



MUNICIPALITY OF PUKA



STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF PUKA MUNICIPALITY

Short Version

Prepared by: PUKA MUNICIPALITY
Supported by: Intercooperation, Albania Decentralisation and Local Development Programme (dldp)

Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, Albania
Urbaplan, Switzerland

Funded by: SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Puka - 2008

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Swiss Cooperation Office Albania
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

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Introduction

The Strategic Development Plan of Puka Municipality is prepared in the framework of the Decentralization and Local Development Programme (**dldp**) implemented by Intercooperation Albania in the Shkodra Region, in the North of Albania.

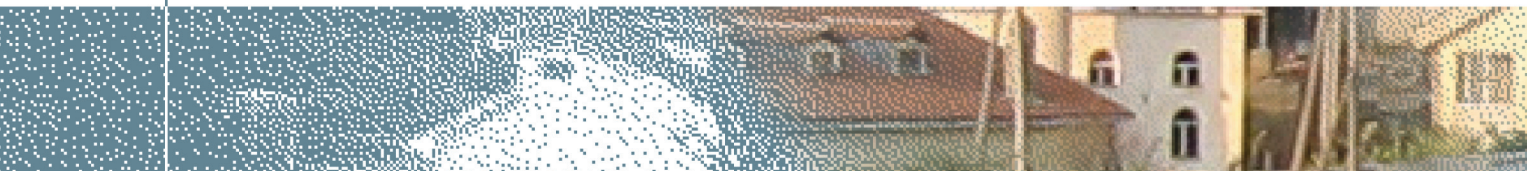
Puka Municipality is one of the eight partner Local Government Units involved in **dldp**, together with Shkodra Municipality, Vau i Dejës Municipality, Koplik Municipality, Fushë-Arrëz Municipality, Velipoja Municipality and Dajç and Gur i Zi Communes.

The aim of this Programme is to improve local governance in Shkodra region, focusing on the improvement of all the components of governance, managing and administration of infrastructure, services and transparency, with the ultimate goal of supporting decentralization and transition processes and the sustainable and participatory urban development.

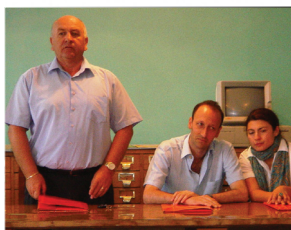
The preparation of the Strategic Development Plans, through a transparent and participatory process is a crucial component of the **dldp** programme. Its main objective is to provide the selected local authorities with a strategic document that identifies the key development priorities of each local government unit and orients the future economic development, the improvement of physical and social infrastructures, the provision of public services, planning and management of the territory, etc.

The Strategic Development Plan of Puka Municipality is designed through an open participatory process, engaging the municipal staff and the Citizens Group in a consultation process.

This process has also involved representatives of the municipal staff, members of Puka Local Council, several local interest groups, representatives of Shkodra Qark as an important partner in the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan, representatives of non-governmental organizations, as well as other actors that are active in Puka.



Foreword



For more than one year, Puka Municipality has been engaged in a very important project for the area and the community it represents. Thanks to the collaboration with Intercooperation Albania, a Swiss organization operating in the Shkodra Region, and Co-Plan, Institute for Habitat Development the preparation of the Strategic Development Plan of Puka Municipality was made possible, being thus finalized one of the most important strategic documents for the development of this local unit in the forthcoming years.

The preparation of this document was conceived through close collaboration with the key partners and actors of the Puka town and its Municipality. The main representatives of the town institutions such as health and education structures, as well as of the Municipality administration and Local Council were involved in this framework. Their engagement during the whole preparation process of the Development Strategy serves as a good example of transparency and guarantees the fulfillment of the duties this Plan enforces both within the local administration of this Municipality and among the groups of interest or the habitants themselves.

I want to thank all those who gave their contribution in preparing this strategic document as well as the supporting institutions such as Intercooperation Albania and Co-PLAN, and to express my own and my Municipality's commitment to a rigorous implementation of the responsibilities and tasks that the Strategic Development Plan enforces.

Respectfully!

Rustem Strugaj
Mayor of Puka Municipality

What is a Strategic Development Plan and what does it represent?

An Innovative Plan: This Strategic Development Plan is the first strategic document produced by the Municipality of Puka and represents an important achievement for this local unit and paves the way for a more organized and planned approach to its future development.

A plan as product and process: This Strategic Development Plan, as an institutional mechanism, supports the purpose of promoting welfare for all the inhabitants and defines the local agenda for the development of Puka. What is special about this plan is that it is not only a product but also a process, which continuously intertwines the needs and potentials of the community for achieving their goals.

A Visionary Plan: The Strategic Development Plan of Puka Municipality represents the first document that responds to the development vision of its community. Important strategic documents have been produced in Albania in the past, both at regional and national level, but they have never been combined with a future vision providing details on where and how the existing potentials would be utilized. This plan links to the regional development more harmonically enabling maximal development in all the related fields. All the actions proposed fit to the future vision on Puka Municipality, which sees it as a very important tourism center for northern Albania.

A Pragmatic Plan: The Strategic Development Plan is conceived of as a contract between the local authorities and the citizens. This contract identifies the common vision for for the area of Puka; it specifies the type, quantity and quality of the necessary developments to implement the vision, all the while protecting the environment and the local values. The plan is focused on setting up a specific working framework to initiate and to influence the change process at the Municipality; all this supporting the bigger goal of meeting the economic, social and environment objectives set by the community.

An Updated and Realistic Plan: this document includes a portfolio of maps, which serve to facilitate the process of managing the territory, as well as different pictures representing the current situation.

Profile of Puka Municipality



Puka is a small Municipality, with about 5,600 inhabitants. Puka Municipality is the center of the Puka District Prefecture; it is located in a rugged mountainous terrain in the northwestern part of Albania and borders with the following local units: the Commune of Qelëz and the Kabash village of the Commune of Rrapë to the north; the Commune of Rrapë to the east and northeast; the Commune of Gjegjan to the south and the Commune of Luf-Qerret to the west and northwest. Puka district is bordered with Tropoja and Has to the north, with Kukës to the east, with Mirdita to the south and with Lezha and Shkodra to the west.



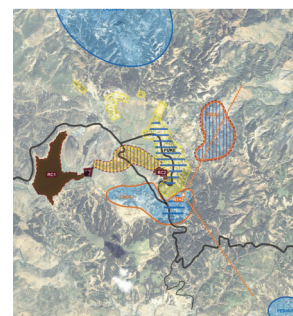
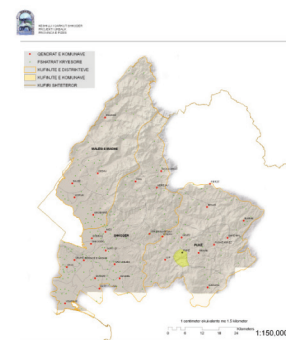
As for its historical background, Puka town was founded about two thousand years ago. Due to its favorable geographic location, Puka has played, since the antiquity and later in the Middle Ages, a crucial role in interconnecting the northern, eastern and western Albanian lands, being at the center of the Adriatic-Dardania and Macedonia-Serbia roads, which were trafficked for economical and military reasons. Today Puka is an important station in the national road Shkodër-Kukës-Kosova.



The rugged mountainous terrain at about 820m above sea level determines the orientation of Puka development. On one hand, this terrain together with the poor intercity infrastructure, make the communication of Puka Municipality with the populated centers/cities of the region quite difficult, considering that the distances are significant (e.g. Puka-Shkodra - 60km, Puka-Lezha - 80km, Puka-Kukës - 90km).

On the other hand, the mountainous terrain of Puka is highly suitable for the development of mountain tourism. In addition, natural resources of a great economic value can be found in Puka territory such as natural forests, medical plants, mining underground resources, etc.

Nr.	Name	Figures/characteristics
1	Legal and Administrative Status	Municipality
2	Location	Shkodër Qark
3	Total Surface Area	26.16 km ²
4	Number of towns	1
5	Number of villages	2
6	Number of inhabitants	5, 600
7	Number of families	1450
8	Percentage of active work force	48%
9	Annual Budget - 2008	41,135,000 Lek
10	Expected Local Revenues - 2008	11,687,000 Lek
11	Number of Private Businesses	146
12	Unemployment Rate	30%
13	Number of employees in the public sector	628
14	Number of employees in the private sector	152
15	Emigration rate	No precise data
16	Total road length	26.8 km
17	Number of Public Enterprises	3
18	Number of water-supply and sewage systems	1
19	Number of employees in the Municipality	29
20	Number of preschool institutions	6
21	Number of primary and nine-year schools	3
22	Number of high schools	1
23	Total number of students	1450
24	Number of healthcare centers	1
25	Number of hospitals	1
26	Number of counseling centers	1
27	Number of centers for the elderly	0
28	Main economic activities	Shops and trade centers Services providers Timber processing Medicinal plants
29	Development Documents and Strategies	Regional Development Strategy Environmental Action Plan
30	Main needs in infrastructure	Improvement of water-supply and canalizations network Construction of a sewage treatment station Improvement of town's internal spaces Identification and construction of a solid waste landfill Cleaning of pollution from the water-collecting area Rehabilitation of the Municipality's villages streets



Regional Context



This material is mainly based on the Development Strategy for the Shkodër-Lezhë Region. This Strategy gives priority to the creation of a **“Polycentric Urban Region”** providing possible measures to prevent depopulation in the peripheral areas in the east of the Region. The Strategy addresses this issue through indirect initiatives aimed at economic growth and improvement of living conditions in these areas. In this regard, the Regional Strategy approaches the concept of **“Population Stabilization”** for the local units of Puka, Kurbin and Mirdita, presenting plans and financing opportunities for the improvement of the existing public infrastructure and services, taking also into consideration the possibility of revitalizing the various economic activities.

Another specific element proposed by the Regional Strategy is the development of **“Sustained Tourism”** which in the case of Puka refers to the geographic and natural conditions and potentials of the area as well as to the need of the local businesses or operators for the support of the authorities in developing and strengthening this sector. For the development of tourism in the area of Puka, the Regional Strategy proposes, among other economic development opportunities, the promotion of natural and family tourism. Some more specific proposals concerning this sector have to do with infrastructure and basic services as well as with the improvement of local technical capacities. Other proposals of the Regional Strategy deal with environmental protection and improvement of the damaged areas.

With regards to infrastructure development, the Regional Strategy focuses on the consolidation of the Kukës-Pukë-Vau i Dejës-Bushat-Shkodër road axis, as one of the possible axes for the creation of the Kosovë-Shkodër-Bar Development Corridor. The Strategy promotes the raise of the infrastructure and service standards in Puka as it is considered an important station for this corridor.

An important issue which the Shkodër-Lezhë Regional Strategy deals with is the development of forestry and wood production sector. Being based on the natural potentials of the area re this sector, the present document perfectly integrates with the Regional Strategy, proposing administrative measures and technical specifications for the experts of the field.

Main Development Areas – Definitions of Citizen Groups

1. The development of Mountain Tourism as a possible opportunity because of the mountainous characteristics and natural values that the Puka territory offers.
2. The promotion and development of the timber processing industry, basing on the woodland natural resources of Puka and on the traditions of the area.



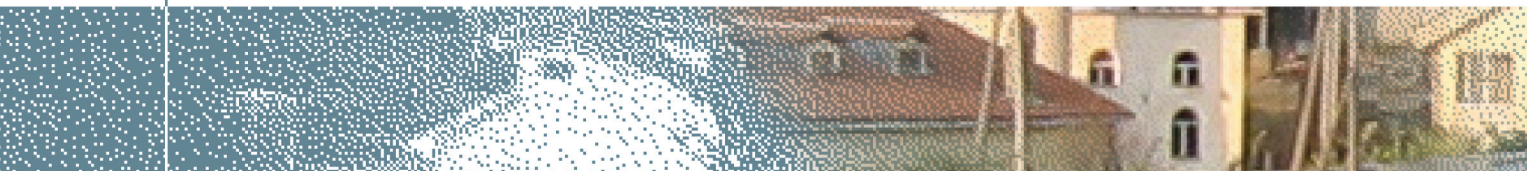
Development Vision of Puka Municipality

Puka as an important urban **center** integrated in the new regional reality of north Albania; a connecting bridge for people and various economical activities and services between Shkodra and Kosova.

Puka as an economically regenerated **town**, which counts on the sustainable exploitation of natural resources and woodland potentials as well as on mountain tourism.

Puka as a **Municipality** with qualified and regenerated human resources, both at local administration level and within the structures of business enterprises, culture, sports and education; which encourage the creation of a favorable climate for local and foreign business and for the employment opportunities and a sustainable increase of incomes for the inhabitants;

Puka as a safe **place**, clean and attractive for the inhabitants and the growing communities, which have the possibility to improve their health and welfare, in cooperation with a civic sense and with the capacity and impetus to give an effective contribute to the future of the Municipality and of the town.



Overall Development Objectives of Puka Municipality



A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development of the Municipality of Puka focusing on the improvement of business climate, the promoting of local enterprising activities as well as the creation of an attractive environment for the foreign investors

B. TERRITORY MANAGEMENT;

The consolidation of the urban center of the Puka town as well as the improvement of quality of the internal urban spaces in function of the promotion and development of the town's mountain tourism feature.

C. IMPROVEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES;

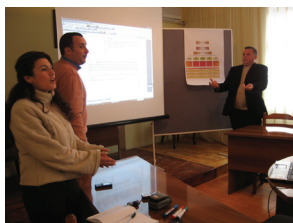
The improvement of public services and physical and social infrastructure quality in the entire territory of the Municipality of Puka.

D. IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The increase of management and administration capacities of the local power in the Municipality of Puka

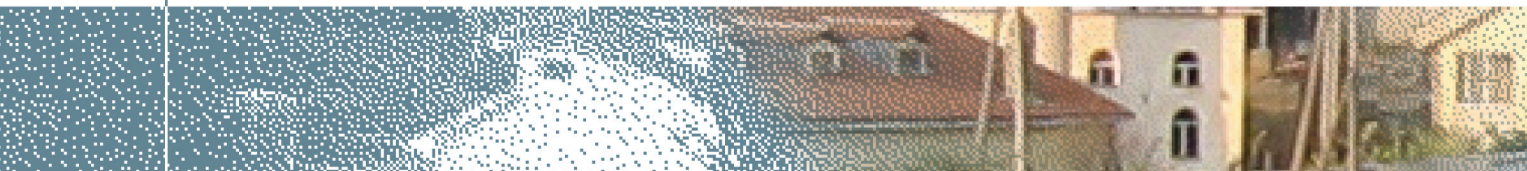
F. INCREASING OF LOCAL INCOME;

Increasing local income in the Municipality enabling more investments in infrastructures and services.



Economic development

- A1. Supporting and stimulation of small economic activities in the Municipality of Puka, with focus on the existing handcraft traditions and on the medicinal plants and wood articles production:**
- a. Identification of the potentials of these handcraft articles production in the territory of Puka Municipality
 - b. Supporting of the existing small handcraft and producing business in the Municipality of Puka.
- A2. Supporting and developing Mountain Tourism making use of the unique natural features of Puka Municipality**
- a. Encouragement and Development of touristic activities in this Municipality
- A3. Promotion of Economical Activities in the territory of Puka Municipality**
- a. Establishment of collaboration with the adjacent communes as well as with the Shkodra District in order to encourage and develop economic activities
 - b. Preparation of detailed projects on the economic activities development
 - c. Support with concrete investments
- A4. Support and development of the local production and agricultural activities**
- a. Identification of the potentials of these agricultural goods production on the territory of Puka Municipality
 - b. Improvement of the land use and of the supporting infrastructures through a study for the evaluation of the needs concerning investments
 - c. Increase of the technical and financial support for the local farmers in Puka



Territorial Management

B1. Protection of the land and prevention of unauthorized constructions

- a. Increase of the level of control on new constructions (Constructions Inspectorate) in the Puka Municipality territory
- b. Presentation and consolidation of the penalizing measures as well as introduction of these measures to the local community
- c. Identification of special fiscal policies for the protection of the agricultural land and of the woods and for the orientation of the constructions in these territories

B2. Regeneration of existing territories damaged by human activity and environment protection in Puka Municipality

- a. Identification of the areas that need environment improving interventions
- b. Improvement of the damaged (polluted) environments situation in the Municipality of Puka territory

Infrastructure and Service Improvement

C1. Consolidation of Road Network in Puka Municipality

- a. Designation of projects for the intervention in the road network of the Municipality of Puka town and villages
- b. Making of improvement investments for the town's road network

C2. Improvement of the water-supply and sewage systems within the territory of Puka Municipality

- a. Improvement of the technical and management conditions of the Water-supply and Canalizations Directorate in the Municipality of Puka
- b. Improvement of the physical situation of the water-supply and canalizations network in the territory of the Municipality
- c. Increase of the management and administration capacities of the enterprise's staff

C3. Improvement of solid waste collection and depositing situation

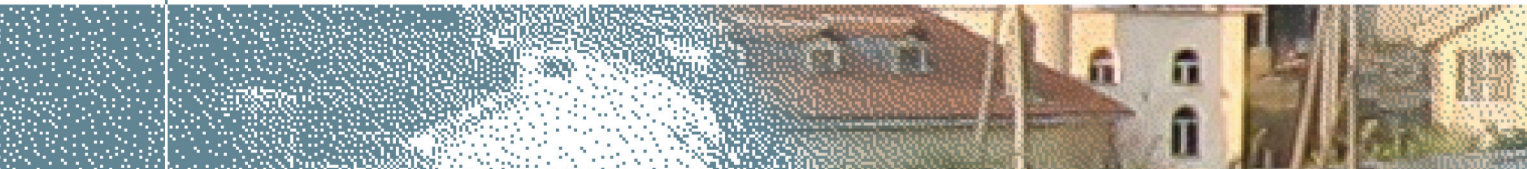
- a. Identification of a waste depositing point

C4. Improvement of the conditions of schools and kindergartens within the territory of Puka Municipality

- a. Identification of the needs for physical improvements in the Municipality of Puka schools
- b. Preparation of technical projects for possible funding from the state sector or various donors
- c. Encouragement of local forums on the possibility of increasing the teaching quality in the schools of the Municipality

C5. Green areas in Puka Municipality

- a. Improvement of the physical conditions of the green areas in the territory of the Municipality
- b. Improvement of street lightening situation in the Municipality of Puka



C6. Street lighting

- a. Improvement of street lightening situation in the Municipality of Puka

C7. Maintenance of Public Cemetery

- a. Enlargement and improvement of the actual conditions of the public cemetery

C8. Town Decoration

- a. Improvement of the town's image and its decoration

C9. Increase of the employment rate in Puka Municipality

- a. Increase of the inhabitants capacities in the Municipality of Puka
- b. Organizing of periodical employment for the groups in need

Good Governance

D1. Strengthening the capacities of Puka Municipality

- a. Administrative reorganizing of the Municipality of Puka
- b. Increase of the technical capacities of the Municipality staff

D2. Improve Transparency in Local Decision Making Processes

- a. Official information sharing regarding the activities of Puka Municipality
- b. Encouragement of citizen participation and information sharing in the Municipality council meetings

D3. Promote Participatory Budgeting in Puka Municipality

- a. Building of local capacities in organizing the Participatory Budgeting in Puka
- b. Organizing of periodical annual activities of Participatory Budgeting in the Municipality of Puka

Mobilizing Financial Means

F1. Increasing local revenues for Puka Municipality

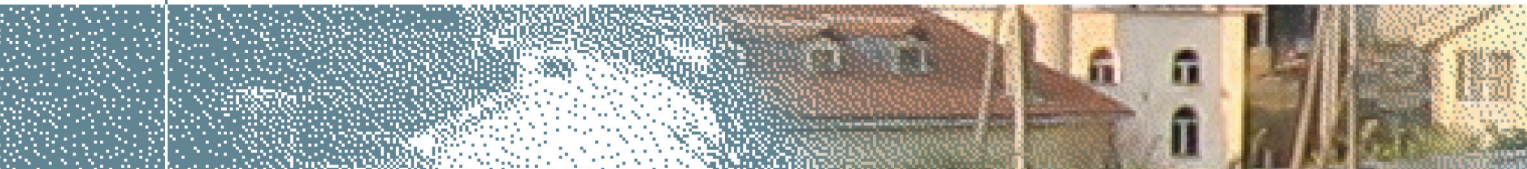
- a. Creation and consolidation of a database for the increase of the taxes and tariff base in the Municipality of Puka

F2. Promoting and increasing national and foreign investments

- a. Preparation of promotional materials for the Municipality of Puka
- b. Organizing of various events supporting the business in the Municipality of Puka

F3. Identification and utilization of other financial resources in the Municipality of Puka

- a. Preparation of project proposals



Instruments for Territorial Management

With regards to the assignment and orienting of the spatial distribution of residential buildings, mixed areas and economic areas in Puka Municipality, a graphic scheme with the related explanations is shown below.

Its aim is to express, through the organization of territorial space, the main economical, social and environmental objectives of Puka Municipality. Also, they are a key instrument for the public participation, offering private or public actors the possibility to cooperate based on a clear and integrated vision.

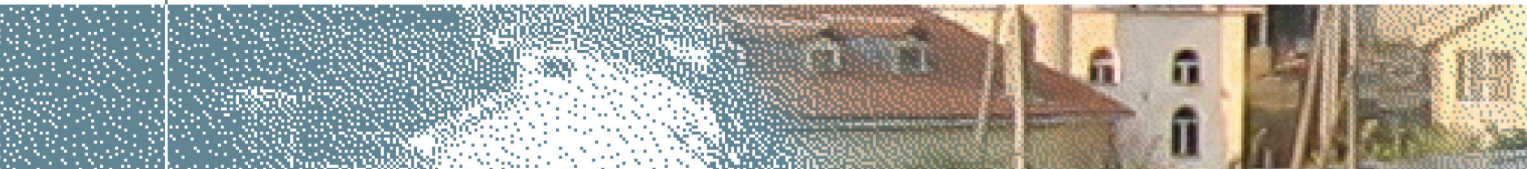
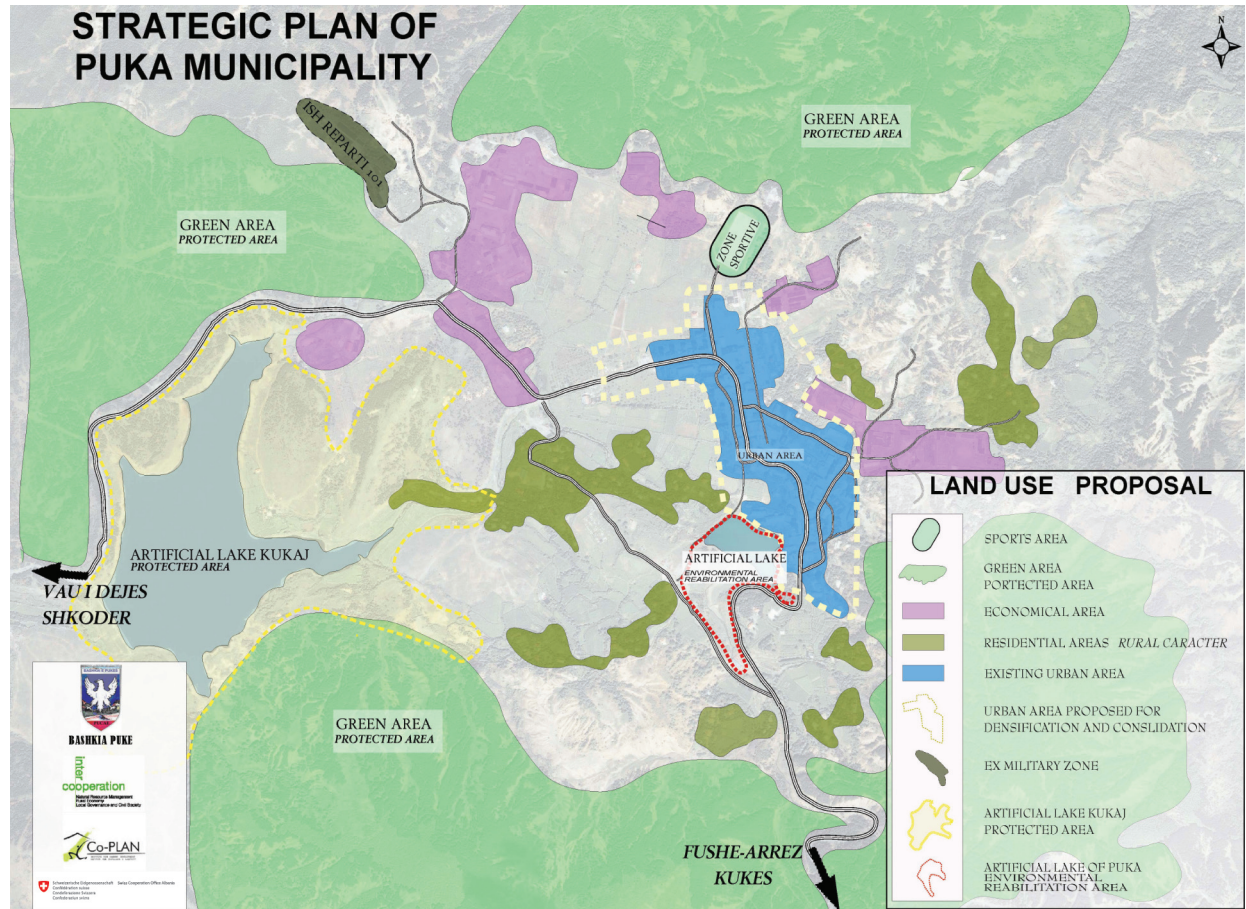
These instruments aim at:

- ❖ Orienting the overall land use by defining the frames for the territorial development of the Municipality.
- ❖ Identifying the protected natural areas
- ❖ Identifying economic and mixed use areas.

A. Residential areas

In Puka Municipality urban areas shown in the map can be divided in two different groups:

1. The first type includes the Urban Consolidation Areas, which need regulatory plans, master plans, detailed studies or other specific studies (as for instance Partial Studies). At the same time, these areas need to be fully covered with the necessary physical and social infrastructure and services (road system, sewerage system, water supply and power networks, public transportation, schools, kindergartens, health care and social centers, etc.). The construction of new buildings will be permitted and encouraged in this area (based on the related local policies), aiming at the consolidation of the area and the increase of public services efficiency.
2. The second one includes the **Rural Areas**, which don't represent the need for general regulatory plans and urban analysis. These areas include the entire surroundings areas of Puka.



These proposals have the purpose of:

- ❖ assisting the consolidation of urban areas
- ❖ Assisting in the protection and rehabilitation of the areas with natural and landscape values.
- ❖ assisting in the densification and increasing service provision efficiency in urban areas
- ❖ assisting in the lowering of investment and infrastructure maintenance costs in urban areas

B. Special Areas:

In Puka Municipality, special areas shown in maps can be divided into two categories:

- ❖ **Mix and economic areas** are those areas that are designated for commerce development; light industries of agro cultural products processing and services. They will be a subject of environmental assessment projects.
- ❖ **Green areas with environmental and panoramic qualities** are those specific areas which need special as for example the city green belt, the green area surrounding Kukaj reservoir, the small lake of the City and the ski territories.

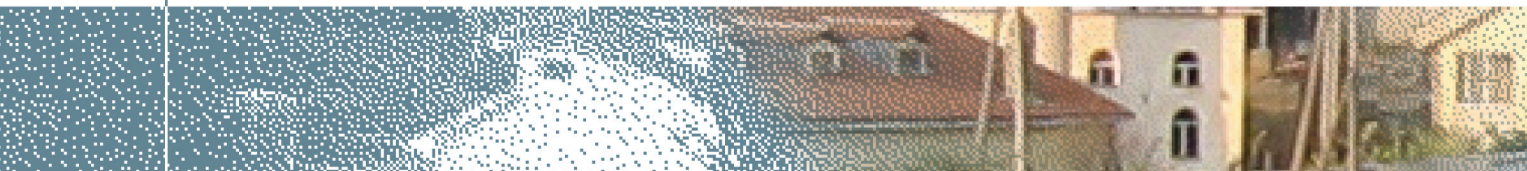
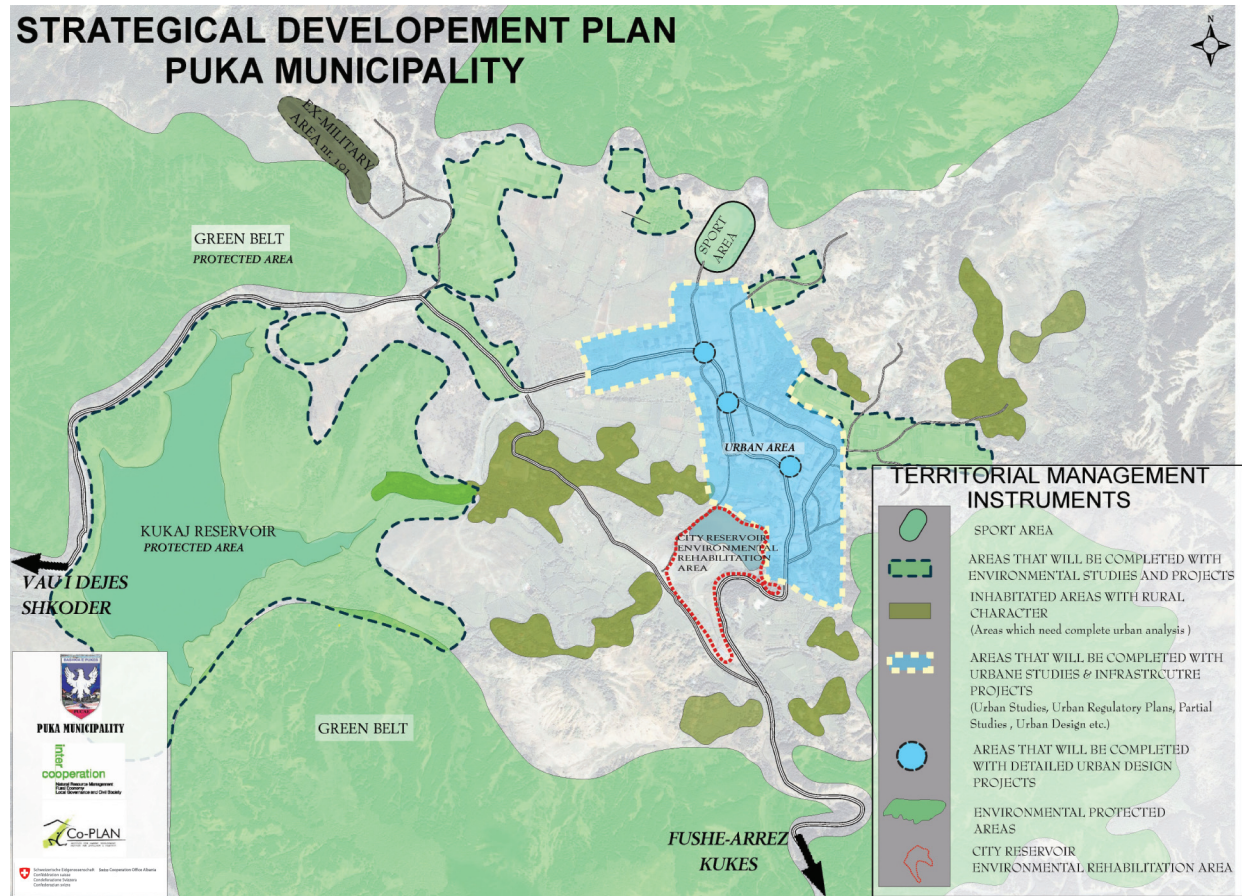
The objectives which have oriented the proposals above are:

- Helping to consolidate urban areas
- Helping densification and improve efficiency of services in urban areas.
- Helping lowering investments, infrastructures and maintenance costs.

The Puka Municipality, through the Territorial Management Instruments, identifies the first step toward the future preparation of detailed urban studies, which are the basic legal instruments needed for the management of urban areas, focused on the best exploitation of the land and minimization of infrastructures costs.

At the end of this document, there are the maps and explanations that show the orienting and establishment of spatial urban mix and economic areas in the Puka Municipality.

STRATEGICAL DEVELOPEMENT PLAN PUKA MUNICIPALITY



Form and Methodology of Strategic Development Plan Implementation in Puka Municipality

The Municipality of Puka, through its Mayor and local administration, is the primary institution responsible for the Strategic Development Plan implementation. In order to increase the efficiency of this process, the undertaking of the following measures is necessary:

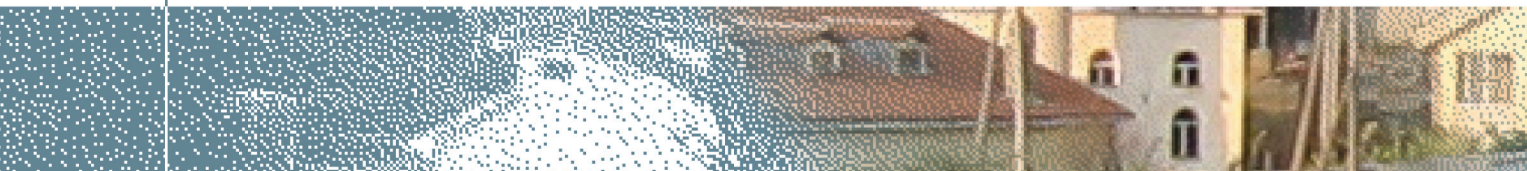
- The establishment of the group for the implementation and monitoring of the Puka Municipality Strategic Development Plan, within the existing administration structure, which will be the principal unit responsible for the coordination and implementation of the initiatives and activities proposed in the Action Plan. Depending on the Municipality's budget, this group may include representatives of the various offices of the administration as well as specialists newly engaged in this structure. In both cases, the groups must be under the Mayor's leadership. In this way, the sustainability and the connection of the Strategic Development Plan with the annual planning and budgeting processes are ensured.
- The consolidation and further development of the capacities of the Coordination and Development Department of the Puka Municipality, which will be engaged in the preparation of the studies and project proposals necessary for the financings in function of the activities proposed in each field.
- Administrative reorganization of the Municipality of Puka based on the actions and requests identified in the proposed Action Plan, such as: the establishment of working groups for the preparation of project proposals; the organization and monitoring of seminars or meetings, with the participation of local actors, on issues concerning budgeting, education, agriculture, environment, etc.; organizing and moderating of "functional associations" in collaboration with the neighboring local units; etc.

- Focusing on the strengthening of the administrative structures that deal with the following through of the strategic commitments in the framework of the Strategic Development Plan as well as with the performance monitoring.
- Improvement of the territorial, financial and infrastructural database of the Municipality, in order to precede the preparation of a number of projects or studies necessary to enable the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan.
- Increase of the capacities and commitment level of the Puka Municipality staff, especially with regards to territory and physical infrastructures management and monitoring through continuous trainings as well as to the improvement of the reporting and evaluation system.
- Institutionalization of the periodical reports of each office of the administration concerning the Strategic Development Plan implementation progress.

The successful implementation of the Strategic Development Plan in the Municipality of Puka needs the consolidation of a periodical authentic monitoring and evaluation system. In this way becomes possible to evidence the problems that might be encountered during the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan and to determine the necessary changes or adaptations. The Strategic Development Plan refers to a short period of time, 2008-2014; therefore it is very important for it to be accompanied by a continuous process of evaluation and necessary adaptations.

Being that the Plan is a strategic document serving the Municipality of Puka, it is natural for its implementation and evaluation to be executed in accordance with the local power functioning and planning processes. This is also the case for the synchronization of the activities proposed with the electoral stages of the local power elections in Albania. In this way it is ensured the adaptation of the Strategic Development Plan proposals as well as the monitoring of its implementation with the administration's annual planning and budgeting cycles.

Based on the Law on Public Finances, the preparation of the Budget Project for the three following years is a process that must be financed on July of each year. This Budget Project is based on the Government Guideline on the preparation of the Budget Project of all the local units for the June-July period. It makes a prevision of the expenses and investments of the Municipality of Puka for the three following years, while the Budget Plan, which is prepared and approved by the Local Council and the Prefecture of Shkodra by December, deals only with the successive year. The preparation of the Investments Project for the Grant Competition Funds is a process that must be terminated by November 1st of each year. The annual Budget Plan may or may not include these projects in its structure.



Proposed Monitoring Scheme

Activity Proposed	Time Frame (foe each year)	Actors Responsible	Connection with the Annual Planning and Budgeting
The 6-month evaluation of the activities of the Action Plan of SP. Preparation of the Progress Report	April - May	Coordination and Development Unit	Based on the 6-month results, the Municipality can determine the changes in the Budget Project that will be submitted in July.
Public meetings with the citizens about the results of SP implementation.	June - July	Coordination and Development Unit	They influence the necessary adaptation of the activities in the final Budget Plan
Meeting of the Municipality administration staff to discuss the progress and necessary changes.	October - November	Coordination and Development Unit – Mayor	The meeting will finalize the necessary changes and adaptations of the Activity Plan that will be reflected in the new annual Budget of December.
Annual meeting for the SP Evaluation and Monitoring. Preparation of the Annual Report	November	Coordination and Development Unit – Mayor	The final meeting precedes the finalization and submission of the Municipality's Annual Budget.

At the end of each evaluation, the Working Group must submit a summary report which will be submitted to the Municipality of Puka Council. The latter maintains the right to eventually make a request for an additional report if considered - necessary.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF PUKA MUNICIPALITY

S h o r t V e r s i o n