

**The National Policy for Sustainable Housing  
and Urban Development Ministry of Urban Development of the  
Republic of Albania**

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# Content of the presentation

- Overview of social housing policy
  - a) Strategy on social housing and new law on housing
- Territorial Planning
  - a) Strategic spatial plans and general local plans
- Pilot projects- Rilindja Urbane
- Challenges

## Social Housing Strategy 2016-2025

- In the context of strategic planning and development of social housing policies based on evidences, the Ministry of Urban Development worked out and adopted on June,1<sup>st</sup> 2016, **the Social Housing Strategy for the years 2016 -2025, together with its Action Plan.**
- This strategic document, the first of its kind for the past 26 years, gives solutions to the housing needs, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups.
- Besides improving the legal framework, this Strategy foresees the establishment of a reliable data system about the current situation of homeless families in Albania, according to the new administrative division of the country.

- The main goal of the strategy is to: *"Provide available solutions, accessible, affordable and qualitative housing for families with low and medium incomes that can not afford a home on the open market and, in particular, for families in disadvantaged positions that lead to exclusion from housing"*.
- **Its goal is to improve living conditions of about 25.000 Albanian households with low and middle incomes.**

**There are four strategic objectives which are categorized under four strategic directions:**

- (1) provide evidence about social housing and local capacity;**
- (2) improvement of the legal, institutional and regulatory framework;**
- (3) strengthening financial instruments in positions disadvantaged groups;**
- (4) the expansion and reorientation of social housing programs;**

The process of drafting the strategy on the new law on housing was supported by UNDP.

- Inclusive
- Participatory
- Coordinated among national and international actors
- 127 actors involved in the process Ombudsman, academia, LGU, line ministries, International Agencies, UNDP, OSCE etc

# Main challenges faced with:

- One of the main hindrances in the formulation of effective social housing policies and programs was the lack of systematic data and analyses based on these data.
- Nor the local government had a sustainable system that could be used for collection of the data.

To better response to the immediate needs, the best thing to do was the orientation of the state budget' funds to the Program of social rented houses and the housing bonus, as instruments to accomplish the Program.

**That was considered as the best and more appropriate alternative providing effectiveness and economically matching the homeless families and those in vulnerable conditions.**

# Approach of social housing programs

Such measurements were followed by a strict surveying and monitoring of the other social housing programs, such as:

- Low-cost Housing
- Housing Subsidies
- Land equipment with infrastructure
- Joint projects between central and local government for social housing

# Agenda 2030- INCLUSION

Being led by the motto” **Leave no one behind**”, which is a core promise of the Agenda 2030, the National Strategy on Social Housing comprises a **total of almost 17 benefiting groups so far:** (*female-headed families; single parent families large families, older adults, persons with disabilities, young couples, orphans, returning emigrants, migrant workers, asylum seekers, victims of domestic violence, Roma and Egyptian families, recipients of economic assistance, etc*)

*“Social inclusion, equal opportunity, gender equality, non-discrimination, care for vulnerable groups and people in need, have become the anthem of our daily work in the housing sector”* **quoted by H.E Mrs. Eglantina Gjermeni, Minister**

# Social housing targeted model

**Case study:** revitalization of degraded building and its adoption into a social settlement for orphans. (*Shkodra city- north of Albania*)

- This residual housing model is relatively small in terms of size as they apply to very specific target group.
- The successful accomplishment of this model, provides room to develop it widely in the territory of Albania.

# Pilot projects & PPP scheme

Housing is an integrative good that has a significant impact on the quality of residents' lives; and more profoundly, it affects people's physical and psychological health, their economic and energy security and access to transportation, education and employment.

As above mentioned sustainable housing has a key role in the quality of human life, MUD is committed to improve the living conditions of vulnerable group throughout the country, with the initiation of this pilot project for providing affordable and live able housing for vulnerable group.

Meanwhile, there have been, **for the first time**, developed and implemented pilot projects aiming at the energy efficiency performance in human settlements, by applying certain measures related to energy efficiency in condominium buildings.

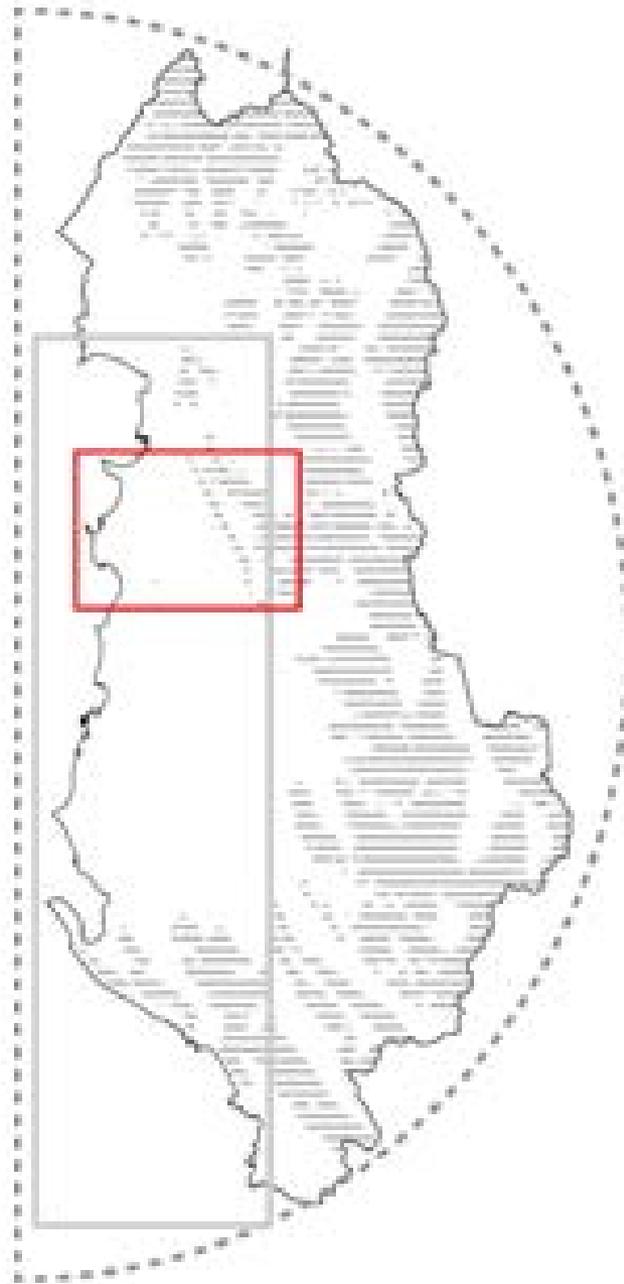
Taking into consideration the limited fund available for housing programs over this four years' period, the Ministry of Urban Development, parallel to the state budget, is trying to establish a proper model of social housing based on a PPP scheme.

**An important initiative taken by the Government of Albania and led by the Ministry of Urban Development, is the drafting of three strategic documents in the field of territorial planning which are:**

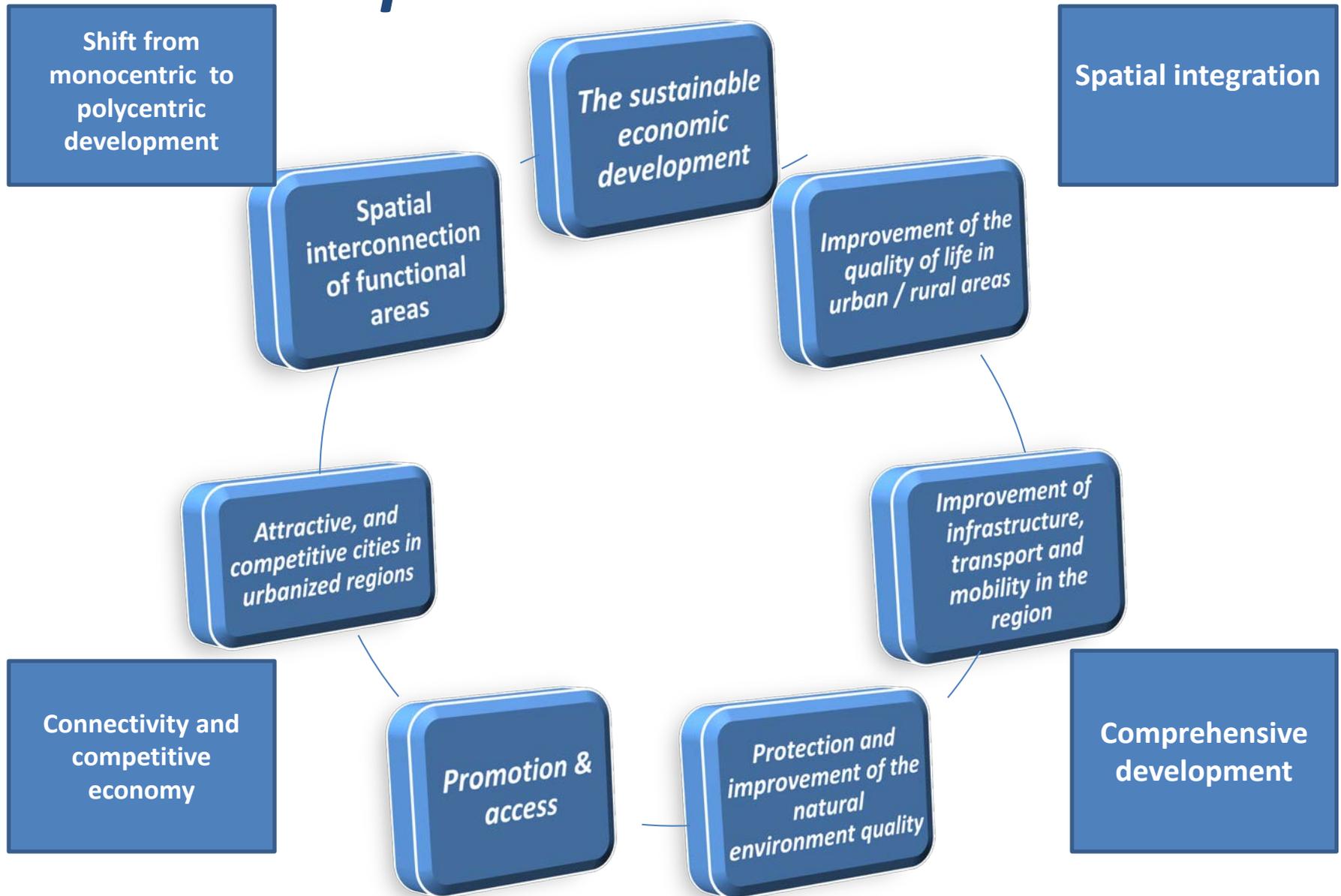
- 1. National Spatial Plan-** provides the strategic reference framework for sustainable territorial development for the next 15 years, in order to ensure balanced economic and social national development, responsible management of natural resources, environmental protection, all while ensuring the rational land use . NSP Albania 2030 is the highest-level instrument of territorial planning in Albania .
- 2. Cross Sectorial Integrated Plan for the Coast-** aims to establish a balanced and fair ratio between the development of objectives according to the perspective of governmental policies, the right to develop the territory and its natural resources, implementing a new vision, giving a qualitative burst to tourism development.
- 3. Cross Sectorial Integrated Plan for the economic area Tiranë-Durrës -** The purpose of the plan is to provide a clear vision of urban and economic development for this area. Economic zone is seen as a significant hub of the Balkans, as a national and regional economic center, able to compete worthily in the Balkan area and in Eastern Europe, ensuring sustainable development for the people and the territory .

## 1-National and Sectorial Plans (2013-2016)

- **General National Territorial Plan**
- **Cross-Sectorial Plan for the Coast**
- **Cross-Sectorial Plan for Tirana and Durrës-Region**



# *Key elements of strategic national plans in Albania:*



## **Administrative - Territorial Reform**

Decentralization process which was undertaken successfully by the government is strongly related with the process of the sustainable urban development of the territory and drafting of the strategic plans and local plans.

After the administrative territorial reform, where were in place 373 municipalities and communes, the number was reduced in 61 LGU.

In the framework of the administrative territorial reform – decentralization, MUD started the process of drafting three national plans and local plans to strengthen and empower the role of municipalities in providing the best possible services for citizens. 61 Local Plans will serve as strategic documents for territorial re-organization.

## **2- General Local Plans for 61 Municipality**

NSP Albania 2030 is the highest-level instrument of territorial planning in Albania, which addresses planning issues in an integrated manner, considering the Albanian territory as a whole. Based on its principles, objectives and specifications, details will be provided in terms of the lower hierarchy plans as General Local Plans for 61 Municipalities. This initiative will provide each of 61 municipalities in Albania with a development guiding document, that will serve as a local constitution for the next 15 years of municipal territory administration.

26 –financed by MUD

5- financed by USAID

3-Swiss Agency

10- MUD for the year 2017

Remaining international organizations...

**This large-scale initiative for the regulation of the territory, is taken for the first time, after a caotic development we inherited for the past 26 years.**

**Main features:**

A coordinated process with the national plans;

Territorial management in a larger scale including cross-sectoral planning;

Land protection and densification of urban centers bringing scenarios of sustainable development and reduction of urban sprawl;

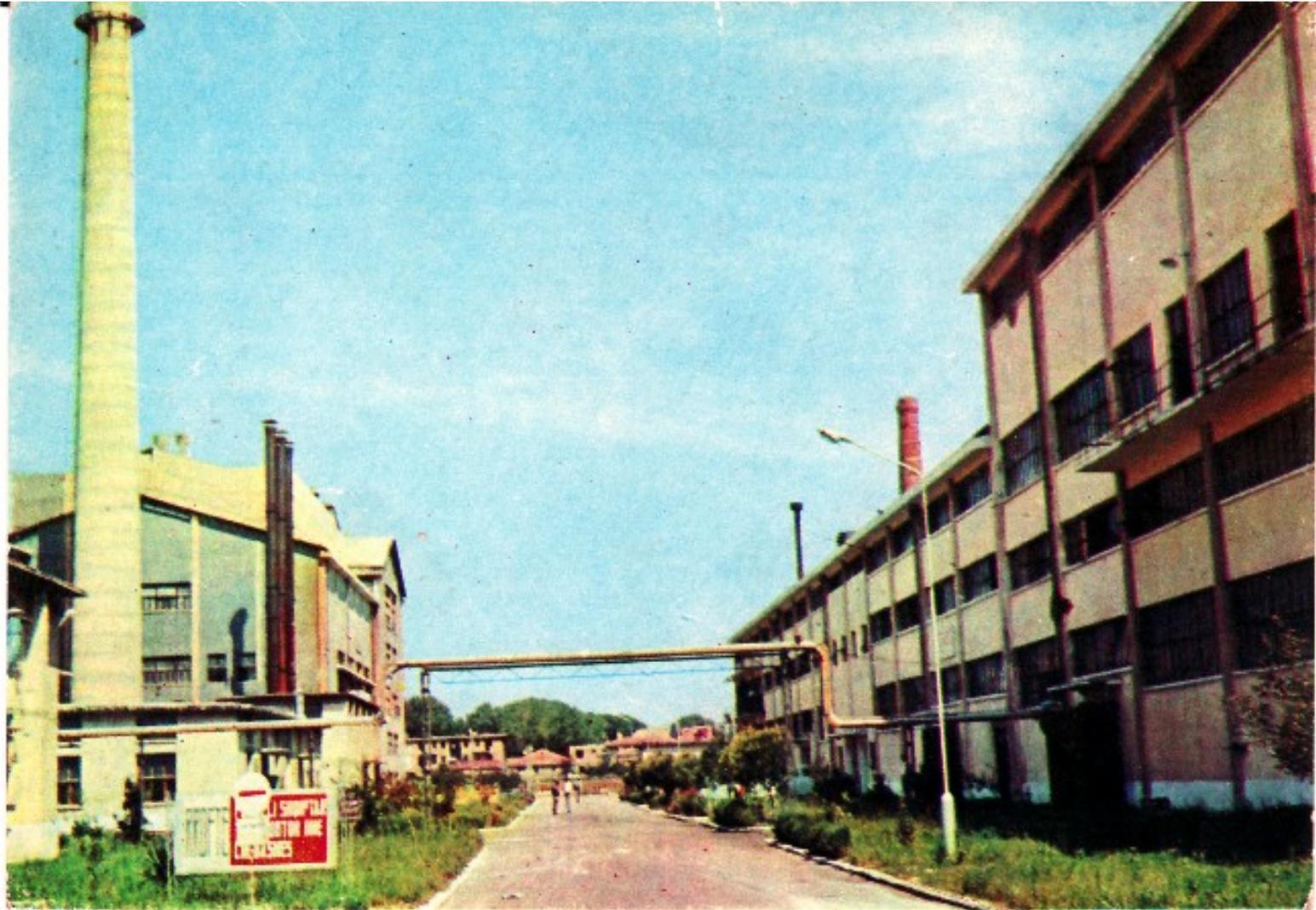
Drafting of plans according to a methodology which includes territorial systems such as urban, agriculture, water, energy, and infrastructure.

These plans serve as a guideline for the development of the territory, ending the era of informality in the development of land, territory, urban and rural areas, as well as serving as the base platform for future investments.

**On the crossroad of different urban phenomena-how  
can government play a role?**

- Albanian cities are now important urban laboratories where different urban phenomena intersect, such as, Eastern European city models, suburbanization, urban sprawl, shrinking cities, ghost towns and etc.
- Some of the phenomena are landmarks of centralized planning of the communist era, prefabricated city blocks and infrastructure which are still visible in peripheral cities which did not change much since the fall of communism. Those cities continue to have the same spatial properties and offer few alternatives to 21 century challenges.
- Meanwhile in some cases urban sprawls, city growth create the similar challenges but with different symptoms in Tirana and Durres which is now a linear joint city.
- At the intersection of those phenomena we can experiment with different methodologies which lead to innovation.
- Below are mentioned four key-steps of (successful) methodologies which were used in improving the sustainability of the cities, based on the work in the Ministry of Urban Development during 2013-2016.

**On the crossroad of different urban phenomena-Former Industrial City Challenges?**



## On the crossroad of different urban phenomena-Ghost Towns



1990s transition and laissez faire

## On the crossroad of different urban phenomena-Informality and Suburbanization



Informality in the suburbs (Photo credit: John Driscoll, IIUD)

## On the crossroad of different urban phenomena-Urban Sprawl, Tirana



## Public meetings and the “Bottom Up Approach”

More than 61 public meetings with all stakeholders



## Public hearings



## Public hearings



## Public presentation



### **3- Pilot PROJECTS in cooperation with Municipalities- /Rilindja Urbane**

Although these projects aim at very specific theme, the idea was used to generate spatial solution which increases the quality of life. Urban Acupuncture is a methodology which is very effective especially in Shrinking Cities where there are not so many economic resources and sometimes with smaller effective intervention we can “heal” a broader area and provide incentive for improving conditions especially in post-industrial cities.

Regional Development Fund has been an incentive which has supported financially these projects. A concrete impact of these project is the improvement of the quality of life in existing cities with over 300 projects spread out in different cities in Albania (Examples)

**Project designed by the Ministry of Urban Development for the Municipality of Lushnje**



## Revitalizing the old Bazar of the historical City of Korçë



## **4-Urban Studies**

Urban studies are quite important because analyzing the urban phenomena in order to find the right diagnoses, provides a path for more sustainable and thoughtful solutions in the long-term.

Involving academics and universities can be very effective and could lead to innovation, but there is a challenge in creating effective partnerships with governmental bodies and experts who would be willing to integrate those studies in political decision-making and programs.

# What do we expect...

**Guided by the two strategic documents New Urban Agenda, adopted in Quito in October 2016, UN Geneva Charter on sustainable housing and the fulfillment of the goal 11 SDG, we foresee:**

- Readdress the way cities and human settlement are planned , designed, financed governed and managed;
- Establish a data collection system on housing and urban development;
- Raise capacity building in all levels;
- Strengthen urban governance with sound institution and mechanisms that empower and include urban stakeholders;
- Make the National Strategies on Housing and Urban Development as collective vision and a political commitment to promote and realize sustainable housing and urban development in Albania.

**Thank you for your attention!**

For more information you may visit the official site of  
the Ministry of Urban Development, Albania:

[www.zhvillimiurban.gov.al](http://www.zhvillimiurban.gov.al)