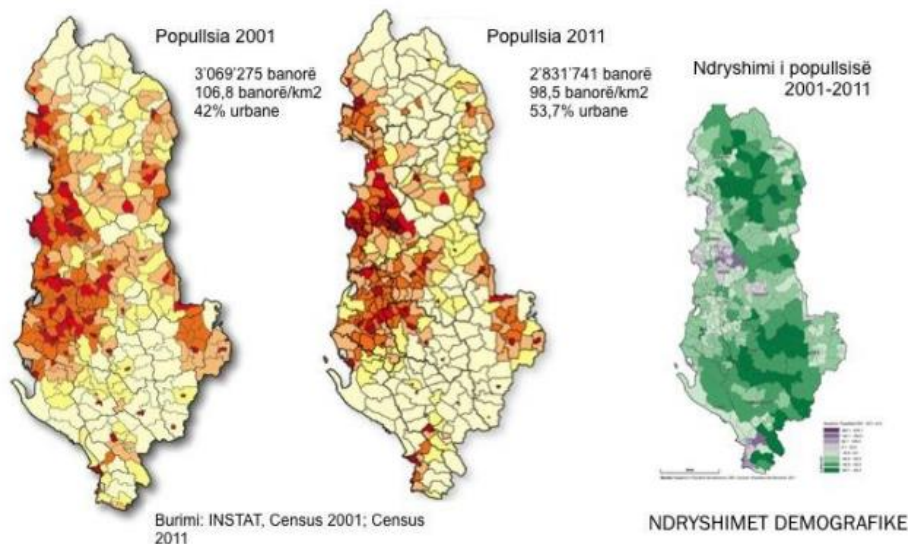
Planning and Local Governance Project (PLGP) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2012, reiterates the need for administrative reform, closely connecting it to the improvement of decentralization in governance and the local services delivery. Special attention is drawn to the negative impact the reforms undertaken had on the transfers system, fiscal autonomy, responsibility and functions transfer and the deadlock they create in local government.

The Regional Development Programme funded by the Austrian and Swiss Development Agencies (ADA & SDC) enriches the discourse on the need for administrative and territorial reform, focusing on the role of second-level local government and scrutinizing the sub-national governance in terms of multi-level governance and regionalization. SKL International & the Albanian Association of Communes (AAC) funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in 2012 add another study to the discourse, and based on previous contributions, come up with recommendations for administrative and territorial reform in the first level of local government.

1.2. Strategic Plan Update Necessity according to the administrative reform impact

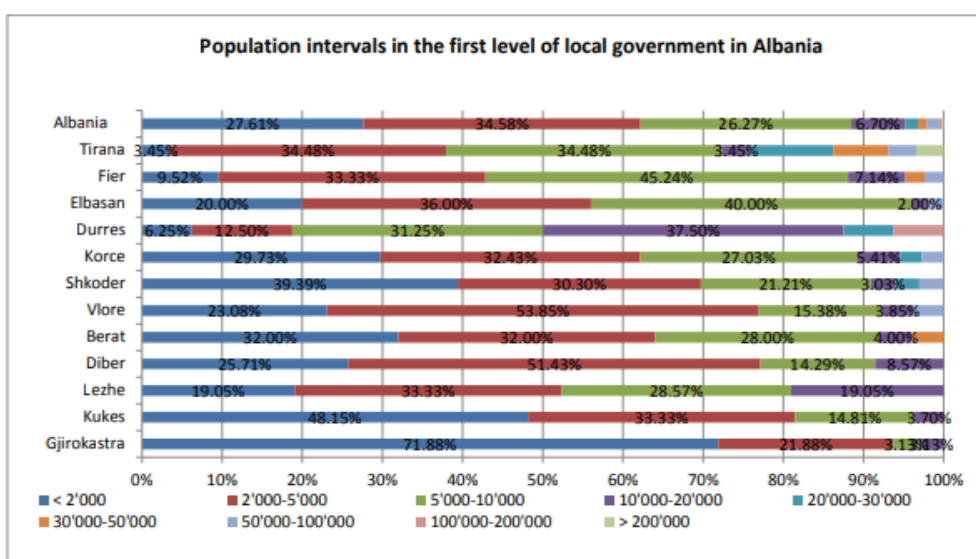
1. Demographic changes

Over the ten or eleven years following the decentralization reforms undertaken in 2000, the country has undergone a number of demographic, social and economic changes. The demographic map of Albania has changed as a result of people's internal migration and emigration abroad.



Resident population in Albania has declined based on the previous census results and for the first time the population is more concentrated in urban areas. About 2/3 of LGUs see a change in population by roughly 25%. This migration had its own impact on local government units in Albania, a part of which has had to accommodate the increasing needs of inhabitants for services, whereas other local government units suffer the consequences of the inhabitants' internal migration.

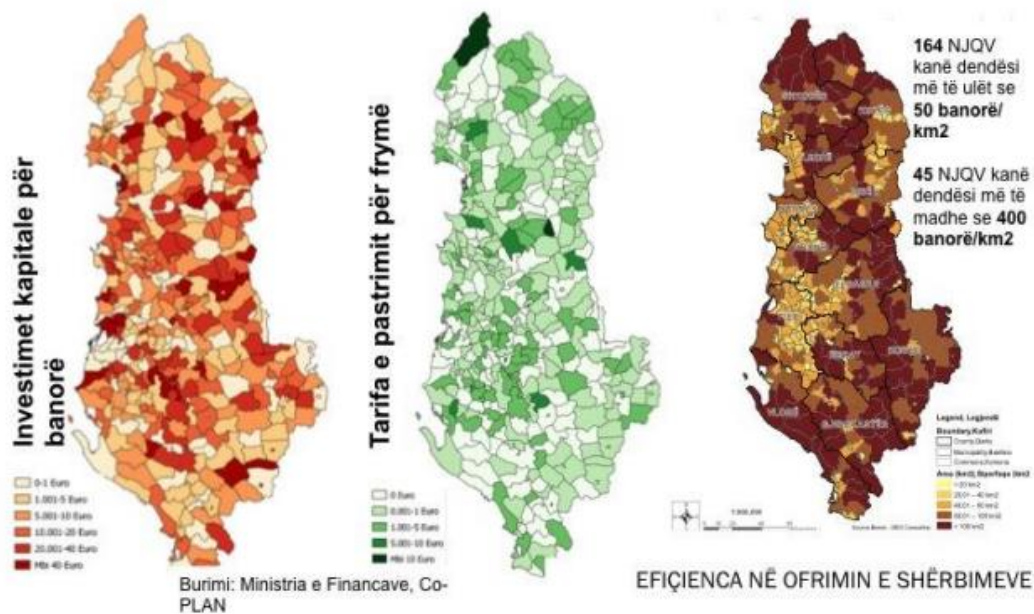
Fragmentation of local government, both in terms of service delivery and democratic representation. Another important argument broadly discussed in terms of the need to reform is the high level of LGUs fragmentation. Even more than fragmentation itself, what impresses the most is the variety in size, surface area, and population and especially in the density of local government units. As mentioned above, the 2000 reform approach was the democratization of government, namely the citizens will be represented in their local needs and have direct access to decision-making. After the 2000 administrative-territorial reform, Albania resulted to have 373 LGUs with an average population of 7,579 inhabitants.



Source: INSTAT, Census 2011, Our calculations

2. Lack of efficiency in service provision at local level

The third very important argument on the need for administrative-territorial reform is the efficiency in service provision. Let's see how LGUs have used public funds in providing services to citizens. If we refer to the data of the Ministry of Finance for 2012, we will notice that 70 LGUs (19% of the total) have not used any funds for investment during 2012. LGUs in Albania spend on average 27% of their budget on capital investment and 37% on salaries. 40 LGUs spend over 80% of their budget only for staff salaries, whereas 230 LGUs (63% of LGUs and representing 34% of the country's population) spend over 60% of their budget on staff salaries.



There is a positive correlation between capital investment per capita and the surface area of local government units, and if we also add the population density map we will notice this correlation is even more evident. Thus, the smaller the number of inhabitants settled in a large area, the higher is the need for capital investment. Reorganization of local government units enables the provision of more efficiently distributed investments; this especially with regards to education, road infrastructure, waste management, etc. Large fragmentation of units increases the costs for services delivery.

The above map, which displays the value of capital investment per capita, is largely fragmented and shows that although the types of investments are generally the same, the cost for providing many services (and the construction of the respective infrastructure) varies depending on the surface area and the number of population, i.e. the density of inhabitants (without taking into account, at present, other factors). The map of cleaning and waste collection tariff per capita conveys the same message, but this time from the taxpayer's perspective. What may be noticed is that the waste collection service (although

lacking the appropriate standards) has a different cost for citizens in local units with different sizes and density.

3. Economic development and GDP.

Local government plays an important role in local economic development. This section will provide a look on the data on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for every region; data on the workforce and employment (to the extent these data are available); as well as the entrepreneurship and business development, analyzed both from the perspective of density in every region and the revenues they generate at national level and for every unit.

II.3.1 Gross Domestic Product According to the data provided by the Institute of Statistics regarding regional GDP, Tirana region is clearly the engine of the Albanian economy, generating over 36% of the added value nationwide. Other significant regions are Fier (9.8%); Durres (9.4%) and Elbasan (9.2%). Vlora and Korca regions generate only 6% each of the added value nationwide.

It is worth examining whether this relatively low specific weight for Vlora and Korca, as compared with the cities in the centre, is an indicator of greater inequality within the respective regions. GDP per capita at national level for the year 2012 was EUR 3,271. At regional level, the GDP per capita in Tirana is about 35% higher than the national one (EUR 4,439), followed by Gjirokastra (EUR 3,382) and Durres (EUR 3,276). The lowest GDP per capita is registered in mountainous areas, in Dibra region (36% lower than the national one) and Lezha region (24% lower than the national one). A region traditionally known as poor, such as Kukes, despite having the lowest specific weight in the national GDP, has the highest GDP per capita compared to Dibra, Lezha or even Shkodra and Korca.

II.3.2 Entrepreneurship and economic activity.

According to the data provided by the National Registration Centre, by January 2014 there were about 157 thousand businesses registered in Albania, of which 8,441 were large enterprises (annual turnover over ALL 15 million); 3,430 medium-sized enterprises (annual turnover, ALL 8-15 million) and the remaining part were small or undefined enterprises. Geographic concentration of enterprises corresponds to the data on economic development: over half of general enterprises (52%) and large enterprises (56%) operate in the section Tirana - Durres, with a higher concentration in Tirana region. Fier and Vlora are ranked second by the number of active enterprises, along with over 15% of the total number of enterprises and large enterprises.

Data on revenues performance from the main tax sources reveal important indications on the distribution of assets, which shall be explored in detail during the elaboration of the next fiscal decentralisation policy. 18 At national level, the revenues deriving from Value Added Tax (VAT) and the profit tax (tax on large enterprises) have significantly declined from 2008 to 2013. Personal income tax, in contrast, has retained the increasing trend despite the difficult economic situation, most probably as a result of the tax base growth in the present case. Distribution of revenues deriving from all these national taxes is largely concentrated in Tirana region, and the Directorate of Large Taxpayers (the so-called VIP businesses, with an annual turnover of over ALL 150 million), where over 80% of the VAT and profit tax and 75% of the personal income tax are collected.

The regional directorate of Durres (which for administrative reasons includes also Kavaja, that would otherwise be part of Tirana region) collects about 5% of the revenues nationwide from each of these sources, whereas in other regions with a good economic development like Fier and Vlora, the tax specific weight remains at 2%. These data do not fully correspond to the measurement results produced by INSTAT regarding the regional GDP, according to which the specific weight of other regions should have been considerably higher. Under the decentralization perspective, these data must be taken into account for separate taxes policies.

4. Employment and workforce.

According to statistical classification, about 68% of the population nationwide is in working age (15 - 64 years old). According to INSTAT data, the employment rate is at the level of 50.1% of the working age population. There are no pronounced inequalities regarding this indicator at regional level, although regions like Tirana have a lower employment rate than many other regions.

Whereas the registered unemployment rate is about 13% at national level, but significantly higher in Vlora (19%) and in Fier (16%). These data include also self-employment in agriculture. Distribution of employment by specific sectors indicates a higher concentration of employment in urban areas in industry and services as compared to agriculture as the main source of employment in rural areas. In rural areas, the agriculture sector employs the majority of employees; whereas Tirana and Durres have the highest number of employees in manufacturing industry, services and construction.

5. Waste collection:

By local government units remains a crucial issue. The majority of communes, around 70%, do not provide waste collection service at all. These communes do not apply any tariffs for this service. Those communes that provide this service, do so insufficiently and incompliant with any legal standard. In large municipalities this service is provided regularly, but still not according to the integrated management scheme. The integrated waste management scheme is still considered difficult to implement. This scheme requires sustainable financing provided by the waste management tariff that must be collected in every local government unit.

The government has built several landfills, but their administration by local government units remains problematic. The average coverage with the usual waste management service from the municipalities in every region varies between 30%-100%; whereas for the communes the service varies between 0% - 30%. The majority of communes in each region do not provide this service. If we would make an attempt to organize the territory based on districts, the district centre municipalities would help in providing this service also for other municipalities and communes. Thus, in this case we could have higher efficiency in using funds by organizing the waste management and transport.

6. Road Infrastructure:

All the road infrastructure and related services are now under the ownership and administration of the local government. In order to maintain and improve it, municipalities and communes are autonomous in their decision-making. The municipal of communal councils must plan the respective funds from their own sources for their administration. Around 45 per cent of the road inventory transferred to the local government is under the administration of the regions. Because the regions are not local government units that directly generate income to then use them for investments, it is totally unclear how the regions provide maintenance services or investments in the road infrastructure under their administration. Roads distribution is more related to the geographic space than the economic potential of these local government units to administer this road network. Consequently, great disproportional ties are noticed in the inventory.

For example, Shkodra Region has under its administration around 1,800 km of regional and communal roads; whereas Tirana Region - with a population several times higher and with greater budget and human and financial capacities has under administration only 600 km of road. The transferred road infrastructure was and remains severely damaged. This inventory of damaged infrastructure and services transferred to local government set in the very fragile financial and administrative reality of the local government has mainly led this infrastructure to further degradation. Most of the local roads are rural roads. They connect villages to one another and not all of them are paved with asphalt. Nearly all communes have insufficient financial capacities to build or asphalt roads. Most of the communes cannot provide any services on these roads. In cases of civil emergencies it is the government that intervenes with additional funds or measures for their normalization. Only large municipalities allocate yearly funds to repair and maintain roads within their territory. However, these funds are never sufficient for providing all the maintenance services for the roads under their administration.

The Government remains the main investor in maintaining and constructing new local roads, financing the construction of new rural roads or asphaltting of existing roads through three financial sources: (i) The Albanian Road Authority, that intervenes in segments that connect the main road axes in the country, that also affect local territories, (ii) The Albanian Development Fund, that has practically been the main investor in rural roads construction, and (iii) through competitive grants from the Regional Development Fund (state budget), that, among others, finance road reconstruction projects for the local government. According to

Albanian Road Authority statistics, during 1996 - 2012 the central Government has invested in 767 km of regional and communal roads. Due to the lack of administrative and financial opportunities for local government units to provide maintenance services for these roads, and based on the importance of these roads after the investment made, by decisions of the Council of Ministers these roads have been removed from the inventory of regional or communal roads, and were added to the inventory of national roads under the administration of the Albanian Road Authority.

They also represent the main share of investments carried out in local roads. To conclude, by analyzing the road infrastructure inventory in the jurisdictional map imposed by the

current administrative division, it appears that: The administrative jurisdiction of local government units is physically very limited to successfully administer the road infrastructure. Even if for a moment we would think that local government units possess the financial capacity to construct and asphalt roads, its use divided into small jurisdictions would not be effective.

Practically, a road that connects one commune to another under these conditions would have to be tendered and implemented in two parts by each commune, with two different projects and not necessarily logically connected with each-other, without having the same effectiveness. Coordination and cooperation remains difficult when every local elected thinks and behaves like a “landlord” in his territory. The financial and administrative advantages of constructing a unique and turnkey infrastructure compared to the fragmented infrastructure are now well known.

The disproportional development in neighboring local government units brings about difficulties in constructing and administering a common infrastructure. The physical barriers between large municipalities and neighboring communes are particularly problematic. Today the differences in road infrastructure between a municipality and its surrounding communes are physically noticed due to the fact that the municipalities are more committed to ensure the necessary means for infrastructure maintenance. But as soon as you step on the neighboring commune territory, although the quality of constructions might be better than in the municipality, the quality of the road infrastructure and access of its inhabitants to this infrastructure remain poor. 25 Central government investments or donors’ investments in roads are made targeting territories with large population and affect several LGUs. The current distribution of responsibilities makes the design and implementation of these projects very difficult, because of the fragmented decision-making and budgeting process for complementing investments. Several times this has led to failure in attracting large donations.

The constructed road infrastructure requires sustainable maintenance systems. These are called sustainable systems because they overcome administrative barriers. If for instance the road Durrës - Kukës would be administered by the local government units it affects, there would be no public or private enterprise that would perform this successfully. Therefore, the road segments of this road that belonged to local road inventories were removed from the respective local government units and were added to the national roads inventory. The same could be said for roads that run completely in communal territory, but because of their use they have national importance.

7. Water supply, and sewerage services

The transfer of water supply and sewerage companies created 58 operators, 55 of which are joint stock companies and one operator acts as a state enterprise under the ownership of the respective local government units, and the operator is the Directorate within the local government unit. Out of 58 operators, 28 are water supply and sewerage operators,

30 are water supply operators only. The majority of companies, 20 of them or 35% of the total, belong to 2 or 3 units, whereas 26% or 15 companies belong only to one unit, whereas the rest, 22 companies or 39% are companies divided between more than three local government units.

The other 19 companies have 4 to 11 shareholders (local government units). In 7 cases, district centre cities own 75% of the shares whereas the rest is distributed between their surrounding communes. The Municipality of Tirana and the Municipality of Durrës respectively possess 72.5% and 54.7% of the shares, whereas the rest is distributed between the communes in the company's service area.

Extreme cases are those of the Municipalities of Elbasan and Gjirokastër, that own respectively 90% of the shares; whereas Korça, Librazhd, and some other units possess 100% of the shares, because the companies' coverage area in these units totally complies with the jurisdiction of the units they belong to.

The Report of the Water Regulatory Entity (WRE) for 2011, also referring to the data published in the framework of the Sectorial Strategy 2011-2017, estimates that 2.65 million inhabitants or 80.3% of the total inhabitants of 3.31 million that live under the companies' jurisdiction, of which 90.7% in urban areas and 57% in rural areas, have access to or coverage with water supply services.

Based on this report, around 1.65 million inhabitants or around 64.6% of the total population have access to or are covered with water supply and sewerage services, mainly in urban areas with 83% of the population and only 10.9% of the population in rural areas. Actually, coverage with these services by licensed operators may be lower than reported by them, because in many cases a difference between the actual area covered with service compared to the area licensed for service coverage has been identified, with the latter being larger than the first. The effect of the change in the number of local government units in order to achieve an effective administrative and territorial reform remains unclear.

However, it is known and proven through several sectorial studies that the economy of scale is an indispensable condition to increase efficiency and improve access to water supply. The dilemma between regionalization and/or decentralization of water supply systems has been one of the main factors that hindered the development of the sector together with objective factors related to the immediate needs for investments and the depreciation of assets.

At least, the existing water supply and sewerage companies will be easier to administer due to the reduction of the number of shareholders, and this is expected to lead, in some cases even to a sufficient concentration of shares in a larger local government unit. It is totally possible that the district as an administrative sub-division serves as a starting point for the reorganization of operators in this sector.

This could be the first step towards the aggregation of water supply and sewerage companies. Alongside this, these operators would simultaneously provide the service of waste water disposal, by unifying the control with the two organic aspects of the same service, though so far this has not been possible.

However, the approach to aggregation as an effective means to improve the performance of operators in this sector can be briefly guided by the following principles: (i) Aggregation of the two service components, water supply and waste water utilities; (ii) Extension of the operators' service area in compliance with the administrative borders of the district; (iii) Merging of operators beyond the district borders in order to improve the main performance indicators.

1.3.Strategic Plan of Vlora Region 2010-2020

The Strategic Plan of Vlora Region 2010-2020 has been approved from the Regional Council on March 2011.

The Strategic Plan was seen as an absolute priority for most territories based on the development of a stable and sustainable economy base. In that respect the Albanian government has adopted a development policy focused on investments in key infrastructure and has promoted leading sectors in the economy that demonstrate regional comparative advantage. Vlora Region government units have shown a continuous interest in being part of an integrated development in compliance with the National Tourism Strategy and the National Strategy for Development and Integration.

Strategic Planning was a cyclical process of review and assessment, constantly accompanied by monitoring, communication and participation procedures. It consisted of four main steps:

1. Launch

The Strategic Planning process in Vlora Region started off with a series of preparatory activities, aimed at introducing the strategic planning initiative to Albanian authorities at all levels, mapping stakeholders, pointing out general goals and programming further activities. The strategic planning methodology and its possible outputs were discussed with various territorial actors, emphasizing future benefits in terms of development policies coordination, resource optimization, local community involvement and awareness.

2. Analysis framework

Vlora Region's current situation was analyzed, starting from the information contained in recent plans and programmes regarding the regional territory.

This analysis includes:

- an analysis of territorial aspects (historical background, infrastructures, environment, cultural heritage, social and economic context), based on information from existing planning and programming instruments, assessed through territorial surveys and integrated with the participatory process outcomes;
- a compared analyses of plans programmes regarding the Region;
- an S.W.O.T. analysis, identifying the area's main potentials and problems.
- a set of Keywords, synthesizing the analysis results, and the Strategic Plan general goal;
- the development Scenarios, expressing possible future configurations of the Region based on present conditions and on the trends outlined by current policies at all levels.

3. Strategic framework

The territorial analysis was the first step towards the definition of a shared short, medium and long-term regional development strategy, consisting of:

- *Vision* - Is the future image of an area, directing all development policies. It suggests

the possible role that Vlora Region can play in a global perspective in compliance with the analysis conducted and the outcomes of the participative process.

- *Strategic Guidelines* - Are the directions to follow to accomplish the Vision, creating an integrated and synergic system focused on crucial issues of regional development.
- *Actions* - Are the “tools” to fill the gap between current situation and future development. They are strongly interconnected, help achieve several goals concurrently and are carried out through projects implementation.

The contents of this step were discussed and shared with territorial actors in a series of thematic workshops in Vlora and in Saranda.

4. Action plan

The Action Plan contains an integrated system of coordinated projects (proposed by territorial actors and organised in a coherent, vision-oriented framework), which must be implemented to achieve the Strategic Plan goals. The Action Plan traces possible procedures to implement the projects and suggests the role of institutions and private actors in the implementation process. The Action Plan was discussed and agreed upon by territorial actors during Focus Groups.

Vlora Regional Strategic Plan has defined three main scenarios for development respectively:

Scenario 1) Tourism development - Tourism is the leading sector in Vlora Region economy as well as the main catalyst of economic growth. However, hitherto a clear strategy for tourist development has not been established. The “beach tourism” has played the leading role, with negative effects on the environment.

Nonetheless the Region has a variety of potential tourist attractors (cultural heritage, natural areas, traditions and food) and hence has the opportunity to move towards responsible and sustainable tourism, generating income and employment whilst respecting the environment and the local culture.

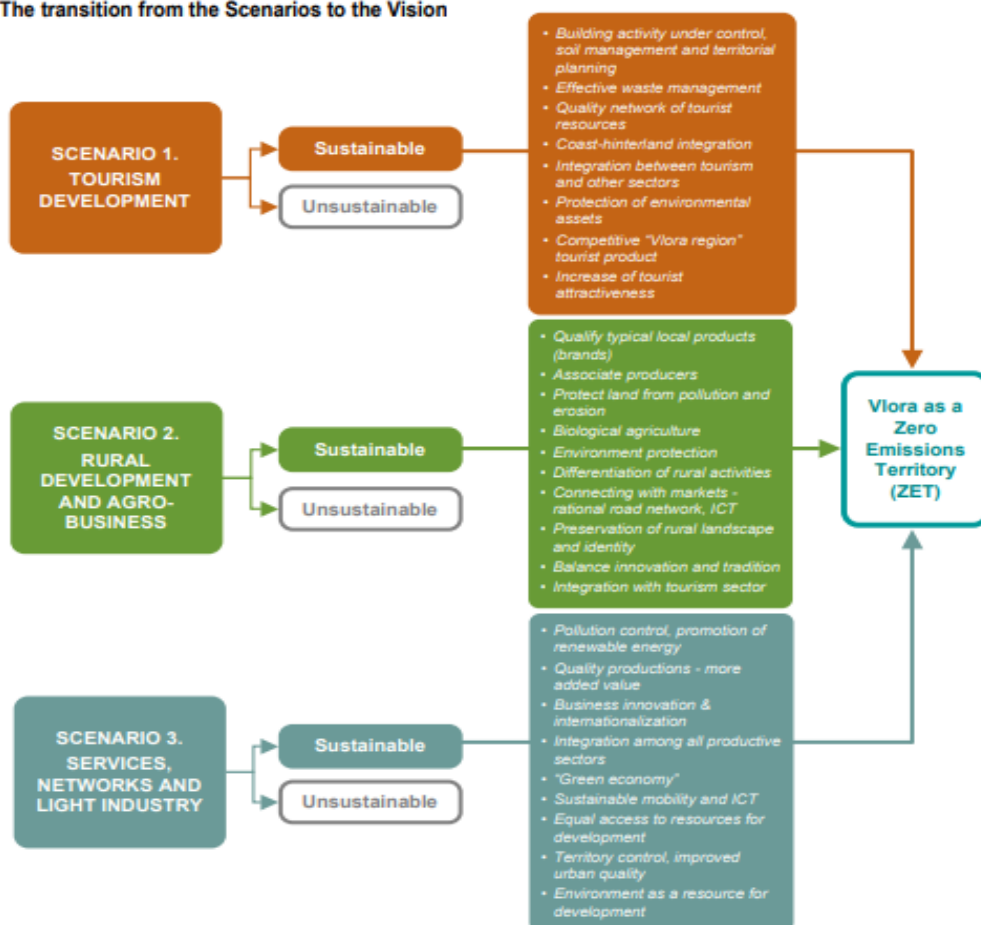
Scenario 2) Rural development and agro-business - Rural activities are an important part of regional culture and identity. However, the environmental issues regarding the rural sector such as the lack of water, wastewater and solid waste management systems should be addressed immediately in view that the natural environment is a potential source of income for rural areas both through its ability to affect the quality of food products and through its attractiveness for tourism. The challenge is thus to achieve an overall environmental sustainability in regional rural activities, balancing innovation and tradition and enhancing the quality and the security of typical local products.

Scenario 3) Services, networks and light industry - Vlora Region lacks the basic services systems. Infrastructure problems have a negative effect on economic activities, which cannot be developed without an adequate energy supply and reliable communication systems. Ongoing policies have acknowledged, to some extents, the necessity to upgrade infrastructure and services networks, while keeping an eye on environmental sustainability.

The risk is that the lack of financial resources can cause delays in the implementation of the strategies hence leading to short-term solutions and losing sight of the overall sustainability and coordination of interventions. The challenge is to continue to coordinate all the relevant components of the Scenario, so that all sector policies converge on the same objectives and are coherent amidst each other.

- To achieve a more diversified development and avoid the unbalances that a single sector development can cause, these Scenarios were carried out simultaneously, in an integrated and complementary manner, making sustainability the central thread of regional development.

The transition from the Scenarios to the Vision



The Strategy for regional development consists of:

- 9 Strategic Guidelines (SG), addressing the main critical aspects of the Region. Each Guideline is subdivided into Actions, for a total of

- 33 Actions, each of them including a number of categories of intervention, which specify and explain the Action scope. Guidelines and Actions were prepared also using the programmes for the allocation of EU structural funds in the Italian regions as a reference

model. This was done to ensure that the development programme for Vlora Region fits European Union standards. In this way, the SP shall work as a shared basis and a model to prepare structural funds programmes when Albania becomes a EU member. The 9 Strategic Guidelines are listed below.



1.4 PASSAGE Project

The PASSAGE (Public Authorities Supporting low-carbon Growth in European maritime border regions) project¹ involves 6 straits, with 11 partners from 8 countries. It emerged from the European Strait Initiative (ESI)² and is co-financed by the ERDF in the framework of the Interreg Europe programme. The European Straits Initiative was launched in 2009 by Pas-de-Calais County Council and Kent County Council and now

includes 24 public authorities in Europe. Experiencing the features of a strait territory and the related human, social, economic and environmental challenges, their aim is to bring together strait territories and to structure projects along their common issues.

Even if straits have apparent basic similarities (a stretch of water that is surrounded by two coastal areas which are linked to their proper hinterlands), each side of a strait might have different carbon intensive economic activities and are often subject to different governance and laws as they are from different countries. As a result of these area features, cross-border cooperation is required.

Following the “Network Of STRAits” (NOSTRA) project, launched in 2012, which aimed to reinforce the governance tools supporting sustainable development, the 2016-2020 PASSAGE project is the second strait-related project to be supported by the INTERREG Europe programme (formerly Interreg IV C), and is dedicated to the development of low-carbon solutions in the straits areas. At the request of the Pas-de-Calais County Council, a carbon study was launched in January 2017 in order to support the preparation of action plans at strait level by the partners of the PASSAGE Project.

b) Straits and climate change Straits have unique geographies, and are characterised by diversified and specific economic activities, including transportation, industrial activities, tourism, services and manufacturing. Straits are important centres of communication, commerce and culture.

Straits include cities with an important population living on coastlines, and thus particularly vulnerable to global environmental change, such as rising sea levels and coastal storms. Additionally, all these economic activities may be significant, and growing, sources of energy consumption and account for a significant percentage of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This may include not only GHG emissions from “land based” activities (ports, industries, cities, tourism), but also “sea based” activities, such as domestic or international maritime transportation. Therefore, straits may play an important role in tackling climate change and responding to climate impacts, bringing an integrated management approach, considering marine areas and hinterlands, on both sides of the strait.

As for cities, strait’s ability to take effective action on mitigating climate change and monitoring progress, begins with developing a GHG inventory; a “carbon study”. Such an inventory will first enable straits to understand the main emissions contribution of different activities taking place at strait level. It may then allow straits to determine where to best direct mitigation efforts, where to best consolidate partnerships with key stakeholders, and finally create a strategy to reduce GHG emissions.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that state, regional, city and company level inventories are mainly carried out because of legally binding obligations. Voluntary initiatives to account for and disclose GHG emissions are quite new practices, such as

The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy or the World Port Climate Initiative (WPCI).

Very few studies have been carried out at strait level, and it is worth mentioning that the governance of these areas is often complex, because it involves multiple levels and

responsibilities, as well as administrative and cultural divisions that may hinder the implementation of common action at a strait level.

3. Objectives The aim of this “carbon study” is to provide a first review of knowledge, experience and requirements in terms of GHG emissions at a strait level, to enable partners of the PASSAGE project, as well as relevant stakeholders, to define the strategic direction for the better integration of “low carbon measures” in these straits. In addition, to ensure credible reporting and good consistency in GHG accounting, this study proposes a framework on how emissions sources are defined and categorized, and a specific methodology for calculating and reporting GHG emissions and scientific studies (that are built on existing methodologies), related to the definition of a strait. A detailed methodology is provided in the Annexes. In this study a total of 6 European straits have been involved: Dover / Pas de Calais Strait, Strait of Otranto, Strait of Corfu, Gulf of Finland’s Strait, Fehmarn Belt, and Corsica Channel.

1.5 VLORA REGION and CO2 Emmissions

Methodological framework

During this study, the main accounting and reporting principles for strait GHG emissions follow the main principles from the GPC Protocol Standard, which enables a fair and true account of emissions:

Relevance: The reported GHG emissions shall appropriately reflect emissions occurring as a result of activities of a strait. The inventory can also serve the decision-making needs of the PASSAGE project members, taking into consideration relevant local, sub national, and national stakeholders and regulations. The principle of relevance applies when selecting data sources, and determining and prioritizing data collection improvements. **Completeness:** Straits shall account for all required emissions sources within the inventory boundary. Any exclusion of emission sources should be justified and explained.

Consistency: Emissions calculations shall be consistent in approach, boundary, and methodology. Using consistent methodologies for calculating GHG emissions enables meaningful documentation of emission changes over time, trend analysis, and comparisons. Calculating emissions should follow the main methodological approaches available for GHG emissions inventory.

Transparency: Activity data, emission sources, emission factors, and accounting methodologies require adequate documentation and disclosure to enable verification. The information should be sufficient to allow individuals outside of the inventory process to use the same source data and derive the same results. All exclusions shall be clearly identified, disclosed and justified.

Accuracy: The calculation of GHG emissions shall not systematically overstate or understate actual GHG emissions. Accuracy should be sufficient to give decision makers and the public reasonable assurance of the integrity of the reported information. Uncertainties in the quantification process shall be reduced to the extent that it is possible

and practical. This methodology requires straits to measure and disclose a comprehensive inventory of GHG emissions and to total these emissions following a categorization of all emissions depending on where they physically occur.

Activities taking place within a strait can generate GHG emissions that occur inside the strait’s boundary, as well as outside the strait’s boundary (such as international maritime cruise for example). This methodological approach is based on an adapted application of the scopes framework used in the “GPC Protocol Standard”, and takes into consideration the strait-induced activities and the different abilities of strait stakeholders to take effective action on mitigating climate change.

The figure below illustrates which emission sources occur solely within the geographic boundary of a strait, which occur outside the geographic boundary of a strait, and which may occur across the geographical area.

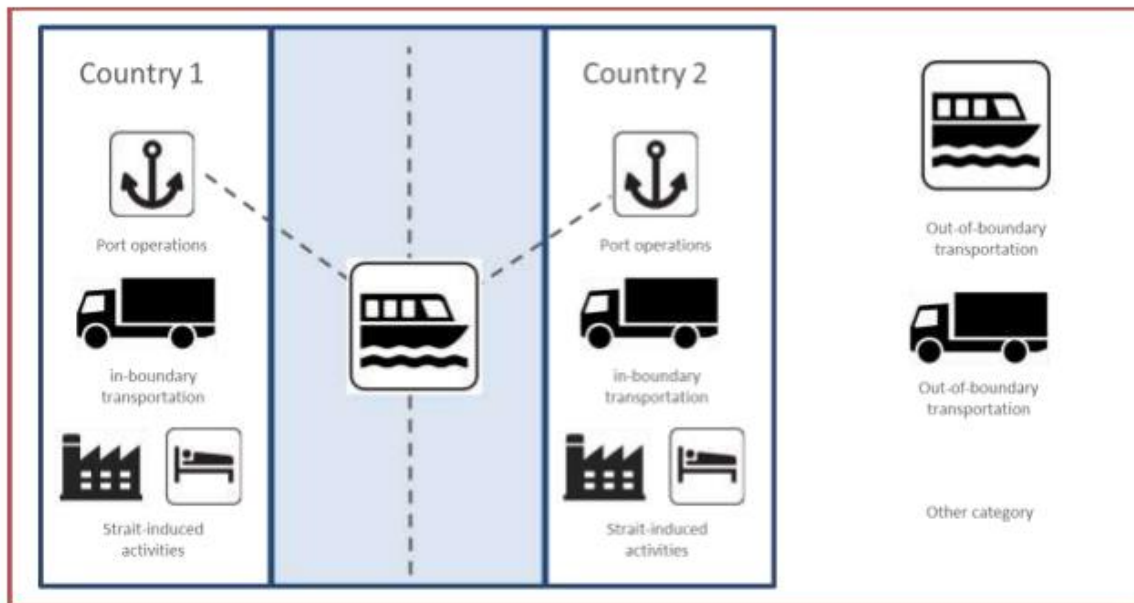


Figure 5 – Illustration of the emission sources within and outside the strait’s boundary (Source: I Care & Consult)

Albania’s emissions represent only 0.017% of global emissions and the net per capita GHG emissions was 2.76 tCO₂e, which is less than a quarter of the emissions from high-income countries. Even though, Albania is a country with a low-carbon economy and low per capita GHG emissions, the Albanian government adopted the INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) document in 2015 and submitted it to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Albania is committed to reduce its CO₂ emissions by 11.5% as compared to the baseline scenario for the period 2016 to 2030 and to decouple greenhouse gas emissions from its economic growth. This reduction is equivalent to a CO₂ emissions reduction of 708 ktCO₂e by 2030 and to an increase of the emissions by 47% by 2030 compared to 2009

in the Energy & Transport sector. The long-term goal is to achieve 2 t CO₂e/capita in 2050. (See figure no 130)

Figure 5.23 Baseline Scenario, Mitigation Scenario and the evaluated reduction potential of GHG emissions (in Gg of CO₂ eq.) from the energy&transport sector

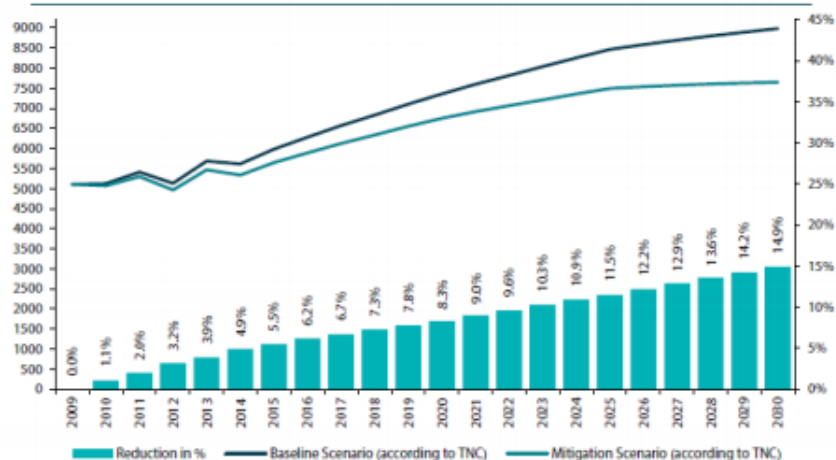


Figure 130 - Evolution of Emissions from energy & transport in the Baseline and Mitigation scenarios (Source: Third National Communication of the Republic of Albania on Climate Change)

In the context of the EU Accession process, Albania also transposes and implements parts of the EU legislation, including legislation on climate change. As one of the Contracting Parties of the Energy Community Treaty, and in line with the EU 20-20-20 objectives, Albania had to adopt a binding national target of 38% of renewable in the final total energy consumption of the country in the year 2020 compared to 2009, within the preparation and adoption of a National Renewable Energy Plan, which was adopted in 2016. Moreover, the first endorsed National Energy Efficiency Action Plan also sets a binding target of 9% of energy efficiency in 2018 compared to 2009.

Maritime transport emits around 1 000 MtCO₂e annually and is responsible for about 2.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions (3rd IMO GHG Study). Shipping emissions are predicted to increase between 50% and 250% by 2050, depending on future economic and energy developments. According to the 2nd IMO GHG Study, ship's energy consumption and CO₂ emissions could be reduced by up to 75% by applying operational measures and implementing existing technologies.






The EU and its Member States have a strong preference for a global approach led by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to reduce the energy consumption and GHG emissions of the shipping sector⁶¹. The European Commission's 2011 White Paper on transport suggests that the EU's CO₂ emissions from maritime transport should be cut by at least 40% from 2005 levels by 2050, and if feasible by 50%.

However international shipping is not covered by the EU's current emissions reduction targets. In 2013, a strategy was set out by the Commission to include maritime emissions into the EU's policy for reducing its domestic GHG emissions. The strategy consists in three steps: - Monitoring, reporting and verification of CO₂ emissions from large ships using EU ports - Greenhouse gas reduction targets for the maritime transport sector.

Further measures including market-based measures in the medium to long term From 2018, the MRV companies (ships over 5000 gross tones loading/unloading cargo/passengers at EU maritime ports) are to monitor and report their related CO2 emissions, submit to an accredited MRV shipping verifier a monitoring plan and submit the verified emissions through THETIS MRV (a dedicated European Union Information system currently under development by the European Maritime Safety Agency).

At the strait level, the application of the national objectives (disaggregated by sector) results in a reduction of the emissions by 13% by 2030, compared to 2016. The following table presents the main hypothesis made to estimate the de-carbonization path of the Strait of Corfu.

Table 39 - Hypothesis for the estimation of the decarbonization path of the Strait of Corfu

Emission source (within the strait's boundary)	Source of hypothesis	% of reduction	Emissions 2016 (tCO ₂ e)	Emissions 2030 (tCO ₂ e)
Port operations 	European Commission's target on CO2 emissions from maritime transport	-40% between 2005 and 2050 (corresponding to -12.3% between 2016 and 2030)	NC	NC
Maritime transport 	European Commission's target on CO2 emissions from maritime transport	-40% between 2005 and 2050 (corresponding to -12.3% between 2016 and 2030)	230 878	201 718
In-land traffic 	Greek 2050 Energy Roadmap and Albania's Target in INDC	GR: -33% between 2005 and 2030 (corresponding to -18.2% between 2016 and 2030) AL: +47% between 2009 and 2030 (corresponding to +30.6% between 2016 and 2030)	50 308	43 537
Industries 	Greek 2050 Energy Roadmap and Albania's Target in INDC	GR: -33% between 2005 and 2030 (corresponding to -18.2% between 2016 and 2030) AL: +47% between 2009 and 2030 (corresponding to +30.6% between 2016 and 2030)	1 556	1 273
Buildings 	Greek 2050 Energy Roadmap and Albania's Target in INDC	GR: -33% between 2005 and 2030 (corresponding to -18.2% between 2016 and 2030) AL: +47% between 2009 and 2030 (corresponding to +30.6% between 2016 and 2030)	75 469	66 273
TOTAL			358 210	312 800

This reduction is due to the actions implemented at all the levels (national, regional, local) and corresponds to the path that is being taken with the actual strategies. The emissions can also be reduced by implementing new actions specifically on the strait's boundary.

1.6 Maritime infrastructure, Vlora Region

Albania has recently approved a law on maritime administration and on the establishment of a maritime directorate. At present there is a ban on private yachting of Albanian boats over a certain length, and due to problems with smuggling it will not be removed before mid 2012. Albania sits between 2 very large agglomerations of nautical tourism, one in the South, based in Greece, and one in the North, centered in Croatia. Currently, vessels from both countries sail across the Albanian coast without stopping, due to the lack of reception facilities and the security offered by organized facilities. Vessels whose homeport is in Italy hardly venture into Albanian waters at all. However, interest towards Albania is increasing.

The ports of Vlora and Saranda have been identified as the Region entry points for foreign vessels and deserve full marina facilities within the existing urban environment. Vlora seaport is the second important port in Albania, which has been defined as the second entry gate to Corridor VIII after the port of Durres. This port transfers passengers and goods, covering around 10% of the export-import goods.

Its infrastructure and superstructure is currently being developed. The Italian government will fund the first, second and third phase of the port empowerment project through 15.3 million Euros, which will also include the construction of the docks for goods and the ferry dock. Himara port serves as a secondary port, used mainly for tourism in Himara and the surrounding areas, and does not play any role in goods transfer.

Saranda seaport (see the photo on the top) is a secondary port, which transfers passengers and goods. It is also being developed based on the Master Plan, as a port with a tourist function for the transfer of passengers, while the transfer of goods will be made in Limoni harbor (around 3 km from the town port). Funding is to be provided by the national budget and the World Bank.

The Italian company La Petrolifera ItaloAlbanese, based on a concession agreement with the Albanian Government, is constructing the Port of Vlora Bay. This port will be used for the unload and storage of oil, gas and their sub products. It will facilitate the processing by increasing security levels and environment protection. Among other ports that should be mentioned there are the Triport fishermen harbor, in Vlora, and the recently completed Orikum marina (see the photo below) in the southern part of the Vlora Bay, which offers basic services to yachts, multipurpose spaces and apartment

1.7. Analysis of planning and programming instruments

Adopted methodology

The analysis of planning and programming instruments at municipal, inter-municipal, regional and interregional levels contributes to build a reference frame for territorial development strategies of Vlora Region, focusing on the ongoing projects in the area.

The analysis was conducted taking into consideration various kinds of instruments: general and sectorial plans and programmes, development plans/programmes, environmental plans/programmes, city planning and feasibility studies. Several data sheets were developed, in which every document was analyzed separately, listing also its main goals.

In this chapter, therefore, we seek to provide an overview of the ongoing programming, highlighting the necessary elements for the construction of possible regional development scenarios and the strategy required for their realization. The synthesis process has followed a path divided into 3 phases:

- **Summary of the main goals emerged from the instruments analysis:** starting from the information collected in the data sheets, a list of the main objectives for each document was synthesized, taking into consideration also the type of instrument and its field of interest (see table 1).

- **Identification of common goals in different instruments,** to point out the objectives shared by the analyzed instruments (see table

2) and identify the main directions they trace for territorial development. Goals are grouped in four thematic categories: “Environment protection and infrastructure network”, “Cultural heritage”, “Agro-food production and rural tourism”, and “Social issues”.

- **Analysis of the compatibility among the various instruments goals,** to provide an overview of the consistency of the current programming and to verify the possibility for coordination and synergy among the ongoing programmes (see table 3).

Strategic Guideline 1

Community based tourism

Background:

The data and information collected through analysis and surveys emphasized the high tourist potential of Vlora Region and political willingness, at all levels, to take advantage of it. Tourism development was pointed out as one of the most likely scenarios for regional development. Nevertheless, to preserve environmental and cultural heritage (which are the main tourist attractors in the region) and attract international tourists (who expect high quality standards from a Country aspiring to join EU) it is necessary to change the tourism development model followed so far and direct it towards environmental and social sustainability. This implies creating a more diversified tourist offer, integrating coast and hinterland through thematic itineraries including well-preserved attractors and high quality accommodation and services. Additionally, an effective communication and marketing activity will be crucial for the success of “Vlora Region” tourist product. Eco tourism taking in consideration Blue Growth Strategy, eco labeling will be the challenges for the next years

Objective:

Development of a diversified eco-friendly regional tourist product that fulfils European quality standards.

Actions:

1.1. Tourist information services, effective territorial communication and marketing

- Marketing plan for the regional territory
- Tourist communication campaigns

1.2. Qualification and diversification of accommodation structures

- Accommodation structures qualification through stars certification, eco-labeling process
- Assistance packages for accommodation structure aimed to quality certification ISO 9001, ISO 9014
- Incentive to B&B and farm holiday creation in a territorial sustainability perspective based on Innovative resource energy
- Extension of rural hospitality offers to different realities as socially responsible tourism

1.3. Valorisation and integration of cultural identities and landscape and environmental resources for tourist development and differentiation

- Construction of sporting routes and facilities for different tourist offers development
- Valorisation and promotion of typical local handicraft
- Creation of naturalistic footpaths and facilities
- Creation of “wine and food” itineraries
- Creation of integrated tourism packages: accommodation structures and typical products to

promote the quality of rural life through territorial and cultural marketing • Valorisation of social and therapeutic function of environment and rhythms of rural living for social uneasiness

1.4. Improving infrastructure and services for tourism

- Tourist resort accessibility improvement through tourist transport association creation
 - Creation of land ports and development of quayside integrated services in coastal villages
 - Former state buildings recovery and restoration to be converted into tourist structures
- Eco-hotels, energy efficiency measures- intelligent hotels.

Strategic Guideline 2

Typical rural products and handicraft

Background:

Analyses and surveys conducted highlighted the relevance of the agro-food sector in the Region, as well as the existence of local products and value chains with competitive potential (olive oil, herbs, textile handicraft, etc.). The enhancement of these resources is crucial for the sustainable development of rural areas, which for the most part are poor, isolated and subject to emigration and depopulation. The Strategic Guideline 2 intervenes on the main critical aspects of the regional primary sector, also highlighted during the public consultations: incomplete value chains, lack of quality certification policies and small dimension of enterprises, causing difficult access to credit, markets and technology.

Objective:

Strengthen the agro-food sector by differentiating the sources of income, fostering the creation of producers' associations, developing value chains, increasing quality of products using eco-friendly processing methodology and renewable energy resources

Actions:

2.1. Promotion of typical products and increase of quality products for export purpose

- Integration of typical products in tourist packages for a territorial valorisation
- Promotion of brand policies and incentive to farmers participation in food quality systems for quality certification achievement
- Support the modernisation of farms, production techniques with eco friendly technology and energy efficiency
- Finalization and valorisation of value chains
- Enhancement and valorisation of typical products
- Recovery of traditional production techniques
- Incentivize and support craftsmen associations and development of crafts markets where craftsmen reproduce traditional craft production techniques
- Facilities for enterprises association to participate in national and international exhibitions and fairs
- Mainstream quality control, safety and security food certification system (HACCP)
- Recovery of traditional agricultural landscape and cultural elements
- Communication and promotion of agricultural typical products
- Creation of a typical products pannier representative of local tradition

2.2. Encourage producers grouping

- Realization and improvement of necessary infrastructures for typical agricultural production managed by enterprises association
- Incentivize enterprises association through information, assistance and training packages

2.3. Incentivize and support enterprises credit accessibility for farmers, breeders and craftsmen

Strategic Guideline 3

Fishing and aquaculture

Background:

The extension of the coastal area and the existence of three lagoons (Narta, Orikum and Butrint), together with their related natural habitats and economic activities (mostly sea fishing and shellfish farming) are important resources that are not yet fully used for the development of Vlora Region. The Strategy includes therefore not only the protection and conservation of these natural environments or the enhancement of seaside and natural tourism, but also the sustainable development of coastal and wetlands resources to implement aquaculture systems or to develop moorings integrated services, to support tourism and develop a green shipping for marine fishing vessels.

Objective:

Strengthen the sector of fishing and aquaculture, through the development of infrastructure and the qualification of products in an environmental sustainable perspective through the application of green shipping and eco-friendly fishing activity

Actions:

3.1. Finalization and valorisation of fish products value chains

- Incentivize fish preservation enterprises association through information, assistance and training packages
- Support the achievement of safety and security food certification
- Creation, valorisation and promotion of those brands with high added value in terms of environment protection and energy conservation
- Development of local shellfish farming and improvement of product safety and typicality promotion aimed to exportation

3.2. Lagoon ecosystems conservation

- Protection, maintenance and sustainable development of wetlands
- Enhance environmental awareness of people living and working in wetlands

3.3. Renovation of land ports and development of moorings integrated services

- Infrastructure development to ease fishing activities
- Development of facilities and services to enhance fishing tourism and marine ecotourism

3.4. Rationalization and strengthening of production-support infrastructure system in an integrated vision

- Realisation of infrastructure to support fishing and shellfish farming, managed by fishermen and producers associations
- Development of selling and marketing facilities

Strategic Guideline 4

Education & training

Background:

The participatory process pointed out a strong demand for improved, more innovative education and vocational training, and for a tighter connection between training experiences and the working world needs. Education and training are the basis for any field of development. It is necessary to be professionally competitive through the acquisition of new skills and professional qualification to increase customer satisfaction and face international competition. Moreover, in a global context, it is important to incentivize student mobility and international training exchanges, which are essential for the actual economic growth model, through the strengthening of funding and scholarships and their access.

Objective:

Improve education and training in all sectors to create more and better job opportunities and effectively enhance territorial resources giving to the students the principles of eco-sustainable enterprise development .

Actions:

- 4.1. Valorisation of existing education and training activities strengthening their links with national and international ecological enterprises enterprises
- 4.2. Increasing access to education and training by funding low-income students with scholarships and grants.
- 4.3. Enrichment and promotion of international exchange training programs
- 4.4. Education and training aimed at creating expert personnel in planning and Association creation
- 4.5. Education and training regarding key sectors for regional development
 - Education and training aimed at creating expert personnel in social and intercultural section and development of cooperation policies between social workers
 - Education and training aimed at creating expert personnel in information and communication new technologies
 - Education and training aimed at creating expert personnel in eco- agricultural technologies for farmers' professional qualification enhancement
 - Promotion and development of education and training for eco- tourism and eco- enterprises personnel

Strategic Guideline 5

Enhancement of Regional Cultural heritage

Background:

Based on the analyses, surveys and participation outcomes, Vlova Region is rich in tangible and non tangible cultural heritage, representing both a powerful tourist attractor and an expression of regional identity and history, to preserve and pass down to next generations. Nevertheless, this heritage often suffers from neglect and oblivion: coordinated monuments maintenance, restoration, management and promotion policies are lacking (often because of insufficient funding), especially in remote and hinterland areas, and traditional building techniques and crafts are slowly disappearing. The Strategic Guideline 5 intervenes to recover and re-build a common regional identity, grounded in history and tradition, to strengthen the sense of community and to attract cultural tourism.

Objective:

Enhance tangible and non tangible cultural heritage to increase territorial attractiveness, strengthen social cohesion and improve life quality of local communities.

Actions:

5.1. Knowledge, preservation, restoration and qualification of historical assets, through innovative management and the creation of integrated networks

- Survey, maintenance, restoration and promotion of historical heritage sites (archaeological areas, castles, monasteries and places of worship, historical houses) in the region, paying special attention to their accessibility, fruition and innovative management
- Preservation and restoration of traditional architecture and traditional building techniques in urban and rural areas
- Support the enhancement of places and institutions devoted to the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage (public libraries, museums, archives, theatres, etc.), also through the development of public-private partnerships
- Support research and innovation in the restoration of monuments and in the sector of cultural heritage study, dissemination and promotion
- Enhancement of university education in the cultural heritage sector

5.2. Improvement of the value chains connected with cultural production and cultural heritage, including artistic craftsmanship, traditional music and contemporary art

- Support enterprises and associations working in the cultural sector, also through the promotion of coordination networks
- Support the creation of business networks connected to the preservation, restoration, promotion and enhancement of the cultural heritage (including craftsmanship for restoration, quality artistic handicraft, production of traditional music instruments, cultural services, etc.)
- Promote the recovery and transmission of traditional know how and folklore, with special attention to the involvement of young generations
- Support the development and dissemination of innovative technologies, in the fields of cultural heritage preservation and management and the promotion and dissemination of knowledge
- Promotion and creation of a network of creativity centres and laboratories to boost quality artistic and handicraft production and to increase its promotion and marketing
- Support cultural events to promote artistic expressions, both traditional and contemporary (iso-polyphony, contemporary music, theatre, etc.)

Strategic Guideline 6

Environment and landscape

Preservation and rehabilitation

Background:

Vlora Region is home to unspoilt and diversified landscapes (sea, wetlands, mountains, canyons, etc.), which represent powerful tourist attractors. On the other hand, uncontrolled and illegal building, uncollected litter, untreated wastewater and other unrestrained human activities have spoiled several areas and are now threatening uncontaminated ones. The Strategic Guideline intervenes on the most critical environmental aspects of the regional territory: natural areas and resources to preserve, solid waste and wastewater management, geological instability, polluted and degraded areas.

Objective:

Protection, enhancement and sustainable use of natural resources.

Actions:

6.1. Protection and sustainable development of natural areas and landscapes and preservation of biodiversity

- Rehabilitation of areas of high natural and landscape value
- Creation, management and maintenance of natural parks at regional level
- Increasing environmental awareness in local communities
- Support enterprises and associations working in the fields of environmental protection and enhancement, also to increase awareness around environmental issues
- Consulting, technical assistance and services to business associations aimed to increase their environmental sustainability (ISO14000 certifications, etc.)
- Promotion of sustainable development
- Reclamation & environmental rehabilitation of polluted and degraded areas
- Environmental rehabilitation of informal settlements and buildings

6.2. Preservation of water springs and water cycle management

- Development of water supply systems to ensure the availability of drinking water in all cities and villages of the region
- Development of sewage disposal systems and water treatment plants, also through the promotion of innovative, eco-friendly technologies

6.3. Eco-sustainable solid waste management

- Development of infrastructure and plants for waste collection and treatment, with priority to innovative and eco-friendly systems
- Promoting and supporting separate garbage collection
- Reclamation and environmental clean up of areas contaminated by wastes
- Supporting the development of value chains in the waste recycling sector, also by stimulating the creation of enterprises processing materials from separate collection

6.4. Protection of the territory from hydrogeological risk

- Increase safety in areas subject to geological instability
- Creation of a research and monitoring system, aimed at the preservation, protection and reclaim of the territory

Strategic Guideline 7

Material and nonmaterial networks and energy

Background:

The enhancement of the transport networks is recognized by most territorial actors as the prior action to any type of regional development. Improving territorial accessibility is the necessary condition for the enhancement of goods and people mobility, while the development of the information and communication technologies (in particular a fast internet connection) represents an unavoidable instrument to develop and internationalize business. Strategic Guideline 7 also addresses the necessary development of energy supply networks, with special attention to renewable energies, which represent an essential innovation and a contemporary trend to preserve environmental resources.

Objective:

Empowerment of infrastructure and services for people, goods, information and energy transport.

Actions:

7.1. Enhancement of the transport networks to improve territorial accessibility and competitiveness, in the framework of the Corridor VIII project

- Completion and enhancement of the road network, including rural roads
- Improving connections among road and railroad networks, ports and airports
- Improving external access to the region, also through the empowerment of infrastructure nodes (ports, airports, etc.)
- Improvement of public transport services, also to foster tourism development
- Promotion of mobility planning
- Development of infrastructure and services for sustainable mobility (cycle tracks, etc.)

7.2. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

- Development of wireless broad band networks to mitigate isolation of rural and remote areas
- Enhancing the efficiency of the existing ICT networks
- Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion in local communities, with special attention to rural villages and remote areas
- Promoting the diffusion of ICT among local enterprises to enhance their competitiveness and internationalization

7.3. Promotion of renewable energy and energy saving

- Upgrade and monitoring of power plants and energy supply networks
- Promotion of renewable energy production, also through the development of value chains in the renewable energy sources sector
- Promoting and supporting the increase of energy efficiency and the reduction of climate emissions, especially in the industry, transport and building sectors
- Promotion of green building and incentives to the adaptation of existing buildings to eco-friendly building criteria.

Strategic Guideline 8

Social inclusion

Background:

The analyses carried out in the territory highlighted the presence of a large segment of the population victim of social exclusion and showed a lack of assistance services and insufficient gender equality. In order to support regional economic development, it is crucial to encourage the fight against unemployment through professional training, re-qualification and replacement and to boost young people and women integration into the job market. The information gathered through public meetings also highlighted the need for enhancement of services for elderly people. Moreover, the Strategic Guideline 8 tackles the lack of public health services and the difficult access to primary health assistance, also due to the inaccessibility of some parts of the territory.

Objective:

Enhance infrastructure and services to strengthen social cohesion and increase the inclusion of disadvantaged population.

Actions:

8.1. Strengthening social integration and fighting poverty through work placement programmes

- Promoting work placement programmes
- Promoting gender equality policies and women empowerment to better integrate women in the working world
- Experimentation of integrated programmes for the orientation, support and work placement for disadvantaged groups (women victims of violence, people with disabilities, etc.)

8.2. Improving and innovating social care services

- Development of partnerships and multi-level agreements among social actors aimed to improve employment opportunities and social care services, i.e. through the creation of permanent coordination bodies
- Promote non-profit associations and reinforce employability in the social economic sector
- Creation of structures to provide social care services to disadvantaged groups (people with disabilities, elderly, children, women, etc.)
- Supply services to support working women (increase of day care centres, etc.)
- Promotion of social housing programs for disadvantaged people, in coordination with work placement programmes
- Enhancement of Senior Citizens Centres and creation of “Tradition & Crafts schools” to valorise the elderly know how and foster inter-generation relationships

8.3. Improving public health services

- Improvement of regional medical centres, also through services qualification and equipment supply
- Increase the number of community health centres, to ensure access to primary health assistance to the whole regional population
- Creation of a health care centres network

8.4. Increasing participation of local communities in regional development policies

- Mainstream participatory practices in the construction of development programs and projects
- Implementation and optimisation of plans, programmes and projects prepared through participation, and dissemination of results achieved

Strategic Guideline 9

The Strategic Plan of children and teens

Background:

During public debates, territorial actors emphasized the lack of public spaces where children and teens can socialise, such as safe playgrounds, green areas or public sport facilities. This Strategic Guideline is based on the concept that children and teens represent the future of the regional community, therefore it is important to take care of their well-being, safety and education, and encourage them to participate in community life to prepare them for future responsibilities. Therefore, Strategic Guideline 9 focuses on improving the quality of life of young people, with a special attention to their education, in order to rise their environmental awareness and encourage them to discover the cultural heritage of their homeland.

Objective:

Enhance the role of children and teens in regional governance and social life, as parameters and guarantors of all citizens needs.

Actions:

9.1. Promoting children autonomy

- Optimisation of education buildings and areas, to increase their accessibility also outside school time
- Creation and maintenance of safe playgrounds
- Preparing urban traffic and mobility plans, encompassing the creation of networks of protected pedestrian areas and paths and the use of road signs for children
- Enhancement of public transportation for schools
- Removal of architectural barriers in public-use buildings, in sidewalks and pedestrian areas and in public transport means

9.2. Promoting children & teens active participation in urban planning and management

- Promoting forms of participation, consultation and discussion as those of the Children Council or of the Direct Involvement Planning (also to assess needs and demands), and disseminating achieved results
- Increasing awareness of children's rights in the regional population

9.3. Increasing the involvement of children and teens in social and cultural activities and in the discovery of cultural heritage

- Promoting, in urban districts and villages, the use of public spaces for socialisation, also through the creation of multipurpose buildings
- Promoting interventions aimed to adapt public services and structures to fit the children needs
- Promotion of social and cultural initiatives addressed to children and/or teens
- Creation and/or empowerment of public libraries

9.4. Improving environmental sustainability and urban quality in towns and villages

- Promoting activities to rise environmental awareness, disseminate knowledge about sustainable development and encourage eco-friendly behaviours
- Rehabilitation of schools according to environmental sustainability criteria
- Increase supply & quality of public sport facilities, green areas, public spaces