

CREATION OF CITY VISION

PREPARATION OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND REGULATIONS FOR THE CITY OF KAMZA

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Since the fall of communism in Albania, the country has undergone profound changes, almost without equal among the transition economies. The effects of such a transformation, both good and bad, have become very visible – in physical and spatial patterns, and in the living condition of the people – in urban areas and especially those which are growing rapidly and are situated on or near the Adriatic coast with easy communication access to EU countries.

INTRODUCTION

- > This urbanisation process has undergone three distinct phases. The first phase was dominated by the development of the informal sector. The second phase consisted of the consolidation of the informal sector and the emergence of a formal sector. In its third current phase Albania is continuing steady urban growth, further development of the formal sector and rapid regularisation of informal developments (ALUIZNI) alongside new formal developments.
- > Simultaneously, the contribution of the private sector to the growth of the GDP has increased dramatically from 10% in 1992 to 75% by 1996 and is still increasing. As the previous barriers to population movements do not exist anymore, the Albanian workforce has entered regional as well as extra regional economic areas and began to invest their remittances from foreign earnings especially in housing and other real estate sectors. This has provoked an overall rural exodus to urban areas. Between 1990 and 1994, Tirana and its peripheral communes, as well as other provincial cities grew four times more than during the previous 40 years.
- > Looking forward, over the next 20-30 years, Albanian cities are expected to add between 400.000–700.000 new residents and will gradually approach urbanisation levels comparable to many newly emerging countries in Europe. In view of

the present growth trends, there are reasons to believe that in spite of the effect of recent global economic recession, this urbanisation pattern is likely to continue and may even become more pronounced. Besides Tirana, it will take place in and around other provincial cities, namely Durrës, Shkoder, Vlora, Kamza, Berat, Korça, Lushnje, Saranda and Gjirokaster and especially in the coastal region of the Adriatic Sea, encouraged by new investment potential of recent European initiatives in infrastructure and economic development (especially tourism and manufacturing) covering the Mediterranean and the Balkan region, such as CORRIDOR VIII, oil and gas lines, thermal and aeolian power stations, intra-European road networks, and other projects. This has already unleashed fierce competition among the fast growing cities of Albania to attract more people and investors to their cities. Already a long metropolitan development axis joining Tirana with Durrës is evolving along a connecting four lane express motorway. However, this rapid pace of urbanisation has not been adequately backed up by the development of quality infrastructure, and the deficit between demand and supply is increasing daily. On the other hand, in spite of benefiting from considerable growth potential the municipalities of these growing cities are severely handicapped by their urban management capacity and lack of municipal finance – two essential requirements to maintain the dynamism of these cities and the quality of their living environment. Many cities have developed some sort of urban master plans between the 1990s and early 2000s, but their present state of urbanisation has largely overtaken these master plans. As a consequence, uncontrolled and illegal developments outside these plans are degrading cultural, environmental and especially high quality natural landscaping assets of these cities and are creating serious obstacles to better planning prospects of these areas (especially as regards land acquisition and infrastructure development). As most of these plans were developed without any long term

vision or strategy, uncoordinated growth has occupied vacant land outside these master plans and strangled their scope of planned extension.

- > Since 1991, Albania has carried out incremental reforms of land and property administration to organise this growth and the government has devolved the responsibility for land use planning, development control and property taxation to local governments. The important reform of the urban planning system at all levels introduced recently by the government has failed to attain the desired objectives, as it was seriously handicapped by the lack of capacity of local planning bodies in managing urban sector issues.
- > In January 2007, the World Bank has published a report, Albania Urban Sector Review, which analyses the economic and demographic trends of the country and identifies key issues concerning urban development and local government. In particular, it identified the challenges and opportunities of urban planning and land management. Following this report, the Government of the Republic of Albania (GOA) and the World Bank have initiated the Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of urban planning and land management of eight Albanian cities (Albania Urban Sector Review; World Bank Report, 2007).
- > The project being described in this paper forms part of this overall LAMP project dealing with the preparation of strategic local area development plans and capacity building for the municipalities of Kamza, Durres, Shkodra and Vlore. The findings have been discussed with the citizens and the stakeholders of the city and its surrounding communes, as well as with the municipality. The aim was to decide in common what vision is appropriate for the city of Kamza by using its growth potential and its natural, cultural and built-up assets in the most judicious manner. This includes the definition of its long term development strategy, namely the scale of development that will be compatible with its present and anticipated carrying capacity to become a sustainable city.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

The working group has carried out exhaustive research on all available information (provided by the municipality and the Ministry) and collected documents (through their own survey) on the issues related to the city's strength, weakness, opportunities and threats. They also consulted many ongoing development projects and those under consideration which have already applied the SWOT analysis methodology. They include many LED projects of Shkoder and Durres, the regional development plan of Shkoder-Lezhe (2005-20), the urban development plan for Kamza (CoPlan), the development strategy 2008-2015 for Kamza Municipality (CoE, OSCE, LGI-Budapest & Association of Albanian Municipalities), urban development plans of Shkoder, infrastructure development projects of the Durres-Kukes express way, the national road development project study (LBG) and CORRIDOR VIII – the pre-feasibility study of the development of the railway axis (September 2007).

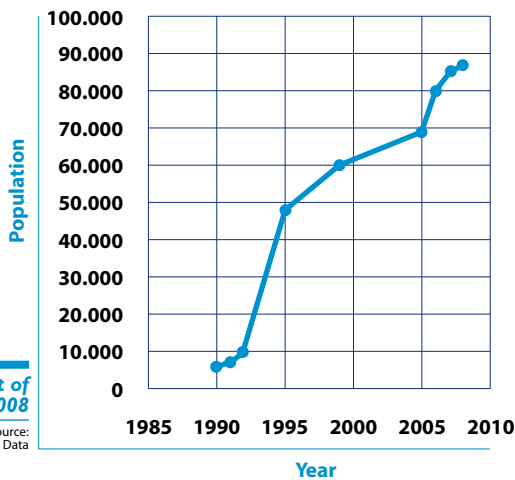
All these projects have been studied, analysed and important inferences have been made by the working group while developing a vision and determining the goals for Kamza which constitute the potential 'opportunities' for its development. In order to have a picture of the main environmental issues of the municipality of Kamza, the working group collected many documents, data and reports. Some documents provided the basis for the identification of environmental characteristics and key environmental issues of the municipality and its surroundings. They include 'Strategic Urban Development Plan, Municipality of Kamza'; the plan establishes a strategic approach, framework and actions on several fronts to enable the municipality to undertake an incremental planning, programming and development process in the city. The plan focuses on key interventions to achieve sustainable planning and management of Kamza over time. The objective is to make a plausible projection of the expected growth and development trends of Kamza in 20 years time,

indicating what the implications are for the Kamza area and municipality. In particular:

- to create a strategic framework – comprising physical, institutional and financial aspects,
- to assist MoK in managing effectively the current and future development,
- to identify land use interventions, including the definition of a functions based layout,
- to develop an infrastructure strategy, including infrastructure financing mechanisms, in order to meet the current infrastructure needs and further potential increase in the future,
- to develop an immediate environmental action plan, in particular to set up a solid waste management system in Kamza,
- to establish mechanisms and a process to formalise the existing informal settlements,
- to establish basic elements of a sustainable urban management system in terms of planning, institutional setting and financing.

CITY PROFILE
POPULATION GROWTH AND TRENDS

> According to the data of the Civil Registration Office (which unfortunately did not release raw data but only accumulated values, so that the working group could not verify the statements in detail) the Kamza population has experienced a real demographic expansion during the last 18 years. In 1990 there were 6.000 inhabitants, while in 2008 registered inhabitants amounted to 87.000 people (Fig. 1). The total growth rate of this period amounts to 1.400%, which might be considered a record in contemporary Europe. The average annual growth is around 80%.



I. Development of population 1985-2008

source: Municipality Data

< Due to informality in the region, the number of population has been underestimated each year. Local officials and other experts believe that the Kamza region is actually populated by around 120.000 people. The Bathore commune deserves a special treatment, because about 1/3 of the total population of Kamza there is concentrated and informality is widespread. Despite these reservations, it can be assumed that the calculated population growth rates were neutral with regard to this phenomenon.

< It is significant to note the sharp decline in the population growth rate since 2007. Actually, it amounts to 2,2%, which is not much higher than the natural growth rate of around 2% (no details provided by the municipality). In such circumstances, the prediction made in the development strategy for the Kamza Municipality 2008-2015 of an average annual growth rate of 9% does not seem to be very realistic.

< The working group's more realistic population predictions are based on the following considerations:

- very little attractive 'free land' is available, making informal settlements in Kamza difficult,
- governmental measures to enforce stricter rules for illegal settlements seem to become effective,
- land prices and speculation in unoccupied areas prevent people from establishing informal settlements,
- better economic perspectives for the northern region: Kukes and Tropoja (the main origin of new Kamza), due to the new road to Durres,
- the expected increase of emigration abroad, following the liberalisation of the visa system, to be conducted by the end of 2010 (it is estimated that 4% of the Kamza population has emigrated abroad).

< Factors which may contribute to Kamza's growth include a stronger attractivity for settling in Kamza (for businesses and individuals), as infrastructure and living conditions are being improved.

< Regarding the demographic evolution, the average household size is around 4,5 person per household.

This is typical for the rural population of the entire region, but in some areas such as Bathore it is estimated to be higher than 5.

- > Based on historic data, the following population projections have been developed until 2020. Possible variations include three categories: low 1,5% per annum, medium 2,0% and high 2,5% per annum. Household size will reduce from 4,5 to 4 persons per household by 2020.
- > For 2020 this will result in a total population of 124.000 (low), 131.000 (medium) and 140.000 (high) inhabitants. For the master plan the 'high' scenario is considered to be the most likely, especially if the city development plan becomes active and attracts new citizens to Kamza. The number of households will increase under the high scenario to 34.828 households. The limiting factor will be that approximately 18.000 new dwellings will have to be constructed, but with 36 inhabitants/ha the population density is very low which means few spatial restrictions.

PRESENT AND PROJECTED HOUSING STOCK

- > In the absence of reliable statistical data the working group has established data of the housing stock by a rapid land use survey and by analysing aerial photos of the city. The housing stock of Kamza consists of:
 - apartment blocks (4-5 floors) constructed in the socialist era (~1970s) accommodating approximately 5% of the population (90% of the population in 1990). These buildings are of medium to low quality, however residents have improved the interior over time; all these dwellings are connected to public services;
 - newly constructed single family houses (1-3 storeys, 100-150 sqm floor area with around 94,5% of the population. These houses have very little official connection to public services, except for power connection and
 - newly constructed multi-storey (5-8 floors) buildings for about 0,5% of population.
- > The centre of Kamza, mainly made up of socialist apartment blocks, has already a relatively high

population density ranging from 100 to 200 inhabitants/ha. According to data obtained from Kamza municipality there are actually 13.000 private housing and service buildings declared at the legalisation office of which 10.350 are estimated housing units.

The present infrastructure does not allow an increase in population density. New required housing, estimated at 1.800 units, can be constructed only in those parts of the city which do not constitute the traditional core of the city. These houses will consist of mainly single family houses, following the Albanian tradition to live in owner occupied property.

This indicator may imply a strong and constant demand for dwelling houses and apartments in the coming years. Again, it is difficult to predict the annual growth rate of housing demand, but in my opinion it might be significantly higher than the population growth rate. A shift from a widely uncontrolled building distribution toward more concentrated urban blocks is expected as well. Until now, the Kamza region has been popular for settlement, because of the low building costs within an illegal framework. The ongoing legalisation process will contribute to an increase of these costs, which now has reached the amount of 450 €/sqm (residential purpose) while the rental rates vary from 150 to 200 €/month (for a 3 room apartment). As a consequence, the monthly rate for business premises could be estimated to be 200-300% higher.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND URBAN POVERTY

Education. In the Kamza municipality there are: 7 kindergartens hosting 1.647 children, 8 elementary schools hosting 10.491 pupils, high schools hosting 2.469 pupils, 1 vocational high school hosting 678 pupils, 2 universities (1 public and 1 private) hosting 8.000 students (more than 7.000 in the public university). Problems identified during meetings with local officials, teachers and other interested groups involved:

- the need for more investments in education (more premises and staff),

- more attention for children that abandon the education system (estimated 10-15%),
- more greenery, gardens and parks belonging directly to school buildings and premises.

- > **Health care.** In the Kamza region there are 10 primary health centres, employing 13 family doctors, 5 medical specialists, 3 working groups woman & children and 25 supporting staff. There are also 8 private drugstores and 12 private dental clinics. Similar to the education problems, investment is urgently needed, in order to bring health care centres to an acceptable level, at least at the Albanian average.
- > **Poverty.** Actually, 1.473 families (7% of total) are receiving financial aid from Kamza municipality. The number of families living in poverty, however, is estimated to be higher, due to the high degree of informality. In 2007 the average extreme poverty in Albania has been estimated between 3-5 % of the population, while the average poverty indicator value was, at the same time, around 18%. However, the poverty problem is supposed to be alleviated by remittances of relatives living abroad (in 2007 this figure was estimated around 4% of the Kamza population).

MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- > It is worthwhile noting that only the water supply and sewerage services are provided by the municipality directly, while the other services are supplied by service providing companies in which the municipality has a varying degree of stake. All these other services are connected to the Greater Tirana Network.
- > Water supply, sewerage and storm water services fall under the responsibility of the water and sewerage company which was founded in 2001 and forms part of the municipality. Financially and development-wise the company depends on the municipal budget.
- > There is at present nearly no interaction between town development and expansion of services of the water supply and sewerage company. The company is financially so stressed that major

investments for renovation or expansion are realised only by government funds or foreign donors.

Electricity distribution used to be the responsibility of the nationwide electricity company KESH that was charged with the production and distribution of electric energy. However, in 2008 the distribution part has been converted into a separate entity which was then handed over to a concessionaire named OSSH. No information is available as to how the rights and needs of the municipalities are represented within the concession contract. Telephone service used to be the domain of Albanian Telecom, which has been privatised recently. In the last years additional licenses for telephone operators were issued. But their activity is limited to the capital Tirana and some smaller municipalities within Albania. In Kamza no additional concessionaire is active with a landline telephone network.

The water supply system of Kamza was constructed for a population of 6.000 persons and has been expanded in an haphazard way to accommodate the extremely fast growing population. Kamza depends for its supply on the Bovilla plant of Tirana Water Supply which provides 60% of the water and the wells in Valias. These two systems are not interconnected officially, but informal connections might exist. The supply situation is the worst of all towns in Albania with an average supply duration of 1 hour daily. The investments originate mainly from the municipal budget and the Albanian Development Fund. It is reported that a master plan for water supply has been developed and submitted in June 2009 as a draft version of the municipality, however the content was not provided to the working group, so judgment on the future requirements must be deferred to a later stage.

The figures reported by the water and sewerage company indicate that it operates under a balanced budget. This is astonishing as only 4.637 official connections exist in relation to 19.337 households. The supply figure of 1,7 million cubic meters/annum and the daily supply duration of 1 hour

which fills 500 l tanks of individual consumers indicates that at least 8.000 households draw water from the system. The remaining 10.000 households have no connection.

- > Although, the sources are hygienically clean the water of Kamza cannot be considered safe due to the unreliable supply infrastructure. Waste water intrusion into supply pipes that are empty most of the day cannot be excluded. Apart from infrastructural deficiencies the capacity of the water sources (Bovilla and Valias) is insufficient to cover present and future demand.
- > Without significant investments into production and distribution facilities, the water supply of Kamza is bound to collapse by 2020 and all municipal development programmes are likely to fail. If sufficient financial means are available and the utility will be restructured a connection rate of 100% and a supply duration of 12 hrs daily are deemed possible.
- > Basically no waste water system has existed at the foundation of Kamza in 1996. Between 1998 and 2009 investments have been made into the waste water disposal by constructing main collectors, which is ongoing. However it is estimated that presently only 20% of the population are connected to a piped disposal system. The main way of waste water disposal especially in the informal areas are septic tanks whose overflows drain into agricultural channels with insufficient drainage capacity.
- > Several projects are under way to address these problems. Kamza is included in the second stage for the Tirana waste water treatment plant, but this stage will not be implemented before 2020. Further construction of main collectors which will drain into Tirana river is planned. However, this river passes the aquifers of Valias (one of the present water supply sources) and the wells might be endangered in the near future. Meanwhile, the informal settlement areas still remain unconnected to the main contributor of sewerage. The disposal into agricultural ditches will create a severe hygienic hazard for the further development of the town.

Without significant investments into a piped sewerage network other municipal development and improvements programmes are likely to fail. If sufficient financial means are available a connection rate of 70% is deemed to be possible by 2020. A general drainage master plan including also surface waters seems urgent.

SWOT ANALYSES AND CITY VISION

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS OF SWOT ANALYSES

From a dormitory village at the periphery of Tirana in the years 90s, Kamza has now become a fully fledged structured city with its own municipality. During the SWOT analysis, the working group has identified many strengths and opportunities alongside with weaknesses and threats in order define an appropriate city vision and city development strategies to turn the city of Kamza into a distinct urban centre of sustainable communities where people can live and enjoy a comfortable level of urban life.

Being a sub-urban town of Tirana – the capital of Albania and being a part of the Tirana-Durres Metropolitan Development Axis, which concentrates most of Albania’s economic activities, the city of Kamza can profit from a good economic fallout from this development axis, by offering competitive advantages in the sectors of housing, intermediate quality hotel industry, non-polluting SMEs, access to the airport, etc. Moreover, the city will soon be situated at the cross-roads of the air, rail and trans-Balkan highway system (CORRIDOR VIII). Being very near to the only international airport of the country and its perspective of growing air traffic movements (which has already started), the city can expect a very good development opportunity related to airport service facilities in the medium and long term.

The working group has identified the following strengths:

1. Kamza is an integral part of the Tirana-Durres Metropolitan priority development axis. Hence, it can expect important economic fallouts from this axis. In matters of investment and services Kamza

is the hub of an important communication centre of all kinds – air, railway, roads and highways – and is going to benefit from the development of the Trans Balkan Highway system (CORRIDOR VIII).

- > **2.** Kamza offers a fairly high quality of urban infrastructure and facilities adjacent to Rinas International Airport which is expanding and modernising and needs supporting urban facilities in its vicinity. As Kamza does not fall under the aircrafts' take-off and landing path nor the sound zones, it has a very good opportunity to receive related airport activities and real estate development. This will help to create more employment and contribute to poverty reduction, particularly for an important section of its poor population living in the informal housing areas of the city.
- > **3.** Kamza is connected to the Albanian cities in the east, west, north and south through daily and frequent bus, railway and air services. Most of these national roads are being upgraded. It thus offers good accessibility nationally as well as to the wider Balkan region.
- > **4.** Many road developments and infrastructure improvements for Kamza city are operating or proposed. They will certainly enhance its overall urban quality.
- > **5.** Kamza provides a good level of water and energy supply.
- > **6.** The presence of a technical school and the Agricultural University (the oldest of Albania) can provide a good source of qualified graduates.
- > **7.** Kamza has a good stock of urban land within its territory at a comparatively lower price than that of Tirana, thereby, providing a good real estate market for building development in different sectors.
- > **8.** The municipality of Kamza is determined to develop the city to European standard. The Mayor expressed this desire during the two participatory meetings with stakeholders.
- > Conversely, Kamza suffers from a number of weak points that need to be redressed for its development, and they are:
 - > **Environmental sector.** The environmental quality concerning the waste disposal system,

sewerage, road maintenance and respect of natural landscapes is very poor. They need priority attention of the municipality to improve the image of the city for investors, tourists, residents and visitors.

The excavation of the river beds for collection of building materials needs to be stopped or subjected to severe control to prevent erosion and or total disappearance of natural water courses. The absence of any organised waste management system in the city needs redressing. Although the city has some system to meet this situation its capacity is far from adequate in terms of population or building development. Garbage has been dumped wherever there is vacant space and mostly in open drainage channels atrophying their capacity and particularly in the two river beds. They cause flooding during heavy rains. The city is lacking adequate public open spaces for children or the citizens. All vacant land is private property. There is a stadium but its accessibility is far from adequate and security standards pose a high risk factor during fire.

Service facilities. Many built-up areas of Kamza are devoid of appropriate road infrastructure and other public facilities. The organisational structure of cleaning and greening enterprises is poor. The revenue of the Public Utilities Company doesn't cover the costs of maintenance and services, notwithstanding new investment.

The budget of the municipality is heavily subsidised by the national government, thus the municipality has few options of new investment on its own initiative unless approved by the government.

Housing. The city has too many informal (unplanned) settlements with illegal buildings, poor services and inadequate utilities. Housing permits are issued irrespective of accessibility, service facilities and related environmental safety condition. As a result, they are high risk factors both for the city authority and the citizens.

THE PROCESS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN KAMZA FOR THE CREATION OF A CITY VISION

Currently, there is no regulatory obligation to

organise public or stakeholders participation in the preparation of urban plans or project decisions in Albania. Even if they are organised, there is no obligation on the part of the executing agencies to follow-up the observations expressed during these consultations. It becomes a sort of one way process and is non-democratic in a strict sense.

- > Under the new planning laws, which were expected to come into force after September 2010, public consultations are required for the elaboration of the urban development plan but no hard and fast rules are underlying such a process. It is hoped that in the perspective of being a future member of the EU such regulations will be in force in the national planning laws.
- > The working group has organised two public consultations during the process of developing the two contractual documents, a SWOT analysis and the City Vision and Development Strategies.
- > The organisation of such manifestations has been prepared with the assistance of the municipalities. They have played a leading role in selecting and inviting the stakeholders due to their insistence. In spite of all previous contacts with the citizens and the stakeholders, the outcome of the result was not very encouraging as many sections of the population were absent at the meetings. The lack of appropriate diffusion of information, previous inaction in providing active follow-up to similar manifestations organised by the public authorities, lack of initiative on the part of citizens in participating in community action are some of the main reasons for the mediocre results obtained from such meetings. However, the presence of some of the cities' important stakeholders and comments received later from citizens were encouraging. The working group has analysed the comments and important information has been retained.
- > A register of contact addresses of the participating as well as the invited stakeholders has been drawn up for further follow up. For the next participation meetings, the working group foresees a more elaborate diffusion of information across the local

media well before the consultation. Regarding urban governance, there does not exist any structure at present within the municipality to install a proper system of urban governance. The major obstacle is the lack of effective inter-departmental as well as inter-agency coordination involved in urban development activities. There is an urgent necessity to develop a proactive institutional structure within the municipal administrative system.

VISION STATEMENT – VISION OF KAMZA FOR 2020

Based on the above findings, following the interactions at two stakeholder meetings and a number of meetings and dialogues with the municipality and the Mayor, the working group has developed the following visions for the city of Kamza to be achieved until 2020 which has been presented at public consultations:

Vision Key Element 1. In the new master plan, Kamza would be developed as a logistic city to support its own growth facilities, as well as that of the metropolitan region of Tirana and would act as an obligatory gateway to the north of Albania being situated at the cross-roads of north-south and east-west national highways, railways and national airport.

Vision Key Element 2. The new master plan of Kamza will help to develop the city along the concept of a liveable city by removing the infrastructural handicaps and weaknesses and by improving its environmental qualities in the sectors of waste management, urban transportation, provision of open spaces and social and educational facilities.

Vision Key Element 3. Kamza would be developed as a leisure and welfare city. In its new master plan, there will be more provision of public recreation and green spaces, especially for children. More sophisticated leisure infrastructures like golf, horse riding and other similar activities are planned around the airport area where building development is restricted but which are suitable for their location to meet the growing demand of Tirana's cosmopolitan population as the availability of land is scarce and very costly in Tirana.

Vision Key Element 4. Kamza can offer an excellent place for becoming a commercial and manufacturing hub for future SMEs' to utilise fully the advantage of a national and international transport and communication system, low land values, energy facilities and proximity to the market of Tirana and the port of Durres. Such facilities are difficult to locate in and around Tirana due to the high cost of land and energy facilities. The new master plan of Tirana will designate specific areas for such activities. It will propose that the abandoned mining area be reconverted into profitable urban land for other than residential activities.